

Enargeia and Its Illusions in Garcilaso's "Ode ad florem Gnidi"

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In 1531, a year before Garcilaso de la Vega (c. 1500-1536) took up residence in Naples, Bernardo Martirano published a commentary on Horace's *Ars Poetica*, the manuscript having been written a few years before by the humanist's late teacher, Aulo Giano Parrasio (Fosalba 2011, 31). Martirano, along with Antonio Tilesio, Scipione Capece, and the Augustinian friar Girolamo Seripando, among others, were making a deliberate effort to restore the intellectual life of a city still recovering from Odet de Foix's devastating 1528 siege. The rising generation of humanists would discard the model of community pioneered by Giovanni Pontano and imitated by his most illustrious successor, Jacopo Sannazaro, a model whereby the common intellectual life centered around a single charismatic figure. The post-Sannazaro humanists would instead opt for a decentralized network held together by a shared love of classical learning (Fosalba 2018, 1–7, Furstenburg-Levi 2018, 89-91).

In his comments on the *Ars Poetica*, Parrasio magnifies one of the themes implicit in Horace: the power of literature to bring a matter to life before the eyes of its audience. Dramatists who re-create a battle scene or confrontation with the ancient gods transport distant ages to the here and now. The movements of actors on stage stir the viewers' sense of sight, which "places in view of the soul what we cannot otherwise see or perceive" (52v). Audience members will observe actors in pantomime with their physical eyes, but imagination allows them to see Athenian warriors. Parrasio argues that well-crafted writing has this power as well. Through the charm of his poetry, Homer succeeds in "setting war and peace before our eyes" (46v). Even the orator's *dispositio*, when written with "force and nerve," has image-producing power (4v). The common refrain is "ante oculus." The right words conjure visions that play out before the inner eye of the soul.

Parrasio's annotations hint at the esteem among members of the emerging post-Pontano intellectual community for classical theories of visualization. Garcilaso would receive a hearty welcome to this circle upon his arrival in 1532. His ode to Tilesio betrays the warmth of his friendship with the Cosenzan neo-Latinist, as well as with Capece and Girolamo Seripando, who inherited the library that included Parrasio's Horace commentary (Fosalba 2012).¹ The poetry that Garcilaso produced during this period likewise reveals an interest in the imagination's power to see. Scholars as early as Fernando de Herrera have called attention to Garcilaso's talent for painting with words, but the nature of his technique demands a fuller account. This essay considers the role of the *enargeia* tradition in one of Garcilaso's Neapolitan poems, the "Ode ad florem Gnidi" (hereafter "ode"). I argue that the poem combines clear uses of classical and early modern ideas about vivid visual description with unconventional adaptations. Where the ode stretches the bounds of *enargeia* theory are precisely those places where it suggests its first readership, the community of humanists in Naples that embraced the Castilian soldier-poet as one of their own.

Classical Theories of Visualization

Prized in classical rhetorical manuals, *enargeia* stands for the proposition that the most

¹ Fosalba 2011 traces the influence of Parrasio's *Ars Poetica* annotations on the "Epístola a Boscán."

moving speech is the speech best able to conjure vivid images in the mind's eye. *Enargeia* is a communicative aspiration embedded in a network of multi-disciplinary ideas. Its strands of theoretical support crisscross from rhetoric and aesthetics into physiology and epistemology. Classical Latin had a small constellation of terms for the Greek ἐναργεῖα, the most prominent being *demonstratio*, *evidentia*, *inlustratio* and the calque *hypotyposis*.² Language differences, and the broad span of time connecting these theorists, play a role in generating discrepancies. But the more determinative factor is the difficulty in assigning to a language, any language, a single word to account for a theoretically rich, albeit imprecise, concept. Terence Cave's definition, as satisfactory as any, gives a sense of just how many parts must be assembled for the term to have operational value: "the evocation of a visual scene, in all its details and colours, as if the reader were present as a spectator" (6). *Enargeia* is the vision of something not physically seen when that vision arises from descriptive words. It is a kind of writing that can be identified only with reference to its effect, a visual presence cast on the soul.

The aesthetics of *enargeia* are rooted in classical beliefs about the physiology of the imagination. According to Aristotelian theory, the human soul may be moved by sense perceptions even though the object of those perceptions is not presently available. This is because sensory data, once perceived, remains part of us, ready to be enlisted for a variety of uses. When we remember, we recall sights and sounds that we recognize as part of our past. Deliberation requires that the mind summon perceptions and apply them to present circumstances. In dreams and hallucinations, the mind takes discrete sensory data from real objects and reassembles them, often to fantastic ends. Aristotle calls this quality of movement by which sensory data is represented to the soul *phantasia* and the movements *phantasmata* (Modrak 18–22; Bussels 61–64).

