Emblems in Colonial Ibero-America:
To the New World on the Ship of Theseus

Edited by Pedro Germano Leal
with Rubem Amaral Jr

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Pedro Germano Leal
The Emblems in the *Neptuno Alegórico* by Sor Juana

BY

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The question regarding the specifically emblematic character of *Neptuno Alegórico*¹ by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz has not been sufficiently addressed even today. This triumphal, baroque and *novohispano* arch has been the object of multiple critical approaches and varied exegesis. A few of these inquiries share succinctly with the contemporary reader the description of this ephemeral and festive work that Sor Juana, hired by the town council of the *novohispano* city, created to welcome the Viceroys that would be her most important protectors, helping to start her literary career outside the borders of the New Spain. Other approaches focus largely on the meaning, or multiple meanings, of this symbolic construction that reflects an amalgam of social and political concerns, in other words, historical issues concerning the inhabitants of New Spain. Notwithstanding, these approaches have barely touched on the emblematic representations in the text, made up in total of a dedication, an ‘Argument of the Allegorical Structure and Application of the Fable’ and an ‘Explanation of the Arch’ where, in this order, Sor Juana spells out the goal and the general principles of this

¹ Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Neptuno Alegórico*, *Océano de Colores, Simulacro Político, que erigió la muy Esclarecida, Sacra, y Augusta Iglesia Metropolitana de Mexico...* Mexico City, Juan de Rivera, c. 1680. To celebrate the entry of the viceroy of Tomás de la Cerda y Aragón, Marquis of the Laguna, and his wife, María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, in Mexico City, on 30 November 1680, the city commissioned two triumphal arches, from two preeminent intellectuals of the time: Carlos de Sigüenza y Gongora, who became responsible for the arch in the Plaza de Santo Domingo; and Sor Juana, a Hieronymite nun who would become one of the most important authors in Colonial Ibero-America, whose arch was built in front of the west door of the Cathedral of Mexico. *Neptuno Alegórico* is a detailed account of Sor Juana’s arch, where she describes her intricate iconographic programme with the literary brilliancy and erudition that would characterize her later works. For a short introduction and an English translation of *Neptuno Alegórico*, see Linda Curcio-Nagy, ‘Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the 1680 Viceroyal Entry of the Marquis de la Laguna into Mexico City’ in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 2, ed. Peter Davidson et alii (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 352-357, 361-428.
symbolic system, soon summarizing the meaning of the arch and developing the symbolism of each one of the fourteen emblematic images that make up its totality—eight canvases and six ‘hieroglyphs’ which she would call those with a *subscription*\(^2\)—and, finally, displaying a poetic synthesis of the former in eight parts.

In her dedication, Sor Juana begins by expanding upon a theory of apophatic symbolism, referring to the arcane secrets of the old religions (to the Egyptians, god is a circle). Nevertheless she ultimately opens up, in *Neptuno Alegórico*, a mostly cataphatic symbolic vision, that, analogically, weaves direct similarities between the attributes of Neptune and the qualities of the Viceroy. This feat can be significant, because she emphasizes the symbolic quality of the signs, positing this quality as a paradigm of the symbols of metaphysical significance, that is to say, the divinity, to soon deploy a sequence of emblematic symbols concerning the heroic and political qualities of the Marquis de la Laguna. In very few of the emblematic figures of *Neptuno* can we find the theological, metaphysical and the arcane. It is the feats and deeds of the Marquis that matter, in any case, to have his virtues manipulated as symbolic abstractions. The likely intention of Sor Juana was to show that the symbols may be interpreted on different levels although she might prefer, in her compositions, the highest level, or the analogic (which would be reached, some years later, in her work *Primero Sueño*) if that is the most significant for public life, that is the moral level, that extends to the public, political or social good. In any case, it is clear that Sor Juana subscribes fully to the system of classical hermeneutics, that, as we can see, continues to be active among the baroque authors, above all those who were part of the ecclesiastical culture.

There are two methodologies that enable the analogical and alternative operations in Sor Juana’s text: firstly the mechanism of biblical typology that has been transmitted by the Church Fathers, who taught a progressive revelation in which the Old Testament prefigures the New Testament (in this respect the several references to the work of Jacob

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\(^2\) The distinction is traditionally between the hieroglyphic and the emblem according to which the first has a *subscription*, that is to say, an epigram or an explanatory text of smaller or greater length at the bottom of the image in addition to the theme that tends to appear on the upper part of the picture, while the hieroglyphic only has a motto or a theme, without the *subscriptions*. See Giovanni Pozzi, ‘Les hieroglyphes de L’Hypnerotomachia Poliphili’, *Société Française des Seiziémites. L’emblème à la Renaissance. Actes de la Journée d’Études du 10 Mai, 1980*, ed. Yves Giraud (Paris: Société d’Édition d’Enseignements Supérieur, 1982), p. 23. More recently, however, new perspectives on the different ideas and genres of Renaissance hieroglyphs have emerged. See Pedro Germán Leal, *The Invention of Hieroglyphs: A Theory for the Transmission of Hieroglyphs in Early-Modern Europe*, PhD Thesis (Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2014), where the author argues, among other things, that from the turn to the 17th century on, Spanish hieroglyphs often had *subscriptions* thanks to the influence of emblematic tradition.
Boulduc, *De Oggio Christiano*, in *Neptuno* are also symptomatic and already indicate what the methodology is which integrates Sor Juana with this and other theoretical sources) and secondly a syncretism typical of the Renaissance that Edgar Wind showed us in the eloquent chapters of his work *The Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*. In any case, on the basis of this work by Sor Juana stands the idea that the Greco-Latin gods are political and moral ‘valences’ (I prefer utilizing this mathematical term—valence—because, in reality, what one witnesses with this use of the mythology is real axiological algebra). And with this I would like to say something more, regarding the Evemerist interpretation of myths, according to which all gods were originally historical characters—a perspective much in vogue in many mythologists of the Renaissance. It concerns a wide range of values related to the consistent cultural tradition that, on the one hand, opposes virtues to vices and that, on the other hand, connects the hermeneutics to a reading of social and political history, just as happens in the spiritual life. Such values, like all of the work of early modernity, are connected according to the vectors that the same cultural context, and each author, imprints, singularly, upon the discourse. Thus, for example, the eloquence of Mercury can be connected to the knowledge of Minerva and constitute, in this manner, the symbolic sustenance of a discourse about prudent eloquence.

At any rate, Sor Juana makes it clear to us that ‘amidst the shadows of what is pretence, the light of what is truth stands out more’, a fundamental conviction of the baroque aesthetic, and we shall see how she goes on to expand it further, through these mechanisms, a system of very unique signifiers. In this way we can see that the wise goddesses, be it Isis, Cybele or Minerva, are one of the pivotal points around which many of her works turn. Equally, as I have mentioned elsewhere, her representations of the gods of silence, be it Harpocrates, Neptune or Conso, are the engine that will string together her aesthetic and poetic

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3 Jacques Boulduc, *De oggio christiano...* (Lyon: Boissat and Anisson, 1640). Some have suggested that Sor Juana might have made a mistake in terms of the title (Gregorio Hinojo Andrés, ‘Fuentes clásicas y renacentistas del Neptuno alegórico’, *Nova Tellus*, 21.2, 2003, 196), given that the correct Latin word is Orgia, meaning ‘sacred celebration’, alluding to the prefigurations of the Eucharist in the Old Testament. Notwithstanding, the first edition of this work by Boulduc, from 1640, in Lucerne, published by Gabriel Boissat and Lorenzo Anisson, shows the word Oggio on the title, that is, Sor Juana was loyal to the reference of the work that she used in her research.


creations with the Jesuit currents of the contained eloquence that at once signals and protects a sense of the superhuman revealed in the discourse as logos. The Pythagoreanism inherent in this specific value emanates from the Italian thinkers, from the Neoplatonics of the 15th century, derived from the Neoplatonism of late antiquity, to the Italian mythographers of the 16th century. Sor Juana takes it from, among other sources, the Hieroglyphica by Pierio Valeriano. In any case, the concrete procedures come, manifestly, from her dialectic and rhetorical education. And just as Baltasar Gracián outlines his definition of the concept as a subtle blending of a terminus a quo and a terminus ad quem, which are unlike each other, making use of all the resources of dialectics, Sor Juana will utilize these techniques, which keep bringing us clearly, as readers, to the general meaning of Neptuno Alegórico. As long as we keep in mind that every single one of the emblematic representations will have a terminus a quo and ad quem for the allegories, our interpretation will be on a firm footing. It is because of this that I will explicitly indicate both elements, that is dialectically, the terminus a quo from the correlation to the allegoric, like the god Neptune, and the terminus ad quem, the material or actual basis that is being made into allegory: the Marqués de la Laguna and Count of Paredes.

On the other hand there is the issue of allegoresis. What was stated above makes it clear that we must not, as a rule, expect to find an anagogic sense in the Neptuno Alegórico, since it is dedicated entirely to a concrete human being, living and present, such as the Marquis, and given the reason for his arrival and the political reception by the people in the New Spain territory. We also see that in all the emblems, Sor Juana makes use of simple allegories based on direct and cataphatic analogies, although we sometimes run into what I will call, following Baltasar Gracián, continuous allegories that aim to raise us up into the

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7 Christopher S. Ceclenza, Piety and Pythagoras in Renaissance Florence: The Symbolum Nesianum (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2001), p. 10, mentions the work of Saint Ambrose, De officiis ministrorum, as an antecedent to the Renaissance’s rhetoric of silence. Saint Ambrose considers the Pythagorean silence to be a virtue of a Christian priest. That is also the case of Clement of Alexandria, who offers several Christian interpretations of the moral value of the Pythagorean silence, mentioning the Pythagoreans with Moses’ doctrines. O’Meara describes the transmission of Pythagorean thought from the texts by Iamblichus and through Neoplatonism from the Middle Ages, until Florence in the 15th Century, where Marsilio Ficino ‘Christianized’ Pythagorean thought that he had translated from Iamblichus (Dominic J. O’Meara, Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in the Late Antiquity. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). This is how we find several Pythagorean maxims, and allusions to Pythagorism in the Italian emblemist Pierio Valeriano, whose Hieroglyphica books are often cited by Sor Juana.

8 Mauricio Beuchot, Sor Juana: una filósofa barroca (México City: UNAM, 1999), p. 28.
realm of apophasis. In any case, the latter rarely succeeds, with simple allegories predominating in a text of heroic and eulogistic tone, such as Neptuno, that only reaches the sublime tessitura when the use of continuous allegory falls back on ‘prudent, sublime and secretive’ discourse, as Gracián himself described it. Of the fictional examples of ingenious subtlety or wit (agudeza) that he mentions, it is the ‘special fictional examples of wit’ that reach the sublime—and that is the case of epic literature. Therefore, the heroic and eulogistic discourse can be sublime, although it may not be anagogic:

Wit (agudeza) is created in two ways, and there are a further two compound genres. The first consists of plain concepts...the second consists of fiction, as is the case for epics, continuous allegories, dialogues, etc... These continuous allegories, as few as there might be in Neptuno, contribute, in the author’s strategy, to the interchangeable and permuting virtues of symbolic figures of the mythology such as happens in the culture of the Renaissance. It is necessary to highlight that in the works of Sor Juana of another kind, such as in Primero Sueño or El Divino Narciso, we find abundant evidence that these continuous allegories exceed a cataphatic symbolism and penetrate into an intricate web of correspondences that move away from the reader’s direct understanding, thus bringing the reader to a reflection where the ontological or metaphysical elements play an essential role. In the Neptuno Alegórico, on the other hand, since it is a celebratory document and related to an allegorical festival, the simple and direct didactic intention determines the way in which the allegories, once interpreted (in a ceremonial manner in the ‘About the Arch’ section and retrospectively in an exegetic written text), are, for the most part, easy to understand by

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9 For a modern take on the cataphatic and apophatic symbols from texts by Pseudo Dionysus, see Ernst H. J. Gombrich, Imágenes Simbólicas (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1983), pp. 238-240. The cataphatic symbols are imitative and immediate; the apophatic are enigmatic and require full exegesis.

10 Baltasar Gracián, Arte de ingenio, tratado de agudeza (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1642), p. 1201: ‘Para sentencia no basta qualquiera verdad: ha de ser un desengaño prudente, sublime y recondito.’ By ‘desengaño’ one must understand here the ‘interpretation’ of the witticism, not a kind of ‘deception’.


12 For the mythical syncretism of the Renaissance, see Edgar Wind, Los Misterios Paganos del Renacimiento. Baltasar Gracián, Agudeza y Arte de Ingenio, 2001, vol. 2, p. 171, also provides the rhetorical basis for these procedures: ‘Aumentase en la composición la agudeza, porque la virtud unida crece, y la que a solas no pasara de una mediocridad, por la correspondencia con la otra, llega a ser delicadeza; y no sólo no carece de variedad, sino que antes la dobla, ya por las muchas combinaciones de la agudezas parciales, ya por la multitud de modos y géneros de uniones.’
the public which was present at the reception of New Spain’s new governor.

