

GÓNGORA'S SONNET "ACREDITA LA ESPERANZA CON HISTORIAS SAGRADAS": AN EMBLEMORPHIC READING

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Entre poeta y profeta hay
sólo dos letras de diferencia.

In his classic study *La lengua poética de Góngora*, Dámaso Alonso warns us of the dangers of what he calls "la crítica oficial" which tends to affirm and perpetuate a particular "concepto tradicional" (10). "Cuando un mito literario se ha fosilizado tanto como el presente," Alonso tells us, "todo esfuerzo para destruirlo resulta pequeño" (16). Although Alonso was referring to the polemic of the "dos Góngoras," it seems that this postulation could likewise be applicable to certain analyses and interpretations of particularly well known works of a given poet. Such seems to be the case with the "traditional interpretation" of Luis de Góngora's sonnet 167: "Acredita la esperanza con historias sagradas."

What I propose in this study is that critics through the centuries may have been misled by the title of this sonnet, a title which may have little relationship to the actual *topoi* found in the work itself. What the lexical, syntactical and architectural (structural) components seem to point to, however, is an emblematic, or what I shall call an *emblemorphic*, interpretation, based on, as in most emblems, classical mythology.

Acredita la esperanza con historias sagradas

Cuantos forjare más hierros el hado
a mi esperanza, tantos oprimido
arrastraré cantando, y su rüido
instrumento a mi voz será acordado.

Joven mal de la invidia perdonado,
de la cadena tarde redimido,
de quien por no adorarle fue vendido,
por haberle vendido fue adorado.

¿Qué piedra se le opuso al soberano
poder, calificada aun de real sello,
que el remedio frustrase del que espera?

Conducido alimenta, de un cabello,
 uno a otro profeta. Nunca en vano
 fue el esperar, aun entre tanta fiera. (1985: 253)

From the very first critical studies (e.g., Salcedo Coronel [1636]), critics have assumed a biblical *topos* as a central focus for this sonnet. Following this same lead, Robert Jammes confirms these “conceptos tradicionales”:

Lo que aquí atrae nuestra atención es este ardor, esta especie de frenesí con el que Góngora se precipita hacia su destino de cortesano; aun es más visible en el otro soneto [“De la esperanza”] en el que hace de la espera del cortesano una verdadera esperanza en el sentido religioso de la palabra, casi una virtud teologal. No por casualidad el poeta toma sus alusiones del dominio sagrado de la Biblia: ya evoque a José triunfante después de haber sido vendido por sus hermanos, o a Daniel encerrado en la fosa de los leones y luego alimentado milagrosamente por el profeta Habacuc, la idea que constantemente aparece es la del milagro. (288-89)

The major reason for this “fossilized” interpretation, it would seem, is the fact that little is known about “who” or “why” titles were given to most of Góngora’s poems. If, however, we examine closely many of the titles of the earliest editions, particularly of the sonnets, we find that they are in the third person. It becomes obvious that it was Antonio Chacón who invented these “labels,” while he was amassing the vast and varied works of the “claro cisne de Betis” for the 1628 edition of the poet’s work. Thus began a tradition which was followed by Foulché-Delbosc, Millé y Giménez, Jammes, and even Ciplijauskaitė in her 1985 edition of the poet’s sonnets.

If, however, we consider sonnet 167 without its title (as I have said, almost assuredly added after its composition and not by the poet himself), what direct references or allusions of a biblical nature can be found? Except for the word “profeta” (which can certainly come from other than biblical *topoi*) in the penultimate verse, there are no obvious biblical figures, allusions or metaphors at all.

