The Dilemma of the Iberian Proto-Humanist: Hermeneutic Translation as Presage of Necromantic Imitation

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In the late Middle Ages, and on into the Renaissance, translation from Latin into the modern languages was often fostered in the schools and universities as a prelude or accessory to the cultivation of the art of *imitatio*.[1] Such imitations, of course, were originally meant to be carried out in Latin, and were intended to refine the Latin style of the student (Quintero 100). With the rise of Humanism, however, it was increasingly recognized that the imitation of prestigious models in vernacular texts would also serve to elevate the status of the modern languages, and imbue them and their literary traditions with an authority nearly equivalent to that enjoyed by the Classical tradition itself. The high esteem accruing to this type of imitation was further authorized by the similar importance known to have been accorded the concept of *translatio studii* in Latin culture with respect to the Greek. It is significant in this regard that Humanist authors often state that successful *imitatio* will serve to "*ilustrar*" not only their own works, but their language and national literary tradition

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1   Of course, as Folena points out (64-65), the principal motive of Medieval translation from Latin into the vulgar tongues was to assist in transmitting Christian religious ideas to the general populace.

as well.[2] Nonetheless, because this process of "adding luster" through recognizable allusion involves the recreation or evocation of the model in a different linguistic and cultural context, it is often very difficult to distinguish sharply between imitation and translation (Folena 73). It is a very special case of this problem that I propose to discuss here.

María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, in her monumental 1950 study *Juan de Mena: poeta del prerrenacimiento español*, has made a convincing case for reading the fifteenth-century Spanish poet Juan de Mena as a major pioneer or precursor of Humanism in the Iberian Peninsula. As the Argentine scholar makes clear, Mena faced considerable obstacles in the project of creating a vernacular literature grounded in a proto-humanist resuscitation of Classical letters. On the one hand, the Castilian language had not quite achieved the state of development required to serve as a vehicle of Humanist expression, as evidenced by Mena's frequent use of idiosyncratic Latinisms and difficult neologisms (Lida de Malkiel 233-86). On the other, his public, even that of the royal court, could not be counted upon to have sufficient stock of the "literary memory" requisite for recognizing and interpreting the Classical allusions so fundamental to Humanist literary endeavor. Both of the aforementioned difficulties become particularly acute when the poet attempts to engage in the formal *imitatio* of prestigious models that is so central to Humanist poetic practice. In this paper, I examine how Mena is obliged by the abovementioned obstacles to resort to what I call "hermeneutic translation" in the showcase imitative passages of his most ambitious work, the long narrative poem known as the *Laberinto de Fortuna*.[3]

As A.D. Deyermond has pointed out, Mena's poem is no abstract medieval meditation on the vagaries of fortune, as the title might suggest (163-64). On the contrary, it is an intensely political, propagandistic attempt on the part of the poet to influence his monarch in favor of the

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2   "Ilustrar" is a verb that is often used by sixteenth-century poets like Alonso de Ercilla (*Araucana* 23.61*gh*) and his contemporaries to describe the practice and goal of imitation. This is made especially explicit by Du Bellay and Ronsard (Py 15, 20), and the concept permeates discussions of imitation amongst the Sevillian disciples of Herrera (Vilanova 20-21).

3   What I call here "hermeneutic translation" is somewhat different from what Folena (72) calls "mediazione esegetica" (referring to Jean de Meun's thirteenth-century translation of Vegetius's *De re militari*) in that where Meun is concerned with providing modern references or equivalents (what Folena calls "la glossa lessicale attualizante o l'*exemplum* storico moderno"), Mena must focus on amplifying the original literary allusion.

person and policies of Alvaro de Luna, the powerful but controversial Constable of Castile. Philip Gericke (515-16) has demonstrated how the entire narrative structure of the poem culminates in the scene of the 'Sorceress of Valladolid" which takes place in the Sphere of Saturn, the seventh and highest of the 'heavens" which make up the allegorical structure of the *Laberinto de Fortuna*. It is clear that Mena has reached the most crucial moment of his poem; here he must demonstrate to his sovereign the decisive superiority of Alvaro de Luna over the treacherous grandees who oppose the Constable and his political program. Simply put, at this juncture Mena has need of his most brilliant literary fireworks. It is no mere coincidence that the poet calls upon the shade of Lucan and places his imitation of the Erictho episode from *Pharsalia* 6 at this point in the text, nor is it surprising that the episode of the 'Sorceress of Valladolid" is by far the most extended and ambitious exercise in formal *imitatio* attempted by Mena in the *Laberinto de Fortuna*.