One must also draw attention to the rhetoric that is usually mentioned in relation to Neptuno Alegórico, above all the ekphrasis, even the hypotyposis. In general terms, and in accordance with the development of the decorative arts in the Renaissance and the Baroque era, like the description of the triumphal arch, all the images analysed in Neptuno are basically ekphrastic, because they convert the images of the arch into written text. However, the question is not that simple, because the same intertextuality of these allegorical images can also determine a double ekphrasis: the description that Sor Juana makes of pre-existing images to conform to her own emblematic programme and Sor Juana’s description of her own triumphal arch when it was already completed and, as an ephemeral construction, soon discarded physically. Analogies are not precise in the arch’s formation, but there are distinct procedures of adjustment and adaptation that I will explore in due course. On the other hand, the hypotyposis also determines this specific intertextuality, in the first place, because the pictorial version of each canvas is based on the earlier description, reliably written, that Sor Juana made available for the painter to draw the image of the arch from. Furthermore, it is also feasible that Sor Juana’s sources are only textual and not iconographic. That is to say, the resources of ekphrasis and hypotyposis find themselves intrinsically related given that emblematics is, in itself, inscribed in the knowledge-based genre of literature. Ekphrasis and hypotyposis have their own dynamic that varies according to the emblematic proposition of each canvas, whether it comes from pre-existing images, emblems or devices, or simply from textual sources, making use, in their own way, of partial elements from both kinds of source. Variations of this dynamic, for example, work from an initial emblem that serves as inspiration, suppressing any non-functional parts to the compositional goal of the author, taking only the image and not its meaning (or vice-versa), or simply inverting the meaning of the image.

Next I will proceed with an exposition of the mechanisms and resources of Sor Juana in the allegorical elaboration of the different canvases. I will suggest, on each occasion, the intertextual substrata that serve her goals and I will attempt an explanation for these suggestions. At the same time I will go on to signal the several strategies of appropriation of these erudite quotations that, step by step, determine a different poetics of citation, referring, above all, to the symbolic and emblematic axis of such ‘erudición noticiosa’.
THE EMBLEM OF THE FIRST CANVAS

The first emblem described by Sor Juana, like the others, was created expressly for the Triumphal Arch although it synthesizes several sources. It combines pictorial and cartographic sources, like the mention of the winds distributed on four sides of the scene. Sagrario López Poza signals that it was common to find a representation of the four winds in the triumphal arches of the Renaissance and the Baroque. The most likely reason lies in the theme of welcome: the traveller being honoured has just arrived from a long voyage, which naturally suggests allusions to geographical and cartographical matters: he has arrived at his destination thanks to the good spirits of the winds. On the other hand, the presence of the winds gives a feeling of depth to the representation, whose perspective appears catoptic, and, with distinct levels of distance, produces the impression of a third dimension, since winds, such as the air element and the water clouds, find themselves above the Earth’s surface with the sea and continents. On geographical maps of that era the moon, sun and the stars above winds and clouds are sometimes at a more external plane on the map (or close to a catoptic vanishing point). In this canvas the couple Neptune and Amphitrite (terminus a quo) appear as an allegorical representation of the Marquis de la Laguna and his wife. Sor Juana’s textual description sits closer to Pausanias’ text, mentioned by her and by the mythographers Baltasar de Victoria and Natale Conti. The original version by Pausanias served as inspiration to many Renaissance painters, both Italian and Flemish, and Sor Juana prefers these versions to the ones offered by Victoria and Conti.

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14 Pausanias, Description of Greece, Translation by W. H. S. Jones, London, Heinemann, 1918, pp 251, 253. ‘On the temple, which is not very large, stand bronze Tritons. In the fore-temple are images, two of Poseidon, a third of Amphitrite, and a Sea, which also is of bronze... four horses, gilded except for the hoofs, which are of ivory, and two gold Tritons beside the horses, with the parts below the waist of ivory. On the car stand Amphitrite and Poseidon, and there is the boy Palaeemon upright upon a dolphin. These two are made of ivory and gold. On the middle of the base on which the car is has been wrought a Sea holding up the young Aphrodite, and on either side are the nymphs called Nereids’.
15 Baltasar de Victoria, Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad (Salamanca: Antonio Ramírez, 1620), p. 325. This mythographer does not paraphrase Pausanias’ description of Neptune’s entourage but another one, which describes Neptune as standing alone with horses that draw his carriage, without an entourage. In that we see clearly that Sor Juana does not limit herself to referring to him or Conti.
16 Natale Conti, Mythologiae (Padua: Pietro Paolo Torzi, 1616), pp. 84-85. In this edition, the image of Neptune with Amphitrite appears on a carriage with four horses, exactly like the Venetian 1624 edition of Curtaci’s imagine degli dei de gli antichi. Notwithstanding, in his text, Conti does not mention a carriage accompanying the couple (Natale Conti, Mythologiae, pp. 84-85).
several sources and recent criticism this canvas is referred to as the mythological couple in the work of Vincenzo Cartari (Fig. 1), although Pausanias is more likely to be the source of Sor Juana here.

Fig. 1. Neptune and Amphitrite, woodcut from Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines Deorum*, Lyon, 1581, p. 169 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

17 Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines Deorum, Qui Ab Antiquis Colebantur* (Lyon: Barthélemy Honorat, 1581), pp. 168-170: ‘Maxima pars Neptuni comitum in quodam templo quod est in agro Corinthio, ut Pausanis referit, cernebatur, ubi est una cum Amphitrite sua uxor in curru erat; puer quoque Pulemon delphino inluxus visebatur; equi quattuor currum trahebant; Tritones duo crant ad latus; in basi medie, quae currum sustinebat, mare erat exculptum, atque Venus, quae inde emergebat, pulcherrimis Nereidibus comitatis.’; Translation: ‘The larger part of Neptune’s procession, in the land of Corinth, as mentioned by Pausanias, could be contemplated as he was with his wife Amphitrite on a carriage where one could also see Palaemon the child standing over a dolphin; four horses that drew the carriage; two Tritons placing themselves on each side; in the middle of the base that supported the carriage Venus and the sea, from which she emerged, had been sculpted, accompanied by beautiful Nereids.’ We can see how Cartari interprets Pausanias placing the Nereids around the image of Venus in the sculpture of Neptune’s carriage. In contrast, Renaissance and baroque painters interpreted Pausanias placing the procession of Nereids around the couple of Neptune and Amphitrite, such as it was described by Sor Juana.
If we look carefully at Sor Juana’s text, the images she describes—even if mediated by Cartari—depart from the description that Pausanias gives of Neptune and Amphitrite accompanied by a large entourage of Nereids and Tritons, forming a truly festive procession:

They broke through the white foam that was growing larger, these swimming monsters, hitting the golden brakes with the green fetlocks on their feet. Preceding the carriage, Triton, bi-form figure, with his twisted trunk, marine trumpet of so many glories; entertaining the royal ears with siren songs, accompanied by their owners the obsequious Nereids, crowning their green hairs with shells and pearls; serving Palemon from a vessel with the lightness of a dolphin, the real insignia of the maritime god.18

This is how he is represented by several painters from the 16th and 17th centuries such as Frans Francken and Nicolas Poussin.19

The image of the canvas must have resembled these multifaceted scenes from Francken and Poussin. In contrast, the emblem of Cartari is concise, in comparison, with only the figures of Neptune and Amphitrite, with no Tritons or Nereids, but sufficient to refer to the viceregal pair by concrete means (terminus ad quem). López Poza observes that, in Cartari’s Venetian edition from 1571, both gods appear with Palemon standing alone above the dolphin.20 Palemon reappears with them in the later Italian editions, such as the one from Padua in 1608 (Fig. 2).21

On the other hand, in other versions, in Latin as well as in Italian and French, the gods appear without a procession. Certainly, the intention of Sor Juana was to surround the gods with abundant and showy followers. In this way the description of her canvas aligns itself with Pausanias’ version, the source of all the later hypotyposis. Also the carriage, sometimes with two, or four horses, varies according to Cartari’s editions. In the Italian editions of the 17th century we see the triumph of gods with the medallions that represent other landscapes of the myth, where the four horses appear.

As it is clear that in this emblem of the Neptuno Alegórico the hypotyposis about the ekphrasis from another representation is predominant, we must take into consideration the author’s many literary sources, because the description of Neptune with the swirling procession was

18 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 375-376.
19 Frans Francken the Younger’s The Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite (1630’s) and Nicolas Poussin’s The Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite (1635).
also abundantly dealt with in the same hispanic tradition, such as the works of Barahona de Soto,²² Pedro de Espinosa²³ and Lope de Vega.²⁴

Transforming it into an emblem, more than the symbolic illustration of a mythography or mere pictorial representation of a fable, Sor Juana gives the image an inscriptio: ‘Munere triplex’ (Triple in her trade), referring to the civil, military and criminal (or judicial) powers of the

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²³ Pedro de Espinosa, Poesías, ed. Francisco López Estrada (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975); and Primera parte de las flores de poetas ilustres (Valladolid, Corpus Diacrónico del Español, 2002).

Viceroy, which are allegorized as the trident of Neptune, and adds the following sonnet as a kind of subscriptio:

Como en la regia playa cristalina
al Gran Señor del húmedo Tridente,
acompañía leal, sirve obediente
a cerúlea deidad pompa marina;
no de otra suerte, al Cerda heroico inclina,
de almejas coronada, la alta frente
la laguna imperial del Occidente
y al dulce yugo la cerviz destina.

Tres partes del Tridente significa
dulce, amarga y salada en sus cristales,
y tantas al Bastón dan conveniencia:
porque lo dulce a lo civil se aplica,
lo amargo a ejecuciones criminales
y lo salado a militar prudencia.

(As on the regal crystalline Beach the Great Lord of the wet Trident, the azure deity, is loyally accompanied and obediently served by his marine court. There is no other fate for the heroic Cerda, before whom the high forehead bows crowned with shells, the imperial Lagoon of the West, and to the sweet yoke the neck is destined. The three parts of the Trident signify sweet, bitter and salt in its crystals, and many parts contribute to the efficacy of the Staff: because the sweet part is applied to civil matters; the bitter to criminal executions and the salt to military prudence.)

The allegory that connects the terminus a quo with the terminus ad quem is simple, given that it does no more than identify the Viceroy couple with the god/goddess couple. The attributes of Neptune, metonymically, also represent those of the Viceroy: the god of waters controls and dominates them; their partner keeps their company in the same position. The trident of Neptune is a symbol of the triple power that is invested in the Marquís de la Laguna: civil, judicial and military. We have, therefore, an allegory that is directly applied to mythological characters.

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25 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 372.
26 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 377.
27 Tomás de la Cerda y Aragón, Marquís of La Laguna, who is being celebrated in Neptuno Alegórico as the new Viceroy of New Spain.
THE EMBLEM OF THE SECOND CANVAS

The emblem of the second canvas of Neptuno Alegórico seems to be a combination of many representations of the emblematic heritage with which Sor Juana worked: firstly, a combination of Juno, Cybele or Rea, a mythographic representation in the work of Cartari that Sagrario López Poza had already identified in relation to this canvas of Neptuno and that again takes up Cádiz’s edition of this work of Sor Juana. It is precisely Cybele who travels in a carriage drawn by lions, such as what appears in Natale Conti. Juno’s carriage, in turn, is usually drawn by peacocks, although the mythographic source of Cartari speaks of a version of Juno in Syria, where she merged with other goddesses, becoming a multifaceted mother goddess. There, the image of Juno is not only on the carriage with the two lions, but they are also accompanied by a peacock and a goose that were consecrated to her. The following section by Cartari, dedicated to the ‘Magna Mater’ or ‘The Great Goddess’, that is to say, Rea, is where the canonical image of this single goddess with her lions appears (Fig. 3).

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28 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 377-378: ‘Al diestro lado, si no tan grave, no menos lúcido se ostentaba otro tablero, que hacía hermoso colateral al de en medio; en cuyo campo se descubría una ciudad ocupada de las saladas iras del mar: copia de la que en Grecia, según refiere Natal, anegaron sus furiosas olas. Imitaba la valentía del pincel con tanta propiedad la náufraga desdichada de los moradores de ella, que usurpaban la última debida a lo verdadero las bien fingidas agonías de su último fin. Descubriese arriba Juno con regio ornato, en un carro que por la vaga región del aire conducían dos coronados leones... A su lado estaba Neptuno, a quien afectuosa, pedía socorro para la ciudad de Inaco su alumno, dado ya a saco a los marineros monstruos; y el piedoso dios, no queriendo emplear generosas iras en los indefensos griegos (pues, según Plinio, mal usum spatias alientis intueris experiet), apartaba con el poderoso tridente las aguas, que obedientes se volvían a encerrar con las llaves de arena que les impuso su eterno autor.’

29 Sagrario López Poza, ‘La erudición de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz en su Neptuno alegórico’, pp. 255 and 268. The author mentions the Venetian edition from 1571. It is important to note that this edition differs from former Venetian editions in that it includes a good number of illustrations with the symbolic attributes of different gods, and besides the text itself is different. In the edition of 1556 there are no images. In other editions, like that of 1576, in addition to lacking images, the carriage drawn by horses of the Syrian Juno is never mentioned, as neither the goddesses with whom she is syncretized. In this edition, from 1571, the images of lions appear (174), and, in addition, it is specified that the Syrian Juno would have something from Pallas, from Venus, from Nemesis, from the Fates and other goddesses (173).

30 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Neptuno alegórico, eds. Vincent Martin and Electa Arenal (Barcelona, Cádiz, 2009), pp. 78-79.

31 Natale Conti, Mythologiae, p. 47. This same image of Rea reappears in Vincenzo Cartari, Le imagini degli Dei degli Antichi (Venice: Evangelista Deuchini, 1624), p. 175.

