Oriana, Holy and Mighty: *Amadís* and the Sacro-Profane Castilian *Cancionero* Motif[*]

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One of the most intriguing facets of the veneration of love and the female figure in medieval Castilian courtly literature is the sacro-profane imagery of *cancionero* poetry. The fusion of the sacred and secular in this literature was such that often romantic prayers were directly inspired by liturgical ones; indeed, E. Michael Gerli notes that a common iteration of this motif was the amorous adaption of liturgical prayer for divine help or intervention (1980). In this motif, the lady occupies the place of God and the aspirant of her love that of the supplicant; the latter invokes the former through an ascending dialogue, pleading for relief from his affliction (requital of his love).

This *cancionero* poetry was contemporaneous with early versions of *Amadís of Gaul*, which had passed from the oral tradition to prose around the beginning of the 14th century (Gómez Redondo, 1545)[1] and by the end of the same century was likely circulating among Castilian-reading courtiers of the Iberian Peninsula in three books, which we can conjecture thanks in part to its description as such in a *decir* by Pero Ferruz to Pero López de Ayala from between 1379 and 1390 (*Cancionero de Baena*, 539-544, n. 305).[2]

At the end of the 1400s, when Enrique de Trastámara overthrew his stepbrother, Pedro I, and established his court in Castille, a new socio-political era was established which, as Fernando Gómez Redondo observes, doubtless played a role in revisions of Castilian prose of the era, given that its audience demanded literature that reflected their new ideological and political sensibilities (1547, 1563-1664); very likely the same happened with the primitive versions of *Amadís*. This shift in literary reception was witness to a surge in the production of *cancionero* love poetry, whose metaphor-heavy lexis and enigmatic rhetoric, says Gómez Redondo,

> …penetrarán, ya de forma absoluta, en el lenguaje castellano, impregnando no solo el discurso en verso, sino también las narraciones en prosa. Esta ha de ser una de las pautas

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[1] Fernando Gómez Redondo finds tenuous Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce's theory that the first primitive version of *Amadís* dates to before the turn of the 14th century, to the reign of Sancho IV of Castille (Avalle-Arce, 64-100), arguing that Avalle-Arce's methodology of counting back three generations (one for people to become familiar with the story, another for it to become popular, and a third generation for its moral transgressions to merit censure by ideologues; he uses Ortega y Gasset's historiological theory of 15-year generations from *En torno a Galileo*) from the earliest known direct reference to the story of *Amadís* (c. 1345, from Juan García de Castrogeriz's *Regimiento de principes*) is dubious at best, given its reliance on criteria unrelated to chivalric material. Rather, Gómez Redondo contends, it makes more sense to postulate a first primitive *Amadís* appearing between the second and third decades of the 14th century, coinciding with the alterations to the *Libro del caballero Zifar* and the composition of *Tristán de Leonís*, both of which are mentioned with *Amadís* two decades later in García de Castrogeriz's moralizing treatise.

[2] The reference to *Amadís* is found in verses 57-63:

> Amadís, el muy fermoso,
> las lluvias e ventiscas
> nunca las falló ariscas
> por leal ser e famoso;
> sus proezas fallaredes
> en tres libros e diredes
> que le Dios dé santo poso.

While an important piece of information, Rafael Ramos cautions against taking a few lines from a poem as indisputable evidence of the properties of a novel that was evolving at the time (844).

> con que se han de considerar las posibles refundiciones que debió sufrir el *Amadís* a finales del siglo XIV: excepcional informador de sucesos históricos, a la vez que reflejo perfecto de unas modalidades de pensamiento puramente cortesanas. Precisamente, debe acudirse a los poetas de cancionero para perseguir la impronta que el *romance* deja en la conciencia de un selecto público que de receptor, bien puede convertirse en creador. (Gómez Redondo, 1547-1548)

It's also worth consulting Francisco Rico on the topic, who comments:

> La prosa tiene siempre un punto de referencia esencial en la poesía contemporánea. En el caso de la prosa de caballerías y la poesía cancioneril, los ligámenes son singularmente estrechos. El repertorio lírico compilado por Hernando del Castillo da una savia que en multitud de puntos fecunda de afectos y conceptos las caballerías de libro. (Rico, 222)

Could one of these "afectos y conceptos" that nurtured chivalric fiction be the *cancionero*'s comingling of sacred and erotic love? Javier Roberto González observes that a few iterations of one of the most regularly repeated motifs in the book—Amadís' invocation of Oriana—closely resemble the liturgical supplication. The protagonist's romantic pleas are directed to his lady in the way a prayer would be to God: in an ascending dialogue, assuming an omniscient and omnipresent recipient, with an appeal for intervention (González, 36-42).

