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ARTICLE

Nautical Votive Offerings and Imaginative Speculation in Góngora's *Soledad primera*

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Abstract

With a particular focus on lines 29-33 and 477-80, this article analyzes the motif of the *exvoto* or votive offering in Góngora's *Soledad primera*. In relation to Golden-Age *exvotos* more generally, both in popular practice and in literary convention, it identifies three characteristics that are central to Góngora's development of the motif. These are the *exvoto's* capacity to signify in a metonymic mode, its fragmentary and ephemeral nature, and its sacralizing potential when exhibited beyond the bounds of the conventional sanctuary. The discussion suggests ways in which close attention to Góngora's techniques in developing votive imagery can enhance a reading of the 'grillo torneado' conceit in lines 849-53 of the *Soledad segunda*, and can ultimately shed light on the imaginative, persuasive force that Góngora perceived in the votive artefact and its poetic analogues.

A set of two modern lifebuoys and a life jacket adorn a column to the left of the main altar in the Santuario de Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación in Villaselán (Lugo). There is no plaque or epigraph to explain their provenance or their presence in the shrine. Only the name of a fishing boat, 'Coppi', and that of its home port, Figueras, are visible on the life jacket—names daubed in white paint on the orange, sun-bleached fabric. The viewer is left to infer that this *ex-voto*, like the handful of miniature votive ships and three crude paintings of shipwrecks also on display in the sanctuary, was set up in grateful commemoration of a deliverance that the donor attributed to the tutelary Virgin of the shrine, perhaps following a shipwreck, a capsizing, a crewman washed overboard, or a similar accident. When I inquired about the event that had occasioned this display of life preservers, no member of the local *cofradía* that maintains the shrine could offer specifics. They did not recall the date of the disaster and rescue, nor the names of those involved. My inquiry elicited instead their general comments on the dangers of the Cantabrian coast and the power of the 'Virxe de Vilaselán' to deliver her devotees from peril on the seas. Official maritime records indicate that the vessel called *Coppi* was a deep-sea trawler that plied the waters beyond the Ría de Ribadeo in the last decade of the twentieth century.¹ Beyond these scant details, however, the lack of documentation only permits one to imagine the story betokened by the artefact. Like all conventional *ex-votos*, the narrative contours are clear: a person or persons in acute peril or affliction have come through the ordeal and have offered up a representation of that experience as a token of gratitude to the supernatural agent to whom they credit their

¹ *Legislación pesquera vigente: Régimen jurídico de la pesca marítima* (Madrid: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1990), 102 [on CD-ROM]; *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 229 (24 September 1993), 27827-37, Anexo: Censo de Buques, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación (27833). The present article could not have been completed without the *estancia de investigación* that I undertook at the Universidad de Sevilla in June 2012, at the generous invitation of Dr Inmaculada Murcia Serrano and Prof Antonio Molina Flores of the Departamento de Estética e Historia de la Filosofía.

survival. Often taking the form of a material fragment salvaged from the experience (a plank from a shipwreck, chains from captivity, a piece of weaponry from an armed conflict, a burial shroud once intended for one deemed terminally ill), a votive object, displayed in a place of worship, points to the material and emotional, natural and supernatural event from which it derives. The viewer's imagination must work upon the oblatory artefact in order to 'read', speculatively, the sentimental and narrative freight it carries—a hermeneutic exercise that is necessarily freer and more speculative when little or no explanatory text accompanies the object.

Like the anonymous devotee of Villaselán, the pilgrim protagonist of Luis de Góngora's *Soledad primera* offers a similar remnant of his harrowing experience of shipwreck to the rocky shore on which he emerges (lines 29-33), and the poem later depicts a historical ship, the *Victoria* of Ferdinand Magellan's fleet, in terms of a votive memorial (lines 477-80). These passages constitute Góngora's creative engagement with elements of both the material and literary traditions involving nautical ex-votos. The ex-voto, itself a recognized figurative mode, constitutes one of the 'formas literarias codificadas que [Góngora] sometió a experimentación y transformación en su propio texto',² though perhaps because it is not an exclusively literary form, Góngora's appropriations and adaptations of the votive artefact have received less critical attention. Close examination of Góngora's artful development of this motif can sharpen our sensitivity to a characteristic technique in Góngora's poetic panoply. It is a technique which, like the votive display in Villaselán, can spur the reader to imaginative speculation concerning indistinct histories and can evoke compelling impressions by drawing on the reader's own store of associations.

Votive offerings are a transcultural and transhistorical phenomenon. Anthropologists and archaeologists have documented instances of their use on all habitable continents, with examples ranging from prehistoric times to the present. In the widest sense, ex-votos are thank-offerings that entail the fulfilment of a vow; the forms such offerings take, especially as material representations of personal experience and devotion, can vary widely among regions, eras, and individuals. It is important to delineate at this point some general parameters concerning how *exvotos* were considered, construed, and constructed in early modern Spain, before we proceed to examine the votive motif in the context of Góngora's composition.³

² Enrica Cancelliere, 'Estrategias metaliterarias en las *Soledades* de Góngora', in *Góngora Hoy X: Soledades*, ed. Joaquín Roses (Córdoba: Diputación de Córdoba, 2010), 61-80 (p. 61).