32 The image alluded to by Sor Juana is from Cartari’s 1571 edition (Le imagini de i Dai de gli Antichi, Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1571), p. 208, which is the edition mentioned by López Poza, or any other edition with a similar print. Here, Salceda’s confusion, in his note regarding this passage (Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 611) refers, in fact, to Rea, not to the Syrian Juno, from Cartari’s 1624 edition, p. 173 (where the text relative to the image is on page 175), instead of
The mythological syncretism of the Renaissance has precedents like this in Syria, where border cultures return to their gods of antiquity who are themselves hybrids. In the case of the Neptuno Alegórico, it corresponds to the abstraction of nature as an allusion to the physical environment of the city of New Spain (terminus ad quern) devastated by the floods (‘This flood represented what is a continuous threat to this imperial city, preserved from such a fatal misfortune by the care and

vigilance of the lord viceroy's). The connection between Neptune and Juno when it comes to the floods of Argos is not found in the pictorial representations of the time, whether in the work of mythographers, or on emblematic representations. The flooded city is not 'Inachus' as suggested by Georgina Sabat de Rivers, given that Sor Juana says that it is Juno who asks for Neptune's help for 'Inachus, her pupil'. In fact, Inachus was a river and thus a mythological character that in the fable dedicated himself to the goddess Hera or Juno and not to Neptune, incurring the vengeance of the latter. Inachus waters the cities of Argos and Tiryns, which are both in the Argolis region. Therefore, the cities in Argolis that Neptune inundated (terminus a quo) and that represent New Spain (terminus ad quem) are Tiryns and Argos, even without explicit specification in the text. The intercession of Juno with the vengeful Neptune in the emblem of the arch by Sor Juana brings us back to countless representations of Juno unleashing a storm aided by Eolo, making Aeneas sink in his escape from Troy with Neptune intervening to save the ship that will establish the Latin world, like in this engraving by Abraham Bosse to the Aeneid (Fig. 4).

In these known representations, Neptune soothes the winds that cause the storm. The emblem of Sor Juana would then be an exact counterpart where Neptune, persuaded by Juno, calms down the waters. It is possible that somewhere in Latin America there might have been an illustrated copy of Eneida with the engravings by Bosse, considering that even Sigüenza y Góngora quotes several emblem books that were edited only in Italian or Dutch. The splendid prints could very well have been the reason to collect this work, especially coming from the Society of Jesus, whose bibliographic collections during the colonial times have been studied.

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33 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 378.
35 The advances by Edmund O’Gorman (‘Bibliotecas y Librerías Coloniales, 1585-1694’, Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación, X, 4, 1939, 663-1006) and Gerard Decorne (La Obra de los Jesuitas Mexicanos durante la Época Colonial, 1572-1767, 2 vols., México City: Antigua Librería de Robredo, 1979) have been systematized by a recent publication by Idalis García Aguilar and Pedro Rueda Ramírez (Leer en tiempos de la Colonia: Imprenta, bibliotecas y lectores en la Nueva España, México City: UNAM, 2010), where they observe that: Novohispános printers were normally foreigners, generally French or Italian (pp. 13-19); that the publishing market arrived in the Indies, normally from Lyon and the Frankfurt fair, passing through the ports of Barcelona, Valencia and Alicante, from where they would enter Castilla, as well as the ports of Gibraltar, Cádiz and Seville, from where they would depart to America with a certain number of titles in Italian and French (pp. 127-128); and how the Jesuit schools, from their foundation in New Spain until their expulsion, consistently stimulated the reading of classic authors in several editions, accumulating abundant libraries not only in Latin or Spanish (pp. 36-37 and 42).
Fig. 4. Neptune soothes the winds, engraving by Abraham Bosse from Virgil, *L’Enéide*, Paris, 1648, plate 4 (University of Glasgow, Library). Much reduced.

The first illustration with Neptune calming the storm is very similar to the ekphrasis by Sor Juana for this second canvas. Notwithstanding, the painters and artists of all periods have greatly favoured the scene from the *Aeneid*, and for this reason there are many possible different sources. In addition, this emblem from *Neptuno Alegórico* seems to be influenced by some woodcuts not from the Aeneid, but from those about the flood of Deucalion, mentioned by Ovid and depicted in the illustrated editions of the *Metamorphoses* (Fig. 5).36

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36 One must take into consideration the paradigm of the 178 prints by Bernard Salomon for the French edition of Ovid’s work (*La Métamorphose d’Ovide figurée*, Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1557), considered the most beautiful of the *Metamorphoses* in the 16th century. Salomon’s prints exerted a vigorous and continuous influence on printers that followed in the book illustrations and decorative arts. One of these was the German Virgil Solis, whose prints in a Latin and German edition (*Metamorphoses Ovidii...* Frankfurt: Georg Corvin, Sigmund Feyerabend and heirs of Wigandi Galli, 1563), circulated in Spain. See Fátima Díez Platas, ‘Tres maneras de ilustrar a Ovidio: una aproximación al estudio de las “Metamorfosis” figuradas del XVI,' in *Memoria artis. Homenaje a la profesora María Dolores Vila Jato*, vol. 1 (Santiago de Compostela: Xerencia e Promoción de Camiño de Santiago, 2003), pp. 254-261. Solis’ woodcuts illustrating this paper are taken from the 1569 octavo edition, by the same author and editors.
The aforementioned flood was ordered by Zeus against the men of the Bronze Age (favoured by Prometheus, Deucalion’s father); this human generation had indulged in anthropophagy and Jupiter was assisted in his destructive rage by the waves of Neptune.\textsuperscript{37} When the mythographers from the Renaissance had equated this Greek flood with the universal flood, Sor Juana found a platform that she subtly used in order to allude, without specific reference, to theories espoused by her contemporaries concerning the origins of the indigenous people in America. With this development, Sor Juana introduces an understanding that involved the subjects over which the new Viceroy would rule, as coming from their own diluvial origins.\textsuperscript{38}

The ‘illustrated Ovid’ was a phenomenon shared throughout Europe in the 16th century. The most original illustration of the Metamorphoses in the 16th century was that of Bernard Salomon, in Lyon, 1557. It was copied by the German Virgil Solis, whose woodcuts (published in Frankfurt, 1563) were reproduced in a 1595 edition, Transformaciones.


\textsuperscript{38} This idea, fully debated in the 16th century, has figured since then among the most important colonial works about the history of the (native) American people, such as Historia natural y moral de las Indias (book 1, chapters 20, 22 and 25) by Joseph de Acosta and La Monarquia indiana (chapters 8, 9, 13 and 14) by Juan de Torquemada, whom Sor Juana mentions in her argumentation of the fifth canvas (Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 385). See also Ilona Katzew (‘La saga de los orígenes: una reinterpretación americanista de dos cuadros de Villalpando’, Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 33, 99, 2011, 47-50), where the author establishes that in the days of Sor Juana the theme of the flood in relationship to the Americas became a popular topic, as happened in the paintings by Villalpando, produced subsequent to Sor Juana’s Neptuno Alegórico.
de Ovidio, translated into prose by Jorge de Bustamante. But the illustration of the flood of Deucalion is contained neither in Sánchez de Viana, the best translator of the original Metamorphoses into Spanish in the context of Sor Juana—in verse and faithful to the original—nor in the adapted version by Bustamente. One must point out that not all the prints by Solis were copied over for Bustamante’s translation and this has a lot to do with the various editions that had passed through the hands of the printers in Spain, which are not identical. This scene, obviously coupled with the biblical floods during the Renaissance, appears, as I have said, in the illustrated edition by Solis and by his model, Salomon. It seems that this hypotyposis by the illustrators of Ovid’s text is the ekphrastic description by Sor Juana, unless the source is the mythographic texts themselves, adding the author to the figure of Juno on the carriage drawn by two lions and the image in which Neptune is calming the storm, a figure that is depicted in the prints of the end of the deluge (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. The end of the flood, woodcut by Virgil Solis from Ovid, Metamorphoses Ovidii, Frankfurt, 1569, p. 10 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

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39 Ovid, Las Metamorfoses o Transformaciones de Ovidio en lengua española (Antwerp: Pedro Bellero, 1595).

40 Ovid, Las Transformaciones de Ovidio (Valladolid: Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 1589). This edition is based on the Italian edition by G. Andrea dell’Anguillara (Fátima Díez Platas, 2003, p. 261. The Spanish prints, an imitation of the Italian ones, are by an anonymous artist and there are only fifteen, one for each book of the Metamorphoses. See Fátima Díez Platas, “Tres maneras de ilustrar a Ovidio...”, p. 252.
The print of the end of the storm appears immediately after the previous one, both in Salomon and Solis. We can be certain that the German edition in Latin, illustrated by Virgil Solis, was part of the Spanish bibliographic records and it is very likely that it would have reached New Spain. On the other hand, the translation into Italian by Andrea dell’Anguillara with the prints by Giacomo Franco, in 1584, an imitation of those by Salomon and Solis, appears in the New Spain inventories because it was the most widespread in the Hispanic world. The translation by Bustamante with the prints by Solis was, in fact, listed in many inventories of novohispano books, which shows that novohispano culture appropriated images by Salomon and Solis.

My deduction regarding the second emblem of the Neptuno Alegórico is that Sor Juana connects the flood of Deucalion to the floods of the Argolid to take advantage of the image of Juno as the protector, a symbol of American nature, alongside Neptune, who granted his mercy to the Argolids after they erected a temple to worship him. All these rhetorical manoeuvres are what Gracián calls acolucía. The other adjustment made by Sor Juana is the selection of the Syrian Juno by Cartari, who collects the symbols and attributes of a group of goddesses resulting in Magna Mater. Moreover, it connects the hypotyposis of the Biblical flood itself with the one of the end of the flood where Neptune is present in the images of both illustrators, the French and the German.

On the other hand, the terminus ad quem is not limited to novohispano nature and its floods, but more precisely to the desire that the Marquis de la Laguna, like Neptune, may be able to manage the flow of waters. In this concrete case, Sor Juana even refers to creating a river or channel from the Mexican lagoon so as to contribute to its drainage. The source associated with this idea is without a doubt emblem 86 of the Emblemata regio politica by Juan Solórzano Pereira, about the Prince’s good government, known as ‘Fluent et refluent’ (They flow in and

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42 Baltasar Gracián, Agudeza y Aria de Ingenio, 2001, vol. 2, p. 183-184: ‘Lo más arduo y primoroso estos compuestos de ingenio falta por comprender, que es la unión entre los asuntos y conceptos parciales. El arte de hallarla sería superlativo primor de la sutileza. Esta conexión es constante que ha de ser mortal y artificiosa, así como todo el compuesto lo es. En los discursos metafóricos es aún más fácil, pues consiste en ir acomodando las partes, propiedades y circunstancias del término con las del sujeto traducidos, y cuanto más ajustada es la correspondencia, campea más el discurso.’

43 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obres Complètes, p. 278: ‘Representaba esta inundación la que es continua amenaza de esta imperial ciudad, preservada de tan fatal desdicha por el cuidado y vigilancia de los señores virreyes, y nunca mas asegurada que cuando no sólo tiene propicio juez, pero espera tutelar numen en el Excelentísimo Marqués de la Laguna... nosotros esperamos mejor Neptuno, que contraponiendo la hazaña, forme un río por donde fluya una laguna, en su tan necesario como ingenioso desagüe.’
out), where the figure of Neptune with a jar regulating the flow of the waters of the sea into the rivers (as was believed then\(^{45}\)) and from these rivers into to the sea (Fig. 7).

![Emblem from Juan Solórzano Pereira, Emblemata, Madrid, 1653, p. 726 (Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Brazil). Reduced.](image)

**Fig. 7.** ‘Fluunt et refluunt’, emblem from Juan Solórzano Pereira, *Emblemata*, Madrid, 1653, p. 726 (Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Brazil). Reduced.

The allegories from this emblem (the *novohispano* nature as Juno/Rea, the flooding of the cities with the rains and floods of the Argolid and the control of Neptune or the Viceroy over the natural elements) are direct allegories, given that motifs drawn from fable do not represent anything different from those that the same fable contains (that is to say, Neptune has power over waters; Juno/Rea is the goddess of nature; the flood is a divine punishment and means nothing other than that in the text of the fable). Everything is applied to the natural environment of New Spain and its frequent floods, like the power of the

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\(^{44}\) Juan Solórzano Pereira, *Emblemata regio politica in centuriam vnam redacta et laboriasis atque vilibus commentariis illustrata* (Madrid: Domingo García Moras, 1653), p. 726. The epigram’s Spanish translation by Lorenzo Matheu (Década VIII de los Emblemas de D. Juan de Solórzano Pereira Traducidas... por el Docto Lorenzo Matheu y Sanz, Valencia: Bernardo Nogués, 1660) reads: ‘Da las aguas Neptuno, / y él las recobra; / Nunca el dar empobrece, / pues quien da toma. / No sea el Rey escaso, / dé con largueza: / Que una mano recibe / lo que otra emplea.’