We find the first of these instances in the test of the Forbidden Chamber (II, XLIV), in which Amadís witnesses his friends and brother try and fail to enter the innermost chamber of the test, which only the purest lover can reach. Seeing his companions unceremoniously spit out of the crucible, he prays for help:

> ¡O, mi señora Oriana, de vos me viene a mí todo el esfuerço y ardimiento; membradvos, señora, de mí a esta sazón en que tanto vuestra sabrosa membrança me es menester! (Montalvo, II, 673)

Our hero addresses his lady in second person, a key element which separates this instance from the myriad other occasions in which she is the subject of his reflection. His invocation of her is not casual: he finds himself before the test of his mettle, of the impetus for doing what he does. Not until he met Oriana in Chapter IV of Book I did he have reason to seek adventure and glory; it is she before whom he sends defeated adversaries to kneel, she whose name he proclaims far and near, she whose memory causes him to wake and gives him peace in his slumber—it was because of her the world took on meaning (Cacho Blecua, 78-83, 210-211). Naturally, then, it is she he invokes for strength and favor in the challenge before him, and she for whose glory he dedicates his initiative.

Though Amadís does pray to God, it is merely mentioned in passing by the narrator and does not form part of the dialogue. González points out that the position of this prayer relative to the one addressed to Oriana is important, because one seems to build up to the other: if God is mentioned casually, Oriana is addressed deliberately and at length; the intentionality or lack thereof corresponds to the use of narration in the former and dialogue in the latter, as well as with the differing semantic impact of the words (37-38). Whereas the prayer to God makes do with a brief, impersonal "rogando a Dios que le ayudasse" (Montalvo, II, 672), there are two parts to the invocation of Oriana: praise and a plea for help. That is, before he requests her aid, Amadís acknowledges that his strength, his very ability to attempt the test, comes from her. This is the same rhetorical model used in Catholic prayers and the Psalms from which many derive their structure and was also common in the *contrafacta* of the *cancionero*, much of

which was Christian prayers for mercy or delivery accommodated to an erotic context (Gerli). Take a *canción* by Johan de Padilla:

> Senyora a quien m'ofreçco
> más de mil vezes al día,
> *ménbrate, por cortesía*
> *de mí, triste, que padeçco*.
> Senyora por quien espero
> ser de mi mal acorrido,
> pues só tuyo tod'entero
> no me pongas en olvido;
> pues por te servir pereçco
> alongado d'alegría,
> *ménbrate, por cortesía*
> *de mí, triste, que padeçco*.
> Senyora cuya tardança
> es a mi vida dudosa,
> pues tú eres mi esperança
> sey contra mí piadosa;
> pues que yo mal no mereçco
> por amar tu senyoría,
> *miénbrete, por cortesía,*
> *de mí, triste, que padeçco*.
> (*Cancionero de Palacio*, 63-64, n. LXXIX)

The lady, elevated to the position of God, is praised as the poet's only hope ("pues tú eres mi esperança") and the one who delivers him from his travails ("Senyora por quien espero / ser de mi mal acorrido"); he commends himself to her wholly, using, like Amadís, language conspicuously reminiscent of biblical entrustment of hope and faith ("Senyora a quien m'ofreçco"; "só tuyo tod'entero"). Particularly salient is the refrain, an appeal to the deified lady to *remember* (Amadís: "membradvos de mí" / Padilla: "ménbrate de mí") the supplicant is his hour of need. Martín Tañedor calls upon his *senyora* in much the same way:

> ¡Ay, senyora!, por tu fe:
> *no me tengas apartado*
> *de tu graçia et merçé*.
> Pues veyes que mi querer
> es todo a tu mandar,
> no me quieras olvidar
> que tuyo só et seré;
> si no siempre cridaré:
> *no me tengas apartado*
> *de tu graçia et merçé*.
> (*Cancionero de Palacio*, 161, n. CLVII)

The language used here to associate mercy and grace with the lady is overtly Christian in its structure, akin to Amadís' acknowledgment that his strength comes from Oriana. The intervention requested is implicitly divine, ergo, the one from whom the intervention proceeds is also divine.