Thomas Greene, in *The Light in Troy* (38), has likened the most successful processes of Humanist imitation, particularly as practiced by Petrarch, to necromancy -the revival of the dead to make them speak prophetically. Greene (38-47) proposes a fourfold framework for the taxonomy of imitative practice: reproductive or sacramental imitation that treats its subtext as a hallowed model that must be reduplicated as faithfully as possible; eclectic imitation that stirs together a witch's brew of allusions from a variety of sources without foregrounding any particular subtext; heuristic imitation which, on the one hand, flaunts its kinship with the subtext while, on the other, it deliberately delves and illuminates the chasm of anachronism that cultural and linguistic mutation have interposed between 'parent" and 'offspring" texts; finally, dialectical imitation, an amplification of the heuristic type that not only asserts its independence from the subtext, but also its superiority through what Greene calls 'Oedipal agression." Only the last two types, heuristic and dialectical, are truly necromantic in that they revive a 'dead" text and make it sing of new things.

Although Lida de Malkiel (79-83) seems to argue that Mena shows signs of attempting at least an 'eclectic,"if not a 'necromantic"imitation of Lucan in the 'Sorceress of Valladolid"passage (without, of course, using Greene's terms), and although the Castilian poet's model is itself a textbook" example of aggresively agonistic, competitively Oedipal emulation, I believe that Mena's effort can only be read as a sacramental

or reproductive imitation of key passages from the 'witch episode" of *Pharsalia* 6. In fact, in two key passages of the necromancy performed by the Sorceress of Valladolid, Mena follows Lucan so closely that his imitation often borders on direct translation, and close analysis reveals that many of Mena's modifications of the subtext are not transformations at all, but glosses on Lucan's verses that amplify the tightly wound allusions of the *Pharsalia* in order to make them accessible to a fifteenth-century Iberian audience.

Mena is characteristically economical in his approach to exhuming the ghoulish potency of Lucan's *nekuia*. Lucan takes advantage of the greater space afforded by the more porous and extensive framework of his poem and dedicates approximately 415 hexameters -half of *Pharsalia* 6- to the development of Erictho's necromancy. The Latin poet takes care to orchestrate the rhetoric of horror and revulsion in an incremental series of crescendos, because he is literally working against all of the density and majesty of *Aeneid* 6. Mena, on the other hand, is writing within a much more circumscribed structure. In order to highlight Alvaro de Luna's dominion over Fortune, Mena needs to select only the most memorable, and the most appropriate, passages from his model. For instance, where Lucan occupies 45 hexameters with a description of how the Thessalian witch Erictho selects the unburied body of a legionnaire, drags it with a hook to a gloomy cave and prepares to begin her grisly rites, Mena condenses the whole process into one eight-line *copla* without losing either the hair-raising revulsion of the subtext or the rapid pace of his own narration (*Pharsalia* 6.624-66; *Laberinto de Fortuna* 245).

Because he has chosen to reproduce the device of the necromantic revival of a corpse which will become the vessel of prophecy, Mena selects for detailed imitative resurrection precisely the segments from his model that deal most directly with the sorceress's violent and transitory resuscitation of the unfortunate soldier's cadaver. The two most thoroughly developed of these are the list of horrendous ingredients that make up the witch's necromantic decoction (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241-44), and the hair-raising invocation of the infernal powers that finally results in the prophetic revival of the dead soldier (*Laberinto de Fortuna*

247-48, 250-51).[4] Not coincidentally, these are also the two Lucanesque *loci* which will provide one of the best opportunities to evaluate Mena's approach to imitation in a context where he is most eager to display his powers at their fullest, and where his own effort itself became the secondary subtext for a subsequent, more truly "hecromantic," Renaissance imitation.[5] Because the "triste conjuro" is more of a set-piece and is recreated by so many authors, in so many contexts, over the centuries, it is the less apt of the two for a study of either necromantic imitation or hermeneutic translation. Therefore, I shall concentrate on the list of frightful ingredients.

According to the analysis of Classical scholar C. A. Martindale, Lucan's list of magically charged ingredients is based entirely on literary models. The principal subtext is Ovid's description of the potion prepared by Medea for the rejuvenation of Aeson in *Metamorphoses* 7.262-78. Martindale characterizes Lucan's approach as *aemulatio* (372). As George Pigman has pointed out in his seminal analysis of imitative strategies, *aemulatio*, or emulation, is an inherently competitive mode of imitation which demands that the subtext be made explicit in such a way that the reader is moved to directly compare the emulation with its model; if the emulation is successful, it will clearly outshine the subtext (26).[6] Careful analysis of Lucan's emulation of Ovid in these passages, in fact, reveals a notoriously triumphant instance of *aemulatio*, one that undoubtedly formed the basis of centuriesof schoolroom exercises in the reading of prestigious Latin texts, as Castilian Humanist scholar Fernán Núñez's 1499 and 1505 commentaries on Mena's rendition so suggestively imply.

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4   For a complete list of editions of the *Laberinto de Fortuna* consulted, see the List of Works Cited. Parenthetical references in the text will always refer to the editor of the edition in question unless the reference is to the text of *Laberinto de Fortuna* itself, where the numbers always refer to stanzas rather than pages.