Jammes seems to be on the right track when he suggests that we compare this sonnet to earlier *letrillas* and *romances* “anticortesanos” in order to appreciate Góngora’s change of attitude between his earlier works (before 1617) and his later works near the end of his life: “¡Cuánto camino recorrido...!” exclaims Jammes (289). Jammes continues:

La figura del cortesano, completamente negativa, ahora se aureola, y el pretendiente ridículo y grotesco se convierte en una especie de santo, en

un verdadero mártir cargado de cadenas: arrojado a las fieras, sigue esperando y descubre en su misma alienación una conmovedora grandeza . . . a pesar de sus diversas tentativas con los grandes, el autor mira siempre a los <<señores corteggiantes>> desde el exterior, para criticarlos, burlarse de ellos y rechazarlos; por el contrario, a partir de 1617 se ve obligado a contemplarlos desde dentro a través de su propia situación. Esta doble perspectiva da a su testimonio una amplitud que lo hace particularmente interesante. Pero lo que sobre todo importa ver es que estos dos puntos de vista opuestos no se excluyen en realidad, porque el segundo representa la superación del primero, y no su negación. (289-90)

In fact, if we examine all of the sonnets Góngora wrote in 1623, we find this same "cambio de actitud." That this sonnet is personal, there is no doubt; that it purports a double vision (at least), but of course; that the poet feels isolated and alienated, obviously; but that the "Homero andaluz" ever considered himself a saint or a martyr, seems to be stretching the imagination a bit too far. In no poem that I have examined does the poet refer to himself in terms of a "cristiano perseguido." In his works and in his personal correspondence of this period (1617-1623), Góngora constantly makes claims of being poor, of being a great poet, of being misunderstood and lost, and even of being a heroic figure (e.g., "el gran Licio"), but never of being a martyr.

Thus, in his "cacería de imágenes heroicas" (to use Lorca's metaphor), where would this Baroque poet search to find a figure in chains ("hierros"), who is dragging others ("arrastraré cantando"), who had been a prisoner ("fue vendido") and was frustrated; but by waiting and hoping ("espera" and "esperar") was finally saved ("remediado")? As in many of his works, the poet most likely would have embarked on a journey into that familiar forest of classical mythology, and he would have easily encountered Hercules (that is, one of the poet's favorite figures of antiquity, Alcides), to whom he had alluded numerous times in previous works.

One of the most immediate sources of classical antiquity for the renaissance and baroque poet were the recently published emblem books which enjoyed such tremendous vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in Spain. Yes, the poet most assuredly would refer to his collection of Virgil, Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian, and especially, Ovid. Yet, as John T. Cull points out, all of these were much more readily accessible in their newer, illustrated versions, the "literary arsenal of the baroque poet," so to speak, the emblem books:

The emblem, then, was not only the literal embodiment of Horace's *ut pictura poesis* for a Golden Age audience, but it also contributed to the vogue of *conceptismo*. For the creative writer, the evocation of a previ-

ously constituted emblem permitted the depiction, with great verbal economy and without sacrificing the enigmatic, of an abstract and often moral concept. The metonymic function of emblematics, in which a part depicts a greater whole, allowed it to develop as a unique writing style. (Cull 11)

Instead of recounting or detailing a myth, what Góngora seems to do is simply to "allude" to the myth by presenting it to us in "profile." As Lorca explains in his exquisite study, "Procede por alusiones. Pone a los mitos de perfil y a veces sólo de un rasgo oculto entre otras imágenes distintas" (115-16). And thus the poet transforms the myth to fit into the overall allegory that the sonnet becomes: a true metamorphosis.

If, then, we consider this sonnet "in light of the emblem" (to employ Peter Daly's term), we find a number of "synonymic variations" (lexical similarities between the texts of an emblem and a poem) and a similarity of "architecture" (structure) between the sonnet and the emblem; that is, just as there are four parts (stanzas) to the sonnet, there are four parts to the emblem (*figura*, *subscriptio*, *inscriptio* and *explicatio*). Thus, we might call the sonnet an "emblemorphic sonnet": that is, a sonnet which is both structurally and thematically similar to, if not identical to (or perhaps a parody of), an existing emblem to which the poet had easy access. By combining classical mythology, emblematic conceits and autobiographical material, Góngora uses a number of literary techniques (i.e., formulae of elocution, Latinization of lexical and syntactical units, hyperbaton, hyperbole, etc.) to create his own personalized "emblem" or *emblemorphic* poem.