Indicative of Oriana's supplantation of God in Amadís' mind is his first impulse when he passes the test of the Forbidden Chamber: "…el quedó descansado y cobrado en toda su fuerça, y quitando el scudo del cuello y el yelmo de la cabeça, metió la espada en la vaina y gradeçió a su señora Oriana aquella honra que por su causa ganara" (Montalvo, II, 673). While God is mentioned incidentally before the test, in its aftermath—in the heat of the moment and the exhilaration of victory—ritual and religious custom are forgotten in favor of that which occupies the heart and mind of the victor.

Skipping over the penitence episode, we find another prayer to Oriana that perfectly mirrors the first. On his way to reunite with his lady at Miraflores after receiving her repentant missive—it was a letter that ruptured their love, so it must be a letter that restores it—Amadís encounters the giant Famongomadán and his son Basagante, who have challenged Lisuarte and his court to battle. For a moment, the urge to not postpone his reunion with Oriana causes him vacillate, but the giant's blasphemy of his lady is too much; chivalry requires the transgression be punished. Demanding his arms from his dwarf Enil, Amadís again lifts his gaze to the horizon and addresses the one who holds power over his will:

> ¡O, mi señora Oriana!, nunca comencé yo gran hecho en mi esfuerço dondequiera que me hallase, sino en el vuestro; y agora, mi buena señora, me acorred, pues me es tanto menester. (Montalvo, II, 787)

The attribution of his strength to another entity who is invoked as if a higher power is an unmistakable sign of the liturgical inspiration of this prayer. The customary mention of God is moved from before the battle to after (Montalvo, II, 790) but is again relegated to narration, reinforcing its mundanity relative to Oriana.

The third supplication addressed to Oriana is in the penitence episode, after Amadís has received the jealous breakup letter from his lady. Hurt and reeling, he takes leave of companions and squire and retires to the nearby woods where he unleashes a serious of bitter soliloquies decrying fortune and lamenting his untimely "death." Among these grievances,[3] now vituperative, now pathetic, he addresses Oriana:

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[3] González argues that the part of Amadís' monologue in which he addresses "Ventura" (Montalvo, 686-687), despite including a request, does not count as a supplication because Fortune lacks the capacity (either in the context of the novel or in that of Amadís' rhetoric) either to receive or fulfill petitions. Rather, he explains, the similarity of Amadís' expression to the wisdom literature of the Bible—his censure of Fortune's mutability recalls the *Vanitas vanitatum* of Proverbs—renders the request more of a hyperbolic punctuation (González, 43-44). However, it is interesting to note that as with his invocations of Oriana, the dialogue is ascendant and, though a denunciation of his miserable fate, his rhetoric assumes an acquiescent, at times even suppliant posture towards the object of his grievances. In the *cancionero*, it was common to address *Ventura*, and petitions for mercy or lenience were not uncommon. Martín Tañedor writes:

> Ventura, tan perseguydo
> me tienes con merescer:
> *plégate dolor aver*.
> Bien me tengo por errado,
> por errore que fiçiese
> aunque mucho me vinyese,
> de todo só yo culpado;
> Ventura, pues repentido
> soy de tanto mal façer:
> *plégate dolor aver*.
> (*Cancionero de Palacio*, 161, n. CLVI)

In another example, Macías uses Jesus' words from the cross to underscore his heartache caused by fortune:

> Pues me falleció ventura
> en el tiempo de plazer,
> non spero aver folgura

> ¡O, mi señora Oriana!, vos me avéis llegado a la muerte por el defendimiento que me fazéis, que yo no tengo de pasar vuestro mandado; pues guardándole no guardo la vida, esta muerte recibo a sinrazón, de que mucho dolor tengo, no por la recebir, pues con ella vuestra voluntad se satisfaze, que no podría yo en tanto la vida tener que por la menor cosa que a vuestro plazer tocasse no fuesse mill veces por la muerte trocada; y si esta saña vuestra con razón se tomara meresciéndolo, llevara la pena yo, y vos, mi señora, el descanso en aver esecutado vuestra ira justamente, y esto vos fiziera bivir tan leda vida, que mi alma doquiera que vaya de vuestro plazer en sí sentiría gran descanso; mas como yo sin cargo sea, siendo por vos sabido ser la crueza que contra mí se faze, más con passión que con razón, desde agora lo que en esta vida durare, y después en la otra, comienço a llorar y plañir la cuita y grande dolor que por mi causa os sobreverná, y mucho más por le no quedar remedio seyendo yo desta vida partido. (Montalvo, II, 687-688)