These ideas filter through classical rhetorical manuals and down into the early modern era, where a commentator like Fernando de Herrera takes them as received truth. Herrera writes on the nature of *phantasia* early in his *Anotaciones* on the poetry of Garcilaso:

Es la fantasía potencia natural de l'ánima sensitiva, i es aquel movimiento o acción de las imágenes aparentes i de las especies impressas. Tomó nombre griego de la lumbre, como dize Aristóteles, porque el viso, que es el más aventajado i nobilíssimo sentido, no se puede exercer sin lumbre, i porque assí como la lumbre i claridad, según refiere Plutarco en las *Opiniones de los filósofos*, muestra las cosas que rodea i ilustra, assí se muestra la fantasía mesma. (299–300)

For Aristotle, *phantasmata* may derive from any of the five exterior senses. But even Aristotle uses sight as the paradigmatic kind of perception (Johansen 199; Bussels 63). As Herrera rightly notes, the word *phantasia* derives from the Greek word for light, which is perceptible only to the eyes. He assumes, following the classical tradition, that sight is "the most favored and noble sense." It is understandable, then, that Herrera would accept the standard gloss of *phantasmata* as "apparent images" and of *phantasia* as "imagination" (300). The primacy of

² *Evidentia* is found in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (3:60; VI.ii.32; 3:374; VIII.iii.61). He later acknowledges that what he calls *evidentia* others call ὑποτύπωσις (*hypotyposis*) (4:56; IX.2.40). *Demonstratio* comes from the *Rhetorica ad herennium*. (Caplan 404; IV.iv.68). *Evidentia* and *illustratio* were commonly attributed to Cicero, though Bussels points out that, strictly speaking, Cicero uses the adjective *inlustris* instead of the noun *illustratio*. His preferred expression for the concept of vivid visual description is the phrase "sub aspectum paene subiectio" (71, 80).

sight in classical and early modern rhetoric is indispensable to the scaffolding of *enargeia* theory. Vision, for these writers, is the sense most capable of perceiving things in themselves. It is the sense that can supply more details, or *circumstantiae*, than any other.

The assumption that visual data is the principal source of *phantasmata* is also the basis of a paradox. When the genre is oratory, an audience primarily hears, not sees, the oration—as the Latin root of *audience* reminds us. How does sound turn to imaginative sight? The answer is that classical and early modern rhetoricians placed great stock in the power of words to summon stored images. They began with the belief that an audience comes to an oration with a storehouse of *phantasmata* gathered from daily living. From this insight they reasoned that the skilled orator could call forth his audience’s *phantasmata* and combine them into the images of the oration, just as an artist mixes pigment on the palette and applies it to the canvas.

Writing on theatre, Aulo Giano Parrasio explains that for an actor’s speech to have imaginative effect, the sounds of the words must pass by the audience’s eyes (“oculorum commendatione”), that is, make a connection to stored visual input, before they are placed in custody of the soul (52v). The tradition that champions pictorialism in poetry follows from the assumption that a poetic detail is encoded sensory data, most importantly from sight. When considering the quickest way for a play to communicate to its audience, Horace ranks vision above hearing. But he counsels that the dramatist “remove from sight much that can presently be reported in immediate and vivid language” (36, 50-51). The rightly chosen words can create a presence that is perceived not with the external eyes but with the eyes of the soul.

In the *enargeia* tradition, vivid visual description is ultimately directed outward. The imaginative eyes that matter most are those in the audience. To make a text vivid, however, the speaker must first place before himself the images that will eventually make their way to others. *Visiones*, Quintilian’s Latin gloss of *phantasiai*, is apt since he has in mind the art of visualization. His oft-cited passage on *enargeia* is foremost a description of the imaginative life of the orator:

The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has properly formed what the Greeks call *phantasiai* (let us call them “visions”), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically present to us. Some use the word *euphantasiōtos* of one who is exceptionally good at realistically imagining to himself things, words, and actions. (3:58-61; VI.ii.29-30)

The orator must learn how to concentrate and conjure up stored images in his own mind before articulating them and casting them to others. Ruth Webb writes helpfully of the transmission of *phantasmata* as a “chain of images.” If the orator is successful, the audience will become the final custodian of the *phantasmata* that have originated in the speaker’s imagination (97).

Metapoetry of Presence and Absence (vv. 1-30)

Poetic visualization drives the opening stanzas of the “Ode ad florem Gnidi.” Rather than begin with the first details of a scene that the rest of the ode will complete, Garcilaso lifts the veil on his creative process. He reveals himself at work summoning and discarding *phantasmata* until he settles on one suitable to the occasion and his talents. The centrality of sight at the beginning of the ode might not be obvious since Garcilaso presents himself as a musician. From the opening verse, he portrays himself as a singer, lute in hand, whose music calms storms and tames

wild beasts. Yet his descriptions are predominantly visual. The first two stanzas are heavy on appeals to motion, which is perceived by sight. We see winds stirring the seas (vv. 4-5) and a jumble of enchanted animals and trees advancing through the mountains (vv. 6-10).³ With the Orpheus motif abandoned in the third stanza, the poem places before the eyes of the audience a succession of finely wrought, though evanescent, poetic miniatures. We first see Mars stained with dust, blood and sweat (vv. 13-15) followed by a triumphal procession of captive Germans and French (vv. 16-20). The third image will not fade away so easily as the other two. The lyric voice conjures the sight of the beautiful flower of Gnido, armed and disdainful, alongside a viola flower, the pale transformation of her mournful lover (vv. 26-30).⁴

In his typology of *enargeia*, Quintilian identifies one category of vividness in writing as a description that gives a picture of the whole scene. Perhaps Garcilaso exemplifies this type of *enargeia* with these sketches, where a few words suffice to give the contours of the entirety (Quintilian 3:376-77; VIII.iii.63-64; Webb 92-93). The mere evocation of the word “Marte” is enough to suggest martial themes. Spattering the Roman god of war with dust, blood, and sweat takes in the sweep of heaven and earth. In the next scene, the metonymy of a wheel for a chariot is a clue to the audience that the poet is continuing with a classical image. The evocation of barbarian French and Germans bound and paraded in procession confirms that the scene is a Roman triumph.

