

## 'El canto y lira mía': The Horatian authorial persona in the work of Fray Luis de

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Fray Luis is famous in Spanish letters for the Horatianism which pervades his work. However, critics are often content to point out allusions to Horace without exploring their literary function. In this study I shall discuss the generic implications of Fray Luis's adoption of the Horatian authorial persona, and in particular how his lyric authorial persona treats political, religious, and amatory themes. In the first place I aim to show Fray Luis's affiliation to Horace's lyric through an interpretation of Ode I as a statement of his poetic programme. In discussing lyric poetry's apparent rejection of epic themes, I shall give a reading of poem XXII which shows the lyric persona's relationship to men of the public life as exemplified by Horace's relationship with Maecenas in the *Odes*, particularly in his poems of invitation to his patron. I shall discuss how other serious poems are compatible with the lyric persona through their affiliation with the hymn form and particularly with Pindar's lyric. Fray Luis has often been thought of as an author who shies away from amatory themes; while this is true in his original poetry, I aim to show that in his translations of Horace and in his use of Classical allusion in the Latin commentary *In Canticum Canticorum*, the lyric persona gives him both the licence to treat amatory themes and the insurance of being able to distance himself from them through the use of Horatian humour.

### **Fray Luis and Horatian lyric**

Classical lyric poetry is different from lyric poetry in its modern sense and has a specific technical meaning. In origin, the term denoted poetry accompanied by the lyre. Archaic and classical Greek lyric was written in the seventh to fifth centuries B.C. and is

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<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by a grant from the Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. I would also like Prof. Jonathan Thacker, Prof. Llewelyn Morgan, Prof. Stephen Harrison, and Stefan Kazimierz for their invaluable comments and suggestions.

commonly subdivided into choral and monodic: the former was performed by a chorus, whereas the latter was performed by a single voice. The fifth-century B.C. poet Pindar was perhaps the most famous composer of choral lyric; though much of his work is lost, we have his victory odes, which celebrate the achievements and virtues of aristocratic victors at athletic competitions. The poet Alcaeus was a notable exponent of monodic lyric; his poems dealt with various themes such as politics, love, and drinking. Later, the Roman poet Horace would write Latin lyric inspired by his predecessors, naturalizing Greek lyric metres (particularly those of the poets Alcaeus and Sappho). Along with many of his contemporaries, Horace was also influenced by a trend in Hellenistic Greek poetry (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) epitomised by the poet Callimachus, who rejected epic themes and lengthy poems in favour of shorter and more polished works. As a result of these various influences, Horace's lyric poetry covers a range of themes, including amatory, moral-philosophical, political, and religious ones. The *locus* of lyric poetry is often the *symposium* (banquet); this is a place of *otium* (leisure), and is characterised by wine, petals, garlands, perfume and music. Renaissance authors studied and imitated many of these features of classical lyric.<sup>2</sup>

Poets often express their allegiances at the start of their works. Alcina comments about the first poem in Fray Luis's collection that 'Las dos familias principales de manuscritos la colocan en primer lugar y, sin duda, Fray Luis la puso ahí con carácter proemial' (Alcina 1992: 67). However, for this scholar, this just means that the poem is a 'síntesis de todos los temas que tratará después'. The tendency to focus on the themes of the poem has meant that criticism is mainly concerned with pointing out Horatian and other

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<sup>2</sup> For more on Horace, see Robin G. M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard (eds), *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); *Odes I: Carpe diem*, ed. by David West (Oxford: OUP, 1995); Stephen Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); on Horace's *otium*, J. M. André, 'Otium', in Scevola Mariotti (ed.), *Enciclopedia Oraziana*, 3 vols (Rome, 1996–98), vol. II (1997), 592–94; for more on the Renaissance reception of Horace, Carol Maddison, *Apollo and the Nine* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960); Giacomo Comiati, *Horace in the Italian Renaissance (1498–1600)*, PhD thesis (University of Warwick, 2015).

Classical intertexts for them. The *Beatus ille* trope, based on the praise of the country life in Horace's *Epode* II, has of course seen the most extended discussion by critics, with important studies by Davies, Gallagher and Sarmiento, among others (Davies 1964a, 1964b; Gallagher 1969; Sarmiento 1970). More recently, Rabone has pointed out that the country-sea dichotomy in the poem is closer to ideas presented elsewhere in Horace's odes than the country-city opposition found in the *Beatus ille* (Rabone 2016). Ramajo Caño in his essay comes closest to looking at the literary dimension, writing 'La oda inicial de fray Luis tiene hondo sabor horaciano, *no solo por la materia semántica*, sino, además, por los elementos que le confieren un carácter proemial' [my emphasis]; as a consequence he discusses in detail the device of the priamel, that is, the device whereby a list of alternatives is given which serves as a foil to the choice of the poet. In particular, Ramajo Caño looks at the poem in relation to the priamels of Horace *Carm.* I. 1 and III. 1. Nevertheless, he still relates this to the content of the poem, seeing it as a composition in which the author 'exalta la vida contemplativa frente a la vida activa' (Ramajo Caño 1994).