Amadís is careful not to accuse Oriana or attribute motive; she is, after all, perfect, and if she cuts ties and wishes to never see him again, the ultimatum is necessarily just.[4] But that doesn't mean he has done wrong, and he clearly delineates between his "death" and what his actions have merited; there is no connection between the two. As such, the supplication takes on a mournful quality with a slight undertone of indignation. We find an example of this chivalric resignation in a *glosa de mote* by Soria:

> Sola sois vos quien podés
> hazerme alegre de triste.
> Pues tan penado me ves
> señora, si posible es,
> *transeat a me calix iste*.
> Mas, si algo os satisfaze
> esta mi muerte, mirad
> mi gran querer lo que haze,
> que, si a vos plaze, a mí plaze
> cumplir vuestra voluntad,
> mas antes mirar devés
> si el dolor que en mí consiste
> vos remediarle querés,
> mas, si possible no es,

> mas por siempre entristecer;
> turmentado et con tristura,
> chamaré, ora por mí:
> *Deus meus, Elly, Ely*
> *e lama zabatany.*
> (*Cancionero de Palacio*, 232-233, n. CCL, v. 1-8)

Perceptible here are three key elements present in Amadís' prayer: the despair of rejection, the anguish of an ignominious fate, and yet resignation (to the lady's will).

[4] Justina Ruiz de Conde reflects on the total submission of Amadís to Oriana's will: there is no resistance nor is any attempt made to clarify her motives or reason. The author comments, "…[Amadís] ama a un ser perfecto y ni el mal ni el error caben en él" (190-191). As the protagonist withdraws farther into the forest to mourn, Gandalín, in an effort to console his lord, suggests Oriana may have made a mistake. Amadís castigates his squire's brazenness, saying he would not hesitate to decapitate him had his defamatory comment been made knowingly and not out of ignorance. He continues: "…tal locura y mentira has dicho, que con ello se enojaría todo el mundo; …que Oriana, mi señora, nunca erró en cosa ninguna" (Montalvo, II, 703).

> *maneat in me calix iste*.
> (Castillo, vol. II, 635, n. 573/2)

The *glosa*, as with the *mote* itself (Castillo, vol. II, 634, n. 573), uses Jesus' well-known words from the Garden of Gethsemane just before he is betrayed: "If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (*Holy Bible*, Matthew 26:39). Soria utilizes not only the context of the words—a prayer—but also the fact that the words represent the ultimate example of surrender to a higher will, to express his own submission to his lady. Not insignificant is the fact that the words used by Amadís and Soria to lament their ladies' decisions ("con ella vuestra voluntad se satisfaze" and "a mí plaze / cumplir vuestra voluntad," respectively) are the same ones used by Christ: your will.

It's worth looking at another passage in *Amadís* that, though not a prayer to Oriana, is still a remarkable parallel to the sacro-profane motif of the *cancionero*. In Book III, in one of the most symbolic episodes of the story,[5] Amadís faces his biggest test yet: the Endriago. Caught in a storm, Amadís and his company find themselves near the *ínsula del Diablo* and his merry band of adventurers becomes not so merry when he informs them that he intends to do battle with the beast. He insists that Oriana's very existence compels him to seek and destroy and reassures them that she will be with him in his time of need. His squire Gandalín is not convinced. How can Oriana help him, especially if she's not there? He follows behind his lord weeping, certain he's met his match. But Amadís reproves his incredulity:[6]

> Mi buen hermano, no tengas tan poca esperança en la misericordia de Dios, ni en la vista de mi señora Oriana, que assí te desesperes; que no solamente tengo delante mí la su sabrosa membrança, mas su propia persona, y mis ojos la veen… Y si tu no la vees, yo la veo, que delante mí está. (Montalvo, III, 1140)