5   Although many Iberian authors after Mena were to use elements of Lucan's "witch episode" in their works, the most ambitious, and most successfully "necromantic" imitation of both Lucan and Mena is that which Alonso de Ercilla weaves into the narration of his descent into the mantic cavern of the Araucanian enchanter Fitón in *Araucana* 23. For a detailed analysis of Ercilla's "necromantic" imitation of both Lucan and Mena, see Nicolopulos (155-239).

6   "...*aemulatio* includes the attempt to surpass the model,.... *Aemulatio* calls attention to itself and deliberately challenges comparison with its model. The relation between text and model becomes an important element in the text itself" (Pigman 26). The principal difference between *aemulatio* and Greene's "necromantic" imitation, of course, is that anachronism is not a major factor in the former.

It can be appreciated, then, that Juan de Mena set himself a daunting task when he chose to empower the key episode of his own poem with an imitation of this scene from the *Pharsalia*. Nonetheless there can be no doubt about his intention to directly invoke the subtext here. One of the most distinctive features of Lucan's emulation of Ovid is the organization of the list of explicitly named substances around the impersonal litotes of *non... defuit* (*Pharsalia* 6.671-80). Mena commences his list with a virtual quotation from this passage that, furthermore, functions in exactly the same way: 'Pulmón de Linçeo allí non fallesçe, / de yena non menos el nodo más tuerto" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241ab), and he reinforces the allusion by returning to the litotes in the following stanza with "...non menos falta..." (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 242e).

In fact, this is only the first indication that Mena's imitation of *Pharsalia* 6 fits very closely Thomas Greene's category of reproductive or sacramental imitation which "...celebrates an enshrined primary text by rehearsing it liturgically, as though no other form of celebration could be worthy of its dignity"(Greene, *Light* 38). Of course, it is precisely this type of reproductive imitation that is most difficult to distinguish from translation, as becomes increasingly evident as one reads through the list of ingredients employed by the sorceress of Valladolid.

Ovid names fifteen discrete substances that Medea mixed in her cauldron, while Lucan has Erictho blend sixteen in the chest cavity of the dead legionnaire.[7] It is not surprising, then, that Mena limits himself to just fifteen. Of these, ten are taken directly from *Pharsalia* 6, and several are almost exact translations. A good example of these last is 'Espuma de canes que el agua reçelan" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243a), which virtually translates "...*spuma canum quibus unda timori est*" (*Pharsalia* 6.671), and which, with its somewhat latinate 'espuma" and 'canes," approximates its original at least as closely as Martín Lasso de Oropesa's very literal prose translation of Lucan (c. 1535) which reads: "...espumajo de aquellos perros que temen del agua" (123).

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7   They total sixteen, if the "*quidquid fetu genuit natura sinistro*" of *Pharsalia* 6.670 is not counted apart from the things 'not absent" which are enumerated in *Pharsalia* 6.671-80 and if 6.681 ("...*viles et habentes nomina pestes*") is likewise excluded from the total, as it should be if Housman's reading of the line is correct.

The following verse, "membranas de líbica sierpe çerrasta" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243*b*), is also hewn very closely to its model, "*...viventis adhuc Libyci membrana cerastae*" (*Pharsalia* 6.679), which Lasso de Oropesa renders, more completely than Mena, as "*...el hollejo dela serpiente cerastres del libya antes que muera*" (123). This verse was, of course, Lucan's own most direct allusion to his Ovidian subtext (Morford 71), and as such plays a key role in his strategy of emulation. No other line from this passage in the *Laberinto* more instructively illustrates the difference between "reproductive" imitation and transformative emulation.

Medea stirs into her cauldron the "*squamea Cinyphii tenuis membrana chelydri*" (*Metamorphoses* 7.272), which Fernán Núñez translates somewhat clumsily as "*...la sotil membrana de la serpiente que se cria en Africa, la qual se llama chelidro*" ([1499] fol. 168v).[8] She has chosen the delicate, scaly skin shed by the water snake (*chelydrus*) because the purpose of her potion is rejuvenation (Broccia 226, n. 124). The Alexandrian poet Nicander, in Greek, and Virgil, in Latin, had already established the image of the water snake shedding its skin as an indelible metaphor of renewed youth and vigor, and hence, longevity.[9] Virgil's amphibious serpent frequented the mountain streams and pastures of Calabria (*Georgics* 3.425). Ovid is not content with anything so prosaic,

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8   Fernán Núñez perhaps fails to effectively translate "squamea tenuis membrana" because he has just rendered Lucan's "membrana" as "el cuero sotil" and does not want to repeat "cuero." Alonso Fernández de Palencia, in his *Universal vocabulario en latin y romance* (Sevilla, 1490), considers "membrana" to be a strictly Latin word, although Nebrija uses it to mean "pergamino" (Corominas, *Diccionario* 3: 369). I cannot explain why Núñez neglects to translate "squamea."