In previous sonnets in which Góngora had referred to Alcides, all but one (#29, dedicated to the rector of the University of Salamanca, Don Juan de Acuña, "maestro de elocuencia") compare the poet (Licio) to Alcides, the symbol of liberation (via his eloquence, discipline, and strength) and of the search for immortality (also the "empresa de los poetas"). Therefore, it should not surprise us that the poet would have been familiar with the various emblems of Hercules, as depicted in this Emblem CLXXXI of Andreas Alciati's *Emblematur libellus*:

Fig. 1
Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior



*Arcum laeva tenet, regidam fert dextera clavam,
 Contegit et Nemees corpora nuda leo.
 Herculis haec igitur facies? Non convenit illud
 Quod vetus, et senio tempora cana gerit,
 Quid quod lingua ili levibus traiecta catenis,
 Queis fissa facileis allicit aure viros?
 Anne quod Alciden lingua, non robore Galli
 Praestantem populiis iura dedisse ferunt?
 Cedunt arma togae, et quamuis durissima corda
 Eloquio pollens ad sua vota trahit.*

"Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior." *Andreae Alciati emblematur libellus*. D. J. Thuilius (Padua: Tozzi, 1621). Emblem CXXXI, f. 751. Reproduced with the permission of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

In addition to the above figure, I have chosen to reproduce (more for the *figura* than anything else) the same emblem from the works of Bernadino Daza Pinciano (Fig. 2) and Francisco Sánchez Brocense (Fig. 3), all of which Góngora would surely have known, in addition to others in Latin and in Spanish. For although there is much variation from one text to the other in terms of the engravings (*figura*), and in terms of the Spanish translation versus the Latin, what remains constant in all of these is the original Latin text to which Góngora most certainly would have been wed, given his love of and familiarity with that language and the possibilities for Latinizations and neologisms.

Fig. 2

Que la elocuencia puede más que la fuerza



Lleva en la siniestra el arco, en la diestra la dura maza,
y cubre su cuerpo desnudo el león de Nemea.

—¿Es, pues, ésta la imagen de Hércules? No es pertinente una cosa:
que sea viejo y lleve las sienas canosas.

¿Por qué, con la lengua atravesada por finas cadenas,
arrastra fácilmente a los hombres, que las tienen fijadas a las orejas?

—¿Acaso no dicen los Galos que el extraordinario Alcides dio a los
pueblos leyes por la fuerza de la elocuencia y no de las armas? Las
armas ceden ante las togas, y aunque los corazones sean muy duros,

la poderosa elocuencia atrae sus votos.

"Que la esperanza puede más que la fuerza." *Alciato: Emblemas*. Ed. y com. Santiago Sebastián, 223. Emblem CLXXX in the facsimile edition of Daza, 1549.

Although the *figura* is the same in the original Daza text (1549) and in the modern edition of Santiago Sebastián, it is interesting to note the differences between Daza's and Sebastián's titles and texts. Daza's version is as follows:

Que más puede la elocuencia que la fortaleza

En la siniestra el arco se descubre,
 Y la derecha tien' la clava dura,
 Y la piel del león su cuerpo cubre.
 Luego ésta es la fación de Hércules pura,
 Mas no le quadra aquello que está cano,
 Como hombre ya de edad vieja y madura.
 Mas ¿qué querrá dezir que está el anciano
 La lengua con cadenas trespasada
 Con que lleva tras sí al vulgo insano?
 ¿Es porque Alcides con lengua acordada
 A los pueblos Franceses componía,
 Más que por fortaleza aventajada?
 Las armas con la paz no ayan porfía,
 Pues aún a los muy duros corazones,
 Domo con buen hablar sabiduría.
 (Daza, *Emblemas: Alciato*. Ed. y com. Manuel Montero
 Vallejo, 156-57)

Fig. 3
Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior



(The Latin text is the same as that of 1621, Fig.1.)

"Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior." *Alciati emblemata* (Lyon: Roville, 1573). Ed. Francisco Sánchez Brocense. Emblem CLXXX, f. 490. Reproduced with permission of the Department of Special Collections, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, Univ. of Pennsylvania

If we compare the texts of the four "poems" (Góngora's sonnet, Alciati's original Latin text, Sebastián's translation, and Daza's original Spanish text), we find the following "synonymic variations."

Synonymic Variations:

Daza/Sebastián
 (Alciato)

Góngora

el arco se descubre/Lleva...el arco
 (*Arcum laeva tenet*)

mi voz (by metonymy)

está cano/las sienes canosas
 (*senio tempora cana gerit*)

de un cabello/...profeta

cadena trespasada/finas cadenas

hierros

(*catenis*)

vulgo insano/los hombres
(*illi*)

otros (que arrastra)

lleva tras sí/arrastra fácilmente
(*levibus traiecta*)

arrastraré cantando

lengua acordada/la lengua atravesada
(*quod lingua...Alciden lingua*)

su ruido/instrumento de mi voz
(by metonymy)

muy duros corazones/corazones...
duros
(*quamuis durissima corda*)

piedra se le opuso...

hablar sabiduría/atrae sus votos
(*pollens ad sua vota trahit*)

conducido alimenta

With so many intertextual referents it seems difficult to refute the idea that in this sonnet Góngora is alluding not to Joseph and Daniel ("el concepto tradicional"), but to the myth of Hercules. The only symbol that remotely relates the two legends is the lion's skin which was worn by Daniel in the lion's den and the one worn by Alcides, which was obtained from Nemea. However, for those not accustomed to reading in the light of the emblem or for those unfamiliar with the legend of Hercules, it is easy to understand why one might miss these connections. Let us now, then, examine these allusions and demonstrate how they do, indeed, also relate to the life (and "esperanzas") of our "cisne andaluz."

Although Góngora often reserves the "autobiographical key" for the last tercet, he is quite forthcoming in the second verse of this sonnet, informing us that it is indeed "mi esperanza" that Providence ("el hado") has condemned ("forjare más hierros" and "oprimido") to enlighten ("arrastraré cantando") the masses ("tantos" or "el vulgo insano," according to the Daza edition), just as Hercules was condemned in Lydia (Persia) to serve the Queen Omphale. It is here in verses 3-4 that we see one of Góngora's most eloquent and ingenious ekphrastic images, whereby through metonymy and paronomasia the poet depicts the bow carried by his hero as both an instrument of war and of music, as we visualize the "instrumento . . . mi voz" crossing the chains ("hierros") (Fig. 1) to form "una agudeza por excelencia" of bow and chains metamorphosed into bow and strings of the musical instrument with which the poet will communi-

cate with his people. With "mi voz será acordado" the poet (or "profeta") hopes to sing "su rüido" ("their noise / sound," if we follow the sociopolitical interpretation, or "its renown" ["de su esperanza"], if we stick with the autobiographical reading), so that it might be "acordado" (that is, "recordado," "de acuerdo," "resuelto," or "harmonizado"). Yet, as the "cadenas" seem to issue forth from the mouth of our hero (Figs. 2 & 3), we might interpret the "acordado" as the "ruido...del hado" (by hyberbaton); that is, that the voice of the poet is the instrument of Providence that will resolve the problems and tranquilize the savages ("los de la Corte") if only he were given the opportunity ("forjare," future subjunctive) by those that oppose him (e.g., a clear reference to Góngora's struggle between 1617-1623 to obtain various posts and favors in the courts of Phillip III and Phillip IV).