His statement is remarkable: Oriana is omnipresent (or at least ever-present to him).[7] This is his boldest affirmation yet—it goes beyond his comparably quotidian praise of her perfect character and infinite goodness and blatantly attributes a trait of God to her. But however surprising, this sentiment is not without precedent in Castilian courtly love rhetoric. In the *cancionero* we find similar assertions: "Senyora, maguer absente, / siempre vos tenguo presente;" or more explicitly, "Sepas tú, senyora mía, / a doquiera que seré, / tu gaya filusumía / ante mis oxos veré" (*Cancionero de Palacio*, 57, n. LXXIV, v. 1-2; 24, n. XXIV, v. 1-4). The exploitation of biblical ideas (and the context of their expression) by these poets is by no means lost on the reader—the psalmist, millennia before, proclaimed the very same thing about God: "I know the Lord is always with me; / I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me" (*Holy Bible*, Psalms 16:8).

Taking a step back from these particulars to look at the big picture, a question that arises is why such *prima facie* sacrilegious language is present in a romance whose content was

[5] The character of the Endriago is diametrically opposed to that of Amadís (Cacho Blecua, 31, 282): while our hero is the protector of the weak, helper of the needy, rectifier of wrongs and defender of the Catholic faith, the Endriago exists to lay waste to what is good and just and to wreak havoc on Christendom. A pure and perfect love is Amadís' motivation, whereas the Endriago is the spawn of an incestuous union.

[6] Evident in this interaction is the biblical motif of admonishment for lack of faith: "You have so little faith… Why did you doubt me?" (*Holy Bible*, Matthew 14:31).

[7] Clearly what Amadís expresses here is hyperbole; Cacho Blecua comments that "La realidad percibida no existe por ella misma, sino como acto volutivo del personaje" (284-285). But what is important here is not whether Oriana is in fact omnipresent or not, but what our hero believes and *how he expresses that belief*. The language he uses communicates, at face value, a trait commonly applied to God. In a romance of hyperbolic dimensions, this hyperbole stands out.

reformed[8] to comply with the religious rigor of the Catholic Monarchs, forgers of a new ideology enemy to the paganism and heterodoxy that remained in the Iberian Peninsula, whether literary or in deed. In truth, by the time Rodríguez de Montalvo began his work of revision in the latter half of the 15th century, not only was the story of Amadís but its language so etched in the minds and literary sensibility of courtly Castille that Montalvo would have risked rejection by his audience were he to alter certain parts of it (Avalle-Arce, 119; Gómez Redondo, 1550). When he could not modify, he inserted moralizing commentaries after the offending act or, where especially egregious, sermons. Indeed, returning to the Endriago episode, not only does Montalvo criticize Amadís's transgression but he also devises[9] the

[8] Montalvo, prescriptively modest, attributes his edits as much to his own desire to be immortalized in history as to the iniquitous nature of the first three books: "…desseando que de mí alguna sombra de memoria quedasse, no me atreviendo a poner el mi flaco ingenio en aquello que los más cuerdos sabios se ocuparon, quísele juntar con estos postrimeros que las cosas más livianas y de menor sustancia escribieron, por ser a él según su flaqueza más conformes, corrigiendo estos tres libros de Amadís, que por falta de los malos escriptores, o componedores, muy corruptos y viciosos se leían…" (Montalvo, 224).

[9] Menéndez y Pelayo suggests that the Endriago was inspired by the sierpe from the *Gran Conquista de Ultramar*, an opinion with which Cacho Blecua concurs while casting doubt on John K. Walsh's proposition that it comes from a hagiographical legend (Menéndez y Pelayo, 251; Walsh, 193-195; Cacho Blecua, 286). María Isabel Toro Pascua traces the conception, features and symbolism of the beast to the Antichrist of St. John's Revelation (the tradition of which was widespread in 15th-century Castille) (2008). Whatever its precedents, the Endriago episode is at the very least of Montalvo's own assembling: the symbolism of the beast, the religious implications of the fight, the conspicuous appearance of Catholic appurtenances—all bear the mark of the *regidor de Medina*'s ideological motives (Avalle-Arce, 288-295). Curiously, Avalle-Arce does not suggest that this adventure contains any allusions to the primitive version, something he says is the case with various other episodes in Books III and IV in which Montalvo hints at the tragic ending of the original he was editing (101-132). Avalle-Arce does acknowledge the dichotomy of the fact that Amadís, about to engage the Endriago, instructs Gandalín to take his heart to Oriana if he is defeated. He chalks this up to Montalvo's intention to emphasize the symbolism of the episode, the before and the after, the old chivalry and the new. But he never so much as mentions the instance highlighted above in which the protagonist declares Oriana to be omnipresent, a sentiment difficult to reconcile with the piety of his other statements and actions. The author says that Amadís' commendation of his soul to God at the end of the chapter (Montalvo, III, 1147) is proof that the old man is dead and the new born (Avalle-Arce, 294), but he does not bring up the fact that the first words out of the hero's mouth as he hangs between life and death following the battle are a reiteration of his charge to Gandalín to return his heart to Oriana:

> …y como yo fuere muerto, tomes mi coraçón y lo lleves a mi señora Oriana. Y dile que pues siempre fue suyo, y lo tuvo en su poder desde aquel primero día que la yo vi, mientra en este cuitado cuerpo encerrado estuvo, y nunca un momento se enojó de la servir, que consigo la tenga en remembrança de aquel cuyo fue, aunque como ajeno lo poseía, porque desta memoria allá donde mi ánima stuviere recibirá descanso. (Montalvo, III, 1145)

The incongruity of this and the other gestures mentioned with the entire leadup to and aftermath of the battle—God rather than Oriana as the impetus, the mass celebrated before combat, the relics procured by Elisabad, the ending monologue in praise of God's mercy—cannot be ignored. Rather than serving to symbolize the change in Amadís, as Avalle-Arce maintains, if anything, they undermine Montalvo's ideological designs for the episode. The repeated and overt characterization of Oriana as Amadís' deity belies the idea that they could have been, by design, mild lapses in the reformation of a knight of Arthurian heritage, devised to emphasize the change in character.

Cacho Blecua's interpretation of this episode centers around the courtly love aspect, with the religious element taking a back seat. In a test in which Amadís must prove himself superior to the Endriago to validate his relationship with Oriana (the Endriago symbolizing, as mentioned earlier, the antithesis of said relationship and its fruit, Esplandián), the protagonist's statement about Oriana's presence transforms the confrontation into the common folkloric motif of the knight defending the maiden from the beast (Cacho Blecua, 283). In this light, the author claims, Montalvo's explanation of the consequences of Amadís' excessive faith in his lady becomes a technique to increase the tension of the plot and bestow on the antagonist potency that reasonably threatens the as yet unassailable hero (283-284). But this interpretation does not seem entirely satisfactory: if Montalvo wanted to include this theme, why undercut it by calling into question Amadís' moral integrity (the criticism in his language is unmistakable: "…este cavallero ponía más esperança en su amiga Oriana que en Dios" (Montalvo, III, 1141))? Why go to the trouble of molding the story to fit a motif only to criticize it? Certainly it would not correspond to Montalvo's role as moralizer-in-chief: there was plenty of material to censure in Books I-III without having to

episode to bring the protagonist closer to death than in any other of his adventures; he states, speaking about the Endriago, that "…como los diablos viessen que este cavallero ponía más esperança en su amiga Oriana que en Dios, tuvieron lugar de entrar más fuertemente en él y le hazer más sañudo" (Montalvo, III, 1141).[10] It was certainly not for lack of zeal that Montalvo was unable to change the unique love language of *Amadís*.

Beyond the historical, lexical and motific overlap, what *Amadís* and *cancionero* poetry share is the goal—indeed, the necessity—of portraying love in its most radical and unparalleled form. For the *cancionero* poets it was because nothing else would justify the endless anguish and pain they professed to suffer, and in the case of the chivalric romance because Amadís was not just any lover, he was the paragon of courtly love of medieval Castille, at whose proverbial shrine Don Quixote himself laid his offering:

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fabricate his own transgressive plot twists. Cacho Blecua continues: the enhancement of the Endriago's diabolical power is just one effect of the memory-turned-presence of Oriana. The other is the same function it has always served—to confer upon the knight greater strength for the deed at hand. The author states that "Si el amor tiene como consecuencia una mayor potenciación de determinadas cualidades, en nuestra novela confiere un mayor arrojo al enamorado para enfrentarse a cualquier peligro. […] Ahora, con la presencia real de ella, puede vencer a la personificación del mal" (284). While this affirmation could be true of Amadís' Chapter LV supplication (II, 787), here it seems deeply problematic. Montalvo makes it plain that the memory of Oriana is unequal to the task at hand and that the only reason Amadís prevails is because God intervenes: "Y como las cosas pasadas de su propia servidumbre se caen y pereçen, y ya enojado Nuestro Señor qu'el enemigo malo oviesse tenido tanto poder y fecho tanto mal en aquellos que, aunque pecadores, en su santa fe cathólica creían, quiso darle esfuerço y gracia special, que sin ella ninguno fuera poderoso de acometer ni osar esperar tan gran peligro, a este cavallero para que sobre toda orden de natura diesse fin aquel que a muchos la havía dado…" (Montalvo, III, 1144). Amadís promptly strikes his foe a mortal blow.