9   Broccia (226, n. 124) does not explain why the *chelydrus* was associated with long life or rejuvenation. For a possible reference to the longevity of the *chelydrus*, see Mynors (129) on Virgil, *Georgics* 2.214. It is apparent, however, that one of the principal subtexts here is *Georgics* 3.414-39. The passage deals with venomous water snakes at some length. Virgil names the *chelydrus* at the beginning of the section (3.415), then uses the more general terms "*vipera*" (3.417) and "*coluber*" (3.418) in the same context, and finally describes in detail the habits and terrors of the Calabrian water snake (3.425-39) without using any noun more specific than "*anguis*" (3.425). Mynors (245), basing his assertion on the assumption that the model is Nicander, *Theriaca* 366-71, says that Virgil's Calabrian serpent must be the *chersydrus* and seeks to correct Servius (on *Georgics* 3.415) for equating the *chelydrus* with the *chersydrus*. Nonetheless, as both are amphibious snake, and "*chelydrus*" is the only really specific term in the complete passage in Virgil, both Servius and Ovid may be pardoned for confusing the two. The adjective "*squamea*" is applied in 3.426. The image of rejuvenation is most clear in 3.437, where Virgil describes the Calabrian snake as "renewed and shining with youth when it has shed its old skin" ("*cum positis novus exuuiis nitidusque iuuenta*"). Probably both Virgil and Ovid had Nicander, *Theriaca* 137-38 in mind for this image; Thomas gives the passage as "... when the viper, having doffed his shrivelled old age, again proceeds exulting in his new youth" (2: 123).

and has Meda fetch her snake skin from the river Cinyps, now the Wadi Khahan, near Leptis Magna (Broccia 225, n. 122), because Libya had long been famous for the number and extraordinary venom of its reptiles.

Lucan himself uses 'Cinyphian" as a synonym for 'Libyan" in another herpetological context (*Pharsalia* 9.787),[10] and so in his emulation of *Metamorphoses* 7.272 he reinforces the allusion to the subtext not only with *membrana* but also by reversing the synecdoche with *Libyci* for *Cinyphii* (*Pharsalia* 6.679). For *aemulatio* to succeed, of course, it is not sufficient to merely highlight the model; there must be meaningful transformation as well. Lucan transforms Ovid's water snake (*chelydrus*) into a horned viper (*cerastes*). A subtle link already existed between the two serpents: according to Celsus (*De medicina* 5.27.8), the venom of either one could be counteracted by the same remedy. The horned viper, furthermore, serves Lucan's purpose better because it is visually the most 'infernal" of the poisonous snakes -not for nothing do poets describe the writhing reptilian locks of the Furies as *cerastae*.[11] No other serpent in the Classical canon is more directly associated with death, and hence more appropriately juxtaposed to an image of renewed life and vigor. Additionally, the horned viper is associated with dry desert and rough sand, while both Ovid's and Virgil's emblematic snakes of rejuvenation are amphibious and gleam with moisture. But this is not all; just as in the case of the 'nameless" ingredients, Lucan must have his fun at the expense of the tradition. Here he is playing with Ovid's emblems of longevity. As Broccia (226, n. 124) points out, these are the water snake, the stag, and the crow. *Cerastes* is derived from the same Greek word meaning 'horn" as *cervus* ('stag').[12] Both are linked to the Moon and magic by the shape

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10   According to Mynors (229), the first known use of *Cinyphius* as an adjective in Latin is found in Virgil (*Georgics* 3.312), and it "became a convenient equivalent for 'Libyan'."

11   This seems to become standard in poetry after Lucan, for instance: Statius, describing Tisiphone, "*centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastae, / turba minax diri capitis...*" (*Thebaid* 1.103-04); "*crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten: / caeruleae dux ille comae,...*" (*Thebaid* 11.65-66); Claudian having Megaera describe how she raised Rufinus, "*...linguisque trisulcis / mollia lambentes finxerunt membra cerastae*" (*In Rufinum* 1.95-96); Claudian describing the three Furies literally 'letting their hair down" and celebrating the wedding of Proserpina and Pluto by allowing their festooned manes of horned vipers to drink generously from the wine bowl (*De Raptu Proserpinae* 2.343-47).

12   According to Pliny (8.35), the *cerastes* hides its body beneath the earth leaving the horns exposed, and by moving them, attracts the birds on which it supposedly feeds. Thus it is possible to see a connection with the third, avian, symbol of longevity as well as with the stag.

of their horns. Lucan then gilds the lily by qualifying the horned viper as *vivens adhuc*, which can mean either "still" or "up to now" "living" or "alive." The model has been both magnificently surpassed and deconstructed at the same time.

Keeping in mind that this is the closest that Lucan comes to an exact reproduction of his subtext, it is apparent that Mena's "membranas de líbica sierpe çerrasta" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243b) is seeking to identify with its own model for some purpose other than transformation or emulation. The same can be said without further argument of "Pulmón de Linçeo" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241a) which corresponds closely enough to "*viscera... lyncis*" (*Pharsalia* 6.672) and "de yena non menos el nodo más tuerto" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241b) which mirrors "*non dirae nodus hyaenae*" (*Pharsalia* 6.672) in everything but the adjective. Not all of Mena's more obvious allusions to *Pharsalia* 6 are such exact translations, however. Nevertheless, before lumping the remainder together as all representing some kind of transformative imitation, it is prudent to examine exactly what kinds of modifications Mena works on the remaining ingredients.