In order to complete his drawing of the *figura* (the two quatrains), Góngora seems to experiment with yet another type of *emblemorphosis*: instead of beginning with the specific object, as he has done in a number of other sonnets from this period (1623) and later extracting a universal to be exemplified by the personal (the autobiographical), in this sonnet the poet begins with the personalized concept ("mi esperanza") and elaborates an allegorical painting which, when completed, not only "tells" us "his" story, but also "shows" us that of a parallel hero easily identifiable to anyone who has "read in the light of the emblem," that is, Góngora's primary readership, the intelligentsia of his contemporary Spain. Yet, without the consistent use of personal adjectives and pronouns throughout the first quatrain ("mi" and "yo" understood), this would be a totally different poem; thus, by letting the reader know almost immediately that the poem is autobiographical, Góngora overtly invites us to compare his life and "esperanza" with those of the young man introduced in the second quatrain. In this context, then, the poet "forces" us to read the second quatrain "a la luz de la analogía." It is up to the reader to search for and to discover (in this Gongorine forest of images) the analogical value of this poem; just as the well-read "lector" would be familiar with the myth of Hercules, those who were familiar with the poetry of the "claro cisne de Betis" would know that this controversial poet (perhaps the most controversial of the Spanish Golden Age) was "mal perdonado," "redimido," "vendido," and "adorado." The "agudeza," then rests on the reader's ability to "adivinar" the analogical literary figure who would have suffered equally as the poet. This quatrain serves as a kind of "flashback" which reveals to us the true legendary hero with whom we can compare the "gran poeta oprimido de Córdoba," thereby completing in detail the *figura* of this now personalized emblem.

One of the twelve tasks of Hercules was to kill the lion of Nemea

(symbol of the sun); this done, because of his pride, Hercules was punished and forced to travel to Lydia where he became the slave of the Queen Omphale. In Lydia he cleansed the kingdom of all monsters and bandits and later married the queen. In spite of these great accomplishments (and perhaps out of envy), the queen forced Hercules to dress as a woman and to do "housework" (women's work), including sewing and weaving (e.g., the chains ["hilos"] between the heroic figure and his followers). Given this well known legend, it would not be very difficult to imagine an analogical series of events in Góngora's life, including his early works as a young "cortesano," writing dedicatory poems, "tumularia," etc., awaiting ("esperando") the favors of the Court, while at the same time openly criticizing the "cortesianos." Later, once his work was accepted, he suffered the "cadenas" ("lazos," both good and bad) with that same Court, having been favored by Phillip II and Phillip III until the latter's death in 1621. As Jammes confirms, between 1617 and 1626 Góngora wrote seventy "poemas de Corte," many "poemas encargados," and only a few "poemas inspirados" (260-62). But then (at least once) the poet was "redimido" "de la cadena," which could signify the "liberty" he felt upon receiving in 1617 the post which he sought for many years: that of the Court Chaplain (Jammes 26). It might also refer to the "freedom from obligation" he felt: the freedom from the necessity to be a loyal courtier and the freedom to "criticar de nuevo" those same courtiers who had reviled him, thereby confirming Jammes' earlier comment concerning the "doble perspectiva" between 1617 and 1626.

Thus ends the second quatrain with an almost perfect anadiplosis: "de quien por no adorarle fue vendido, / por hablarle vendido fue adorado," opening a plethora of possible interpretations, as much lexical and syntactical as psychological and autobiographical. Here we are presented with a literal bombardment of images and formulae of elocution (vv. 7-8: "si no A, B") in order to "complicate" (i.e., enrich) the poem. This said, then, how do we interpret these two verses? There is the obvious play with "adorar" ("venerar" or "amar") and "vendido" ("sacrificado" o "traicionado," which, according to Alemany y Selfa, when used with "por" could mean "atribuirle a uno una condición o calidad que no tiene" [987-88]). If we accept the "facts" of the legend of Omphale and Hercules, that she was beautiful and "viciosa" and that she liberated him from his slavery only in order to marry him (and thus to subject him to further humiliation), then we might conjecture (based on Góngora's correspondence and on various accounts of Góngora's relationship with the court and the courtiers) the following "reasonable interpretation" of the conclusion of the quatrain: a) that "vendido fue adorado" signifies the poet's "casamiento" to the Court, and particularly with the three Phillips; and b) that this is a "cuchillo de dos filos," in

that he was alternately accepted, rejected, and later, after "selling himself" to this style of life (life in Madrid and particularly in "la Corte"), finally accepted. Yet, for this "cortesano provinciano" (to use Jammes' term) there was always a feeling of division of loyalties, even a sense of division within himself: of his physical "home" and "homeland" ("patria chica"), as well as his physical, psychological, political and spiritual *persona*.