Not until the fifth stanza does the poet begin to unpack the substance of the poem, an entreaty to a disdainful woman on behalf of the poet’s scorned friend. The roundabout approach to the ode’s stated purpose suggests that there is more to the poem than a lover’s complaint. Foremost, these preliminary verses establish the meta-poetic nature of the ode.⁵ At the same time, they give priority to the lyric voice over the lover and beloved. The principal character of the ode will be the poetic “I,” and his principal theme the making of poetry. From the opening verses, the lyric voice is casting a chain of images to the audience while feigning that the true image-casting has not yet begun. The classical tradition of visual communication prescribes a reliable formula for the achievement of *enargeia*. The orator first imagines the scenes that will be the subject of the oration. These scenes are then coded in text, performed, then finally decoded as images in the mind of the audience. In the early stanzas of the ode, Garcilaso invites us to pretend with him that none of these steps exist but the first. We behold the ever-changing screen of his *oculus mentis*.

When taken in relation to the love suit, the ode’s early, passing images create a deceptive hierarchy of visual presence. Because the poetic voice summons then discards the first few images, there is an insinuation that they are less present, perhaps even less real, than the images that the poet submits to the audience as evidence of the lover’s plight. A Roman triumph hearkens to the distant past, whereas the suffering of the poet’s friend is immediate in time and space. Assuming that the identities of the lover and beloved would have been known to the ode’s early readers—Mario Galeota and Violante Sanseverino are compelling candidates—, we can suppose that the audience would be filling in images of suffering and disdain with the physical

³ Quotations of the ode are taken from Vega (2020, 283-86). To facilitate comparisons with other editions, this essay will cite by verse number.

⁴ The reading of viola as flower should not be taken to exclude its reading as a musical instrument (Whitby; Wilson; Vega 2017, 285).

⁵ Julián Jiménez Heffernan also proposes a metapoetic reading of the poem. In his interpretation, the ode is a defense of lyric poetry in the mold of an Italian *canzone* (Vega 2017, 274). See also Cortés Tovar, Johnson (298).

characteristics of people who shared with them the reality of 1530s Naples.⁶

A casual reference to the intertexts relevant to the opening stanzas seems to support the notion that the *phantasmata* cast to the audience don't become fully present until the poem begins to unpack the lover's complaint. The ode follows the classical tradition of a *recusatio*, in which the speaker contemplates certain themes beyond his ability before settling on a matter suitable to his poetic skill. Propertius, in his elegy of Book II.1, lacking the powers to praise the exploits of Augustus and past heroes, contents himself with recounting his own amorous exploits (55-56, vv. 17-47; Cortés Tovar 7-9). In a similar fashion, Horace, in his ode of Book I.6, forbidden by the Muse to sing of military conflict, sings of struggle in love (1998, 34, vv. 4-20; Cortés Tovar 10-12). The temptation is to fit the ode snugly over this pattern. Garcilaso, desiring to sing of military struggle and triumph but lacking the Orphean skill necessary to do so, turns instead to the suffering of a friend frustrated in romance.

Attention to the ode's grammar enables the reader to see the hierarchy of presence for the ruse that it is. Running for an astonishing thirty verses, the opening sentence of the poem is formulated as a counterfactual. We may condense it as follows: "If I had the abilities of Orpheus (stanzas 1-2), I wouldn't sing of military feats (stanzas 3-4), but of you, oh hard-hearted beauty (stanza 5), and of your spurned lover (stanza 6)." Taken literally, the lyric voice tells us that he is unable to sing about love just as he is unable to sing about war. Because the poet cannot clear the high bar of calling forth creatures and calming seas at the sound of his lyre (vv. 1-5), amorous and martial themes are equally out of reach. This is to say that the visual images conjured in the long opening sentence of the poem come to the audience qualified as hypotheticals. The lyric voice invites the audience to visualize a series of images that he would create if he were capable, including those of the unhappy lover. There is a difference between mentioning war, which a poet without skill in writing martial poetry can do, and painting with words an emblem of Mars on the battlefield followed by a vignette of Roman triumph. *Enargeia* binds the poet to a descriptive reality in a way that a list does not. Stated differently, if the audience can visualize a martial scene, then the poet has succeeded in writing about it.

The lyric voice's protestation that he is unable to write about amorous themes is even more perverse since a love suit is the main substance of the ode. Though the counterfactual sentence ends at v. 30, there is no thematic break. The "miserable amante" that the poet would write about if he had Orphean powers is the "cativo" of the following verse. The subtlety of verse 31, "Hablo de aquel cativo," makes it easy to overlook this declaration's continued dependence on the apodosis. Garcilaso offers the pretense of indulging the audience's wish to dispense with the fancy within a fancy that is the ode's opening sentence and take hold of more solid stuff. Yet in the new wrapping is more of the same fancy. The ode discards the conditional mood (vv. 22, 24) for the present indicative without changing the subject matter. Given the thematic continuity, "Hablo de" is best taken as synonymous with "Me refiero a . . .," a clarification of the subject introduced in verse 21. The counterfactual that begins with the ode's first sentence thus continues to the end of the poem. Verses 31-110 are elaborations on the hard-hearted beauty and her spurned lover.