Lucan had, in fact, set up the ludic interplay between the "horned" and reptilian emblems of longevity a few lines previous to the mention of the horned viper by metamorphosing Ovid's "liver of a long-lived stag" ("*vivacisque iecur cervi...*" [*Metamorphoses* 7.273]) into the "marrow of a stag nourished on snake" (" *cervi pastae serpente medullae*" [*Pharsalia* 6.673]). As Fernán Núñez notes at some length, a number of ancient authors claim that stags not only feed on snakes, but that they do so in order to rejuvenate themselves when they get old and infirm ([1499] fol. 166r).[13] There is certainly no doubt that Mena read it in this way, because the fifteenth-century poet feels obliged to amplify the model as "medula de çiervo que tanto envegesçe / que traga culebra por rejuvenir" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241ef).

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13   Núñez quotes Pliny's passage on stags at length. The two relevant items concern stags rooting snakes out of their holes and the stags' longevity, which are not linked causally, but by proximity in the passage (Pliny 8.50.118-119). Núñez attributes the belief that stags feed on snakes in order to rejuvenate to the *glossa ordinaria*, apparently on the *Song of Songs*, and to Solinus. Núñez: "...es propio de los ciervos cuando son viejos comer las culebras con lo qual se tornan a la mocedad y cobran su primero vigor" ([1499] fol. 166r).

While still operating far below the dimension of ludic transformation seen in Lucan's emulation of Ovid, Mena is doing more with the "stag's marrow" than simply translating the subtext: he is translating it hermeneutically. It is one of the few glimmers in this passage of acknowledgement on Mena's part of a potential difficulty with anachronism. Clearly, Lucan was confident that his readers would understand that "stags which ate snakes" did so in order to recover their youthful vigor. Mena's "intended reader" is, in the first instance, King John II, and by extension, the Court of Castile (Deyermond 163). Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, in his less than flattering portrait, informs us that John II was much given to literary pursuits, that he could read well, and that he could even speak and understand Latin (118). Yet whatever the extent of the king's direct acquaintance with Latin texts may have been, it is certain that many if not most of his courtiers were limited to the vernacular, if they could read at all. Even such a distinguished man of letters as the poet/courtier Iñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana, was sufficiently unsure of his Latin as to prefer his classics in translation (Kerkhof, ed. 11-12). Although a certain "difficulty" of style may well have been "part of Mena's strategy of persuasion" as Deyermond has suggested (164), Mena could not afford to lose his audience completely. By expanding his translation of the model to include, in effect, the gloss, Mena is not only making a concession to his audience's lack of erudition, he is skating very close to explicit recognition of the abyss of anachronism. This is, of course, not a problem that concerned Lucan, who was writing within the confines of the same *mundus significans* as Ovid, and who could strive to outshine and/or undermine his model confident in the relative stability of the shared system of signifiers and things signified.

Mena seems to engage in a similar attempt at hermeneutic translation in the immediately following, final verses of *Laberinto de Fortuna* 241. Medea had merely added "stones fetched from the remotest reaches of the Orient" (" *extremo lapides Oriente petitos*" [*Metamorphoses* 7.266]) to her potion. Lucan makes this more specific as "stones that rattle when warmed beneath the great breeding bird" (" *quaeque sonant feta tepefacta sub alite saxa*" [*Pharsalia* 6.676]). While Ovid probably meant to imply

only 'exotic stones" or possibly 'pearls," [14] Lucan again does his model one better by giving Erictho the fabulous 'eagle-stones" (" *aëtitae*'), which, according to Pliny, do indeed come from the East (10.4; 36.34,39). Mena, however, again seems to be unsure how far he can challenge his reader's knowledge of either the subtext or the *"mundus significans"* that lies behind it, and so renders Lucan's delicate periphrasis into 'e de aquella piedra que sabe adquerir / el águila cuando su nido fornesçe" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 241gh).[15] Mena finds himself in a difficult position here. He has said more, but also considerably less, than Lucan. While it is now clear that the 'great winged creature" (" *ales*') is an eagle, the dimension of the stones' musicality has been sacrificed, as has the brooding warmth of *tepefacta*, and the uninformed reader is still none the wiser about what role the stones might play in the bird's nesting. In fact, Mena himself seems to have been the first to realize that many of his *coplas* required further explanation, and either he or some erudite royal scribe glosses 241gh as follows (Cummins 165):[16]

> El aguila quando faze los huevos por criar los fijos halla y pone en el nido ciertas piedras marmoreas por temperar su calor el qual es tanto que sin aquellas piedras cozería los huevos y mactaria los fijos estas piedras dize lucano caber en el encantamiento.