I wish to build on this by pointing out that Horace's priamels affirm not only his choice of lifestyle, but his poetic programme. It is true that in *Carm.* I. 1, after rejecting the activities of charioteers, politicians, landowners, farmers, merchants, men of leisure, soldiers and hunters (I. 1. 3 – 28), Horace asserts his preference for the *locus amoenus* of the grove full of nymphs and satyrs (I. 1. 30–31). However, the leisure he seeks is that of the poet, as represented by the crown of ivy ('*hederae*', I. 1. 28). Furthermore, at the end of the poem, Horace emphasises his allegiance specifically to lyric poetry: '*quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres*' ('But if you enrol me among the lyric bards', I. 1. 35 – 36).<sup>3</sup> Finally, the reference to his retreat from the crowds, '*secernunt populo*' (I. 32) does not only refer to Epicurean withdrawal (Fray Luis's *apartamiento*), but also has a metapoetic meaning: as Nisbet and

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<sup>3</sup> All translations are taken from David West.

Hubbard point out, ‘on the surface Horace is referring to the peace of the countryside [...]. But partly he is echoing Callimachus’s rejection of popular tastes and values’ (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: 14).

Turning to Fray Luis’s poem, we can see that he follows the same scheme of rejecting other kinds of lifestyle: that of those with status, wealth and fame (6–15) and of merchants (61–70).<sup>4</sup> However, his own choice is framed in the same terms as Horace’s, as critics have often noted: ‘de hiedra y lauro eterno coronado’ (82). The reference to the ‘plectro’ of the cithara (85) and his use of the *lira* form also suggest that this is a statement of poetic programme. Like Horace, he also rejects ‘mundanal ruido’, which as well as being a moral and philosophical stance also expresses his consciousness of doing something different from contemporary vogues in literature: Blecua in his excellent study points out that by predominantly using the *lira* form instead of more common ones such as *villancicos*, *romances* or sonnets, ‘fray Luis se aparta conscientemente de la tradición poética de su entorno’ (Blecua 1981: 99).

Throughout his poetry, Horace repeatedly defines lyric poetry in opposition to epic poetry. In a famous *recusatio* in *Carm.* I. 6, Horace states that he is too slight for great topics (‘*tenuēs grandia*’, I.6.9) like Agrippa’s military exploits. In *Carm.* I. 19, Venus forbids him to speak of Scythians or Parthian horsemen (I. 19. 9–12). Another major *recusatio* appears in *Carm.* II. 12: once again, Horace repeats that epic themes are not suitable for the soft measures of the lyre (‘*mollibus... citharae modis*’, II. 12. 3–4). In short, Horace tells us that his poetry will not bear the hallmarks of epic, that is, it will not consist of third-person narratives on the themes of gods, heroes and war.

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<sup>4</sup> The edition I am using is Luis de León, *Poesía*, ed. by Antonio Ramajo Caño (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2012).

Fray Luis imitated Horace's assertions of not being able to write epic. For example, he translated Venus' order of *Carm.* I. 19:

Con ímpetu viniendo  
 En mí la Venus toda desampara  
 Su Cipro dulce y cara;  
 Que ni el Scita quiere, ni el que huyendo  
 Valiente se mantiene,  
 Ni que diga lo que ni va ni viene.

He also showed that he was keen to apply these precepts to his own poetry by imitating the *recusatio* of *Carm.* II. 12. In his imitation, the martial themes of Numantia, Hannibal, Carthage and the epic mythological themes of the Lapiths, Hylaeus and the gigantomachy become references to wars waged by and in Spain between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, and his patron Maecenas is converted into Juan Grial:

El canto y lira mía  
 No dicen las escuadras, las francesas  
 Banderas en Pavía  
 Captivas; ni las armas cordobesas;  
 Ni el nuevo mundo hallado;  
 Ni el mar con turca sangre hora bañado.

Al son de trompa clara,  
 Y con heroico verso, a ti conviene,  
 Grial, cantar la rara  
 Virtud del de Vivar, que par no tiene;  
 O con más libre pluma  
 Hacer de nuestros hechos rica suma.

### **Horatian 'political' odes**

In fact, Horace's poems have many elevated moments, and throughout this study I will discuss various mechanisms by which Horace introduces more high-flown subject matter, and how Fray Luis imitates him in these mechanisms. For example, in various poems Horace praises his benefactors and the Augustan virtues of engagement in public life and military exploits; these poems are sometimes referred to as the 'political odes' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: xvii–xix). One way in which Horace deals with the need to balance the lyric persona which rejected epic with the praise of influential Roman politicians is by inviting

them into his lyric space, thereby implicitly affirming that their military exploits place them outside it. At various points, Horace invites his patron Maecenas to lay aside his public life and join him in this lyric *locus*. For example, in *Carm.* III. 8 he describes a sympotic scene complete with flowers, incense and wine (III. 8. 1–12), and invites Maecenas to join him; a similar example occurs in *Carm.* III. 29.

Fray Luis also writes laudatory poems, notably the three addressed to Pedro Portocarrero (II, XV and XXII). He faces the same problem as Horace, in that the themes of great men and war in these poems are more appropriate to epic than lyric. I shall argue that he resolves this tension by modelling Portocarrero on Horace's Maecenas and inviting him into the lyric *locus*. Once again, this goes to show that the Horatian allusions in the poem are not merely decorative, but have a metaliterary function.