\(^{45}\) The figure of Neptune as it relates to the representation of Mexican lagoons has a precedent in the poetry of Eugenio de Salazar and Alarcón, who, towards the end of the 16th century, describes in his *Bucólica* how the Greco-Latin god emerged on the back of a whale, after crossing through a subterranean current that opened a path through the entrails of the Earth from the Southern seas (the Pacific ocean). See Martha Lilla Tenorio, ed., *Poesía novohispana*. *Antología*, 2 vols. (México City: El Colegio de México and Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 243-250.
Viceroy to solve this issue, which is reflected both in the title ‘Opportuna interventio’ (Opportune intervention), and in the subscriptio:

Si a las argivas tierras el tridente
libres pudo dejar de inundaciones,
a cuya causa el pueblo reverente
mil en un templo le ofreció oblaciones,
queda ya la cabeza de Occidente
segura de inundantes invasiones,
pues con un templo, auxilio halla oportuno
en la tutela de mejor Neptuno.  

(If the trident could leave the Argive lands free of floods, for which cause the reverent people offered him in the temple a thousand oblations, the head of the Occident now remains secure from the invasions of flooding, for in a temple, it finds opportune help under the protection of a more propitious Neptune.)

THE EMBLEM OF THE THIRD CANVAS

In the emblem of the third canvas we have a new allegory of New Spain and its capital, now as a floating island, which is that of Delos. According to the fable, the nymph Asteria had been transformed into an island; she will thus welcome her sister Latona, who will give birth to Apollo and Diana, the gods of the Sun and the Moon, who, in Neptuno are the gold and silver of the novohispanos. This unstable land, both physically speaking—since it was built on a lagoon—and politically, needs the firmness and resolve of Neptune’s trident—that is to say, laws that correspond to the civil, military and legal powers of the new Viceroy. Because Jupiter, in the figure of an eagle, seized Latona’s sister before she was transformed in Delos, he is syncretized concurrently with the bird that epitomized the foundation of Mexico city. In the emblem by Sor Juana, the terminus ad quem is dominant over the content of the fable of Latona. That is to say, the basic idea is that the topographic reality of the lake-dwelling Mexico city, unstable like the

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46 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 378.
47 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 380: ‘Representaba todo este vistoso aparato a nuestra Imperial Méjico: y no sé qué más propia copia suya pudiéramos hallar, pues demás de convenirle por su fundamento el nombre de Isla, según su definition: Insula dictius terra quae indique aquis clandestur, que no más manifestum, et apparens, que la que tantos siglos se ocultó, como en el mar, pues el tenor de éste estorbaba su descubrimiento? Y así, parece que se apareció al mundo a merced de Neptuno; pues éste dio paso por sus ondas para poder gozar sus inmensas riquezas, y para que en sus minerales se probase ser patria del Sol y la Luna: pues con tan benignos influjos la adornan de aquellos dos metales primogénitos de sus luce; sin que le falte ni aun el ave en que se transformó el enamorado Tomante por amor de Asteria, pues émula de Roma, tiene por armas una águila imperial....’
island of Delos—or Asteria—is also an allusion to the necessity of political rule.48

There are no representations of Latona in any emblem books, but Sor Juana returns to the illustrated editions of the *Metamorphoses* (Fig. 8).49

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Fig. 8. Latona and the Lycians, woodcut by Virgil Solis from Ovid, *Metamorphoses Ovidii*, Frankfurt, 1569, p. 69 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

Here we have a scene that corresponds to a passage of the myth in which Latona meets, in Lycia, a region of Anatolia, some rude peasants who muddy up the water that she wanted to give her children to drink. The gods help Latona and the peasants are turned into frogs. The presence of the peasants had to be omitted in this emblem, probably because it lacks an object directly related to *Neptuno*, keeping only that of Latona, Apollo and Diana. One must note that the depictions of this mythological trio, with exuberant vegetation, as in Brueghel,50 are closest to the scene described by Sor Juana which—if it is a hypotyposis stemming from mythological tales—is likely to be an ekphrasis of the

48 When she uses the metaphor of the Delos island as the capital of New Spain, Sor Juana must have had in mind Baltasar de Victoria’s text about the island: ‘En lo que toca a la Isla de Delos y su movimiento peligroso que tenía, dize Landino que esta Isla era muy combatida de tormentas y terremotos, con que temblaba y se movía. Por lo cual los habitadores della, y por los trances peligrosos en que se veían, consultaron el Oráculo de Apolo y trataron de su remedio, y él les dio por respuesta que hiziesen en honra suya algunos sacrificios y que luego quedaría firme y estable’ (Baltasar de Victoria, *Theatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, p. 321). Earthquakes, pagan priests and sacrifices... In any case, it is undeniable that the core of this emblem is Delos, that is to say, Asteria. Latona only intervenes because she gave birth to Apollo and Diana, symbols of the wealth of the earth.


50 Jan Brueghel the Elder, ‘Latona and the Lycian Peasants.’
illustrative print from the *Metamorphoses*, except that it is located in Delos and fully landscaped to resemble the reality in New Spain: ‘on the panel the island is adorned with fine and sumptuous landscapes, coppiced trees and intricate crags’.51

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Fig. 9. ‘Sic totus componitur orbis’, emblem from Juan de Borja, *Empresas morales*, Brussels, 1680, p. 323 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

However, in this description from *Neptuno*, an emblematic representation about the to-and-fro of the sea is added to the analysis, because Asteria ‘fell into the sea, and, as if virtue were guilt, was condemned to perpetual movement’.52 It is concerned with the device ‘Sic totus componitur orbis’ (This is what makes up the world) by Juan de Borja53 that alludes to a stormy sea and the instability of a society without the

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51 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 380.
52 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 379.
53 Juan de Borja, *Empresas morales...* (Brussels: Francisco Foppens, 1680), pp. 322-323: ‘Sic totus componitur orbis. Pues no solamente se goviera el Mundo con las leyes, y con la justicia, que los Reyes, y Principes hazen, sino con su exemplo, y aun con sus inclinaciones, lo que debe considerarse mucho, pues no ay viento, que assi levante la mar con tormenta, ni assi la aquieta con bonanza, y tranquilidad, como el Principe lo haze en su Republica con su exemplo.’
laws that it should be governed by (Fig. 9). This meaning connects perfectly to the emblem’s intention on this canvas: to emphasize that the three powers of the Viceroy keep the rule of New Spain steady, since its political stability was under construction and its capital was built on the water and as such, was by nature unstable.

Sor Juana clarifies everything with the inscriptio ‘Te clavum tenente, non nutabit’ (As long as you have the nails in place, you shall suffer no commotion) and the subscriptio:

Asteria, que antes por el mar vagante
era de vientos y ondas combatida,
ya al toque del tridente isla constante,
es de Latona amparo y acogida.
¡Oh, Méjico, no temas vacilante
tu república ver, esclarecida,
viendo el que, con mando triplicado,
firmará con las leyes el Estado!  

(Asteria, who had previously wandered across the sea, was buffeted by wind and wave, now at the touch of the trident the island, which is firm, offers Latona succor and welcome. Oh, Mexico, do not fear to see, hesitantly, your republic enlightened; he is coming who, with triple mandate, will make firm the state with his laws!)

Although the allegories of this emblem have a simple application, one among them presents a greater complexity: the one by Juan de Borja about the sea’s rough waters as a symbol of the instability of the people without the ruler’s laws. Sor Juana starts from this pre-existing allegory (the rough seas as a periphrasis of the instability of the people) in order to make another allegory (the Viceroy’s laws, the trident, corresponding to the stability of the people in New Spain), configuring a continuous allegory. Although it is very possible that Sor Juana only made a hypotyposis from the myth so that the painter could depict the image on the canvas, it is probable that this is an allusion to Juan de Borja’s device.  

54 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 380-381.

55 The fact that the year of publication of the extended version of Borja’s work is 1680—the same year Neptuno Alegórico was written—does not necessarily mean that this work was out of reach to Sor Juana, whose arch was erected in November of that year. Above all, if we consider that the first editions would arrive with some frequency in America (we must recall that the Spanish colonies absorbed, almost completely, the first edition of Quijote). We can also take into consideration another very similar emblem (Alius alto fertur: They carry each other) by Juan Baños de Velasco Juan Baños de Velasco (L. Année Sèneca ilustrado en masones políticos y morales, Madrid: Mateo de Espinosa, 1670, p. 23), although here, the distinctive characteristic is the metaphor of the ‘lack of consistency’ of the ‘grey element’ as the people who lack ‘firmness in their operations’ and is ungrateful to the Prince’s largesse. In any case, Borja’s device is an example of a long tradition concerning the instability of the sea and the rudder of the prince, who confronts the sea, bringing order to chaos. We can cite, for instance, the emblem ‘Dum clavum rectum teneam’ (While
The Emblem of the Fourth Canvas

The emblem of the fourth canvas is a complex composition where armies appear and the figure of Neptune is depicted in the moment where he is rescuing Aeneas from Achilles, who brought him down by piercing his shield with a spear. The episode is the equivalent of Book XX of the Iliad, including one of the passages that gave rise to the creation of Virgil’s Aeneid. It was the most notorious appearance of Neptune in the Iliad and it was a subject well-suited to an emblem that would normally have been created for the political festivities of the Hispanic culture of the Siglo de Oro with the purpose of asking for ‘the Prince’s mercy’. Neptune was upset at the Trojan people because his efforts in erecting the city’s wall were not readily recognized. Since it was not Aeneas who had agreed to pay Neptune for the wall of Troy—but King Laomedonte, before Aeneas’ time—Sor Juana seems to seek mercy regarding old debts on behalf of the novohispano people who welcome the Viceroy. Iconographically, Sor Juana could have been inspired by images where the Trojan army is at battle, as it appears in the Salomon and Solís’ illustrations of the Metamorphoses (Fig. 10), copied, as they actually were, by Bustamante in his Spanish edition.
As far as emblematic literature is concerned, the only representation related to the Trojan army seems to appear in Guillaume de La Perrière’s *Morosophie*, although in this case the Trojans are fighting not the Greeks, but the people of Latium, because it corresponds to the battle of Aeneas against Turnus and later against Mezentius, the Etruscan king who had demanded the first harvest from the Rutuli people—the reason why Mezentius is forsaken by the gods and defeated by Aeneas, as represented in this *pictura*. Obviously it does not sit well with Sor Juana’s intention so it is more likely to be the first option although it is not actually an emblem. Notwithstanding, the essential emblematic plan on this canvas of the *Neptuno Alegórico* is that the god appears in a scene rescuing Aeneas.

Book XX of the *Iliad* was not represented in emblematic literature nor, as it seems, in the visual arts either. But in illustrated editions of the classics during the Renaissance there are indeed representations of battles where we see gods appearing to lead them, observing them, and interfering in them. This happens in Abraham Bosse’s prints for the second part of the French translation of the *Aeneid* by Pierre Perrin in 1658—another book that could have existed in Jesuit libraries in New Spain (Fig. 11).

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60 Guillaume de La Perrière, *La Morosophie* (Lyon: Macé Bonhomme, 1553), p. 104.

61 Virgil, *L’Enéide*..., p. 218. I have already mentioned this edition and included one of the prints in the comments regarding the first canvas.
In this image Juno and Venus appear opposing each other as they look down on the armies of Troy and Latium which are in confrontation. Similarly, in 1590, the illustrated edition of the *Gerusalemme liberata* by Torquato Tasso, whose printer, Bernardo Castello, was inspired by war scenes from the *Iliad*, had depicted the Archangel Michael coming to the aid of the French army, mid-battle, in front of Suleyman and the Turks.\(^{62}\)

It is interesting that in Spain there have been appropriations of the poetic model of Tasso’s work with the prints that illustrate it, such as *El Fernando o Sevilla restaurada*, by Juan Antonio Vera y Figueroa, published in Venice, 1652,\(^{63}\) applying them to the war of the conquest of Seville by King Fernando in the 13th century. This same print with the Archangel Michael appears in Figueroa’s work with a few minimal changes.

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\(^{62}\) Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso con le figure di Bernardo Castello* (Genoa: Girolamo Bartoli, 1590), p. 97.

In any case, the celestial presence in battles is a commonplace of classical literature and Sor Juana could have been inspired by the texts themselves, such that we would have a synthetic hypothesis which in her Razón de la fábrica is converted into ekphrasis of her own emblematic creation.

The allegories found in this emblem are a direct application of the confrontation between Greeks and Romans in Homeric fiction, as is the eventual defeat of the Trojans, a preamble that frames the protagonist Aeneas, who—being on the opposing side of Neptune’s will—nevertheless receives mercy, as he is saved by Neptune from Achilles’ fury. There is no real difficulty in this periphrastic move of applying all of this to the magnanimity of the Viceroy by pardoning the offenses: Neptune is kind to Aeneas: the Viceroy is kind to his subjects. Sor Juana adds the words to the image: ‘Sat est videat, ut provideat’ (One must see, in order to provide), and the subscriptio:

Por más que Eneas troyano
 tenga a Neptuno ofendido,
 cuando le ve combatido
 le ampara su invicta mano.
 Así, Cerda soberano,
 la piedad que os acredita
 ampara al que os solicita,
 sin buscar, para razón,
 otra recomendación
 que ver que lo necesita.64

(No matter how much Aeneas the Trojan has offended Neptune, when he sees him embattled his undefeated hand aids him. Thus, sovereign Cerda, the pity which does you credit aids him who asks it of you, without seeking any other recommendation as a reason than seeing that it is needed.)