In sum, the poem taken at face value is an ode to the poetry that Garcilaso would write if he had Orphean powers. While the poet is denying his ability to write a poem about a hard-hearted beauty, he is presenting its exposition. When he verbalizes the *phantasmata* of a

⁶ Since the sixteenth century, Garcilaso commentators have been attempting to identify the distraught lover and disdainful beloved. For the sake of convenience, this essay follows the convention of referring to them as Mario Galeota and Violante Sanseverino. See Elias Rivers' summary of the scholarly tradition (Vega 1974, 203-04).

triumphal procession (vv.13-20), he is prompting his audience to visualize something that, on the terms of his argument, is not only irrelevant to the main substance of the poem but beyond the poet's ability to describe. With a few carefully placed visual details, Garcilaso manages to take a rhetorically distant structure—the negated apodosis of a counterfactual—and imbue it with a beguiling nearness, indeed, with the concreteness of nonfiction. The surface of the text does not register anything but the insistence that lofty themes of love and war are beyond the poet's grasp. It is left for the reader to prod beneath the surface to discover the shallowness of Garcilaso's protestations of inability.

Writing on the history of *enargeia* in antiquity, Stijn Bussels shows how the concept of vivid description proceeds on two independent tracks in Greek and Roman thought. For philosophers like the Stoics and Epicureans, *enargeia* meant an accurate impression of sensory stimuli. For rhetoricians, on the other hand, *enargeia* referred to the ability to render a scene present in the mind regardless of its correspondence with the external world (57–80). In this understanding, vivid description creates a visual presence that exists in a physical absence. *Phantasmata* occupy a place that they can't fill. Much of the rhetorical use of *enargeia* in antiquity was forensic. Quintilian's example of a courtroom lawyer describing a murder is not accidental (3:60; VI.ii.31). In the rhetorical tradition, *enargeia* could lead a judicial tribunal to see a criminal act that never happened.

Treatments of *enargeia* in classical rhetorical manuals hint at the tension that Garcilaso presses to an extreme. The norm among them is to describe *enargeia* by means of a counterfactual. In *De oratore*, Cicero praises the kind of amplification that provides a “clear explanation and almost visual presentation of events as if practically going on [*quasi gerantur sub aspectum paene subiectio*]” (4:160-161; III.53.202). The effect of vivid writing is “as if” the image were present before the audience, which is a reminder that the reality before the audience, that which is perceptible to the five exterior senses, has not changed (Webb 103–05). Garcilaso's innovation is to call attention to *enargeia*'s presence and absence simultaneously and in the act of image-making. He signs every image of the ode with “as if,” leaving the audience to sort out the reality of what is vividly before the inner eye.

Fantastic Visions in Motion (vv. 31-65)

In the ode's second (vv. 31-65) and third (vv. 66-110) imitative clusters, Garcilaso continues to explore the limits of visual description as something that is simultaneously there and not there. These sections show an interest in techniques for describing the passage of time, an integral element of *enargeia* and the broader context of ekphrasis.

Over the course of the twentieth century, ekphrasis came to take on the restricted meaning of a description of a work of art, but in faithfulness to the classical tradition, ekphrasis is more broadly any kind of description made with the vivid pictorialism of *enargeia*.⁷ In Latin treatises and the Greek *Progymnasmata*, the rhetorical textbooks for school children, an orator could compose an ekphrasis on persons, places, epochs, or events (Webb 62–63). The narrowed understanding of ekphrasis that took hold in the last century has led to a neglect of other kinds of pictorialism in Renaissance letters. In the case of the ode, the description of events, *pragmata*, is of special relevance.

The classical distinction between description of events and narration may not be quite so clean as modern critics would like. Using historical events as examples, the *Rhetorica ad*

⁷ According to Webb's research, the belief that *ekphrasis* was limited to works of art took hold after Paul Friedländer's 1912 publication of two orations on monuments from late antiquity (31).

herennium distinguishes *enargeia* (*demonstratio*) from *brevitas*, a simple statement of facts. If the speaker's time is limited, or if the sequence of events does not require elaboration, the *Rhetorica* advises *brevitas*. With *demonstratio*, by contrast, the orator delves into the details of the event such that "the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass vividly before our eyes" (Caplan 402-05; IV.liv.68-1v.68). The quantity of details may matter as well as the ability of the orator to cast images. The more visual the detail, the more comfortably the description sits in the lap of ekphrasis.

The myth exemplum of vv. 66-100 stands out as a clear example of *pragmata*. Garcilaso isolates the dramatic finale of Ovid's myth of Anaxarete and Iphis and describes the disdainful woman's fatal transformation moment by moment. There will be more to say below on the *enargeia* technique of the third imitative cluster. The second imitative cluster, which catalogues the suffering of the rejected lover, likewise has the theme of transformation; however, in contrast to the third section of the ode, it isn't immediately apparent that there is a coherent description of the passage of time.

One reason is that much of the image-making of the second section has the transitory quality common to the opening *recusatio*. We learn that rejection has transformed the lover from hale soldier to melancholic layabout. To underscore the ravages of unrequited love, the poet summons a series of *phantasmata* that contrast the lover's former prowess to his current lamentable state (vv. 36-60). As in the first section, where the poet cycles through images of possible topics for an ode, the descriptions are picturesque but fleeting. The ode moves the audience along from image to image with the anaphora "por ti" (vv. 36, 41, 46, 51). Descriptions are heavy on action. In his former state, we see the lover bringing a wild horse into submission, yanking at the reins and pressing his spurs into its flanks (vv. 36-40). Next, he is slicing the air with a sword, swiftly but with great skill (vv. 41-43). But now, in the throes of lovesickness, we find him fleeing from the battlefield as if it were a venomous snake (vv. 56-60). To contrast the image of the courtier at his lyre faithfully following the inspiration of the muse, the poet gives us the image of a man bathing his face in his own tears (vv. 46-50). If not exactly snapshots, these are short-form videos in the life of the lover that collectively make an argument about his misery.