³ There have been relatively few studies on ex-votos as a cultural phenomenon in early modern Spain. The neglect is likely due, in part, to the rather thin and scattered primary documentation of votive praxis in the Golden Age. It also reflects biases towards other geographical and historical areas of research, as Joan de Déu Domènech has observed ('Cocodrils i balenes a les esglésies', *Locus amœnus*, 5 (2000-01), 253-75 [p. 255]). Most studies of votive offerings have focused either on the votive artefacts of ancient Mediterranean civilizations (predominantly in archaeological surveys) or on twentieth-century and present-day Latin American *exvotos* (predominantly in anthropological and folkloric approaches). Even those studies, like David Freedberg's *The Power of Images* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), which do consider the early modern period, omit early modern Spain from their analyses. Only two studies have featured sustained discussion of the Golden-Age ex-voto: the anthropologist William Christian, Jr's *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1981) and Elizabeth Davis's pioneering essay on the lyric treatments of the topic, 'La promesa del naufrago: el motivo marinero del ex-voto, de Garcilaso a Quevedo', in *Studies in Honor of James O. Crosby*, ed. Lía Schwartz (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2004), 109-23. These studies build upon Julio Caro Baroja's brief but suggestive treatment of the subject in *Las formas complejas de la vida religiosa: Religión, sociedad y carácter en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Akal, 1978), 109-11. A full-length, scholarly study of *exvotos* in Spain's Golden Age remains to be written. A monograph on the subject could cover votive rites as targets of Reformist critiques in the sixteenth century, their relationship to the origins of public museums and cabinets of curiosities, their propagation in the New World, and their status as objects of metalitary reflections, as in Lope de Vega's Sonnet 149, 'Cadenas desherradas, eslabones'.

Golden-Age authors offer no direct defences or formal apologies for the custom of setting up *exvotos* in places of worship, nor did the church or other authorities formally codify the custom. In Spain, votive offerings constitute a perpetuation of pre-Christian traditions, a fact that early modern writers readily acknowledged. The Franciscan Fray Diego de Arce, for one, in a sermon on the Immaculate Conception, notes the principal Marian shrines of his day, the kinds of votive offerings they exhibit, and the *exvotos*' Greco-Latin antecedents:

Id, os ruego, en espíritu, hijos de la Iglesia, peregrinando a nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, de Monserrate, de Lorito [*sic*] en Italia, y a otros santuarios así semejantes, adonde con particularidad esta Virgen es reverenciada, y entrando en ellos levantad los ojos, y veréis colgando del techo, y de las paredes, gran multitud de grandes cirios, mortajas, cadenas, pedaços de navíos, muletas, cabeças, iernas, braços, cuerpos, hechos unos de cera, otros de oro, y plata, y otras ofrendas desta manera, que los Griegos llaman *Anathemata*, y los Latinos *Donaria*.⁴

Descriptions of this sort, which became something of a generic set piece in contemporary travel literature and encomia of local shrines, exploit a rhetoric of *enumeratio*. Arce urges his listeners and readers to contemplate, in their spiritual imaginations ('en espíritu'), a vast accumulation of votive artefacts, for *exvotos*, both as palpable, visible objects on display and as items in written lists, testify vividly to the status and power of a shrine, of its specific cult and celestial Patron. On crowded walls and ceilings or in long lists, they awe by means of their multiplicity. The names of donors, even if they are known, are excluded from such lists. Instead, anonymous, indeterminate plurality serves to heighten the impression of teeming profusion and, consequently, of repeated corroboration—corroboration of the relevant deity's, saint's, or Virgin's efficacy and, by extension, of the shrine's prestige.

Jaime Prades's *Historia de la adoración y uso de las santas imágenes* presents a comparable catalogue of artefacts donated to one shrine, the Santuario de la Virgen de la Fuente de la Salud (Traiguera, Castellón). Using language that will be pertinent to my discussion of Góngora's poetic techniques, Prades lists votive evidence for

grandes milagros, los quales atestiguan los cirios de cera, y lámparas de plata [...] y los bultos de hombres, y piernas, y pechos enteros, y tetas, y cabeças, de plata, de cera, y de madera; y otras piezas de oro, y de plata: y tras esto los grillos, cadenas, naves, muletas, armas, y hombres ahorcados, y otros presentes que fueron aquí en hazimiento de gracias y para eterna memoria, traídos a nuestra Señora en testimonio de que aquellos sus devotos experimentaron su ayuda y virtud, quando la invocaron en sus necesidades y afanes.⁵

Like Arce's sermon, Prades's list aims to compel by dint of overwhelming enumeration. In the context of his argument in favour of religious images, this demonstrative array of votive offerings attests to the recurring, varied aid associated with the cult of one such image. A written list that teems with *exvoto* testimonials is the textual analogue of the physical display that would have confronted a contemporary visitor to the shrine in Traiguera.

Prades later draws on the shrine's manuscript ledger of miracles in order to describe the circumstances that gave rise to several specific votive objects in the collection. In total, his *Historia* includes forty-four individual miracle stories as part of its argument against Protestant iconoclasm; twelve of the forty-four accounts explicitly record the offering of *exvotos* in the wake of a healing or deliverance, such as 'el dardo y alabarda' that a survivor

⁴ *Miscelánea primera de oraciones eclesiásticas* (Murcia: Diego de la Torre, 1606), Mm8^r.

⁵ *Historia de la adoración y uso de las santas imágenes, y de la imagen de la Fuente de la Salud* (Valencia: Felipe Mey, 1597), Ff3^r.

of a 1586 Turkish coastal raid deposited in the shrine.⁶ In such accounts, the writer's strategy shifts from persuasion by means of profusion, to encouraging the reader to imagine the wonders and personal motives to which discrete artefacts attest.

This focus on individual offerings is, naturally, characteristic of lyric treatments of *exvotos* as well. Elizabeth B. Davis, as I previously noted, has broken new ground in her study of *exvotos* as a Classical motif reworked in the poetry of Spain's Golden Age.⁷ Davis identifies Horace's Ode V (Book 1) as the well-spring of Spanish imitations, ranging from Garcilaso de la Vega's seventh sonnet, 'No pierda más quien ha tanto perdido', to poems of the early seventeenth century. The relevant lines of Horace's ode are the last four:

[...] me tabula sacer
votiva paries indicat uvida
suspendisse potenti
vestimenta maris deo.⁸

Horace's aggrieved and disillusioned speaker thus concludes a rant directed at an inconstant lover. Finding his Pyrrha wooed by a handsome youth, he gives vent to his soured affections and predicts that it will be only a matter of time before his rival is likewise disappointed. Hints of an extended metaphor comparing his erstwhile romance to the navigation of a treacherous sea—the dark squalls that churn the sea in lines 6-7, the fickle wind of lines 11-12 —culminate in the exhibition of his 'tabula [...] votiva' and 'uvida [...] vestimenta'. These offerings to the sea god bring the metaphor, now explicit, to the foreground in the closing lines: the speaker, disabused of Pyrrha's love, regards their relationship as a hazardous sea voyage which he has survived; and his clothes, consecrated while still wet from the tempest, display at once his disillusionment, renunciation, and gratitude for being able to look back on the inconstant seas with open eyes.⁹