THE EMBLEM OF THE FIFTH CANVAS

The emblem of the fifth canvas—which is about the wisdom of the centaurs, protected by Neptune—is centred on the character of Chiron as the wise master already depicted by Alciato in his Emblemata (Fig. 12)65 and mentioned by Sagrario López Poza.66

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64 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 382.
65 Andrea Alciato, Emblemata (Paris: Jean Richer, 1584), emblem 145, f. 202v. The woodcuts from this book, which match the iconographic descriptions by Sor Juana, are copied from the influential Christopher Plantin’s edition (Antwerp, 1577). These woodcuts were copied in the 1584 Plantin edition as well.
66 Sagrario López Poza, ‘La erudición de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz en su Neptuno alegórico’, p. 256, 269.
Before mentioning Chiron as a teacher, Sor Juana described a tumultuous scene where Hercules fights off the jealous centaurs because the demigod, in his path to fight the wild boar from Erymanthus, had drunk their wine, invited by Folo the centaur. This scene does not appear in emblem literature, although it does appear in German prints of the 16th century, such as the works by Hans Sebald Beham, in his series about the labours of Hercules (1542).

Notwithstanding, Sor Juana had at her fingertips an image of the fight between the centaurs and the Lapitas, also as a result of wine drinking, which encouraged, that encouraged the centaurs to steal the women from a Lapith wedding to which they had been invited. This scene can be observed in the illustrations for the Metamorphoses, as well as in multiple paintings and prints during the Renaissance. In Bustamante’s translation, the copy of Solis is included (Fig. 13).  

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67 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 382-383: ‘En el tablero de la mano siniestra, correspondiente a éste, estaba Neptuno, tutelar numen de las ciencias... recibiendo en su cristalino reino a los doctísimos Centauros, que perseguidos de la crueldad de Hércules, buscaban socorro en el que sólo lo podían hallar, siendo sabios.’

68 Metamorphoses Ovidii, 1563, p. 149.

69 Las metamorfosis, 1595, p. 186.
Next, Sor Juana will focus on the figure of Chiron, for whom this emblem about Neptune is a synthesis of two representations: one of the centaurs protected by the god of the sea from Hercules’ arrows and the other of Chiron as a mentor. The composition of the present emblem will depart from this iconographic substratum. Nonetheless, one must note that the scene where Neptune receives the centaurs did not attract the interest of artists from the Renaissance to the Baroque, unlike the scene of the fight against the Lapith (in which Hercules intervened because he had also been invited to the wedding). This episode invites the confrontation between Hercules and the centaurs, although it has nothing to do with Neptune. Beham’s print of Hercules with the centaurs fighting for wine—which happens prior to Neptune’s intervention—seems to have been an exceptional representation of the mythological passage relative to the wild boar from Erymanthus, but in it, Neptune does not make an appearance. Sor Juana offers an exposition of the scene drawn from her imagination, with Neptune present, from the description of Antimachus in Centauromaquia, cited by Natale Conti, concerning the centaurs. Finally, in her comments and subscriptio, Sor

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70 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 384: ‘Éstos (dice Antimacso en su Centauromaquia) no fueron muertos por Hércules, sino que huyeron de su violencia al Mar e Islas de las Siresas.’ Conti includes this account (Natale Conti, Mythologiae, p. 379). Victoria takes it up again (1620: 529). Apollodorus, as the first source (1985: 107), states: ‘Hércules shot an arrow at them, which, passing through the arm of Elatus, stuck in the knee of Chiron. Distressed at this, Hercules ran up to him, drew out the shaft, and applied a medicine which Chiron gave him... The rest of the centaurs fled in different directions, and some came to Mount Malea, and Eurytion to Pholoe, and
Juana makes it clear that Hercules is the furious and the centaurs, the wise ones. We see clearly how the author accommodates her compositional convenience to the contents of fables and visual sources. The *inscriptio* is ‘Addit sapientia vires’ (Wisdom gathers strength), and the *subscriptio* in ten lines:

De Hércules venes el furioso  
curso Neptuno prudente:  
que es ser dos veces valiente  
ser valiente e ingenioso.  
En vos, Cerda generoso,  
bien se prueba lo que digo,  
pues es el mundo testigo  
de que en vuestro valor raro,  
si la ciencia encuentra amparo,  
la soberbia halla castigo.

(Prudent Neptune defeats the furious course of Hercules, for to be valiant and ingneous is to be doubly valiant. In you, Generous Cerda, what I say is well proven, for the world is witness that in your rare valour, if science encounters shelter, protection, pride finds punishment.)

The *terminus ad quem* here are the centaurs, presented as the conquerors of New Spain, who, favoured by the seas, evaded the limits that Hercules imposed with the columns at the straits of Gibraltar. By extension, it hints at the wise Cerda lords, owners of the ports of Gibraltar, and at the Marquis de la Laguna, Governor of the Gibraltar Prison, who are arriving in New Spain. The allegorical application is direct: Neptune protects the centaurs, thus, the Viceroy protects the wise in the Kingdom. Sor Juana’s arduous elaboration to fit the wisdom of Chiron to the theme of Neptune, making use of the fable of the twelve labours of Hercules, eliminates in full the wild character of the centaurs in order to introduce them as the opposite. It is centred on the figure of Chiron and works in a dynamic of application of the *terminus ad quem*, and it is not only the audacity of the Spanish conquerors, but also the Viceroy’s protection of the intellectual class in New Spain. If in addition we take account of Solórzano Pereira’s emblem of the pyramid upon which the vine laden with clusters of grapes climbs, ‘Sic docti a potentibus sublimandi’ (May the learned be elevated by the powerful), we are certainly dealing with a continuous allegory (Fig. 14).

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Note 71: Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, pp. 384-385.

Note 72: Juan Solórzano Pereira, *Emblemata regio politica...*, emblema 79, p. 665. Lorenzo Matheu freely translates the epigram in *Década*, 1658, p. 399: ‘Ya la parra lograra se atrevía / a trepar por la cumbre levantada / de pirámide excelsa y coronada, / con paso presuroso, pues correría. / No la Real insignia se devía, / antes a sus anhelos inclinada, / viéndola de razones adornada, / Los braços...’
Fig. 14. ‘Sic Docti a Potentibus sublimando’, emblem from Juan Solórzano Pereira, Emblema, Madrid, 1653, p. 665 (Fundação Biblioteca National, Brazil). Reduced.

Although Sor Juana does not mention this emblem in the Neptuno text, nor the pyramidal ascension of the learned, we can quite reasonably take this emblem into consideration here not only because it fits the allegorical intention of Sor Juana in Neptuno, but also because this emblem reappears in a reference in Sor Juana’s later work, Prímero sueño.

THE EMBLEM OF THE SIXTH CANVAS

Sor Juana links two visual images here too, one in which Neptune elevates the dolphin to the heavens, another where the dolphin (Delphinus) is a constellation with nine stars. The iconographic sources are probably Du Choul and Hyginus. The work of Guillaume du Choul, Discours de la religion des anciens Romains, is cited by Sigüenza y

amorosos le ofrezca, / Assi el imperio, siempre sublimado, / La doctrina constante favorece, / pues ella / le conserva en el estado. / Con razón estas honras le merece / quien socorro tan grande / le ha brindado / en el néctar sabroso que le ofrece.'

73 Juana Inds de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 385-386: ‘se copió un cielo con todo el hermoso / ornato de que su divino Autor lo enriqueció... pintóse, pues, Neptune, colocando en el cielo al / Delfín, ministro y valido suyo y embajador de sus bodas, cuya elocuente persuasiva / inclinó los castos desvíos de la hermosa Anfitrite a que / admitiese la unión del cerúleo dios. Dícelo Natal... Y cita a / Arato [Aratus], para dar a entender el lugar en que fue colocado / y las estrellas de que consta esta / constelación, que son nueve...’

74 Guillaume du Choul, Discours de la religion des anciens Romains (Lyon: Rouillé, 1556), p. 96: ‘...il ne faut perdre l’occasion d’escrire du simulacre de ce Dieu, qui se faisoit (comme dit / Hyginius) avecques un Delphin, qu’il tenoit / sus sa main gauche ou soubbs son pied, & son trident à
Góngora in his *Theatro de virtudes políticas*;\(^{75}\) it is a work about numismatics whose representations in medals and coins tend to be connected to the hieroglyph and are, therefore, of emblematic character. In one of them, the one on the left, Neptune raises in his hand the image of the dolphin, in a clear allusion to the thankfulness of the god to the animal for having interceded when he was courting Amphitrite (Fig. 15).\(^{76}\)

Fig. 15. Guillaume du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, Lyon, 1556, p. 96 (University of Glasgow, Library). Detail, reduced.

Sor Juana mentions a fragment from Aratus,\(^{77}\) concerning the Delphinus constellation,\(^{78}\) after Natale Conti’s reference. But Aratus’s poem

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\(^{76}\) Cf. Natale Conti, *Mythologiae*, p. 85: ‘Neptunum aequo animo ferret. Id cum Delphinus imperasset, ad perpetuum tant beneficii memoriam dicitur Delphinum signum inter sidera relatum. ut Hyginii in fabulis stellarum’; and, Baltasar de Victoria, *Theatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, pp. 325-326: ‘Con todo eso imbio Neptuno con su embaxada un Delfín, el que se partió a buscar la Nymfa y anduvo mucho tiempo en su busca, hasta que vino a topar con ella en las rayez del monte Atlas; y supo dar tan buen despacho a su mensaje que dejo efectuado todo lo que pretendía. Y agradecido Neptuno de sus buenos servicios del delfin le subio al Cielo y le coloco entre los Astros celestiales...’

\(^{77}\) Aratus was a Greek didactic poet who is known for his *Phaenomena*, a hexameter poem about the constellations.
does not have images. It consists of a textual description only; it is the work by Hyginus, mentioned by her in many other passages of Neptuno, that depicts this constellation (Fig. 16).

![Image of the Dolphin's Constellation]

**Fig. 16.** The Dolphin's Constellation, woodcut from Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabularum liber...*, Basel, 1535, p. 93 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

The verses of Aratus are useful to Sor Juana not only to sustain poetically the nine (and not ten, as Hyginus says) stars in the constellation, but also to connect this episode of the dolphin and Amphitrite with that of Orion in order to reinforce the nature of the noble cetacean. Brocense's commentary on Alciato's emblem that Sor Juana quotes, 'In avaros, vel quibus melior conditio ab extranes offertur' (About the miserly, who are better treated by strangers), only adds arguments regarding the prudence and virtues of the dolphin, a figure who

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79 Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabularum liber... eiusdem poeticon astronomicon* (Basel: Johannes Herwagen, 1535), pp. 93-94. In contrast with the nine stars that Sor Juana takes up again from Aratus's passage, Hyginus states that there are ten. The discrepancy could be related to the magnitude of the stars and Hyginus' better observation 'Habet autem in capite stellas duas, supra caput ad cervicem versus duas alias. Ad ea quae in ventre velut penneae videntur, habet stellas tres, in scapulis unam, in cauda duas. Itaque omnino sunt stellae numero decem.' That is to say, two stars for the head, another two at the back of the neck; the belly, three; one over the shoulder; two for the bottom. Ten in total. However, as it is confirmed later, Sor Juana privileges the poetic as opposed to the scientific source. See Sor Juana’s *Primer sueno*, verso 399, where she prefers citing Homer to Herodotus or the Greek philosophers when it comes to the pyramids (even though Homer never mentioned them).

80 Andrea Alciato, *Emblemata*, 1584, emblem 89, f. 123. The emblem speaks of the sailors who robbed Arion and threw him into the sea, where he was saved by a dolphin who had been attracted to the music coming from his cithara.
accompanies Neptune in this canvas of the triumphal arch. That is to say, although it is about an emblem that represents a dolphin, in which it does not appear with Neptune and is not a constellation either (being the three elements—Neptune, dolphin and constellation—the *terminus a quo*), it is merely a textual reference that amplifies the main theme of prudence. The same thing happens with the well-known, ‘Maturandum’ emblem, of Alciato (Everything in its own time),\(^1\) depicting a remora around an arrow, alluding to the value of prudence, which Sor Juana refers to in the light of a commentary on it by Pierio Valeriano.\(^2\) Curiously, since Sor Juana does mention it in writing, she is also thinking of another emblem by Alciato, with a dolphin around an anchor. This emblem, with the *inscriptio* ‘Prænceps subditorum incolumitatem procurans’ (The prince must seek the security of his subjects),\(^3\) is about the

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\(^1\) Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum liber primum*, 1584, f. 201°.


\(^3\) Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum liber tertius*, 1584, f. 199°. Vincent Martin, in Juan de la Cruz, *Neptuno Alegórico*, pp. 146-149, already comments extensively on the origin and meaning of these two emblems.
prudent government of the prince and seems better fitted than the former
to the intention of the emblem in this canvas of the triumphal arch, even
if it is applied to ministers (Fig. 17). Sor Juana exalts the virtues of free-
dom and common-sense of the new Viceroy, thus evoking between the
lines his good judgement in choosing his ministers now that he begins to
govern New Spain; these would be the *terminus ad quem*. She does that
with such tact and style that it seemed as though she is only speaking of
the virtues of the Viceroy himself or of Neptune (when she stresses in
the text itself the prudence of the dolphin, prized by Neptune; in the
course of the epigram, centred on the dolphin, she also dedicates several
lines to prudence, as we shall see below). One of the more explicable
political demands was, above all in the colonies, the appointments that
the governor would make of new subordinates, in relation to the
*novohispano* subjects’ preference for choosing intermediary authorities
among the candidates that they knew well. Equally, it alludes to the
recognition of the merits of the so-called middle tier (*mandos medios*).
The virtue of prudence, so dear to the tradition of knowledge, was
made into an emblem in many ways—Bacchus with Palas, Janus
Bifrons, Harpocrates, the dolphin, the owl: all of them implying an alle-
gorical procedure. In that way, Sor Juana’s method of allegorizing by
means of allusions to the good selection of the Viceroy’s future minis-
ters can be described as a continuous allegory.