The assiduous reader of Pliny and other ancient authors will, of course, learn a great deal more about the therapeutical and magical

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14 Is it coincidence that Pliny (9.56) speaks censoriously of the joy pampered Roman women took in the sound of pearls rattling together?

15 Fernán Núñez and El Brocense both read 'suele," while Blecua, Cummins, Pérez Priego and Vasvari Fainberg all give 'sabe" without indicating what they base this reading on, or, for that matter, that an alternate exists.

16 This is the marginal gloss to *Laberinto de Fortuna* 241gh found in MS. 229 of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. Florence Street and the post- 1976 editors of the *Laberinto de Fortuna* consider this manuscript to be a copy of one prepared in Mena's lifetime under the author's direction, and that several of the glosses are first person statements obviously made by Mena himself (Street, 'The Text...," 67-71); Cummins 44; Pérez Priego 44-45; Vasvari Fainberg 72). Kerkhoff disputes Street's assessment of the importance of Ms. 229 ('Hacia una nueva edición" 181-89; 'El *Laberinto*" 337-38), but Kerkhoff does not analyze the section of the poem in question, and none of the objections he raises diminish the importance of these early glosses. From the information in Street's article, it is impossible to tell if the gloss on 241gh originated with Mena or with 'Commentator A" (Street, 'The Text...," 67-71). Even if this particular gloss did not originate with Mena himself, it represents the very first stage of reception of the poem.

properties of the "eagle-stones", Fernán Núñez would give generations of sixteenth-century readers a partial summary of this literature ([1499] fol. 166v). As Mena has left it, even with the additional gloss, the salient feature in Lucan's rendition -the sound made by the stones-, is still left buried in the inkwell." [17] Nor has he gained much in the exchange. Like the verses that reveal the stag's peculiar motivation for eating snake, those that seek to spell out the nature of the "eagle-stones" betray a nascent recognition of the difficulty of communicating the essence of the model across the ever-widening cultural and linguistic fracture running back from the Spain of John II to Nero's Rome. In the case of the *aëtitae*, however, the expedient of hermeneutic translation does not totally succeed in transmitting a satisfactorily "sacramental" version of the subtext. Nor is there any indication that anything except an intelligibly "liturgical" reproduction of the model was intended.

Such a reproduction is achieved with certain success in the case of the remora. Lucan is at his most expansive when he gives Erictho the "sucking-fish which holds the ship still in the water although the wind is filling out its cordage" ("...*puppim retinens Euro tendente rudentes / In mediis echenais aquis...*" [*Pharsalia* 6.674-75]). Mena's paraphrase "Allí es mesclada grand parte de echino, / el qual, aunque sea muy pequeño pes, / muchas vegadas e non una vez / retiene las fustas que van de camino" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 242abcd) conveys the substance of the model with charm but without ambition. The detail of this fantastic fish's very small size is probably taken from Pliny (9.41), and again, is more of an attempt to transmit effectively than to transform the model.

"Çeniza de fénix, aquella que basta,"(*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243c) is an adequate, although somewhat lackluster, rendition of "ash of the phoenix which lays itself on the eastern altar"("...*cinis Eoa positi phoenicis in ara*" [*Pharsalia* 6.680]). Considering that the "phoenix" is Lucan's answer to Ovid's "nine-lived crow" (*Metamorphoses* 7.274) -the avian third of the triad of rejuvenation-,[18] Mena's imitation barely passes muster as

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17 El Brocense (293), in his much abbreviatd commentary, makes sure to bring out this very point: "Llámase la piedra Aetites, y suena, si la bullen, como que tiene algo dentro."

18 The three emblematic creatures of rejuvenation that Medea stirs into her cauldron can be seen as corresponding to three of the elements, hence the water snake represents water, the stag earth and the crow air. Seen in another way, the snake represents the Underworld, the stag the world of men and beasts and the crow the upper air or Heavens. It is likely that Lucan is not only playing on Ovid's

'reproductive." Mena's 'de otras vipéreas sierpes que velan, / dando custodia a las piedras preçiosas," (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243*ef*) for the 'viper born by the Red Sea, guardian of the precious shell" ("...*innataque rubris / Aequoribus custos pretiosae vipera conchae*"[*Pharsalia* 6.677-78]) is only slightly more satisfactory, and certainly never presumes to exceed the bounds of a "sacramental" recreation of the model.