An explanation that would seem to better reconcile the conflicting elements of this episode posits these scandalous utterances by Amadís as vestiges of rhetoric from a primitive episode in which, most likely, our hero had a brush with death; the adventures of the "ínsolas de Romanía," unceremoniously cut out in their entirety by Montalvo, could have been the source. What is more, the Endriago episode would not be the first time Montalvo failed to convincingly sew together episodes and motifs from the primitive version with those of his own. Sometimes these were the result of untidy splices of disparate information or timelines, as when Amadís departs Gaul for Germany in Chapter LXX (III) and the anticipation of the reader ends in a decidedly anticlimactic and terse summary followed by a contradictory timeline and preposterous occasion (weather) for the hero's passage away from the lands where he apparently did great deeds (Avalle-Arce, 81-82, 283, 289). In other instances, it was disparities in themes and motifs between the Arthurian primitive material and his reformed version that created tensions in tone or simply incongruities in the character of individuals, as with the secret marriage of Perión and Helisena, in which Montalvo labored to Christianize the promiscuity of the primitive version, or with Galaor's numerous and regular conquests—among them Aldeva (I, XII), the daughter of Lelois el Flamenco (I, XV), Brandueta (I, XXV) and Madasima (I, XXXIII)—in which the author does not even attempt to do so. The episode in question would fall into the latter category. Considered from this perspective, its incongruities make much more sense: Montalvo, understanding the importance of the familiarity of the material to his audience, kept the basic structure of a primitive episode, including language and motifs, but changed the story (the encounter with Briolanja in Chapter XL (II) is an obvious example of this technique); this would be a process very familiar to him and one repeated numerous times in Books I-III (Avalle-Arce). Here, with his revisionist designs in high gear and the story hurtling towards the purity and moral immaculacy of his Book IV, the discrepancies between the primitive material and his reforms were perhaps more prominent than in other episodes.

Were this to be the case, it would lend credence to the theory that Amadís' love rhetoric in this episode was from a primitive version which shared historical time and space with *cancionero* love poetry.

[10] Cervantes, too, criticizes this element of chivalric fiction. In Chapter 13 of Part One of *Don Quixote*, the traveler opines that, "…una cosa entre otras muchas me parece muy mal de los caballeros andantes, y es que cuando se ven en ocasión de acometer una grande y peligrosa aventura, en que se vee manifiesto peligro de perder la vida, nunca en aquel instante de acometella se acuerdan de encomendarse a Dios, como cada cristiano está obligado a hacer en peligros semejantes, antes se encomiendan a sus damas, con tanta gana y devoción como si ellas fueran su Dios, cosa que me parece que huele algo a gentilidad" (Cervantes, 152). This, two centuries later, mirrors the criticism directed at the Cancionero's *contrafacta* by contemporaneous ideologues and religious figures, as E. Michael Gerli notes (318-319).

> …quiero, Sancho, que sepas que el famoso Amadís de Gaula fue uno de los más perfectos caballeros andantes. No he dicho bien fue *uno*: fue el solo, el primero, el único, el señor de todos cuantos hubo en su tiempo en el mundo. …Amadís fue el norte, el lucero, el sol de los valientes y enamorados caballeros, a quien debemos de imitar todos aquellos que debajo de la bandera de amor y de la caballería militamos. (Cervantes, I, 300 [25])

To achieve such an expression of love, the *cancionero* and *Amadís* needed a superlative context through which to elevate the topic in the reader or listener's mind: naturally, that was the context of divine love. This was not an attempt to make a mockery of the Church nor even should it be understood as sacrilegious (Gerli, 316); simply put, it was that sacred *agape* provided the mystery, fervor and scope needed to express the *eros* that dominated medieval courtly literature.

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