Davis examines five Golden-Age sonnets that employ the nautical *exvoto* as a principal motif.¹⁰ Her analysis sets these in the context of poetic treatments of shipwreck more generally, noting the use of this maritime imagery in conventional warnings against the perils of ambition, love, the royal court, and precarious earthly pleasures. The basic image, I would add, depends on the ancient concept of *homo viator* and, more precisely, on the Stoic concept of life as a voyage over stormy seas. In the context of the admonitory *topoi*, the addition of *exvoto* imagery in the Horatian mould offers fresh dimensions to the old warnings. The votive motif permits the lyric persona a retrospective stance from which he or she rehearses and memorializes, with cautionary implications, the vicissitudes of experience and assumes a dialogic relationship with a supernatural agent. As in Ode V, *desengaño* is a dominant theme among such treatments. The speaker marks an enlightened reassessment of reality, a revised alignment of values signalled by the commemorative thank-offering.

⁶ Prades, *Historia*, Hh4^r

⁷ 'La promesa del naufrago', in *Studies in Honor of James O. Crosby* (2004), 109-23.

⁸ 'As for me, a votive tablet on his temple wall records that I have dedicated my drenched clothes to the deity who rules the sea', lines 13-16, in *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and trans. Niall Rudd, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2004), 34-35.

⁹ See Fray Luis de León's close adaptations of this ode, '¿Quién es, ¡o Nise hermosa!' (in *Poesías completas*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas [Madrid: Castalia 2000], 258-59), and '¿Quién tiene la cavida?' (attributed to Fray Luis in the *Cartapacio de Francisco Morán de la Estrella*, ed. Ralph A. DiFranco, José J. Labrador Herraiz, et al. [Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 1989], 422). Ronald Storrs's *Ad Pyrrham: A Polyglot Collection of Translations of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha* includes four additional versions from the Spanish Golden Age: those of El Brocense, Vicente Espinel, Lupericio Leonardo de Argensola, and Francisco de Medrano ([London: OUP, 1959], 197).

¹⁰ In addition to Garcilaso's Sonnet VII, these sonnets are Juan de Morales's 'Jamás el cielo vió llegar piloto'; Diego de Bienvenides's 'Amor, en tus altares he ofrecido'; and Quevedo's 'Tuvo enojado el alto mar de España' and '¡Qué bien me parecéis, jarcias y entenas!'.

Góngora writes in this Horatian vein, for example, in his *romancillo* to 'Noble desengaño'; the *romancillo*'s speaker brings votive offerings to *desengaño*'s temple in lines 5-20, but the latter half of the poem descends into playful irreverence.¹¹

The foregoing, then, gives some indication of the ample and varied palette of ancient and contemporary practices—and representations—from which Góngora selected when incorporating the votive motif into the *Soledad primera*. In his most ambitious and innovative poem, he seizes upon the possibilities inherent in the sorts of fragmentary, material mementos to personal experience that also predominate in Arce's and Prades's lists (as opposed to processions, paintings, candles, fasts, and foundations that could also constitute votive offerings). He eschews explicit treatment of *desengaño* here, though the nautical context could accommodate an Horatian subtext. Instead, Góngora adheres to the basic motives ascribed to votive practice more generally: 'hazimiento de gracias' and 'memoria' or 'testimonio', in Prades's terms. This permits a keener focus on how such artefacts signify and to what ends within the poem.

The pilgrim's *exvoto* 'de la rota nave'

The first nautical votive offering in the *Soledad primera* occupies the first in a series of syntactic periods in which the pilgrim castaway begins to act in the *silva*, rather than be acted upon: here the 'natural totality becomes object, the protagonist subject' in 'the sequence of purposive, ritualistic gestures which he now undertakes'.¹² After the ocean vomits him onto the shore, the pilgrim kisses the sand and offers to the rock the sea-wracked plank to which he had clung, a token of his gratitude. Robert Jammes's edition presents lines 29-33 as follows:

Besa la arena, y de la rota nave
aquella parte poca
que lo expuso en la playa dio a la roca:
que aun se dejan las peñas
lisonjear de agradecidas señas.¹³

While its prominence as the first in a series of actions draws attention to this period, the reference to a votive rite itself is subtle. Góngora includes just enough elements to inscribe the episode within the recognizable conventions of such practices (the fragment offered, a sign of gratitude on display), without explicitly identifying 'aquella parte poca' as an *ex-voto*. Nevertheless, some of the earliest commentators of the *Soledades* readily recognized the votive motif and drew connections among Góngora's use of the convention, classical precedents, and votive practices of their own time. The commentators' particular attention to the votive acts and imagery of the *Soledad primera* was spurred in part by Juan de Jáuregui's criticism of these lines. After taking aim at broader characteristics of the work, its manner, and its overall disposition, Jáuregui turns his attention to finer details of the poem, 'sus sentencias particulares'.¹⁴ His first target is lines 29-33. Jáuregui rightly senses that these lines carry weighty significance—or that they *should* carry weighty significance—in the poem, but he finds their effect to be rather bathetic:

Parece a veces que va V.m. a decir cosas de gran peso, y sale con una bagatela o malpare un ratón, como cuando el navegante echó en la roca el madero que le había escapado de la tormenta, dice V.m. con alta ponderación:

¹¹ In *Romances*, ed. Antonio Carreño (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000), 210-16.

¹² John R. Beverley, 'Soledad primera, Lines 1-61', *MLN*, 88:2 (1973), 233-48 (p. 244).

¹³ Luis de Góngora y Argote, *Soledades*, ed. Robert Jammes (Madrid: Castalia, 1994), 203-205.