Not all the images in this cluster can be so easily sealed off from the rest. Verses 31-35 introduce nautical imagery, which reappears in vv. 54-55. Verse 35 names Venus, and verse 47 seems to allude to her again. As Heiple has argued, *cítera* is a pun on Cythera, the goddesses' birthplace (362). Taken together, these verses tell of a galley slave chained to a seashell and rowing over treacherous water, from the safety of port to the shores where Venus emerged from the sea. The image sequence is fantastic, suggestive, and diffused over half a dozen stanzas, but it is nonetheless coherent.

The trope of metalepsis does much to account for the technique that makes this section's animated image-making possible. With metalepsis, also known as transumption, the text transitions "from one trope to another [as] compressions of meaning are released along an associative string" (Greene et al. 862).

The associative string begins in stanza seven (vv. 31-35):

Hablo de aquel cativo
de quien tener se debe más cuidado,
que está muriendo vivo,
al remo condenado,
en la concha de Venus amarrado.

Simply stated, Garcilaso compares his friend's suffering in love to the plight of rowing in the galleys. If the historical lover in question is Mario Galeota, the stanza induces a pun on *galeote*. To enable his audience to identify the source of the captive's "living death," Garcilaso gives us, along with the metonymy of Venus, the goddess of love, an anatomical pun on "concha," which left Herrera blushing, "no es tan onesta que la permita nuestra lengua; porque el mantenimiento d' este género comueve el incentivo de la luxuria" (535).⁸ A staid play on words, the presence of the verb *amar* in "amarrado" reinforces the sense that unrequited love feels like being tied down.

These allusions are conventional and within the grasp of anyone familiar with the *Cancionero* or the Petrarchan sonnet.⁹ Far less conventional is the stanza's underlying visual image. Taking the text literally, the stanza portrays the lover as a galley slave chained to Venus' shell. We need only recall Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" to confirm that life-size shells are not foreign to the Renaissance imaginary.¹⁰ In this case, it is as if Garcilaso takes Botticelli's celebrated painting, erases Venus and her attendants, and paints against the old background a new foreground in which a goddess' shell is recommissioned as a rowboat for an exasperated lover. The sea, no longer the recipient of Uranus' genitals, is now the site of a fruitless exercise in rowing.¹¹

In the Aristotelian theory of the imagination, one of the common functions of *phantasmata* is to produce dreams. Dreams, like memories, are perceptions gathered during our waking hours that reappear in our mind's eye (Johansen 202). But dreams are involuntary, and the dream may not faithfully represent the cause that originates it. A dream of a galley slave might follow from the anguish of love rather than a criminal sentence. Nor is verisimilitude a requirement. The coherence of the dream images is suggestive more than empirical. Pieces of stored perceptions with little or no relation to each other may combine to create a new perceptive reality (Johansen 209–10; Modrak 18). The original images are still present but misshapen, as Aristotle's explains, like a reflection in water distorted when the surface is stirred (Johansen 199). Our emotional life contributes to the distortions, as feelings latent in the heart assert themselves in sleep over the soul's imaginary (Modrak 19; Johansen 210).

Garcilaso's use of metalepsis in the middle section of the ode facilitates an image sequence with the distortions and slippery coherence of a dream. Memory plays a basic role in rendering the sequence understandable; however, the memory is not individual but collective. The ode takes fragments of shared cultural meaning, the *phantasmata* of Greek myth and early modern Mediterranean sea traffic, and reassembles them into something no less surreal than a nightmare. As the middle section progresses, the ode takes up additional pieces of cultural memory and folds them into the emerging ekphrasis. Heiple suggests reading the "en lugar de" of "en lugar de

⁸ On the power of seashells in early modern culture to evoke the female body, see Grasskamp.

⁹ The image of lover as tempest-tossed at sea had already reached *topos* status by the time Garcilaso began to pen the ode. We find hints of it in the *Cancionero*, including a *copla* in which the lover is figured as a galley slave (Sarmati 56–68). Petrarch's most fully articulated use of the motif is in *Rime* Sonnet 189 ("Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio"). If the sonnet attracted Garcilaso's attention, it may have been through the mediation of Juan Boscán, who wrote an early sonnet in imitation of it (Sarmati 124–25).

¹⁰ Raphael's "Galatea" (c. 1512) is another contemporary depiction of a seashell boat. In the "Allegory of April: The Triumph of Venus" (1470), Francesco del Cossa depicts Venus in a festive barge drawn by two swans. Mars, dressed as an Italian soldier, kneels before her, while a chain binds him to the pedestal that supports her throne.

¹¹ Heiple brings together Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" and the ode as two examples in the contemporary tradition of Mars and Venus depicted in opposition (382–90).

la cítera sonante' (v. 47) as "at the site of" (362). In this reading, the lover of vv. 31-35 has rowed from open water to the shore of Cythera, with the sonorities provided perhaps by the sea's once procreative whitecaps or the lover's own sobbing. The birthplace of the goddess of love has become a treacherous destination where the lover is left to cry out in despair.

Garcilaso rounds out this section of allusions to the sea by drawing himself into the scene: "yo puedo ser testigo, / que ya del peligroso / naufragio fui su puerto y su reposo" (vv. 53-55). The verb tenses of the two stanzas describing the lover's rowing and Cytherean location are in the present; the harbor imagery is described in past tense. Taken in the context of the other images, vv. 53-55 present a flashback. Once, the lover was safe from storms and not doomed to fruitless rowing. In one of the likely intertexts for this section, Petrarch's sonnet "Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio," the love-crazed lyric voice despairs of finding port as he sails between Scylla and Charybdis (335). The ode turns the perspective around, making the port the lover's point of origin. In addition, it identifies the port as the lyric voice himself. The following stanza provides some explanation for the jarring claim. The lyric voice complains that his friend no longer seeks his companionship, which suggests that in the past Garcilaso's counsel kept his friend from giving into love's enticements. The accumulation of free-flowing association makes this final metaphor, that a friend is a harbor, seem less preposterous than it would be in isolation.