Poem XXII begins 'La cana y alta cumbre | de Ilíberi'. Alcina points out that this recalls Horace *Carm.* I. 9. 1–2 ('Vides ut alta stet nive candidum | Soracte'), but he regards it as a simple flourish: 'como es habitual en Fray Luis, hay un especial gusto en que el primer verso guarde resonancias de primeros versos horacianos' (Alcina 1992: 185). However, the allusion is significant because it refers us to a quintessentially lyric situation. As West points out, in Horace's poem, the exhortation to pour wine more generously, the use of the Greek word *diota* ('cask') and the Greek name Thaliarchus suggest that the poet 'is enjoying a symposium, a Greek drinking-party' (West 1995: 42). Likewise, Fray Luis is writing to Portocarrero from the lyric place of *otium*.

In the second stanza, the lyric situation is reinforced by references to Bacchus, the Muses and Apollo, who is linked to lyric through the lyre: 'a do vendrá el Lyeo | y de la Cabalina | fuente la moradora | y Apolo con la cítara cantora'. The failure to understand the sympotic context of these lines has led to misinterpretation, such as that of Alcina, who states that 'Naturalmente, la invocación a "Lyeo" o Baco no tiene nada que ver con el vino' (Alcina

1992: 186); in fact, when Horace uses this epithet for Bacchus it is used to stand for wine itself (I. 7. 22, III.21.16). Other scholars such as Macrí, Ramajo Caño and O'Reilly note that the scene is one of a banquet celebrating the homecoming of a friend and even give individual Horatian parallels, but they do not point out that the symposium is a ubiquitous lyric *topos* (Macrí 1970: 370; Ramajo Caño 2012: 146; O'Reilly 2019: 38).

In stanzas 3–12, Fray Luis portrays Pedro Portocarrero as a Maecenas figure. For example, the reference to his lineage in lines 13–14 ('Bien eres generoso | pimpollo de ilustrísimos mayores') recalls 'Ilustre descendiente | de reyes', Fray Luis's translation of 'Maecenas atavis edite regibus' (*Carm.* I. 1. 1). The allusion to this opening line of the collection in which Horace addresses his patron reminds us that Fray Luis dedicated his own book of poetry to Portocarrero, as well as *De los nombres de Cristo* (1583) and his Latin commentary *In Abdiam prophetam explanatio* (1589).<sup>5</sup> Rivers comes tantalisingly close to making this connection when he writes that 'If Fray Luis had a patron, social and literary, it was Don Pedro Portocarrero' (Rivers 1983: 18). The description of the war by which Pedro Portocarrero has suddenly found himself surrounded recalls the preoccupations of Maecenas in *Carm.* III. 8 and III. 29.

At the end of the poem, Fray Luis exhorts Pedro Portocarrero: 'mas tú en tanto, | dechado de bien raro, | abraza el ocio santo; | que mucho son mejores | los frutos de la paz, y muy mayores' (74–78). We cannot fail to be reminded of Horace's injunctions to Maecenas to leave aside turbulent politics and embrace a more tranquil life in *Carm.* III. 8. 25–28 and III. 29. 32–33. Significantly, the programmatic word *ocio* also tells us that a lyric authorial persona is speaking to a non-lyric interlocutor.

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the relationship between the two men, see Acereda 1993.

My analysis of poem XXII has shown how Fray Luis uses Maecenas as a model for his treatment of Pedro Portocarrero. However, this draws our attention to a curious phenomenon: whereas Augustus appears frequently in Horace's odes, Philip II – Augustus' sixteenth-century Spanish counterpart – is conspicuous by his absence. Indeed, even in the cases where Fray Luis models his poems most closely on Horace, references to a Caesar-figure are deliberately suppressed. For example, as we have seen, in *Carm.* II. 12 the culmination of Horace's *recusatio* is his assertion that Maecenas would do better to speak of Caesar's battles ('proelia Caesaris', 10) in prose histories. The most natural adaptation of this section would be for Fray Luis to encourage Grial to write about the achievements of Philip II, but instead he refers to the much less contemporary figure of the Cid: 'a ti conviene, | Grial, cantar la rara | virtud del de Vivar' (8–10).

This also occurs in poem II. There, Fray Luis apostrophizes virtue, saying it raised Hercules to heaven ('tú [...] al cielo levantaste al fuerte Alcides', 6–7) and makes the sons of Leda shine ('resplandece [...] de Leda el parto', 12–14). Critics note that one of the possible sources for this reference is *Carm.* III. 3. 9–10, 'Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules | enisus arces attigit igneas' ('By such arts did Pollux and far-travelled Hercules prevail and reach the citadels of fire) (Alcina: 77; Ramajo Caño: 16). Significantly, in Horace this idea is immediately followed by the image of Augustus reclining among the gods, having been deified thanks to his virtue (III. 3. 11–12). However, in Fray Luis's poem, Augustus is once again replaced by the Cid rather than by the Spanish king ('tú en la más alta esfera | con las estrellas mides | al Cid, clara victoria de mil lides', 8–10).