¹⁴ *Antídoto contra la pestilente poesía de las Soledades por Juan de Jáuregui*, ed. José Manuel Rico García (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2002), 11-12.

Que aun se dejan las peñas
lisonjear de agradecidas señas [...]
Miren qué lisonja o agradecimiento se infiere de echar un leño roto en
aquella roca.¹⁵

Góngora's defenders, beginning with Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, abbot of Rute, pick up on the term 'ponderación' and insist that this instance is indeed 'alta'. They counter Jáuregui's lack of appreciation by marshalling classical references and citing contemporaneous votive practices. The abbot of Rute seems to assume that Jáuregui has missed the main idea entirely. He explains at length the allusion to material culture:

Los que an escapado de algún graue peligro, o alcançado lo que deseaban, siempre an acostumbrado, agradecidos, dedicar antiguamente a los falsos Dioses imaginarios tutelares de varias cosas, y oy al único verdadero dueño del universo los instrumentos, por cuio medio an conseguido el pretendido fin, o la semejanza dellos, o de sus personas mesmas o cosas equivalentes; [...] y de lo presente las paredes de muchos sagrados templos cubiertas de cables de Nauíos, grillos, cadenas, vestidos, cabelleras, tablillas exvoto ett.^a siguiendo esta costumbre pintó el Poeta el mancebo Peregrino, que a la roca que le recojó naufragante, dedicó el leño, en que abía escapádose.¹⁶

The next apologist to take up the charge against Jáuregui's *Antídoto* followed suit, bolstering the abbot's observations only by adding Spanish literary references to *exvotos* in Garcilaso de la Vega's seventh sonnet and Góngora's own *romance*, 'Según vuelan por el agua', alongside the commonplace quotations from Virgil and Horace.¹⁷ This anonymous apologist deemed it sufficient to demonstrate the poet's erudition in this passage of the *Soledad primera*. 'Desta ponderación se rió el *Antídoto*, [...] Pásasele por alto a nuestro crítico el alma de la ponderación que hizo el poeta del agradecimiento del peregrino, porque en los versos que le parecen "mal paridos ratones" está embebida mucha erudición'.¹⁸ José de Pellicer's *Lecciones solemnes* and José García de Salcedo Coronel's commentaries continue in this vein, each contributing additional citations from classics and contemporaries in order to identify the pilgrim's act as part of the votive tradition.¹⁹

Yet it is highly unlikely that Jáuregui, himself a translator of Horace's odes, would have been ignorant of votive practices in his own time or of the textual and archaeological vestiges of *exvotos* from the classical Mediterranean. In this regard, the critical rejoinders are arguing at cross-purposes with Jáuregui and creating something of a straw man of his admittedly ambiguous objection to the passage. There is indeed more to *ponderar* in lines 29-33, beyond its sources, material or literary. Jáuregui's challenge concerning how or what 'se infiere' by means of the votive act and artefact brings me to my principal observation about Góngora's poetic technique in this passage: *exvotos* like the pilgrim's little fragment from 'la rota nave' are designed to function as richly metonymic signs—signs which point to the broader experience of which they formed a part and of which they are a result. One can

¹⁵ Jáuregui, *Antídoto*, 12.

¹⁶ 'Examen del Antídoto o Apología por las Soledades de Don Luis de Góngora contra el autor de el Antídoto', Apéndice VII in Miguel Artigas, *Don Luis de Góngora y Argote: Biografía y estudio crítico* (Madrid: Revista de Archivos, 1925), 400-67 (p. 409).

¹⁷ *Góngora vindicado: Soledad primera, ilustrada y defendida*, ed. María José Osuna Cabezas (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2009), 186-88. The author of this defense is anonymous, but the editor convincingly attributes authorship to Fray Francisco de Cabrera and dates the manuscript to *circa* 1620.

¹⁸ *Góngora vindicado*, 185-86.

¹⁹ José Pellicer de Salas y Tovar, *Lecciones solemnes a las obras de don Luis de Góngora* (Madrid: Imprenta del Reino, 1630), Aa2^r-Aa2^v; José García de Salcedo Coronel, *Soledades de D. Luis de Góngora comentadas* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1646), C6^r-C8^r.

usefully consider their figurative mode to be metonymic, in accordance with modern terminological treatments of such figures. That is, they are functionally distinct from the other broad figurative mode, the metaphoric, as Roman Jakobson and theorists following his lead maintain.²⁰ Rather than expressing a relationship of similarity and dissimilarity between terms, the metonym, in its broadest sense, relies upon ‘contiguity’, association, and ‘scale-manipulation’.²¹ In other words, unlike interpretive exercises that demand comparisons and contrasts, the metonymic trope expresses a contiguous relationship between entities; it requires the reader’s or viewer’s recognition of the whole in the part (*pars pro toto*), the cause in the effect, the general in the particular. The nautical *exvotos* in the *Soledad primera* are particular material remnants that memorialize in a metonymic mode. The ‘breve tabla’ (line 18) is intended to evoke the whole ship of which it formed a part; the remnant of the ‘rota nave’ displays the effects of the wind and waves. The allusive power of such signs extends to the wider ordeal and context of which they were a component. Their preservation points to the ‘salvific event’ that the pilgrim has experienced, to borrow a phrase from David Freedberg.²²

On the one hand, the hermeneutic exercise involved in reading this kind of *exvoto* differs only by a matter of degree from that required for more commonplace metonyms (for instance, recognizing the ‘leño’ of line 21 as a standard trope for a wooden ship). Yet the votive fragment grants greater scope for speculation. It is designed to stimulate an imaginative aetiology that can encompass narrative (the artefact’s back story), the votive act, and the devotee’s sentiments. Golden-Age readers, particularly those who were conditioned to contemplate votive displays with careful, appreciative attention, could be acutely sensitive to such possibilities. We have encountered one telling instance in Prades’s list of *exvotos*. As he builds his list of votive representations, Prades seems to get somewhat carried away and neglects to distinguish between reality and simulacra: ‘[...] muletas, armas, y hombres ahorcados [...]’, he enumerates. The ‘hombres ahorcados’, like the ‘naves’ earlier in the list, would have been images fashioned of wax or other media, not actual corpses. Whether we take this to be an error or deliberate, rhetorical shorthand designed to pronounce these devotees to be vividly present, the instance suggests how one might read the items in a votive display. For Prades, the representations of men once hanged or condemned to hang and now delivered, powerfully evoke the devotees themselves in the agonizing moment of their distress and imminent rescue. The poet Juan de Ovando y Santarén, a great admirer of Góngora, likewise transposes votive simulacra and the nautical dangers from which they