The fantastic nature of the ode's lover-as-rower ekphrasis stands apart from the textbook ekphrases of battles and murders that we find in a manual like the *Rhetorica ad herennium*. A straightforward account of a rower chained to Venus' seashell would be sufficient to intrigue an audience. The ode's indirect mode of transmission compounds the novelty of the visualization. This is an artificial, highly confected ekphrasis, placed before the eyes, detailed and methodical, but latent beneath the surface of the text. To re-create the image sequence, the audience must decode metaphors, puns, and allusions scattered over a stretch of text that holds out more accessible images of horse-taming and sword-wielding. "[E]n el lugar de la cítera sonante" most directly evokes an image of music-making, but with a little prodding we find Cytherean shores underneath (v. 47). As a final challenge to the audience, the ode transmits the image sequence out of chronological order. The scene that comes last in the poem, of the lover safe in port, hearkens to the time before the rower set out on the treacherous waters of love.

It is important to recall that the goal of vividness in description is not a faithful statement of the facts, be they historical or imaginative, but an emotional impact on the audience. The *Rhetorica ad herennium* concludes its treatment of *enargeia* by commending the description that places a scene before the eyes for its power in "amplifying a matter and basing on it an appeal to pity" (Caplan 408-09; IV.lv.69). In the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian first brings up *enargeia* in a section on pathos. When an orator succeeds in capturing the mind's eye of his audience, "[e]motions will ensue just as if we were present at the event itself" (3:61-62; VI.ii.32). The goal of emotional engagement ought to direct the orator's disposition of the descriptive material, which helps to explain the ode's chronologically reordered image sequence. The description of the lover chained to Venus' shell is the first image presented and the most fully articulated, with pregnant visual cues (Venus' shell and a prisoner at the oars) that help give it an emblematic quality. With these descriptive *circumstantiae*, the ode places the lover in the most pathetic light possible. When subtler references to Cythera and a safe harbor emerge in subsequent stanzas, the striking vision of the exasperated lover is still lingering in the mind and helps lift these images off the page.

Watching the Watchers (vv. 66-110)

If there is a section of the ode that exemplifies the pictorialism of the *enargeia* tradition, it is the ode's closing exemplum of Anaxarete and Iphis (vv. 66-100). The *pragma* of Anaxarete's hardening commends itself for the precision of its word-painting. Here, Garcilaso gives a rigorous account of the physiology of petrification (Barnard 77). He isolates the moment in time in which Anaxarete fixes her eyes on Iphis, then follows the hardening of her body, as first bones, then organs, then finally her circulatory system turn to marble. In doing so, he faithfully applies the counsel of the *enargeia* and *ut pictura poesis* theorists to divide a whole into its parts: an event into its successive moments, a space into its constituent sections (Posada par. 10).

Garcilaso's careful pacing of the petrification scene contributes to its sensory appeal. Visual details lend immediacy to a description. They enable the audience to activate *phantasmata* and paint before their inner eyes a canvas so complete that it can temporarily replace the visual input of their external eyes. In addition to immediacy of physical location, rhetorical presence supposes immediacy of temporal location; the image placed before the mind's eye must be *hic et nunc* (Plett 9). As with the lover-as-rower ekphrasis, the myth *pragma* destabilizes chronology to intensify presence and so heighten emotional impact. In Garcilaso's hands, Anaxarete's death scene isn't single but triple. The exemplum opens with a summary statement that conjures the final image in the account of the myth, when Anaxarete's soul and marble body suffer eternal fire (vv. 69-70). He then breaks down his retelling of the myth with two successive cross-sections of Anaxarete's interior. The first account is of her spiritual softening (vv. 71-84), which brings out the futility of her late change against a backdrop of eternal damnation (v. 80); the second account is of her physical hardening (vv. 86-97). In their details, the three accounts treat time as a succession of moments, but when we take them together, the effect is to freeze time. The ode creates an emblematic "now" where an ungrateful woman is losing her former nature and being converted into an object of eternal punishment.¹²

Anachronism is another technique that Garcilaso uses to fix the myth exemplum in the temporal present. The ode's most pronounced departure from the Ovidian source text is Anaxarete's late change of heart toward Iphis (Cristóbal 40). As she sees the body of her former suitor with the noose around his neck, her spiritual hardness gives way to tenderness. The text characterizes this change of heart as repentance (vv. 69, 83), a spiritual transformation that comes too late to spare her the fires of hell. Repentance for past sins and the fiery torments of the afterlife are familiar features of the Christian worldview, unknown to Ovid. The decision to furnish a Greco-Roman myth with Christian theology might seem better suited to medieval poetry. There is a logic, however ironic, that leads a poet seeking to be faithful to Renaissance canons of presence to the same undifferentiated mix of paganism and Christianity.