Sor Juana gives the name ‘Dignos ad sydera tolles’ ([You] raise the
worthy to the stars) to the image of Neptune turning the dolphin into a
constellation:

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Clarus honor coeli, mirantibus additur astris.
Delphinus, quondam gloria torva maris.
Neptunum optatus amplexibus Amphitritae
nexuit, et meruit sydera munus habet.
Talia Magnanimus confert Moderator aquarum
praemia: Neptunum, Mexico, plaudite tuum.
Delphinus Ponti ventorum nuntiat iras,
cum vario ludens tramite scindit aquas;
coeli Delphinus fixo cum sydere fulget,
onnia felici nuntiat auspicio.84
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(A brilliant honour, from the heavens to the admiring stars is added: the
Dolphin, heretofore the fierce glory of the sea. He joined Neptune to the
longed-for embrace of Amphitrite, and holds a well-deserved reward in the
heavens. This is what he who rules the waters confers magnanimously. Oh,
Mexico, applaud your Neptune. The Dolphin announces the anger of the sea
winds, when in a changing path he leaps playfully through the waters. When
the dolphin now shines beside the fixed star of the sky, he makes it known
that all is well with his augury.)

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84 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 617.
Here Sor Juana described the emblem as follows: "[here] was represented the glorious and celebrated competition which our Neptune had with Minerva over the naming of the city of Athens." The scene was emblematically depicted by Denis Lebey de Batilly and by Achilles Bocchi. The emblem of Lebey de Batilly is entitled 'Paci studere praestat quam bello' (Better to strive for in peacetime than at war), alluding to the triumph of the olive tree over Neptune's horse to name the city of Athens. Bocchi's version, with the words 'Inanis est infructuosa gloria' (Glory without fruits is meaningless), refers to the same subject asserting that, in any warfare, triumph is useless if there are no benefits, like that which comes from Minerva's tree (Fig. 18). One must point out that the epigram in this canvas warns that, continuing the struggle among the gods, who are now one, New Spain gives Neptune a palm, that is to say, the good works, good works which were so truly needed.

Because the presence of the emblems by Bocchi is noticeable in the various emblems alluded to in Sor Juana's Primero Sueño (like those of Harpocrates), it seems more likely to be a reference to Bocchi rather than Lebey de Batilly. We find, once again, a continuous allegory, because even independently of the contents of the Bocchi emblem, not to mention the fable itself, Sor Juana elaborates a specific allegory from the fable to harmonize it with the terminus ad quem, which is the Viceroy's wisdom. The author synthesizes the two mythological characters in the person of the Conde de Paredes, Minerva (reason) and Neptune (the senses which are subject to her). In a second allegory, Neptune is not a character independent of Minerva, but he is led by her. Sor Juana elaborates a periphrastic allegory in which two characters are made into one in the synecdoche of the other, and this fusion is what is compared to the Marquis de la Laguna. The context of this idea is related to Marsilio Ficino's notions, because just as the Florentine had believed that all humans possess the entire zodiac inside of them, Sor Juana makes the Marquis a dwelling for two mythological gods. As we

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85 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 388.
86 Denis Lebey de Batilly, Emblemata (Frankfurt-am-Main: Theodor de Bry, 1596), emblem 28, n.p. As quoted by Sagrario López Poza ("La erudición de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz en su Neptuno alegórico", p. 270).
87 Achille Bocchi, Symbolicorum quaestionum de universo genere (Bologna: Academia Bocchiana, 1555), emblem 63, p. 134.
shall see further on, this emblem works like a hinge that connects the symbolic theory in the introduction of Sor Juana’s *La razón de la fábrica* with the emblem of the first base on the lower right with its figures of Neptune and Canopus, establishing a symbolic platform that will be fundamental in the author’s future creations.

Fig. 18. ‘Inanis est infructuosa gloria’, emblem from Achille Bocchi, *Symbolicarum quaestionum*, Bologna, 1555, p. 134 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

This emblem of the arch bears the following *inscriptio* ‘Dum vincitur, vincit’ (Won over, [one] wins) and the epigram:

Desine, pacifera bellantem, Pallas, oliva,
desine. Neptuni vincere, Pallas, equum.
Vicisti, donaque tuo de nomine Athenis
nomen: Neptunus dat tibi, et ipse suum.
Scilicet ingenium melior Sapientia victum
occupat, et totum complet amore sui.
Si tamen hic certas: Neptunia Mexicus audit,
Neptuno, et Palmam nostra Lacuna refert.
Gaudeat hinc foelix Sapientum turba virorum:
preamia sub gemino Numine certa tenet.⁸⁹

(Conse waging war, Oh Pallas, with the pacific olive. Cease winning, Oh Pallas, over the battling horse of Neptune. You won, and recognized your name in Athens, taken from your own name. Also Neptune gives you his own name. That is to say, that a greater wisdom takes possession of a defeated wit and crowns it all with its own love. But if you still contend here, the Mexican Neptunia hears it, and our Lagoon gives Neptune the palm. May the multitude of wise men who are happy in it enjoy it; under a twin deity it has assured rewards.)

**THE EMBLEM OF THE EIGHTH CANVAS**

The emblems that allude to the Mexican city over a lagoon stand out, among all the emblems of the arch, in the second and third canvases. But the unfinished business of the Mexican cathedral cannot escape notice and it is this canvas which provides the opportunity for the request for the Viceroy to go ahead with the building. Sor Juana begins her description as follows: 'here] was painted the magnificent Mexican Temple of beautiful architecture, although without its ultimate perfection which it appears Providence has delayed, so that it might receive it from its patron and tutelary Neptune, our most excellent hero.'⁹⁰ It would have been clumsy to put the task before the Viceroy without any allegory given that this unfinished reproduction of the cathedral is accompanied by an emblematic image on the passage of Ovid concerning the building of Troy by Neptune and Apollo:

On the other side were painted the walls of Troy, the deed and work of the great King of Waters... in the company of Apollo...

... Neptune was painted in the panel, as the principal mover of the work [the wall of Troy], with many architectural implements, and Apollo with his lyre, obedient to the sound of which, against their natural inclination, which is to press downwards, the stones raised themselves to compose the mysterious structure...⁹¹

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⁸⁹ Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 620.
⁹⁰ Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 392.
⁹¹ Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, pp. 392-393.
This episode from the *Metamorphoses* will inspire, iconographically, this specific emblem by Sor Juana, as one can see in the woodcut by Virgil Solis (Fig. 19), later taken up again by Bustamante.

It concerns a simple allegory in which the attribute of Neptune as the builder of the Trojan wall is the same as the Viceroy's relationship to the cathedral in New Spain, an allegory underpinned in the last name of the Count of Paredes himself (*paredes* in Spanish can be translated as 'walls'). The simple visual comparison, with a reproduction of the cathedral facing the construction of the Trojan walls, was given the motto: 'Construit imperans, sed suavitate comite' (Ordering the construction, with kindness as partner) with the following epigram:

Si debió el teucro muro a la asistencia
del gran Neptuno fuerza y hermosura,
con que al mundo ostentó, sin competencia,
el poder de divina arquitectura;
aqui a numen mejor, la Providencia,
sin acabar reserva esta estructura,
porque recibá de su excelsa mano
su perfección el templo mejicano.

(If the Teucric wall owed strength and beauty to the assistance of the great Neptune, in which it showed to the world, without challenge, the power of divine architecture, Providence does not finish it [the cathedral church in

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93 Ovid, *Las Metamorfosis*, 1595, p. 169. The printer possibly used the same plates, or made a copy of them.
94 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 393.
Mexico] but reserves the structure for a greater spirit, so that from its lofty hand the Mexican temple may receive its perfection.)

THE EMBLEM OF THE FIRST BASE, RIGHT SIDE

Sor Juana’s description of this emblem reads as follows:

Neptune had many temples consecrated to his deity, and all of them famous. The most famous was the one which was in the Isthmus, as Cartari indicates...

Another very celebrated one which the author brings to mind was in Egypt, in which the god Canopus was painted as a pupil of his [Neptune]. Canopus (it is said) was the pilot of Menelaus, as Cornelius Tacitus indicates; and because he had given him a sepulchre in that city, in his honour it too was called Canopus, whom, because he was most learned in nautical matters, they adored; and with him they achieved that learned victory over the Chaldeans, whose god was Fire, whom Canopus defeated because he was of Water.

It was represented as Cartari describes it, saying: In a certain temple of Neptune which was in Egypt, Canopus was adored, the pilot of Menelaus, he who it is said was taken up to the stars after his death. His image was rich, small, and almost round, with a twisted neck and very small feet. He was painted over a fire, whose flames he quenched invisibly, alluding to the victory already mentioned; and to indicate that excellent heroes, as is our heroic prince [terminus ad quem], not only triumph and conquer in their own persons, but also in those of their ministers, who in their name achieve in peace and in war glorious triumphs with the breath which the prince infuses in them.\(^{95}\)

Although Sor Juana begins by mentioning the temples on the Greek Isthmus dedicated to Neptune, above all the one at Corinth, she finally moves on to the temple of Neptune and Canopus in the delta of the river Nile, near Alexandria: from Greece to Egypt. The Serapeum, as it was then called, had been in ruins since the 4th century, having been demolished and replaced by a church. The mention of this temple by Sor Juana—as it had been the place of worship of the couple Isis and Serapis, another version of Osiris, like that of their son Harpocrates—is very significant. In it the Greco-Roman gods were syncretized with the Egyptian ones and we should remember that Juan Horozco Covarrubias dedicates an emblem to this trio.\(^{96}\)

\(^{95}\) Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 394-395.

\(^{96}\) Juan Horozco Covarrubias, Emblemata morales (Zaragoza: Alonso Rodriguez, 1604), II, emblem 37, pp. 73-75. Cartari, neither in the location mentioned by Sor Juana, nor in the 1581 edition (pp. 54-55)—where he also mentions the temple of Alexandria—affirms that Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates were associated in that temple, in addition to Canopus and Neptune, because there were several additional altars. There were other serapeos in the Mediterranean world. Since antiquity.
On this foundation, Sor Juana outlines a topic to which she will return later in her *Primero Sueño*: Greco-Egyptian gods as symbols of knowledge, silence and the cult of divinity. Canopus, the god who was Neptune's assistant, and appeared as an allegory of ingenuity, had an altar in the *Serapeum*. The classical source of this subject is Plutarch, cited by Vincenzo Cartari; Jacques Boulucu, whom Sor Juana also cites, provides the symbolization of the knowledgeable men as bulls, that is to say that Serapis, says Plutarch, is, according to some, in reality Apis.

We do not see Serapis mentioned by name in *Neptuno Alegórico*, instead, there are references to Apis in the introduction and here in the description of the temple that takes his name; the deities that are specific to this temple are also pictured, together with many references to the bull. Exploring the symbols of the bull and the cow as the symbolic attributes of Serapis (Neptune) and Isis (Minerva), Sor Juana elaborates on the theme of knowledge manifested in a feminine and masculine fashion, as we have seen in the emblem of the seventh canvas, dedicated to the struggle among the Greek gods. The theme sits perfectly with the interest that Sor Juana will reflect in her works: Isis as the allegory of knowledge in its pristine stage; Serapis, as the allegory of work,

Pausanias (Descripción de Grecia, p. 227) mentioned the effigies of Isis in the *serapeum* in the Acrotoretos: the images of Isis are, one of them, of the sea-dwelling Isis and the other of the Egyptian Isis. There are two images that depict Serapis, one of which depicts Serapis-Canopus. In addition to Horozeco's eulogy about the *Serapeum* of Alexandria, Sor Juana has certainly referred to Saint Augustine's *The City of God* (Augustine of Hippo, *La Ciudad de Dios*, México City: Porrúa, 2004, pp. 507-508): '...en casi todos los templos donde adoraban a Isis y a Serapis había también una imagen que, puesto el dedo en la boca, parecía que advertía que se guardase silencio...' That is to say, Harpocrates. On the other hand Jacques Boulucu, *De Oggio Christiano*, pp. 94 and 186, affirms that Serapis is a version of the Patriarch Joseph—something that Johann Jacob Hofmann also noticed (Lexicon universale, tomas quartus, Leiden: Hackius, Boutesteyn, Van der Aa and Luchtmans, 1698, p. 149)—which we must keep in mind for the study of some of the Christmas carols dedicated to Saint Joseph by Sor Juana. And in contrast to what one is used to saying, Balasar de Victoria is to us, the main source for Sor Juana; when it comes to this temple and the relationship of Isis with Serapis and Harpocrates, he has nothing.

97 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 29, 1: 'Serapis is the name of him who sets the universe in order, and it is derived from "sweep" (satrein), which some say means "to beautify" and "to put in order"... More moderate is the statement of those who say that the derivation is from "shoot" (seusesthai) or "scout" (seuathai), meaning the general movement of the universe. Most of the priests say that Osiris and Apis are conjoined one, thus explaining to us and informing us that we must regard Apis as the bodily image of the soul of Osiris' (Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1936, p. 71).