Perhaps the most significant example of the suppression of Augustus comes in the coda to poem XIX. In the model for this poem, *Carm.* 1. 12, the last three stanzas are a prayer to Jupiter for the continued safety of Caesar, who is right-hand man of the father and guardian of the human race ('gentis humanae pater atque custos, [...] tibi cura magni |

Caesaris fatis data: tu secundo | Caesare regnes’, 49–52). However, in poem XIX, although Fray Luis anchors his coda to Horace’s through the word ‘padre’ (71), the rest of the poem is a lament about the state of the Church (‘tu templo sagrado’, 74) and a reference to the poet’s imprisonment by the Inquisition: ‘Da paz a aqueste pecho, | que hierve con dolor en noche oscura’ (86–87) (Vega 1955: 529; Rivers 1983: 44). This departure from Horace in a poem that is otherwise an extremely close imitation (as I shall discuss later), as well as its unconnectedness to the rest of the poem, is so strange that critics such as Vega and Alonso thought that it must have been added after Fray Luis’s imprisonment (Vega 1955: 528; Rivers 1983: 41). However, I believe that it is an intentional though veiled statement about Fray Luis’s views on the Spanish monarch.

Durán in his essay on Fray Luis’s relationship with Philip II noted that ‘resultaba casi inevitable que dos personalidades tan fuertes, movidas por principios no idénticos sino más bien, en muchos casos, opuestos, hubieron de chocar’ (Durán Blázquez 1991: 4). He gives two reasons for Fray Luis’s antipathy towards Philip II: firstly, that the king’s bureaucratic approach to law-making and rigid view of law-enforcement ran contrary to the friar’s view that rulership should be flexible and adapt to the individual’s needs: as he has Marcelo say in *De los nombres de Cristo* under ‘Pastor’, Christ’s ideal model of governorship ‘no guarda una regla generalmente con todos y en todos los tiempos, sino en cada tiempo y ocasión ordena su gobierno conforme al caso particular del que rige’ (I. 468).<sup>6</sup> Secondly, Durán writes that Fray Luis objected to Philip’s unconditional support for the Inquisition and its persecution of those who could not boast of old Christian descent. In a particularly audacious passage in the *Nombres* in the chapter ‘Rey de Dios’, Marcelo explains that under Christ’s rule, all people have the same lineage: ‘Así que este reino son los buenos y justos solos, y de estos decimos que son generosos todos, y de linaje alto y todos de uno mismo’ (I. 588). Later,

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<sup>6</sup> The edition I am using is García Moriyón, 1957.

Juliano censures earthly rulers who jeopardise the peace of their kingdoms by dividing their subjects according to status:

Porque, así como dos cosas que son contrarias, aunque se junten, no se pueden mezclar, así no es posible que se añude con paz el reino, cuyas partes están tan opuestas entre sí y tan diferenciadas, unas con mucha honra y otras con señalada afrenta. [...] Mas dejemos lo que en nuestros reyes y reinos, o pone la necesidad o hace el mal consejo y error. (I. 590)

As early as 1609, commentators noted that this passage seemed to be an attack on the Inquisition (Bataillon 1966: 767). It is my contention that in poem XIX, by suppressing the panegyric of Augustus and replacing it with a reference to the state of the Church and his imprisonment, Fray Luis is once again indirectly criticising the Spanish monarch's endorsement of the severity of the Inquisition, the consequences of which he himself had by now suffered.

### **Horatian lyric, Pindar and literary hymns**

Poems XIX, 'A todos los santos' and XX, 'A Santiago', are two poems which seem to contradict the lyric aversion to grand themes, but do not fit into the category of lyric political panegyric discussed in the previous section. However, these poems can be reconciled to the lyric persona through their hymn form and in particular through their relationship to Pindar's lyric. However, we shall also see how these hymns are linked to contemporary religious ritual.

The hymnic form of poem XIX is indisputable; as I noted earlier, it is heavily indebted to *Carm* I. 12, a religious ode in which Horace sings the praises of a long list of deities and virtuous mortals. Indeed, much of the poem is virtually a line-by-line rendering of it *a lo divino*. For instance, where Horace opens by asking the Muse which man, hero or god she will sing ('Quem virum aut heroa... Quem deum', I. 12. 1), Fray Luis asks of which saint, virtue, or deity he will speak ('¿Qué santo o qué gloriosa/ virtud, qué deidad [...] diremos?' 1–5).

However, Horace's poem is itself indebted to the Pindaric model. We know Fray Luis was familiar with Pindar, since we have his translation of *Olympian* 1. His acquisition of a 'Píndaro griego y latino' in 1575, as well as study of his translations of Greek authors, suggest that he followed the Greek texts, although with reference to Latin translations (Schwartz Lerner: 527–48; González González, 35–52).<sup>7</sup> Fray Luis's use of a Pindaric poem as a model for a religious one is not surprising; as Revard demonstrates, the Renaissance received Pindar as a serious poet who could accommodate more elevated subject matter, including praise of both pagan and Christian deities, so this use of the Greek poet is not surprising (Revard 2001: 121–276). The Pindaric tone is clear from the opening lines of both Fray Luis's and Horace's poems, which are modelled on the beginning of Pindar's second *Olympian*:

ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι,  
τίνα θεόν, τίνα ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;

Hymns that rule the lyre,  
What god, what hero, and what man shall we celebrate?<sup>8</sup>

This tone is maintained in the fourth stanza with the formula '¿quién diré primero [...]?' (21), via Horace's 'quid prius dicam' (I. 12. 13). As Alcina has pointed out, the image of the glory growing like a tree which appears in Fray Luis ('Cual árbol con los años | la gloria de Francisco sube y crece', 65 – 66) and Horace ('crescit occulto velut arbor aevo | fama Marcelli', I.12.45–46) alludes to Pindar's eighth Nemean (Pind. *Nem.* 8.40).