The ode leaves no doubt about the reason for a saturated depiction of Anaxarete's death. Warnings envelop the exemplum. The lyric voice begins and ends the section with commands that the disdainful woman heed the fate of Anaxarete and repent of her own hard-heartedness lest she meet a similar end (vv. 66-70, 101-110). Anachronisms and careful resequencing place Anaxarete's petrification in the here and now as in a mirror that can be held up to the mind's eye of the ode's putative recipient. In his presentation of the ekphrasis of petrification, Garcilaso engineers something even more immediate: the complete identification of one disdainful woman with the other. After two exclamations over the futility of Anaxarete's too-late softening of heart (vv. 83-84), the poet suddenly turns his accusations against the ode's stated addressee: "¿Cómo

¹² See McCallister for the argument that a printed illustration of this scene in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* may have influenced the chronological and spatial disposition of the exemplum.

te sucedió mayor dureza?” (v. 85). We may assume that the hardness of heart of the ode’s disdainful beloved is an order of magnitude greater than Anaxarete’s given Galeota’s worthiness and the ongoing suffering Violante has caused him, the subject of the second imitative cluster. In effect, Garcilaso is asking: “How have you become even more hard-hearted than Anaxarete?” Garcilaso may also be hearkening to the fullness of the Latin root of *succēdo*, which means in part “to come after” or “to follow, follow after” (Cassell 580, Lewis and Short 1787). The wordplay helps account for the strange placement of the question in the middle of the ekphrasis. What follows the account of a heart so hard that it was moved only by the sight of a hanged lover is the detailed account of the physical and textual petrifications of two disdainful women.

When Garcilaso purports to step away from the exemplum in stanza twenty-one and apply its lesson to Violante, he is not counseling a woman of flesh but mocking a statue that he has just finished sculpting (Hermida Ruiz 91). Additional wordplay at the end of the stanza cements the bond between the two cases of love rebuffed. The “verso lamentable” that the lyric voice envisions would commemorate “la miseria / d’algún caso notable / que por ti passe, triste, miserable.” At some level, the verses superimpose an unrealized future suffering on a present suffering fixed in poetry. But who is the subject of this “caso notable,” the scorned lover or scornful beloved?

The multiple contextual meanings available of the phrase “por ti passe” leave room for both. We may take “pasar por” as a phrasal verb synonymous with *experimentar*. Read this way, the ode portends an unpleasant future for the flower of Gnido. If she does not return Galeota’s love, she will become another case of petrification, in the tradition of Anaxarete. Two other readings make the scorned lover the object of Violante’s gaze. If we take “por ti” as synonymous with “a causa de ti,” then the verses recall the anaphora of the middle section. This reading implies a causal relationship between Violante’s indifference and Galeota’s changed state from virile soldier to impotent galley slave. With these earlier stanzas in mind, the use of “por ti” in the final stanza is a warning of another change in Galeota, from living to dead. Because of Violante’s scorn, Galeota risks becoming versified as a miserable case of suicide.

A final reading suggests the same fate for the scorned lover but, significant for the poem’s interest in *enargeia*, with an added visualization of Ovid’s myth. In early modern Spanish usage, *pasar por* could be taken as the equivalent of “pasar por delante de,” in English, “pass by” or “pass before”. For example, in “El mundo por de dentro,” the fourth of Quevedo’s *Sueños*, the narrator observes a funeral cortège and comments: “Pasó por nosotros el entierro como si no hubiera de pasar por nosotros tan brevemente” (287).¹³ In the first instance, a funeral cortège is passing the speaker; in the second instance, the speaker entertains the possibility that he will shortly experience his own funeral. Garcilaso may similarly be exploiting the ambiguities of *pasar por* in the context of a funeral procession. Reading *pasar por* as “pass before,” implies that just as Iphis’ dead body, a “caso notable . . . triste, miserable,” passed before Anaxarete, so Violante, if she persists in her indifference, may see the dead body of Galeota pass before her.

A visual stimulus is the catalyst of Anaxarete’s death. As a matter of proximate cause, Anaxarete dies because of something that passes before her eyes. Both Ovid’s myth and Garcilaso’s myth exemplum are charged with imagery of sight.¹⁴ Garcilaso has Anaxarete look

¹³ The example is taken from the database *Corpus diacrónico del español (CORDE)*. <http://corpus.rae.es/cordenet.html>. Accessed July 29, 2022.

¹⁴ From Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*:
mota tamen “videamus” ait “miserabile funus”
et patulis iniit tectum sublime fenestris

down (“abajo *mirando*,” v. 73) and twice fix her eyes on Iphis, the second time combining the visual organ and the act of seeing (“el cuerpo muerto *vido*,” v. 74; “*Los ojos se enclavaron en el tendido cuerpo que allí vieron*,” vv. 86-87, emphasis added). The causal relationship between vision and petrification is even tighter in Garcilaso than in his Ovidian intertext. In Ovid, Anaxarete is first drawn to her window by the sounds of mourning from Iphis’ funeral procession (vv. 749-50). In Garcilaso’s retelling, by contrast, Anaxarete simply sees.

Garcilaso constructs the exemplum to bind together the mythic disdainful woman and the ode’s putative recipient. In this way, Violante is not only the watcher watching the ancient watcher but, by the artifice of textual sculpting, written into the text as a timeless female watcher who is punished for having scorned a worthy man. Behind these two watchers stands a third watcher, the ode’s collected readers. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* holds out the promise that when the orator achieves the vividness of *demonstratio*, the event described seems to be passing before the audience’s eyes: “res ante oculos esse videatur” (Caplan 404; IV.lv.68). Garcilaso’s use of *enargeia* mediated through the eyes of an observer thus creates a form of *mise en abyme*. The additional frame undermines the distinct status of the audience as viewer. The audience is drawn into another world as seen through the eyes of one its inhabitants. That world is then drawn back out to the plane of the observing audience. In this way, *mise en abyme* disrupts the constructs of history and fiction, of time and place. The text holds up to the audience a mirror of *phantasmata* set in a timeless, placeless present (Bussels 78; Posada par. 12).