²⁰ See David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 73-81. Erasing the distinctions between metonymy and synecdoche, or treating synecdoche as a subtype of metonymy, accords as well with some Golden-Age treatments. See, for example, Luis Alfonso de Carvallo’s definition of metonymy in *Cisne de Apolo* (1602):

La *metonimia* es cuando nombramos la parte por el todo, como llamar a las naves, popas, o las nombramos con el nombre de su causa o inventor, como llamar a la guerra, Marte. O con el nombre de su efecto, como llamar obscuridad a la noche, o con el nombre de sus insignias y señales, como al imperio, ceptro, a la victoria, palma. O con el nombre de lo que en sí contiene (ed. Alberto Porqueras Mayo [Kassel: Reichenberger, 1997], 330).

Bartolomé Jiménez Patón’s *Elocuencia española en arte* (1604) likewise treats metonymy broadly as a trope that relies on contiguity and association:

la metonimia, o hipálage (como la llamaron los retóricos), no es otra cosa sino una transmutación de los significados por vecindad de unas cosas a otras [...], y en los antecedentes y consecuentes [...] Digo más, que no hay metonimia donde no se hallen estos antecedentes y subsecuentes, unos tomados por otros; y así no hay necesidad aun de hacer modo distinto en la metonimia, y de ninguna suerte es sinédoque [*sic*] (ed. Francisco Javier Martín [Barcelona: Puvill, 1993], 141).

²¹ Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), 101-02.

²² *The Power of Images*, 157.

derived. His 'Descripción panegírica de Málaga' in *octavas* (1663) features a long inventory of ex-votos exhibited in the shrine of Málaga's Patroness, Nuestra Señora de la Victoria. In lines 1065-72 the shrine itself 'doth suffer a sea-change' as the accumulation of exvotos inundates the space with re-animated representations of doomed voyages and miraculous rescues:

En el ayre engolfados, si suspensos,
contrahechos navegan mil navíos;
de baxeles, que el número haze inmensos,
dichosas tablas llenan sus bacíos;
otros varios prodigios son tan densos,
que les sirven de escollos y baxíos;
ondas, al vivo, los retablos mueven,
donde naufragios milagrosos llueven.²³

The poem, like Prades's reference to 'hombres ahorcados', applies the imagined aetiology to the remnants and representations presently on display. Miguel de Cervantes uses the same technique in *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (1617) to depict his protagonists' perceptions upon visiting the Santuario de la Virgen de Guadalupe:

Entraron en su templo y [...] hallaron [...] muletas que dejaron los cojos, ojos de cera que dejaron los ciegos, brazos que colgaron los mancos, mortajas de que se desnudaron los muertos, todos, después de haber caído en el suelo de las miserias, ya vivos, ya sanos, ya libres y ya contentos [...] De tal manera hizo aprehensión estos milagrosos adornos en los corazones de los devotos peregrinos, que volvieron los ojos a todas las partes del templo y les parecía ver venir por el aire volando los cautivos, envueltos en sus cadenas, a colgarlas de las santas murallas y, a los enfermos, arrastrar las muletas y, a los muertos, mortajas, buscando lugar donde ponerlas, porque ya en el sacro templo no cabían: tan grande es la suma que las paredes ocupan.²⁴

These three Golden-Age examples, from genres as diverse as theological apology, poetry, and fiction, indicate the sorts of implications that readers of the time could have perceived in a metonymic 'parte poca' like that of Góngora's pilgrim. Perhaps the juxtaposition of present or historical present ('Besa') and past tenses ('dio') further hints at the coalescence of imagined back story and present artefact in lines 29-33. With regard to the long-standing contentions about the *Soledades*' apparent lack of narrative content, one could point to the pilgrim's nautical *exvoto*, which encapsulates a narrative reprise of the shipwreck of lines 9-23 and, in accordance with the reader's powers of speculation, potentially harks back further still to the young pilgrim's 'historias largas', to which the poem alludes in line 508. These remain allusions, of course—germinal narrative devices that enrich the poem by means of suggestion and require a 'collaborative creation', involving both the poet and reader, as Marsha Collins observes concerning the *Soledades* more generally.²⁵ Thus, while the oblatory rite, as the pilgrim's first action, initiates 'the trajectory formed by the pilgrimage itself',²⁶ it is also a retrospective memorial, pointing back towards an extra-diegetic past. As a memorial, however, an *exvoto* is, paradoxically, ephemeral and evanescent. Góngora exploits this feature more fully in his construction of the second nautical ex-voto of the *Soledad primera*.

²³ *Ocios de Castalia en diversos poemas*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas (Málaga: Diputación Provincial de Málaga, 1987), 475.

²⁴ Ed. Carlos Romero Muñoz, 5th ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 2004 [1st ed. 1997]), 471-72.

²⁵ *The Soledades, Góngora's Masque of the Imagination* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2002), 197.

²⁶ Beverley, 'Soledad primera, Lines 1-61', 244.