The first noun of the first tercet, "piedra," conjures up a number of possible meanings, as well as usages. Given the "plot" of the sonnet to this point and the verses that follow, it seems only appropriate to refer back to the legend of Hercules one more time. Far from his homeland, in Persian lands, oppressed by the Queen Omphale, Hercules surely felt the hard heartedness of his sovereign ("piedra," "calificada"); likewise, far from his beloved Córdoba, in the court of Madrid, the poet Licio must have considered himself as much oppressed by a severe, yet illustrious and noble heart ("soberano/poder" under the "real sello"), one with the power to reject and frustrate the poet's "esperanza." The intense frustration (physical, political, social and economic) that Góngora must have felt during this period (as is evidenced by his correspondence and his poetry between 1621 and 1624) forced him to humble himself on one hand (soliciting aid from his friends in Córdoba) and to be bold on the other (writing some of his most sincere, impassioned, yet bitter poetry). With this *subscriptio* (the third stanza which serves to elaborate or explain the first two quatrains, the *figura*), this antagonistic emblem begins to take its shape, as the poet begins to fill in the lines with the colors and textures of a slave-like figure, a "cautivo cortesano," so to speak, who finds himself (just like Hercules) in his prison without doors, yet with enigmatic chains/links ("hilos de cabeza," ironically, this very sonnet) that connect him to his public and provide him with "el remedio . . . del que espera."

The final resolution (the *explicatio* of the emblem, the final tercet of the traditional sonnet) defines for us and entwines us in the discursive threads that hold this narrative poem together. Góngora, like most poets, saw himself not only as a hero (if not through force, at least through eloquence), but also as a prophet, a spokesman of the "verdad oscurecida," of the "nueva poesía" which was criticized by his contemporaries, yet admired by them, as well. As Gerardo Diego points out in the introduction to his *Antología poética en honor de Góngora*, very few poets escaped the influence of the "claro cisne de Betis":

Todos, en más o en menos, se rindieron a la poderosa, a la invisible y filtrada epidemia. De tal modo, que creo que ninguno de los textos que integran esta colección podría haberse escrito tal como lo está, si el poeta no hubiese conocido de antemano los versos de D. Luis de Góngora. Me

falta espacio para probarlo en los casos más extremos de independencia de estilo, en un Esquilache o un Jáuregui; pero creo que al lector acostumbrado a finezas de paladar poético y retórico, no se le escaparán los motivos—más bien que pretextos—de la inclusión. (11)

If we had to search for a *durissima corda* (Alciato's words), we would not have to look much further than Góngora's contemporary and arch enemy (and "student"), Francisco de Quevedo: "hay una razón cronológica para concluir que fue Quevedo quien tomó de la pavorosa panoplia de Góngora" (Diego 19). This poet more than any other borrowed from the Cordobés "bien bruñidas y ejercitadas, las hojas de doble filo de sátira, torcidas siniestramente en curvas y quiebros de letrillas, décimas y sonetos" (20). "Conducido" one prophet to another, "alimentándose" one from the other, Góngora took from the classic poets in order to pass on to his disciples that which was necessary to "remedy" and to "redeem" himself (and his disciples). "De un cabello" each one, just as Hercules had done with "los suyos," the prophet Licio would lead if only "they" would allow him. Meanwhile, however, he must wait "entre tanta fiera" (the courtiers and critics), just as Hercules endured in his lion skin: "un engaño esperando al desengaño." This, then, completes the *explicatio* and leaves us only to discover the *inscriptio*, that important one or two verses which "summarize," however inenigmatically, the central *topos* of the sonnet.