Conclusion: Accademici as Destinatarios

The “Ode ad florem Gnidi” has proved a vexation for critics operating under the first principles of Romanticism. In their line of thinking, a poem in which the poet is not the lover is by that fact an inferior work of art. It is emotional intensity that grants the poet access to the highest realms of expressiveness. Dámaso Alonso spoke for many when he concluded of the ode: “Habla por un amigo, y su voz no tiene aquí esa suave y melancólica veladura que tiembla cuando habla de doña Isabel Freire” (302). To the credit of Alonso and like-minded critics, they took history seriously in their interpretations. They recognized that a poem was written by a historical person whose artistic production was shaped by the contingencies of his surroundings. The problem with their appeal to history wasn’t the instinct to consider it but the fact that they got it wrong. Garcilaso scholars of the past few decades have successfully deconstructed the myth of Isabel Freire, a woman whom Garcilaso probably never met (Vaquero Serrano 592-93). In the case of the ode, the historical mistake is the assumption that Violante Sanseverino, or whoever the hard-hearted Neapolitan woman might have been, was the ode’s intended audience.

The self-conscious artifice of the ode, what critics from Menéndez y Pelayo to Lapesa found too precious to move the heart, suggests that its first recipients were more likely to have been Garcilaso’s companions in the Accademia Pontaniana.¹⁵ A poem that lays bare its metapoetry and classicism, that takes up a rediscovered technique like *enargeia* and presses its limits, should have an immediate appeal among fellow poets and classicists. The post-Pontano Accademia that emerged in the years following the Count of Lautrec’s siege prioritized the communal nature of humanist inquiry. It did not revolve around a single charismatic figure or

*vixque bene inpositum lecto prospexerat Iphin,
deriguere oculi...* (458; XIV.751-54, emphasis added)

¹⁵ See Menéndez y Pelayo (13-14) and Lapesa (155).

even a single place.¹⁶ The new Accademia Pontaniana was held together by relationships and sustained by conversation (Furstenburg-Levi 2016, 130-35).¹⁷ In this context, it is not difficult to imagine the ode first being read out loud, an arrangement that would fit more closely than silent reading with the oratory model of classical rhetorical manuals. It is this model that Parrasio contemplates in his Horace annotations, whereby the spoken word calls up memories of what has been formerly seen with the eyes so that the eyes may reflect those images on the soul (52v).

In the ode, Garcilaso recovers the facility with wordplay that had marked his early *cancioneril* poetry and harnesses it in the service of communal image-making. Puns and obscurities are the delight of garrulous friend groups, even more so among the lettered class. Where the mood is lighthearted, over-the-top word-painting feeds an audience hungry for a laugh.

This consideration should make us more open to reading the ode with a playful tone, especially with respect to the ode's portrayal of gender. Though Mario Galeota and Violante Sanseverino may not have been the ode's intended audience, they could have easily been part of the audience at its first reading. Galeota, a member of the Accademia Pontaniana, was almost certainly present. It's unclear whether women participated in gatherings of the post-Pontano Accademia, but they were central to other contemporary Neapolitan sodalities, such as the ones headlined by María Cardona and Giulia Gonzaga, and there was some notable overlap among these groups.¹⁸ The portrayal of Galeota as feminized and impotent would come off as far less sinister if he were present at its reading and among friends aware of his frustration in love. The same logic would apply if Violante or sympathetic female friends were at hand to defend her disinterest and rail against Garcilaso's portrayal of her cruelty. Garcilaso would have been composing the ode with the knowledge of the feedback, or pushback, he would be likely to receive at its debut. To be sure, these are judgments about the poem's tone based on an incomplete picture of the past. The point is that our interpretations should be filtered through the unique circumstances of Garcilaso's involvement with the Accademia Pontaniana, to the best that our knowledge of that involvement permits.

As a historical matter, the gravity of the ode is more safely found in its aesthetics of speech. With the ode, Garcilaso makes the case that the language of the new empire has the suppleness required for poetic expression. Spanish poetry, he shows, can paint images on the mind's eye just as well as the pastorals of Sannazaro or the orations of Cicero. The ode's omnipresent irony carries it even further, commending Spanish as a suitable vehicle for metapoetry and clever artifice. In the hands of Garcilaso, the Spanish language can summon images that are beyond the poet's ability to conjure, draw out fantastic animations behind and between other images, and hold up to the audience a mirror of timeless reflection. His confidence in Spanish is all the bolder when we consider that his image-making is often dependent on puns—Castilian puns shared with Italians who wrote in Latin. The close linguistic relationship of Spanish and Italian placed the ode's wordplay within reach of Garcilaso's Accademia companions, but this didn't mean that understanding would come easily. The ode puts his fellow humanists on notice that they will need to concentrate if they hope to see into the mind's eye of its creator.

¹⁶ The home of the prominent jurist Scipione Capece and the gardens of San Giovanni a Carbonara, where Girolamo Seripando was vicar general of the local Augustinian order, are two likely locations (Fosalba 2012, 137-38).

¹⁷ On the theme of friendship in Garcilaso's Neapolitan poems and its artistic grounding in the poetry of Catullus, see Chinchilla.

¹⁸ On the Ischian sodality of María de Cardona, see Furstenburg-Levi (2018, 91). The Valdesian sodality, gathered by Giulia Gonzaga, included Scipione Capece and Mario Galeota (Crews 95-96).

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