As we have seen, the ending of poem XIX contains references to contemporary circumstances and personal reflections in the Horatian manner. In the previous section, I

<sup>7</sup> Lía Schwartz Lerner, 'Las traducciones de textos griegos de fray Luis y su contexto humanista', in *Fray Luis de León: Historia, humanismo y letras*, ed. by Víctor García de la Concha and Javier San José Lera, pp. 527–48; Marta González González, 'La Olímpica I de Píndaro en la versión de fray Luis', in A. Pérez Jiménez and P. Volpe (eds.), *Musa Graeca tradita, Musa Graeca recepta. Traducciones de poetas griegos (siglos XV-XVII)*, (Zaragoza: Pórtico, 2011), pp. 35–52.

<sup>8</sup> The text I am using is Pindar, *Olympian Odes. Pythian Odes*, ed. and trans. by William H. Race (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

argued that Fray Luis's ending constitutes a deliberate departure from the specific model of *Carm* I.12, and has the aim of subtly criticising Philip II. However, it is worth mentioning that the structure of the formal break followed by a lament on the state of contemporary society can be found in another Horatian hymn: Hor. *Carm* I. 35, which is addressed to the Roman goddess Fortuna. In this ode, once again, the last two verses contain an outburst on the horrors of civil war. It has in common with Fray Luis's poem that it begins with the exclamation 'eheu' (I. 35. 33) (compare Fray Luis's '¡Ay!', 71). It also shares the idea of the contemporary profanation of temples: Horace exclaims 'unde manum iuventus | metu deorum continuit? Quibus | pepercit aris?' ('Where has the youth stayed its hand for fear of the gods? What altars has it spared?', I. 35. 36–38), while Fray Luis cries out '¿qué malvado | el oro ha destruido | de tu templo sagrado?' (72–74).

Poem XX, 'A Santiago', with its long description of Santiago's martyrdom and the victory over the Moors, seems at first sight to belong to the genre of epic. However, on a closer look we can see that the poem is closely aligned with the lyric hymn-ode. West helpfully identifies the typical characteristics of the kletic hymn, which include: the address to the deity introduced by *O*; the use of second-person pronouns; the name of the deity followed by a description in apposition; a celebration of the parentage of the deity; the spheres of operation of the deity, sometimes joined by the formula 'whether... or'; a prayer, sometimes supported by reference to previous services provided by the deity to the worshipper or vice versa (West 1995: 153–54). These elements are present in poem XX: for example, in lines 136–37 the poet exclaims '¡Oh gloria, oh gran prez nuestra, | escudo fiel, oh celestial guerrero!' The use of second-person pronouns addressed to the saint occur frequently, such as in lines 17 ('en ti'), 19 ('a ti'), 25 ('de ti'), and 48 ('tu cuerpo le enviaste'). After the account of the *Reconquista*, this apostrophe returns: 'por ti [...] por ti [...] por ti' (140–142). The reference to the 'Apóstol santo' in line 113 is followed by the

phrase ‘un otro Marte hecho’ (114) in apposition. Although the saint’s parents are not praised, his father is referred to in line 5 with the patronymic ‘Zebedeo’. Santiago’s sphere of operation is clearly martial (‘vesle de limpio acero | cercado, y con espada relumbrante’, 116–17) and in 146–48 Fray Luis even employs the sacral *sive... sive* formula (‘Siempre venció tu espada, **o fuese** de tu mano poderosa, | **o fuese** meneada de aquella generosa’). While there is no direct prayer to Santiago, a prayer to heaven is intercalated in the dramatic narration of the invasion of Spain by the Moors, with reference to previous favour: ‘Cielos, so cuyo amparo | España está: ¡merced en tanta afrenta! | Si ya este suelo caro | os fue, nunca consienta | vuestra piedad que mal tan crudo sienta’ (96–100). Finally, it is worth pointing out that although the poem includes description of war, there is a Horatian precedent for hymns which contain narratives on martial themes in *Carm.* IV. 6, a hymn to Apollo which describes his role in the death of Achilles.

The Pindaric tone of the poem has been noted by Rivers, who writes ‘The poem to Santiago is certainly Fray Luis’s most ambitious Pindaric ode’ (Rivers 1983: 32). However, it could be seen as Pindaric in form as well as content. Pindaric poems have a tripartite structure with a strophe and antistrophe of uniform pattern, and an epode with a different pattern. While Renaissance printers often did not print the line divisions correctly, they usually did correctly designate the strophe, antistrophe, and epode, so Fray Luis would have been aware of the form (Revard 2001: 4). His poem may be based on this structure, with the first section (1–70) dealing with Santiago, the second section of roughly the same length (71–135) dealing with the conquest and reconquest of Spain, and the shorter third section (136–160) praising Santiago. However, once again, Poem XX is also related to contemporary religious life through the references to the Order of Santiago (‘milicia religiosa’, 150) and pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela via the Camino de Santiago (‘El áspero camino’ 156).

The reference to the contemporary context completes the poem's hymnic trajectory from Pindar, through Horace, to the Christian age.