The votive remnants of the *Victoria*

A centrepiece of the *Soledad primera* is a long discourse on seafaring. Góngora assigns this discourse to an ancient mariner who detains the pilgrim wedding-guest with a damning history of mankind's more notable maritime endeavours and of his own tragic loss of a son and his fortune at sea. Attributing Western man's overseas ambitions to personified greed, the aged 'montañés prolijo' (line 505) crowns his survey of Iberian exploration with an account of the first circumnavigation of the globe, a voyage which discovered a westward route to the Spice Islands via the Strait of Magellan. He conveniently reduces the original fleet to one 'glorioso pino' (line 467, a clear echo of the pilgrim's own defiant and broken 'pino' of line 15), and ultimately identifies this lone bark as the *Victoria*, the sole ship to complete the circumnavigation:

Esta pues nave ahora
en el húmido templo de Neptuno
varada pende a la inmortal Memoria
con nombre de Victoria. (lines 477-80)

Of the five ships that ventured forth under the initial command of Ferdinand Magellan in 1519, only one managed to limp back into port at the mouth of the Guadalquivir in September 1522. The first ship to circumnavigate the globe stayed afloat during the final four weeks of its three-year voyage only by a continuous manning of the pumps to draw the water from its leaking hold.²⁷ The historical record tells us a great deal about how Charles V honoured the *Victoria*'s commander, Juan Sebastián de Elcano, and the eighteen surviving crewmen,²⁸ but ambiguity surrounds the memorial that Góngora's 'político serrano' (line 364) describes in lines 477-80. Was the ship truly preserved in some form to commemorate its feat?

Robert Jammes's edition of the *Soledades* notes that there was some uncertainty among Góngora's earliest readers concerning the existence of such a memorial. On the one hand, Pellicer states that 'Las reliquias de la nao *Victoria* se guardan en Sevilla, con razón, para la posteridad: y así lo refieren, sobre haberlas yo visto'; but Salcedo, without, as usual, mentioning Pellicer by name, undercuts this claim when he remarks about the purported relic of the renowned ship, 'dicen que se conserva hoy en Sevilla; no la he visto, aunque nací en aquella ciudad'. As Jammes also notes, Antonio Carreira's *Antología poética* of Góngora's verse reproduces a manuscript annotation from the margins of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1547). The anonymous comment, in a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century hand, testifies that parts of Elcano's ship had indeed been preserved in the royal shipyards at Seville: 'Esta nao Victoria estuvo varada en tierra de Sevilla, en la güerta de las Atarazanas del rey: y allí la vide el año de mill e quinientos e ochenta, que se fabricaban barcas para la jornada de Portugal; della han quedado algunos pedazos vivos'.²⁹ This settles the conflicting claims to Jammes's satisfaction, and elucidates the phrase 'varada pende', 'contradictoria a primera vista'—the implication being that 'algunos pedazos' could indeed be hung aloft in dry dock, but not an entire ship.³⁰ But what should one make of Salcedo's professed ignorance of the memorial? Why does the anonymous marginalia insist so strongly on eyewitness observation assigned to a particular date?

²⁷ See Juan Sebastián de Elcano, 'Carta de Juan Sebastián de Elcano al Emperador', in *La primera vuelta al mundo*, ed. Ramón Alba (Madrid: Miraguano and Polifemo, 2012), 9-12.

²⁸ See Enrique Martínez Ruiz, Enrique Giménez, et al., *La España moderna* (Madrid: Istmo, 1992), 206-07.

²⁹ All three quotations appear in Jammes's note on line 479, *Soledades*, p. 294.

³⁰ Note on line 479, p. 294.

While Salcedo relies on his first-hand familiarity with Seville to reject Pellicer's assertion, the latter places his own eyewitness claim alongside reference to a near-contemporaneous authority, the *Theatri humanae vitae*. This vast collection of commonplaces assembled by the Swiss humanist and physician Theodor Zwinger (1533-88) is Pellicer's principal source for information on the *Victoria*. Pellicer's meticulous reference to volume, book, and page number leads one to Zwinger's brief entry on ships preserved as memorials, 'Naves memoriae causae conservatae'.³¹ The three vessels Zwinger lists in this entry are Noah's ark at rest on Mount Ararat; the *Argo* of Greek mythology, enshrined in Corinth; and the *Victoria*, memorialized in Seville. Pellicer's comment turns out to be a closely literal translation of Zwinger's: 'eius navis reliquiae Hispali memoriae causa, iure meritoque posteritati reseruantur'.³²

In addition to Pellicer's source material and the texts that Jammes adduces, I would cite three Golden-Age authors who shed further light on the matter of the *Victoria*'s memorial. First, Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardín de flores curiosas* (1570) mentions 'la nao que se llama Victoria, que está en las ataraçanas de Sevilla, o a lo menos estuvo como cosa de admiración'.³³ Likewise, José Martínez de la Puente, writing more than a century after Torquemada, maintains that '[l]os fragmentos [sic] desta Nao Victoria se guardan en Sevilla por memoria'.³⁴ More revealing still, on account of their detail and their proximity to the language of Góngora's own description of the memorial vessel, are Pablo Espinosa de los Monteros's comments on the *Victoria* and her captain, whose renown 'por su grande constancia y dicha nunca oyda de aver rodeado todo el mundo merece quede immortalizado. La popa de la dicha Nave se puso pendiente en las ataraçanas desta Ciudad'.³⁵ As in lines 477-80 of the *Soledad primera*, Espinosa records the notion that the *Victoria* was hung aloft in Seville's shipyard and, significantly, identifies the exhibited fragment as the vessel's stern, which, as the heart of the ship's steering mechanisms, would point metonymically to its unprecedented feat of navigation. Thus, the weight of evidence in terms of early modern references to the memorial certainly seems to favour some material basis for Góngora's description, but these authors acknowledge such material to be partial or ambiguous (as in Torquemada's qualification that the *Victoria* 'está [...] o a lo menos estuvo'). Diego Barros Arana, the only modern historian to take up the problem, dismisses the purported memorial as a mere 'invención'—a commemorative impulse that was perhaps intended or desired but never in fact created. We know that the *Victoria* made two additional voyages to the Caribbean before sinking in a storm somewhere on the Atlantic when bound for Spain. Barros Arana quotes Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia* as conclusive evidence against the existence of a memorial; the *Historia*'s account of the *Victoria*'s final resting place seems to leave no room for a remnant of the ship to be preserved in Seville: 'a la vuelta que volvió a España se perdió, que nunca jamás se supo de ella ni de persona de los que en ella iban'.³⁶ Nevertheless, one might naturally assume that the leaking *Victoria* of 1522 would have been substantially reconstructed in the Spanish shipyards before returning to the high seas. There is no reason to rule out the possibility that the 'popa' or 'pedazos' of the original vessel were indeed preserved. Perhaps these were no longer clearly designated as such by Salcedo's day or had deteriorated to such an extent that they were no longer

³¹ Pellicer does not indicate which edition he is citing, but the details of his reference correspond to the 1604 edition (Basel: Henricpetri), in which the relevant information appears in volume 3, NN5'.