98 Jacques Boulucu sustains this, just like the identification of the Patriarch Joseph with Serapis, mentioning a letter attributed to the Emperor Hadrian (*De Oggio Christiano*, pp. 94, 186).

99 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 20, states with some scepticism that some believed the name of Serapis was a combination of the word sarcophagus and the name 'Apis', that is to say, Osiris (Plutarch, *Moralia*, p. 53).

100 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 366.
artifice or ingenuity, and as such, of wise men; and Harpocrates, as the allegory of prudent silence, devout and wise.\textsuperscript{101}

On the other hand, the figures of Neptune and Canopus appear together in an image from the mythography by Cartari,\textsuperscript{102} described by Sor Juana, found by Salcedo and reproduced by Vincent Martin.\textsuperscript{103} There, Cartari explains how the Persians underestimated all the other gods in order to exalt theirs, who was the god of fire. The Egyptian priests of Canopus came up with the idea of filling the vessel with water from the Nile and covering all their orifices with wax, putting it on top of the head of the god Canopus and using paint and craftsmanship to create a semblance of the god himself who had the shape of a pot. By confronting this figure of Canopus with the god of fire, the wax from the orifices melted and water extinguished the fire. In Cartari’s image we see water distilling through the orifices of Canopus. The ekphrasis of this image of Cartari in Neptuno Alegórico consists precisely of the figure of Canopus extinguishing the fire of the Chaldeans thanks to his aquatic nature, which favoured the god of water, Neptune (Fig. 20). The emblematic reference is, therefore, the symbolic illustration of Cartari that appears in his book dedicated to the god of the sea. It involves the combination of a simple hypotyposis (the temple of Neptune) and a source of inspiration of emblematic nature (i.e. the iconic-symbolic representation of a myth, combining image and text). In Cartari’s text we see Canopus serving the interests of Neptune in the face of this stratagem. In this way, Sor Juana allegorizes the ministers that strive, with ingenuity, to favour the Viceroy. This is a case of direct allegory as in the emblem of the sixth canvas, of Neptune and the dolphin. Notwithstanding, the complexity of the signifiers that Sor Juana refers to and explains in the figure of Canopus and in that of Neptune connected with Serapis, confirms what was presented in the introduction of her Razón de la fábrica and in the seventh canvas (i.e. divine wisdom and its myriad forms of providence). These compositions consist of apophatic symbols and of a continuous allegoresis with anagogic significance. With this

\textsuperscript{101} All these sources definitely inspire the identification that Sor Juana makes of Neptune and Isis at the start of La razón de la fábrica alegórica and the full play of equivalencies has other reverberations that did not escape Sor Juana: the fact that the Canopo-Serapis was a place of incubation and interpretation of dreams, like the temples of Aesculapius and it was also there that a local branch of the library of Alexandria was to be found, that was comparable to it, and that was not destroyed by flames (Encyclopédie Méthodique, Paris: Charles-Joseph Panckoucke, 1790, pp. 403-404).

\textsuperscript{102} Vincenzo Cartari, Imagines Deorum, Quo Ab Antiquis Colebantur, 1581, p. 172.

\textsuperscript{103} Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, pp. 394 and 621. Juana Inés de la Cruz, Neptuno alegórico, p. 169.
Sor Juana also alludes to the divine right of kings and the role of nobility in the divine plan of the gods, as it was lived out during the era of the Habsburgs’ theocratic monarchy.

The motto and epigram of this emblem allude to the ministers’ adequacy to their prince (or the acolytes’ adequacy to their divinity) whose shadow allows for important subtleties: *Sufficit umbra* (The shadow is enough). With the shadow theme, it is important to note, we have a version of the mirror motif so dear to the baroque period. Canopus is a shadow and a reflection of Neptune; and the ministers, shadow and reflection of the Viceroy:
Bien es que al fuego destruya
Canopo por sutil modo;
que para vencerlo todo,
bastaba ser sombra tuya.  

It is well that Canopus destroys
fire in a subtle way;
for to defeat it completely
it was enough to be your shadow.

THE EMBLEM OF THE SECOND BASE, RIGHT SIDE

This is how Sor Juana describes the image in this emblem, at the end of an argumentation:

Con cuánta razón podremos decir que nuestro Príncipe es padre de pensamientos gigantes, que con mejor título que los fabulosos hijos de Neptuno, arrebataban el Cielo. Pues si éste, en las sagradas letras, padece fuerza y lo arrebataban los animosos, a ninguno mejor que a Su Excelencia toca este tan glorioso asalto.

Pintóse, para expresar el concepto, un cielo, a quien arrebataban unas manos, y un mote que decía: Aut omnia, aut nihil [O todo, o nada] y más abajo esta quintilla:

Romper el cerúleo velo
pretenden siempre constantes:
que en tu católico celo,
tus pensamientos gigantes
no aspiran menos que al Cielo.

(...with how much reason can we say that our Prince is the father of giant thoughts, which with better title than the fabulous children of Neptune delight Heaven. Since if the latter [Neptune], in Scripture, suffers force and the undaunted ones snatch him away, an assault as glorious as this falls to no one better than to His Excellency.

To express this concept, a sky was painted which was being seized by hands, and there was a motto which said: All or nothing, and lower down was placed this quintilla:

The constant ones always attempt to burst through the Cerulean veil ([the sky], for in your Catholic zeal, your giant thoughts aspire to nothing less than the Heavens.)

The proposal presents the interesting characteristic of utilizing the inverted meaning of emblems that inspire them. This procedure is not foreign to the authors of books of emblems themselves, and it is not
unusual to find the same image symbolizing different subjects. Sor Juana begins by giving the clues to the history of the giants who robbed the sky and accomplishes the inversion explicitly through the recourse of remembering that some of the sons of Neptune were giants, although in reality the first generation of giants was born of Tartarus and Uranus, and had serpent tails for legs. Thus, as offspring of Neptune and in accordance with her own argumentatio, they necessarily have 'generous and elevated souls'.

This manoeuvre is especially interesting from the semiotic and rhetorical perspective, because we see with complete clarity that Sor Juana is fully conscious of the polysemy of the mythology, and, in addition, manipulates it to her creative convenience. Thus we can clearly appreciate how she sets the inventio with the dispositio at the writer's discretion.

In this case it is concerned with the emblems relative to the giants of Greek mythology who, in their nature and origin, were rivals of the gods, thus converting into prototypes of envy and pride. In Barthélemy Aneau's emblem, it is he who appears to influence Sor Juana; we see them raise their hands to the sky threatening Jupiter. Barthélemy Aneau places the title 'Crassa ignorantia' (Stupid ignorance) in the subscriptio, asserting that giants never had elevated thoughts; they hated and denied God (Fig. 21). Being attached to the senses, they are depicted with serpent bodies, given that they drag themselves around in the present and material realms. Sor Juana, in contrast, depicts hands that are raised to the sky to express love for divinity. Aneau's motto, thus, becomes 'All or nothing' in Sor Juana, referring to the more noble thoughts of the soul that aspires to divine perfection. From vice comes also the opposite virtue (from pride, faith) and Sor Juana adapted the original emblem in a partial manner, eliminating, of course, the serpent-like parts from those giants, in addition to inverting the meaning.

Equally, Sor Juana bases her work on emblem 57 by Solórzano Pereira with the giant Ephialtes, who, because of his violent desire to take over Olympus and confront the gods, was fooled by them, causing his own death and that of his twin brother (Fig. 22). Solórzano gives it the title, 'Qui eminent, cadunt' (They who go up, come down). The epigram by Solórzano reads 'Every two months the enormous Ephialtes grew half a foot on his immense body. On land, he made a whole new Olympus that went beyond the clouds. But he perished...’ Mendo's

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106 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 395.
108 Juan Solórzano Pereira, Emblemata regio politica..., p. 469.
Fig. 21. 'Crassa ignorantia', emblem from Barthélémy Aneau, *Picta poesis*, Lyon, 1552, p. 57 (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

Fig. 22. 'Qui eminent, cadunt', emblem from Juan Solórzano Pereira, *Emblemata*, Madrid, 1653, p. 469 (Fundação Biblioteca National, Brazil). Reduced.
version gave it the title: ‘Do not aspire, dear Minister, to rise too high, and you will be rid of the danger of falling swiftly.’ It is clear that Sor Juana diametrically inverts the sense of this emblem comparing the minister to the Viceroy, ‘father of giant thoughts’, with whom he is lifted up, identified with the sky, in a position to reach out to it in an effusive act of veneration.

The exact inversion of the original meaning of the emblems of the giants makes of this emblem in the Neptuno a continuous allegory, since the initial allegories serve as a starting point for a new allegory in the opposite direction. The influence of Aneau’s emblem on that of Sor Juana is manifested through the hands raised to the sky—which become a cataphatic symbol created by her (by suppressing the serpent tails). But the pictura of Solórzano’s emblem can offer a meaning that tends to be apophatic in itself and for that reason it is easier to use it for several significant ends: the head hidden in the clouds recalls the apocalyptic description of a man with columns for legs, with his head in the clouds, devouring a book. At any rate, it does not seem to be Sor Juana’s intention to signify something more than the particular virtue of those who stand out through their spiritual elevation. When it comes to the Prince, once again, we are dealing with a political allegory that in classical hermeneutics would correspond to a moral integument.

**THE EMBLEM OF THE FIRST BASE, LEFT SIDE**

Here Sor Juana highlights the domination of the sea over the planet and its sacred nature for cultures of antiquity. The ekphrasis is as follows: ‘... a world was painted surrounded by a sea, and a trident, which, forming a diameter of the whole world, divided it: with this motto: The world is not big enough; and this letra:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>El mundo sólo no encierra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vuestra gloria singular,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pues fue a dominar el mar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por no caber en la tierra.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(The world on its own cannot encompass your singular glory, since it went to tame the sea, as it was too big for the land.)

This emblematic representation of the Neptuno Alegórico is predominantly related to Saavedra Fajardo, whose Idea de un príncipe político cristiano includes many devices in which the orb is depicted in

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110 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 397.
association with a power that is higher than imperial, universal, being symbolized by distinct elements, from the sceptre to a bough with golden fruits. From Saavedra's three devices,\(^\text{111}\) which can be considered to be underlying the emblem described by Sor Juana, one would have to highlight the closest from the iconographic point of view: the one of the globe with the sceptre and the rudder, whose motto is 'A Deo' (From God), where the commentary in prose focuses on the greater power of the monarchs, which comes from God (Fig. 23).\(^\text{112}\)

\(^\text{111}\) Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea de un princepe político christiano* (Monaco: Nicolao Enrico, 1640), pp. 102, 368 and 375.

\(^\text{112}\) Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea de un princepe político christiano*, 1640, p. 102. The illustration here, however, comes from the 1659 edition (published in Amsterdam).
With the mere substitution of the sceptre and the rudder for Neptune’s trident, we would have precisely this emblem by Sor Juana, which becomes an ekphrasis of the devices of Saavedra Fajardo, adapting them to her main motif: the god Neptune. The other devices are more materialistic given that they allude to the control of the navigation of the world, through commerce or war. Sor Juana does not touch upon these themes in an explicit manner, although every reader today knows that this is the underlying theme, one of the fundamental themes in the American colonies. The device that takes the motto ‘His polis’ (With these poles)\textsuperscript{113} depicts a globe crossed with a rudder that unites the ship Argos at each end. The ship Argos, in which Jason and the Argonauts travelled, was portrayed in the sky as the constellation as being the first one to have existed.\textsuperscript{114} Its duplication means the dominating relationship in the world at that time of the different fleets, which belonged to the Mediterranean and Oceanic seas, above all for commerce, but also for war. The common rudder means the organization of the world through ships, overcoming the differences in language. The other device, with the motto ‘Ferro et auro’ (With iron and gold),\textsuperscript{115} shows a sword and a golden branch which is also an allegory for the supremacy of arms and trade. Both consider the relationship between the poles to be a unifying symbol.

As is customary in the demonstrative devices where an arm or a hand show off various objects, the symbolism is apophasic. Sor Juana, at any rate, is taking up the device \textit{A Deo} practically in its entirety since the comment by Saavedra is a note about the main idea expressed in the motto, full of historical examples and details in its argumentation. In \textit{Neptuno} what we have is a brief amplification of the abstract meaning of Saavedra’s device that underlines the magnitude and sacred nature of the sea as allegory for the power of the monarchy, in the last instance, absolutist. It adds nothing else. It is not, therefore, a continuous allegory.

**The Emblem of the Second Base, Left Side**

The ship as a symbol of the state or the government is a very old allegory. Here Sor Juana exploits it once more in favour of Neptune. The emblem of Sor Juana states the following:

\textsuperscript{113} Diego Saavedra Fajardo, \textit{idea de un príncipes político christiano}, p. 368.

\textsuperscript{114} Gaius Julius Hyginus, \textit{Fabularum liber... eiusdem poëticae astronomicon} (Basel: Johannes Herwagen, 1535), p. 85.