### **Horatian lyric and love elegy**

Another way in which Classical lyric poetry defines itself, aside from rejecting epic, is by expressing a preference for amatory themes. In *Carm.* I. 6, the *recusatio* discussed earlier, when Horace rejects epic he affirms that instead

Nos convivias, nos proelia virginum  
Sectis in iuvenes unguibus acrium  
Cantamus.

We sing of drinking parties, of battles fought  
By fierce virgins with nails cut sharp to wound young men. (I. 6. 17–19)

Most critics observe that Fray Luis avoids amatory themes in his poetry due to his religious commitments. Indeed, he even seems to censure love and emphasise 'los trágicos efectos del mujerial embeleso y de la pasión amorosa' (Macrí 1970: 52–56): the dangers of the love of women are expounded in IX; the consequences of King Roderick's passion for la Cava are presented in VII; a woman who has wasted her life in sinful lust is encouraged to repent and live a holy life in VI.

However, while amatory themes are avoided or condemned in the original poems, the lyric imitations and translations are a different story. Giving the example of III. 9, one of the amatory odes, Alcina describes poems which do not explore the typical themes of the original poetry (such as avarice, the just man, and retirement from worldly preoccupations) as 'simplemente por el gusto de experimentar' (Alcina 1992: 39). It is my contention that, on the contrary, they are an integral part of Fray Luis's Horatian persona. The main proof of this is the very fact that he had prepared a collection of his translations, including ones on amatory themes, to be published alongside the original poems, as shown by his dedication to Pedro Portocarrero: 'Son tres partes las deste libro. En la una van las cosas que yo compuse más.

En las dos postreras, las que traduje de otras lenguas, de autores así profanos como sagrados’ (4). The numbers are also significant: more than half of his translations of Horace are erotic or erotically-tinged poems (*Carm.* I. 5, I. 13, I. 19, I. 22, I. 23, I. 30, I. 32 (two versions), II. 8, III. 7, III. 9, III. 10, IV. 1, IV. 13). Bocchetta points out that in a Christian environment, even translating these poems was daring:

La dificultad de estas poesías para una traducción en los siglos XVI y XVII es que el sentido de los sentimientos amorosos es completamente distinto, por influencias muy lógicas (el mismo cristianismo es por sí solo un factor muy importante). Por lo tanto, una traducción de estos temas tiene que superar estos prejuicios y costumbres y constituye, en cierto modo, una verdadera audacia que los traductores justifican con el ejercicio humanista. (Bocchetta 1970: 116)

Furthermore, in some cases, Fray Luis increases the erotic content of the original poem. For example, in *Carm.* I. 5, Horace addresses a woman named Pyrrha and ironically asks what new man ‘te [...] urget’ (I. 5. 1–2). Hildner points out that the verb *urget* can be translated as either ‘woo, persuade’ or ‘press’ in a physical way. Fray Luis translates it as ‘te ciñe el tierno lado’, ‘outdoing Horace in sexual explicitness’ (Hildner 1992: 132).

One consequence of Fray Luis’s greater confidence to write on amatory themes in the translations and imitations is the appearance of the *carpe diem* theme. Cristóbal notes that in the original poetry Fray Luis often presents us with an ‘anti-*carpe diem*’; for example, in VI the trope is inverted to be an injunction to reject temporal goods and ‘seize the day’ to repent; likewise, the ‘gather ye rosebuds’ trope is inverted in IX. 6–10: ‘ten dudosa | la mano liberal, que [...] esa purpúrea rosa | que el sentido enajena, | tocada, pasa al alma y la envenena’. By contrast, the *carpe diem* trope does occur in its Classical conception in *Imitación de diversos*: ‘mirad por vos, mientras dura | esa flor, graciosa y pura, | que el no gozalla es perdella’ (38–40). This has often perplexed critics; Cristóbal insists that ‘La excepción confirma la regla’ (Cristóbal 1994: 182). However, it is an important part of the lyric persona which Fray Luis could not express using an authorial persona associated with his name. In the lyric

translations and imitations, the original authorial persona is ‘Horace’, which provided him with a safe way to treat amatory themes without fear of repercussions from censors and Inquisitors.

However, when love appears, it is still a kind of love particular to Classical lyric poetry; specifically, it differentiates itself from the love depicted in Latin love elegy. In order to understand the distinction, we must look briefly at both traditions. The first Roman love elegist proper was Gallus, of whose poetry only a few lines are extant, but we know that by the time of Propertius and Tibullus the genre had become codified into a series of conventions: the poet-lover rejects traditional manly virtues and obligations in favour of the *militia amoris*; he is hopelessly devoted to the object of his love, to the point of equating his condition to slavery; he professes eternal love (Lyne 1996: 65–81).

By contrast, as Barchiesi puts it, ‘Lyric love can be observed from its margins’ (Barchiesi, 2007: 158). In Horace’s poems on love, the poet tends to be detached from the erotic situation; love is not eternal, but has its place during youth; it is found in situations of *otium* such as at banquets; and is treated with a sense of lightness and irony. Horace frequently apostrophises real or fictitious interlocutors to help create a sense of distance and Fray Luis capitalises on this device; as Hinojo writes, ‘Este distanciamiento horaciano de las vivencias amorosas ha permitido al poeta castellano seguir su modelo sin comprometer sus sentimientos ni confesar amores personales que podrían atentar contra sus creencias religiosas’ (Hinojo Andrés 1996: 336). Significantly, there is only one translation of an elegiac poet among Fray Luis’s translations (Tibullus II. 3) whereas, as we have seen, there are fourteen translations of amatory poems by Horace. In the following study, I shall discuss how Fray Luis’s use of the amatory aspect of lyric poetry is a vital part of his strategy in his Latin commentary *In Canticum Canticorum*.