Given the autobiographical details of Góngora's life at court as outlined above and the legend of Hercules' slavery in Persia, there can be little doubt that the universal concept and the baroque *conceito* implied here (usually saved for the final verse) are "frustration" and "hope," i.e., "endurance" ("esperar con esperanza"). Thus, if we extract the two verses which deal with these ideas and create the conceit, we find our *inscriptio* in the form of an epigram in verses 11 and 14 "Que el remedio frustrase del que espera / . . . / fue el esperar, aun entre tanta fiera."

Patience is, after all, a virtue. Waiting is not always bad, even under the most dire of situations. In these two rhyming verses Góngora not only emphasizes the double meaning of "esperar" as a positive concept (as Jammes and Ciplijauskaité interpret these verses), but also adds the "agudeza" that the "remedio" can also be the reason (cause) of waiting and the source of the frustration of hope; as we would say in English, "The cure may be worse than the illness." Just as the aging Hercules spent those bitter-sweet years in the court of Omphale (suffering silently, yet enjoying the "benefits" of the courtly life), the Cordoban poet (like Alcides, older and wiser), "naufragado en la Corte de Madrid," realizes that "todo es esperar," as he writes in the last verse of his sonnet "De la esperanza," written in the same year: "derrotado seis lustros ha que nada." That is, he

has waited six years (1617-23) among the enemy (“... espera, aun entre tanta fiera”) with little results; yet, he is wise enough to know that “Nunca en vano / fue el esperar.” As Jammes explains, “Espera porque es su razón de ser” (288); “ser cortesano es eso: esperar todos los días un milagro” (289). Through patience and eloquence (signs of “sabiduría), the prophet will lead them: *cedunt arma togae, et quamuis durissima corda / Eloquio pollens ad sua vota trahit*” (Alciati, f. 751). In addition, as Santiago Sebastián explains, “en el Renacimiento se lo consideró [a Hércules] como inventor de la lengua y promotor del culto a los dioses, aunque al mismo tiempo inculcaba el silencio para no profanar los misterios divinos” (224). Would “el Homero andaluz” have considered himself anything less?

Architecturally, we are left with a structure that looks something like the following:

Acredita la esperanza con historias sagradas

Cuantos forjare más hierros el hado]	
a mi esperanza, tantos oprimido]	
arrastraré cantando, y su rüido]	
instrumento a mi voz será acordado.]	<i>figura</i>
Joven mal de la invidia perdonado,]	
de la cadena tarde redimido,]	
de quien por no adorarle fue vendido,]	
por haberle vendido fue adorado.]	
¿Qué piedra se le opuso al soberano]	
poder, calificada aun de real sello,]	<i>subscriptio</i>
que el remedio frustrase del que espera?]	
Conducido alimenta, de un cabello,]	
uno a otro profeta. Nunca en vano]	<i>explicatio</i>
fue el esperar, aun entre tanta fiera.]	

All that is lacking is the *inscriptio*, which, as I said above, is composed of the eleventh and fourteenth verses:

que el remedio frustrase del que espera?]	
[...] fue el esperar, aun entre tanta fiera.]	<i>inscriptio</i>

This *inscriptio* could be substituted easily for Chacón’s title, thereby allowing for a more secular reading of this sonnet. Considering the rest of the poet’s works (particularly those of this period of his life, 1617-1623), such

an interpretation seems far more consistent and feasible than that of a biblical *topos*.

That this sonnet could be read from a biblical perspective, as the "crítica tradicional" would have us do, there remains but little possibility. Given the allusions in this and other sonnets from this year of Góngora's life, I propose, we should at least consider other possibilities. For as Ellen Lokos points out, "un poema es una articulación que cobra sentido sólo con respecto a un sistema de convenciones asimilado por el lector y que la recuperación del significado fidedigno, conforme con las intenciones del lector." This requires of the modern reader "una labor de reconstrucción que nos permita describir el verdadero hábito de lectura de la época," which, Lokos adds, "consiste, en gran parte, en hacer explícito el sistema latente que da paso a los efectos literarios" (63). That is, within the historical, literary and biographical framework of this sonnet, its creator and his readership, we must consider the work "in light of the emblem," and therefore entertain the possibility of an "emblemorphic reading."

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