Although Mena's essential attitude towards his subtext is clearly respectful to the point of diffidence in regard to the majority of the ingredients, the fifteenth-century Castilian poet, in fact, does effect at least one imitative transformation that recalls, albeit palely, some of the technique of Lucan's most directly allusive imitation of Ovid. As María Rosa Lida de Malkiel has pointed out, when Mena wraps up his list of the witch's ingredients with 'e otros diversos millares de cosas / qu'el nombre non saben aun los que las zelan"(*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243*gh*), there can be no doubt about the allusion to Ovid's 'these and a thousand other nameless things"(" *His et mille aliis... sine nomine rebus*"[*Metamorphoses* 7.275]), the lines that bring the description of Medea's resuscitative decoction to an end. Again, all Lida de Malkiel would make of this is yet one more example of the independent, 'ecletic"nature of Mena's imitation (81). There are, however, without denying their ultimate parentage in *Metamorphoses* 7, at least two different ways to read these lines. Furthermore, whichever way the reader choses to interpret them, far from pointing away from *Pharsalia* 6, these verses prove to be the final, decorative knot in the ribbon of Mena's imitation of Lucan's list of ingredients.

Medea rounds off her recipe with 'these and a thousand other nameless things"(" *His et mille aliis... sine nomine rebus*"[*Metamorphoses* 7.275]) in order to imbue her magic potion with hyperbolic grandeur. Lucan, in turn, makes his own 'common banes having names" (" *viles et habentes nomina pestes*" [*Pharsalia* 6.681]), which both excels and deconstructs Ovid's device, the central axis of his emulation of Medea's widely-gathered exotica. Like Ovid's 'nameless things," Lucan's 'named things" wrap up an enumeration of discrete items: the individual things 'Nature has perversely produced" which are given in *Pharsalia*

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avian emblem here, but that he is also recalling the 'sands" of *Metamorphoses* 7.267 with the 'ash" of the phoenix.

6.671-80.[19] Mena, then, quite deliberately places his "e otros diversos millares de cosas / qu'el nombre non saben aun los que las zelan" (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243gh) precisely at the conclusion of his catalog of the ingredients the sorceress of Valladolid stirs into her decoction. Position alone demonstrates that this cannot be the result of any casual eclecticism. Whatever else we may infer, there can be no doubt that Mena is letting us know that he, too, is aware that Erictho's necromantic brew is modeled on Medea's philtre of rejuvenation.

As we have seen, up to this point Mena has followed Lucan very closely. Ten of the fifteen ingredients have ranged from nearly word-for-word translations to "hermeneutic"paraphrases of their models in *Pharsalia* 6; only one of which (243d) may betray some cross pollination from *Metamorphoses* 7. Even the three additional items that showcase Mena's own powers of invention all have some link to elements of the Erictho passage. Of the remaining two that Lida de Malkiel ascribes to immediate imitation of Ovid, one -241c- is highly problematic,[20] and the other -he only direct and unchallengeable allusion to the *Metamorphoses*- is the case in point: 243gh. Moreover, this unmistakable, virtual quotation from Lucan's principal subtext occupies a key position and plays a pivotal role in both the model and the emulation. How, then, are we to read Mena's abrupt conjuration of Lucan's model at the close of what has been so thorougnly a "sacramental" imitation of Lucan's rendition of this *locus*?

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19   Lucan closes his list of "things not absent" from among all of "whatever Nature had perversely produced" with "After she has brought together hither (in the chest cavity full of blood and lunar poison) these **common, name-having banes**, she added...," ("*quo postquam viles et habentes nomina pestes / contulit... /... / addidit...*) going on to enumerate things produced by Erictho herself in contrast to Nature (*Pharsalia* 6.681-84). Lucan archly links these last substances to Ovid's *sine nomine rebus* by having the first of them be "leaves infused with unutterable incantations" (" *infando saturatas carmine frondes*" [*Pharsalia* 6.682]). What, indeed, could be more "nameless" than a spell so potent as to be unspeakable?

20   The reading that Lida de Malkiel (81) attributes to a reference to *Metamorphoses* 15.389-90 is entirely based on an emendation first made by Fernán Núñez in his 1499 edition of the *Laberinto*. Although Núñez may have been justified in mistrusting the printed editions which formed the principal basis of his own (Street "Hernán Núñez," 55-57; Bataillon 328; Kerkhoff "Hacia una nueva edición" 180-81, "El *Laberinto*" 328-30), all ten of the early manuscripts examined by Street ("Hernán Núñez 51, 57) support the apparently "corrupt" reading emended by Núñez. Among recent editors, Vasvari Fainberg accepts Núñez's emendation (195), while Cummins (165) and Pérez Priego (155) deem it more prudent to retain the reading of Ms. 229. For a fuller discussion of this point, see Nicolopulos (205-08).

Can we interpret Mena's invocation of Ovid here as a necromantic, heuristic or even dialectical (in Greene's terms) distancing device? Does Mena transform an otherwise dutifully reproductive imitation into something much more subtle and ambitious with one master stroke in the final two verses? Perhaps. The answer depends on yet another example of the difficulites involved in what Gianfranco Folena calls 'vertical" translation (65-66), that is from a more prestigious, Classical language and literary tradition, to a less prestigious, vernacular one, as well as on how Mena himself read *Pharsalia* 6.681.