### *In Canticum Canticorum*

In the early 1560s Fray Luis wrote a Spanish commentary on the Song of Songs for his cousin Isabel Osorio, a nun at the Sancti Spiritus convent in Salamanca. As he later recalls in the preface to his Latin commentary, the work was not written for publication, but was copied and circulated without his knowledge, which resulted in it being denounced to the Inquisition; after his name was cleared, Fray Luis's friends encouraged him to write a Latin version to prove his orthodoxy (Becerra Hiraldo 1992: 11\*-13\*<sup>9</sup>). One of the most controversial issues surrounding the vernacular commentary had been his focus on the literal sense of the text (the 'corteza de la letra', I. 72), due to its sensual portrayal of human love. Indeed, Fray Luis explicitly emphasises this dimension, writing that in the Song 'más que en alguna otra escritura, se muestra Dios herido de nuestros amores con todas aquellas pasiones y sentimientos, que este afecto suele y puede hacer en los corazones más blandos y más tiernos' (I. 71). Furthermore, he seems to revel in descriptions of courtship, as in his comments on Song 2. 9, where he describes lovers playfully hiding from each other. As García de la Concha points out, this interpretation is an 'alcance revolucionario' (García de la Concha 1981: 174); previous commentaries, such as that of St. Bernard, had focused on interpreting the Song as an allegory of the love of Christ for his Church or God for the soul.

Significantly, Fray Luis's emphasis on the human love portrayed in the Song resulted in the accusation that the commentary was no better than the work of pagan love poets such as Ovid. Fray Vicente Hernández's accusation read:

le parece a este testigo que toda la exposición es una carta de amores sin ningún espíritu, y casi nada difiere de los amores de Ovidio y otros poetas, y finalmente indigna de llamarse exposición de Sagrada Escritura (CODOIN X. 274)

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<sup>9</sup> The edition and translation I am using for Fray Luis's Latin commentary is Becerra Hiraldo 1992.

Nevertheless, in the *defensa* Fray Luis presented to the Inquisition, his response to Hernández makes clear that there is deep religious sentiment, not pagan eroticism, beneath his desire to explain the literal sense of the Song:

si no es indigno del Espíritu Sancto en persona de dos personas, hombre y mujer carnales, y en palabras de amor carnales y usados cubrir las personas suya y de su iglesia [...] por qué será indigno de mí ni del que declara aquella Escritura decir en ella las mismas palabras que el Espíritu Sancto dice? (CODOIN X. 363)

In the Latin commentary written after his release from prison, he uses the sensitivity to Classical genre discussed above to balance his conviction of the importance of the literal sense of the Song while distancing his authorial persona from accusations of improper desire.

Perhaps in response to the accusations levelled at him, there are no direct quotations of Latin love elegy in the *In canticum*. There is a single named allusion to Tibullus: when defending the realism of the woman wandering around the city at night in search of her beloved, Fray Luis writes nebulously that in Tibullus some woman is said to have dared to do something like this ('Nam et apud Tibullum tale aliquid ausa dicitur nescio quae foemina', 94). He is perhaps referring to Tibullus' *Carm.* I. 2. 15–30.

Nahson points to a few occasions where Fray Luis may have been influenced by Ovid's love elegy. For example, he points to the similarity of the sentiment of 'Quis nisi vel miles vel amans et frigora noctis | Et denso mixtas perferret imbre nives' ('Who, except a soldier or lover, would bear | both the cold of night and snow mixed with heavy rain', *Am.* I. 9. 15–16) and the lover whose hair is wet in Song 5. 2. Slightly more tenuously, he also compares Ovid's description of Cupid's nudity and lack of dissimulation (*Am.* I. 10. 15–16) to Fray Luis's 'el amor verdadero no mira en puntillos de crianza, ni en pundonores' (Nahson, 2006: 274). However, these ideas are commonplaces of love poetry and could be found in other sources, and Ovid is never explicitly mentioned in the commentary.

In short, even though we have seen that Fray Luis emphasises the literal sense of the human love in the Song and is consequently accused of being no better than Ovid, he only alludes to Classical love elegists and elegy obliquely and never quotes from the genre. Furthermore, he is keen to emphasise the fact that he himself has no experience of love and even regards it as faintly bemusing; in the Spanish commentary, he had written:

Así que las extrañas cosas que sienten, dicen y hacen los que aman, no se pueden entender ni creer de los libros de amor; de donde será forzoso que muchas cosas de este Libro sean oscuras, así al expositor de él como a los demás que en el divino amor están fríos y tibios; y, por el contrario, será muy claro todo al que tuviere en sí la sentencia de esta obra, y ninguna cosa le parecerá imposible ni disparatada. (I. 105)

Therefore, it is unsurprising that in the Latin commentary, instead of quotations of love elegy, we find quotations of Horace's amatory lyric, which allows him to create the persona of a removed observer of love. For example, when glossing Song 1. 8, Fray Luis quotes an example where a woman is compared to a horse in Horace *Carm.* III. 11. 9–10 ('quae velut latis equa trima campis | ludit exultim metuitque tangi', 'who cavorts like a two-year-old filly on broad plains, | afraid to be touched'); significantly, he introduces it specifying Horace not by name but as 'the lyric poet': 'Nec vero id nouum, aut absurdum est elegantem foeminam adolescentem praesertim, et viri expertem equae assimilari: notum namque est illud Lyrici' ('Y no es nuevo ni absurdo el asemejar a una yegua a la mujer elegante, sobre todo joven y desconocedora de varón, pues es conocido aquello del lírico', 14).