³² *Theatri*, NN5'.

³³ *Obras completas*, ed. Lina Rodríguez Cacho, 2 vols. (Madrid: Turner, Biblioteca Castro, 1994, 1997), I, 822.

³⁴ *Compendio de las historias de los descubrimientos, conquistas, y guerras de la India Oriental y sus islas* (Madrid: Imprenta Imperial, 1681), C7'.

³⁵ *Segunda parte de la historia y grandeza de la gran ciudad de Sevilla* (Sevilla: Juan de Cabrera, 1630), O5'.

³⁶ Diego Barros Arana, 'Biografía i viaje de Hernando de Magallanes al Estrecho a que dio su nombre', *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 24.5 (1864): 404-14 (p. 412-13).

recognizable among the material confusion of the shipyard. The ultimate loss of the refurbished *Victoria* does not exclude the conservation of its former fragments.

What is important here is that Góngora selects a memorial which, in an implicit, ironic paradox, proves to be ephemeral, unstable, contested. The old man's statement concerning the *Victoria*, which might at first appear to be a crowning moment in his account of discovery and conquest, ultimately discloses another bitter irony in his plaint. Like the life preservers in Villaselán, nearly forgotten within a couple decades, Seville's monument to 'la inmortal Memoria' of nautical achievement cannot now be identified with certainty, if it ever existed at all. Góngora's depiction of the *Victoria's* remnants in terms of a votive offering also underscores this memorial's fragility. (Again, as in lines 29-33, its status as an *exvoto* is not explicit, but the commemorative display suspended in a place of worship sets it clearly within the *exvoto* tradition.) *Exvotos* are notoriously perishable mementos, and more so in murkier shrines.³⁷ In the light of the *Victoria's* ultimate foundering, one could also read its location 'en el húmido templo de Neptuno' as something along the lines of Davy Jones's locker: the first ship to circumnavigate the globe is now beached on the ocean floor, as though suspended in the undersea currents. This *exvoto*, whether lost in a shipyard or lost at sea, is a trophy to fleeting glory, and the mention of the sea god recalls the theme of *desengaño* that united so many imitations of Horace's ode.

If Seville's shipyard can be Neptune's temple, and if personified *peñas* can interpret 'agradecidas señas', this suggests that the *exvoto* motif plays a role in the broader 'pantheistic spirit' with which Góngora imbues the work.³⁸ The reaction of the rocky shore in lines 32-33 is not merely the standard recourse to pathetic fallacy common to eclogues and other pastoral literature, where nature reacts to the emotions of the human characters. The *ex-votos* render the anthropomorphism of the shore and the shipyard an apotheosis: a liberating, pantheistic invitation to contemplate how nature might read man's artefact. The sacralizing transposition of the temple to the littoral space opens possibilities for perceiving votive signs beyond the walls of conventional shrines, while the blurring of setting, medium, and diegetic reader in the form of personified *peñas* and the 'templo de Neptuno' conditions readers to seek potential votive signs in the poem more generally.

Indeed, the hermeneutic exercise involved in 'reading' *ex-votos* is also applicable to other images in the *Soledades*. That is, various images invite readers to contemplate the back story of an object or place, to speculate concerning the processes or narrative that led to its present form. The *Soledad segunda* urges readers to imagine, for example, the pre-existence of a boat as a 'verde roble'—to consider the brief biography of a wooden object that once formed part of a wood inhabited by nightingales (lines 37-39). It is a technique akin to that of Hans Christian Andersen's 'Grantræet' ('The Fir-Tree'); it heightens readers' sensitivity to the narrative possibilities inherent in mundane objects. Moreover, this impulse towards imaginative aetiologies that encourage the reader to speculate concerning extradiegetic elements underlies highly sophisticated conceits in the poem. Within the falconry scene at the close of the *Segunda soledad*, the 'grillo torneado' conceit in lines 849-53 offers a particularly striking example:

Puesto en tiempo, corona, si no escala,

³⁷ For a Golden-Age description of the decay and regular recycling or repurposing of *exvotos*, see Andrés Sánchez Tejado, *La divina Serrana de Tormes, por otro nombre Historia de Nuestra Señora del Espino* (Segovia: Diego Flamenco, 1629), Y3^v-Y4^r; and on the tendency of votive waxworks, paintings, and textiles to moulder in damp shrines, see José de la Justicia, *Historia de la Virgen de la Cueva Santa* (Valencia: Bernardo Nogués, 1655), N4^v.

³⁸ The apt phrase is C. C. Smith's, from 'Serranas de Cuenca' in *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age Presented to Edward M. Wilson*, ed. R. O. Jones (London: Tamesis, 1973), 283-95 (p. 290).

las nubes (desmintiendo
su libertad el grillo torneado
que en sonoro metal lo va siguiendo)
un baharí templado.