The critic's task is complicated here by a long running problem in the editing and interpretation of *Pharsalia* 6.681. As A.E. Housman, the most highly regarded modern editor of the *Pharsalia*, points out (178), many editors of Lucan down the centuries have held that because the model for Erictho's necromantic concoction was clearly Medea's recipe for rejuvenation, and that because Ovid had written 'these and a thousand other **nameless** things" ("*His et mille aliis... sine nomine rebus*" [*Metamorphoses* 7.275]), that therefore Lucan could only have corresponded with 'common banes **not** having names" ("*viles nec habentes nomina pestes*" [*Pharsalia* 6.681]). Suh editors have not hesitated to emend *et* to *nec*. Essentially, this school of thought misreads Lucan's emulation of the passage from *Metamorphoses* 7, and consequently denies this master of parodic *aemulatio* the possibility of anything other than a purely "reproductive" imitation.

Curiously enough, Fernán Núñez subscribes vehemently to this interpretation of *Pharsalia* 6.681. In his commentary on *Laberinto de Fortuna* 243*gh* in his 1499 edition he explains indignantly:

> Lucano (quo postq*uam* viles *et* habe*n*tes no*m*ina pestes co*n*tulit.) Que q*u*iere dezir: 'Do*n*de como echaste estas po*n*çoñas y otras muchas q*u*e no tienen no*m*bre,"avnq*u*e en el lucano me*n*dosame*n*te se lee (Quo postq*uam* viles *et* habe*n*tes no*m*ina pestes.) por dezir (Quo postq*uam* viles nec habe*n*tes *etc.*) Esta es la verdadera escritura de lucano pa*r*a q*u*e co*n*cuerde co*n* ouidio q*u*e al mismo proposito dize en el libro ya muchas vezes alegado... (fol. 169v)

Núñez had little faith in the accuracy of the printed or copied texts he had to deal with, and had as little compunction about 'correcting" them

according to his own lights. As far as Núñez is concerned, Lucan must be engaged in reproductive imitation (Ricci's *sequi* [Pigman 3]); Núñez does not seem to understand or admit the possibility of transformative emulation. For Núñez, then, there is no question of Mena doing anything other than "following" as well. Mena, in fact, is merely preserving the "correct" sense of the passage by imitating Ovid rather than Lucan.[21]

Nor is Núñez alone among Spanish scholars of his generation in insisting on "rectifying" the text of *Pharsalia* 6.681 to make it read as a "faithful, reproductive" imitation of *Metamorphoses* 7.275. Martín Lasso de Oropesa, whose Castilian translation of the *Pharsalia* appeared sometime in the 1530s, renders *Pharsalia* 6.681 as: "Quando tuuo alli allegadas todas estas pestilençias, y otras que no sabria yo dezir..." (124). The principal virtue of Oropesa's prose is that it generally follows the sense of Lucan's difficult hexameters very literally (Herrero Llorente 764-65). Here "otras que no sabría yo decir" clearly comes down on the side of "things without names." Oropesa, like Núñez before him, obviously must have felt the Latin text was defective if it did not reflect a "sacramental" reproduction of the Ovidian subtext. Once again, the issues of imitation and translation succeed in contaminating one another.

We cannot really know for sure, of course, if Mena shared this view of his subtext. 5Nonetheless, close analysis of Mena's sorceress's brew has demonstrated that the fifteenth-century poet pursued an extremely sacramental or reproductive imitation of his model in all but a very few particulars. The only really possible challenge to the authority of Lucan is the one Ovidian allusion at the conclusion. Juan de Mena was one of the most erudite Iberians of his day, and there can be little doubt that he was at least aware of the controversy over the interpretation of *Pharsalia*

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21   In the 1505 edition, Núñez cut out the Latin, but retained his translations. The subsequent reprintings based on 1505, however, do not all agree in this passage. 1528, for example, simply retails the "standard" reading of *Pharsalia* 6.681: "...estas ponçoñas *et* otras muchas que tienen nombre" (fol. 86v), while 1552 [Nucio] asserts Núñez's "correction" by translating the emendation "estas ponçoñas y otras muchas que no tienen nombre" (fol. 209v) without any explanation, and 1566 restores the reading found in 1528. Lida de Malkiel was apparently not aware of the alternative reading of Lucan. She could not have found it in Núñez, because, as she indicates (32, n. 22) the only edition she consulted was that of 1552 printed by Juan Steelsio in which the commentary on *copla* 243 ends with Núñez's remarks on "...otras vípereas sierpes..." (*Laberinto de Fortuna* 243*ef*, and omits all reference to 243*gh* (1552 [Steelsio] 498). Professor Arthur L-F. Askins (UC Berkeley), has confirmed my suspicion that Lida de Malkiel used the same copy of Steelsio's 1552 printing of Núñez's edition that I consulted in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley.

6.681. Given Mena's drift into what I call "hermeneutic translation" in the previously discussed elements of this passage, it is difficult to resist consigning this one possible essay at "necromantic" imitation to the category of yet another "hermeneutic" gloss or correction on the target text.

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