The quotation comes from a humorous poem where Horace's poetic persona asks the wily god Mercury to help him seduce a young girl who has been refusing his advances. This has the effect of heightening the amatory aspect of the poem, but in a playful way: West writes that 'Horace is mischievously depicting this mischievous god colluding with him to find ways of winning this innocent young girl' and that the poem is one of a several which 'make fun of the sentimentality of Latin love elegy' (West 2002: 108).

Particularly significant is Fray Luis's discussion of the temporary dropping of the allegorical persona, which he sees in certain parts of the Song such as 1. 8. He refers to this technique as 'genus commixtum' in accordance with Quintilian ('Fabius vocat', 14). However, where Quintilian himself illustrates this concept with examples from Cicero (*Inst. or.* 8. 5. 48–49), one of the examples Fray Luis gives is another playful Horatian depiction of amatory activity, this time comparing the disinterested young girl to a heifer:

Nondum subacta ferre iugum valet  
 Cervice, nondum munia comparis  
 Aequare.  
 [...]
 Circa virentes est animus tuae  
 Campos iuvencae, nunc struis grauem  
 Solantis aestum, nunc in udo  
 Ludere cum rivulis salicto  
 Praegestientis.  
 [...]
 Iam proterva  
 Fronte petet Lalage maritum.

She's not broken in yet and her neck hasn't the strength  
 To bear the yoke. She can't share duties with a partner  
 [...]
 That young heifer of yours still has her mind  
 On grassy meadows, finding relief  
 From oppressive heat in rivers, or longing  
 To begin playing with bull calves  
 In willow marshes.  
 [...]
 Lalage will soon be butting her mate with lusty forehead. (Hor. *Carm.* II. 5. 1–15)

This is a bold choice of poem. Lines 4–5, which Fray Luis wisely leaves out, read 'nec tauri ruentis | in Venerem tolerare pondus' ('or bear the weight of a bull plunging into love'), and even modern commentators object to them (West 1998: 34). To quote from such a poem emphasises Fray Luis's commitment to pointing out the sensuality of the Song. However, once again in *Carm.* II. 5 the authorial persona is not involved in the love-affair himself, but is advising a friend (Harrison 2017: 82–83), and it is this persona which Fray Luis adopts.

Fray Luis's technique of allusion to amatory lyric can also be seen in the 'Carmen ex-voto' which closes the commentary. The emphasis on sensual love can be seen, for example, in lines 33–36 where the young men beg the woman to open the door, complaining of the winds and their wet heads; the phrase 'cur renuis' ('why do you refuse') recalls the tableaux of playful teasing which Fray Luis imagines in his commentaries. However, once again the authorial persona is distanced through allusion to lyric love. While I can identify no precise allusions to Latin love elegy, there are a couple of allusions to Horace's amatory poems: for example, the phrase 'callida [...] nervos' (37–38) also recalls 'callida nervis' from III. 11 in which, as we have seen, Horace enlists Mercury's help to seduce a young girl. The passage where the young men ask the *virgo* to open the door also contains an allusion to a Horatian poem ('sidere pulchrior', 33; compare Horace *Carm.* III. 9. 21, where the phrase also occurs at the end of the line). The poem from which this quotation is taken is another of those which West describes as making fun of the sentimentality of love elegy, and it appears among Fray Luis's translations. In the Horatian source, two former lovers show off their new partners, but when the male voice subtly hints that he might want his old girlfriend back, the female voice replies that although her new boyfriend is 'sidere pulchrior' ('more beautiful than a star') and he is as flighty as a cork, she will take him back. This once again imbues the poem with a sense of lyric humour in the portrayal of love and thus helps distance the authorial persona.

## **Conclusion**

In the course of this study, I have shown how Fray Luis's Horatianism is not just thematic, but formal. In his programmatic first poem he affiliates himself with lyric poetry, and he displays great sensitivity to the demands of the genre. His poetry claims to reject epic themes he draws on Horace's political poems and Pindaric religious lyric to permit a more elevated tone in his own political panegyric and religious hymns. Although his original poetry shies away from amatory themes, they are frequent in his translations and imitations

and in the Classical quotations in his Latin commentary on the Song of Songs; but once again, he is sensitive to the demands of his genre, and the love portrayed is a lyric kind of love observed by a Horatian persona. We have also seen how these literary considerations often give us clues about the broader circumstances of composition: their suppression of the praise of a Caesar-figure hints at Fray Luis's attitude towards Philip II; they include elements of contemporary devotion in Classicizing hymns; and they portray a man committed to the observation of, but not participation in, human love.

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