\textsuperscript{115} Diego Saavedra Fajardo, \textit{idea de un príncipe político christiano}, p. 375.
Simbolizó este intento un navío, en que se figuraba el gobierno, entre las ondas de un mar. Pintóese en él Neptuno, que gobernando la proa con las manos, tenía fíjos en el Norte los ojos; con un mote que decia: Ad utrunque (A uno y otro); y la letra castellana:

Segura en ti, al puerto aspira
la nave del gobernar;
pues la virtud que en ti admira,
las manos lleva en el mar,
pero en el Cielo la mira.  
(The intention was symbolized by a ship, by means of which the government was represented, on the waves of a sea. Neptune was painted in it, who, directing the rudder with his hands, had his eyes fixed on the North; with a motto which said: To one and the other; and the letra castellana:

As happens in the emblem of the sixth canvas, the reference to Guillaume du Choul's work on antique numismatics offers what is not found in emblem books, as Sor Juana makes an exact hypotyposis of Neptune's posture found on a silver medal of Sextus Pompey (Fig. 24).  

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**Fig. 24.** Guillaume du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, Lyon, 1556, p. 98 (University of Glasgow, Library). Detail, reduced.

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116 Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 398.
In it there is a depiction of the god over the sea above Messina’s lighthouse, with a foot on the prow of the ship and in his hands, the trident and a rudder. The virtues of being a guide with eyes gazing towards the north—as Neptune appears in this image—are a direct allegory of the same virtues of the Viceroy, as a guide of his people with steady gaze at God.

**THE EMBLEM OF THE FIRST INTERCOLUMNNIATION, RIGHT SIDE**

The penultimate emblem is, in full, an analogy between the sea and the Countess of Paredes, whose name is María Luisa. This is how Sor Juana introduces her soon-to-be benefactress for an entire decade who, eventually, becomes her editor. In this emblem and in the following one, Sor Juana takes advantage of the panegyric tone of the full arch to make a comparison between the sea and the Vice-queen. It begins with the birth of Venus and of Galatea, with the Nereids and the nympha, leading to the accumulation of beauties that abound in the sea, ‘precisely from there emerge all the rivers, fountains, lagoons, etc...’ The ekphrasis of the emblem is similar:

> Y como en la Excelentísima Señora Doña María Luis Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, dignísima consorte de nuestro gran Príncipe, admira el mundo, mucho más que la fabulosa Venus, todo el imperio de la belleza... no se halló mejor jeroúfico a su hermosura que el mismo Mar, que significa su nombre.

Pintáse éste lleno de ojos, aludiendo a los que forma con sus aguas; con este mota: *Alit et allicit* (Alimenta y halaga), y esta redondilla más abajo:

> Si al mar sirven de despojos
Los ojos de agua que cria,
De la belleza es María
Mar, que se lleva los ojos.\(^{118}\)

(And as in the most Excellent Lady Doña María Luis Manrique de Lara and Gonzaga, most worthy consort of our great Prince, the world admires all the empire of beauty, much more than in the fabulous Venus... no better image was found for her beauty than the Sea itself, which her name signifies.

This latter [the sea] was painted full of eyes (‘waterholes’)\(^{119}\), alluding to those it forms with its waters; with this motto: *It feeds and flatters*; and this redondilla was placed further down:

If the eyes of water which it rears serve the sea as spoils, Maria is a sea of beauty, for she takes all eyes with her.)

\(^{118}\) Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, p. 400.

\(^{119}\) This image exploits the Spanish term ‘ojo de agua’ (literally ‘eye of water’), ‘waterhole’.
The relationship between the Virgin Mary and the sea is very common in Christian culture. Many religious orders regularly cited The Song of Songs (7, 4) when referring to Mary’s eyes: ‘Your eyes are like the pools of Heshbon’ an allusion to the series of ponds that a fountain near the biblical city of Heshbon formed. The sea full of eyes could be interpreted as a very enigmatic or apophatic image, but instead Sor Juana is giving us many keys of interpretation, when she points out that rivers, fountains and lagoons come from this sea, or when she refers to the image of the eyes: ‘alluding to those it forms with its waters’, that is to say, the eyes of water [ojos de agua, in Spanish, waterhole]. The influence of Juan de Solórzano y Pereira’s emblem showing the multitude of eyes over a fortified city is secondary and tangential here, given that such an emblem is not about the sea and the eyes stand for the vigilance of ministers and legislators (Fig. 25).120

Fig. 25. ‘Legum munia, Urbium moenia’, emblem from Juan Solórzano Pereira, Emblemata, Madrid, 1653, p. 541 (Fundação Biblioteca National, Brazil). Reduced.

Sor Juana could have taken part of idea of the sea with eyes from here, but in reality, she is speaking to us about the springs that exist below the sea just like those that emerge on earth (rivers and lagoons), attributed to the sea. There is no real emblematic reference where we can find eyes on the sea, although there are ‘eyes of water’ strictly related to the symbolism of the Virgin Mary. In 17th-century New

120 Juan Solórzano Pereira, Emblemata regio politica..., p. 541: ‘Legum munia, Urbium moenia’ (Legal duties, city walls).
Spain, the Virgin became worshipped in connection with the springs, in a double relationship between the Virgin of the Assumption and the goddess Cihualcóatl of Mexican antiquity, who controlled the terrestrial waters. For this reason we can affirm that the emblem of the arch is a hypotyposis that stems from an accumulation of references pertinent to the cult of Mary, which, obviously, Sor Juana considered important to make the new Vice-queen a participant. We find here another continuous allegory, given that the sea with eyes is a creation of Sor Juana herself from several elements of her symbolic and iconic references to be applied to Mary, which happened to be the name of the Vice-queen (María Luisa Manrique de Lara). The symbol is decidedly apophatic and possesses anagogic significance.

THE EMBLEM OF THE SECOND INTERCOLUMNIATION

Finally, with another emblem dedicated to the Countess of Paredes, Sor Juana concludes the description of the emblems of her arch, before proceeding to describe it poetically as a whole. Here she takes up again an emblem of Petrarchan inspiration, closely related to the cult of Mary: the ship guided by a star. In this case, it is not the Pole Star or the northern star which has its own tradition with the Virgin, but Venus or Stella Maris who is compared to the Vice-queen. This composition is also used to make the word play between Vesper and Hesperia, that is to say, Spain. In fact, in the maritime life of Spain the Pole Star is practically replaced by Venus because of her greater visibility not only at dusk, promising a quiet night, but at dawn, announcing a clear day.

After building on the topic of the beauty of Venus Sor Juana describes the emblem:

Pintóse, para expresar el pensamiento, una nave en medio de un mar, y arriba el Lucero, que le influya serenidades; con este mote: Lux Hesperiae Hesperus, y esta letra castellana:

Cuando se llegó a embarcar

de Mantúa la luz más bella,
tener el mar tal estrella,

fue buena Estrella del Mar.


123 Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, p. 402.
(In order to express this thought, a ship was painted in the middle of a sea, and above the Morning Star [Lucero], which brought it serenity; with this motto: The light of Hesperia is Hesperus; and then came this letra castillana: When such a beautiful light came to embark from Mantua the sea had such a star that it was a good Star of the Sea.)

One could mention the various emblems that represent the ship guided to a safe port by a good star or by the stars Castor and Pollux, sometimes turned into a metaphor for the eyes of the beloved or of Mary. Starting with the closest emblems, we can mention two by the Carthusian Nicolás de la Iglesia in his emblem book dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, from 1653. One takes the motto 'Mare magnum' (Great Sea) and the epigram 'Al mar caminan los ríos, / Y el hilo de mi corriente / Llegó a María, a su fuente' (The rivers run to the sea, and the thread of my current reached Mary, its source). The pictura shows the sea below the sky. The other is closest to Sor Juana: it is entitled 'Stella Maris' (Star of the sea) and the epigram is 'La estrella fija del mar / Que ilustra los elementos / No ha estar sujeta a vientos' (the fixed star of the sea/ That illustrates the elements/ shall not be subject to the winds). Here the star of Venus is shown above a desolate sea. The emblematic prototype is, however, an emblem of Alciato with the word 'Spes proxima' (Hope is nearby), whose subscriptio mentions Helen's brothers (Castor and Pollux), saying that they are able to cheer the spirits of sailors (the citizens) who have faced tempests, winds and waves, that is to say, two stars in place of one alluding to the two eyes of the beloved or of the Virgin, capable of calming travellers. This is the image of the ship guided by the stars that we find in Girolamo Ruscelli's device dedicated to Isabella Gonzaga, an ancestor of the Countess of Paredes, with the word 'Meliora lapsis' (Improvement in adversity) and the figures of Neptune and Amphitrite round the ship and closing the arch with the same divine couple that

124 Nicolás de la Iglesia, Flores de Miraflors, hieroglyphicos sagrados, verdades figuradas, sombras verdaderas del misterio de la Inmaculada... (Burgos: Diego de Nieva y Murillo, 1659), p. 179. I did not have access to the first edition.

125 Nicolás de la Iglesia, Flores de Miraflors, p. 46.

126 Andrea Alciato, Emblemata, 1584, emblem 43, f. 64v.


128 It concerns Isabel Gonzaga, Marquess of Pescara, who lived more than one century before Manrique de Lara. Ruscelli speaks of this lady in his device (Girolamo Ruscelli, Le imprase illustri, Venice: Francesco de Franceci, 1584, p. 254): 'Ma il sapersi, che questa gentilissima giovane si e di continuo molto dilettata efficacemente de gli studii, e molto felicemente fondata nelle scienze, e insieme sapendosi che ella si e mostrata sempre di costumi, & intensione tutta religiosa & spirituale, si puo, & si debe credere, che sotto questa gia detto exterior sentimento delle cose mondane, ella abbia compreso con piu principal pensiero il sentimento mistico, o allegorico, delle cose spirituali & celesti.'
opened it, reproducing, as it were, the symbolic circle to which Sor Juana alluded in her introduction (Fig. 26).

Frances Yates refers to this device in the context of an emblem of Giordano Bruno in De gli eroici furori. The image is extremely similar to that of Alciato and is used by Ruscelli to praise the qualities and historical importance of this exemplar of a female line whose positive influence will reach Sor Juana herself. With these last emblems Sor Juana pays her respects to the Vice-queen and places the first stones of a long metaphorical-poetic path in which the Countess will be placed on the pedestal of the beloved in courtly love: consort and future mother, Virgin and lady.

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This exploration of Sor Juana's emblems shows that it consists of much more than a mere collection of elaborate qualifiers and advice to the newly arrived Prince of New Spain. In the first place, we highlighted the map that Sor Juana has drawn of her true erudition, something far

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removed from the appreciation of certain critics (a question which will be debated in a different context) that suggested her knowledge and reading were limited to books of general interest and to the reproduction of Spanish works like those of Baltasar de Victoria which had themselves adapted other Italian works. If we look at this map without prejudices and compare the discourse of Sor Juana to the sources that she mentions (and to the sources that she does not mention), we will see that her intellectual method of working is typically baroque and brings together classical, medieval, renaissance and baroque works; she makes use of literary sources, emblems and mythographers to produce a unique semiosis, and, at the same time, remains connected to her own time and cultural reality. Her discourse is not derivative imitation, but possesses its own core that we can detect once she begins to describe the hermeneusis of Egyptian symbols. Step by step she gives us the keys to her own hermeneusis concerning wisdom and its universal operation, from cognitive curiosity to creative appropriation, and full of the sense of what is other and different. And if at first glance it seems that Neptuno Alegórico speaks of the correct exercise of justice, mercy, providence and the recognition of the most elevated ideals, on closer examination we notice other subtle threads: the inner mapping of the human soul and its symbols on the earthly orb, and on the universal soul.

Neptuno Alegórico is also a demonstration that Sor Juana’s semiosis was already firmly consolidated in 1680 and would last her entire creative life. In debt to the theorists of wit (agudeza), Sor Juana will take received views to terrains that go beyond verbal discourse and contribute to the plasticity of the imagination. Like her best intellectual contemporaries, she focused on the multivocal dissemination of the imaginative force by means of the instruments of dialectics, rhetoric and the poetics of symbols. And as if this is not enough, in Neptuno she also draws a map of New Spain: a very abstract map, as it were, with the precision with which she underpins her emblematic creation—the necessary laws, the engineering of the city, the building of the temples and very subtly, as though speaking of something else, the wisdom of its pagan past. All these gods and Egyptian symbols obviously serve the agenda of arguing and justifying the religious symbols of the pre-Hispanic indigenous people. If Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora is fully dedicated to this mission in his own triumphal arch, the Theatro de virtudes políticas, where he emblematizes the twelve kings of the ancient Mexicans, Sor Juana also finally maps, in her Neptuno, the origin of the Amerindian people in water and the flood, and the profound logic needed to elucidate the grotesque extravagance of their pagan gods. The god Neptune, the sovereign coming from Europe, will pardon, will
order, will build and will prize the inherent wisdom of an opulent and shifting society.

Perhaps the most revealing experience of a truly emblematic reading of Sor Juana’s *Neptuno Alegórico* might be achieved through the contemplation of the strategies of composition by which she appropriates the symbols of her literary and cultural context.

The regulation of these processes of appropriation and recreation, their complexity and prolixity, not only make us discover hidden discourses of baroque semiosis (those that the author establishes with her world and culture), but also distance us categorically from the notion that colonial literature might be imitative and derivative of similar authors from a European context. By demonstrating that truth is nothing other than representation, Walter Benjamin not only deconstructed and reconstructed the meaning of allegory, but also made it clear that there is no truth that finds itself in a place or moment previous to representation itself, and that the dynamic between the existence and absence of truth in baroque works rests in the modulating and moulding power of those who create it and those who receive it.