Here the sparrow-hawk, trailed by the metallic jangle of hawk-bells on its feet, flies skyward in swift pursuit of its prey. Aside from other contextual clues, the adjective 'torneado' alerts the reader to the fact that 'grillo' cannot refer to an ordinary shackle for a prisoner's limbs. In the early modern period, such fetters would have been forged, not turned on a lathe. This adjective, in conjunction with the 'sonoro metal' of the following line, leads the reader to seek an alternative metal object. Even the most cursory knowledge of falconry would allow one to perceive an association between the shackle-like 'sonoro metal' and the little bells commonly attached to the bird's feet, but here again the reader's efforts to apprehend the image are stymied by an apparent incongruity. Bells of all kinds are more likely to be produced by means of casting metal in a mould, and are not, in the first instance, mechanically turned; the idea of a lathe seems difficult to accommodate. Moreover, rather than open, cup-shaped bells, which might indeed be turned on a lathe in order to fashion their core, the hawk-bells used in traditional falconry were of the small, spherical, crotal variety, and would not have been turned except—and the exception is crucial—for the purposes of tooling and finishing the bells' surface.³⁹ Thus, what at first may seem like an inapposite reference to the *grillo*-bells' manufacture, proves ultimately to convey a great deal of sensory and conceptual detail in this conceit. By evoking the metal being rotated and worked upon in the lathe, the sound of the regular whirring of the device and of the metallic chisel or gouge grinding against the bell's surface at intervals, coincide to enhance the rhythmic tinkling of the sparrow-hawk's bells as he pumps his wings in flight.⁴⁰ The visual association with a decorative finish on the bell's surface suggests an ornamental gleam appropriate for the aristocratic milieu, while the overall structure and operation of the rotating bell fastened between two points in the lathe underscore the hawk's cyclical return under the falconer's artistry—a cycle that the bells announce as they thwart the bird's seeming liberty.

This well-turned conceit is all the more impressive for its brevity, its capacity to evoke in only two words a vast wealth of associations. Like 'aquella parte poca' that points beyond itself to the pilgrim's experience of shipwreck, the conceit evokes processes and contexts of which it forms a part. But to achieve the effects I have outlined above, the associations must be vividly present in the reader's imagination, which must consider the origins of the bells simultaneously with their present state. The resulting perception is not unlike the vivid images that Ovando Santarén and Cervantes construct when describing the votive display in conjunction with the experiences that gave it shape. But like the ephemeral votive artefact, such impressions must also be evanescent—a series of fleeting perceptions—so as not to occlude the larger scene.

Góngora recognized the persuasive force of such representational techniques that require the reader to invest a considerable degree of imaginative speculation.⁴¹ As he argues in his famous 'Carta en respuesta', the reader's intellect, when engaged in such hermeneutic exercises, 'por fuerza [...] ha de quedar convencido, y convencido, satisfecho'. Aesthetic delight for the ideal reader who takes up this challenge lies in aligning what he or she brings to the text—whether that be speculative invention of a character's past, or familiarity with

³⁹ James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 198-200; Thomas D. Rossing, *Acoustics of Bells* (Stroudsburg, PA: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1984), 164; Thomas D. Rossing, *Science of Percussion Instruments* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2000), 128-36.

⁴⁰ This adds another dimension to the auditory image that Dámaso Alonso noted in the potential pun on *grillo* as both a shackle and as a chirping cricket, 'por su sonido, monótono' (*Las Soledades*, ed. D. Alonso [Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1956 (1st ed. 1927)], 179).

⁴¹ See Collins, 45-47.

lathes—with the poet's prompts. In this way, the reader's intellect 'quedar a m as deleitado cuando, oblig ndole a la especulaci n por la oscuridad de la obra, fuere hallando [...] asimilaciones a su concepto'.⁴² With reference to the ex-voto motif and the modes of representation it entails, I take G ngora's statement to mean that the degree of speculation required for reading such tropes is a source of pleasure and persuasion. The reader is pleased to discover his or her own associations reflected and accommodated among the metonymic hints. What has power to move one to worship, reflection, or grateful recollection likewise serves to elicit a compelling, collaborative image.

There is yet another brief but highly significant testimony to the existence of the *Victoria's* commemorative remnants in Seville. It is also an eloquent testimony to the capacity of G ngora's imagery to capture one reader's imagination. Manuel de Faria e Sousa, who seldom failed to denigrate G ngora's style while praising that of Cam es, evidently drew on G ngora's depiction of the *Victoria* in his Castilian prose translation and commentary on Cam es's *Os Lus adas*. Cam es describes Vasco de Gama's ships about to set sail for India from the shores of Lisbon, ships destined to be immortalized in the heavens like the constellation Argo Navis: 'ellas [as naos] prometem vendo os mares largos, / de ser no Olimpo estrelas como a de Argos' (IV.85, lines 7-8). Faria e Sousa's commentary on these lines proposes an earthier memorial for the fleet, with reference to the *Victoria*: 'La raz n est  dictando que sus cad veres [i.e. the remains of the ships] devieran colgarse en algun Templo por trofeos. Los Portugueses atienden poco a estas memorias: mejor lo hizieron los Castellanos, que oy est n viendo los huessos de la nao Vitoria'.⁴³ Although the *Victoria's* crew did perform a votive procession 'en camisa y descalzos, con un cirio en la mano', visiting various shrines of Seville 'como lo hab a[n] prometido en los momentos de angustia',⁴⁴ no sixteenth-century references to the *Victoria* cast the conservation of the ship itself in terms of a votive offering. Before the *Soledades* first circulated among courtly coteries, no one had envisioned the ambiguous memorial as an ex-voto. Yet the image clearly seems to have held sway over Faria e Sousa's reading of this nautical relic. Even in the imagination of a less than sympathetic reader, the votive possibilities stimulated compelling speculation, enriching his perceptions of his own patriotic mementos.

⁴² These quotations are taken from the most recent edition of G ngora's 'Respuesta': Juan Manuel Daza Somoano, 'Los testimonios de la pol mica epistolar Lope-G ngora (1615-1616), con edici n de la *Respuesta* de G ngora', in *El poeta soledad: G ngora 1609-1615*, ed. Bego a L pez Bueno (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2011), 270-87 (p. 285).

⁴³ *Lus adas de Luis de Camoens [...] comentadas* (Madrid: Juan S nchez [sic, i.e. Antonio Duplastre], 1639), col. 403.

⁴⁴ Antonio Pigafetta, 'Primer viaje en torno del globo', in *La primera vuelta al mundo*, ed. Ram n Alba (Madrid: Miraguano and Polifemo, 2012), 185-325 (p. 324).