

THE KNIGHT AND WAR: ALTERNATIVE DISPLAYS OF MASCULINITY IN *EL PASO HONROSO DE SUERO DE QUIÑONES*, *EL VICTORIAL*, AND THE *HISTORIA DE LOS HECHOS DEL MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ*

Grant Gearhart

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Romance Studies (Spanish).

Chapel Hill  
2015

Approved by:

Frank Dominguez

Lucia Binotti

Carmen Hsu

Josefa Lindquist

Rosa Perelmuter

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## ABSTRACT

Grant Gearhart: THE KNIGHT AND WAR: ALTERNATIVE DISPLAYS OF MASCULINITY IN *EL PASSO HONROSO DE SUERO DE QUIÑONES*, *EL VICTORIAL*, AND THE *HISTORIA DE LOS HECHOS DEL MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ*  
(Under the direction of Frank A. Domínguez)

This study examines the changes in the portrayal of knights in three early modern Spanish texts: *El passo honroso de Suero de Quiñones*, *El Victorial*, and the *Historia de los hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*. These three works are compared to the rather formulaic examples found in *Amadís de Gaula*, which contains examples of knights portrayed as exemplary warriors, but that are of one-dimensional fighters exercising a mostly outmoded form of warfare. No longer the centerpiece of the battlefield, real fifteenth-century knights were performing military functions that required them to be not only masters of traditional skills like riding, jousting, and sword-fighting, but also to undergo training in the use of weapons previously reserved for foot soldiers, more consistently lead larger units of troops in battle, and study in order to improve their speaking skills. The best place to observe these changes is in chronicles of the period. They show the emergence of political institutions, the use of larger armies, the employment of better weapons, and the abandonment of the cavalry charge in favor of larger troop movements. These changes occur under the umbrella of emerging humanist ideas about education and war that resulted in part from the translation and circulation of Classical and newly minted military treatises. The result is the immergence of new modes of displaying masculinity for knights.

To my mother, the bravest warrior.  
And to my son Alejandro, a little “warrior-in-training.”

## ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

This dissertation is about a very specific type of warrior, but the word “warrior” can be broadly defined. There have been many “warriors” who have helped throughout the course of my studies at UNC, and I would like to thank them. They have each in their own way come to my aid countless times; they have also inspired me with their courage, resilience, and, most of all, their love and compassion.

First, I would like to thank to my wife Encarni. You have stood by me through the worst moments of my life, and you have been the centerpiece of the happiest. Whenever I felt sorry for myself or entertained quitting, your love, patience, and the occasional Spanish tongue-lashing reminded me why I wanted to do this, and gave me the strength to keep going. I would have never arrived at the conclusion of this degree without you by my side, nor would I have wanted to. I love you eternally.

To my father, Allen, who has encouraged me since I could hold a baseball glove to put my heart into whatever I chose to do. Pursuing a Ph.D. in Spanish is not a common goal for folk from Fulton, Kentucky, but regardless of my interests in athletics or academics, you always applauded my effort and joy in the task. You have guided me this way my entire life, and I hope to be that way with my children.

And to my mother, Jen Ray, who was diagnosed with cancer the very day of my Master’s exams, and died a year before I completed this dissertation. My graduate school career spans your battle with this disease, which you never once let take away your love for

life. I will never forget how supportive you were despite the circumstances. You are the epitome of the warrior, and I hope you are proud of me.

It would be remiss not to thank the incredible mentors I have had along the way. First, to my professor, advisor, and most importantly my friend from Sewanee, Dr. Eric Naylor: our discussions over meals, drinks, and visits to Spain have shaped my growth as a hispanist. Mostly, though, I thank you for your constant friendship.

Of Dr. Glynis Cowell, I could write pages. I will say briefly that she is the backbone of the Romance Studies program for so many graduate students, including me. Glynis, you asked us on the first day of our Teaching Methods course to think about the characteristics of good teaching, and now when I think of good teaching, I always think of you first. Thank you for your kindness.

To the members of my committee and others from the Romance Studies department: Drs. Lucia Binotti, Rosa Perelmuter, Carmen Hsu, Josefa Lindquist, Elizabeth Bruno, Bill Maisch, Tacia Kohl, Cristina Carrasco and Oswaldo Estrada—each one of you has helped me achieve my goals at UNC, and I am grateful.

Finally, to Dr. Frank Domínguez, my advisor for this project: like all great mentors, you demanded true excellence from me, and while at times that expectation seemed harsh or unrealistic, I appreciate you holding my feet to the fire. I am a better scholar because of your dedication and patience, and it has been an honor to work with you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE EPIC AND THE CASTILIAN KNIGHT.....	16
War and Medieval Culture.....	18
The Epic.....	21
CHAPTER 3: THE KNIGHT’S BODY: TRAINING, COMBAT, ARMOR, AND WOUNDS IN THE <i>PASSO HONROSO</i> AND <i>EL VICTORIAL</i> .....	32
Training and Foot Combat.....	36
Sword Combat on Foot.....	43
Jousting.....	49
The Form and Function of Armor and the Horse.....	59
The Wounded Body.....	72
CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF WEAPONS IN <i>EL VICTORIAL</i> AND THE <i>HECHOS DEL MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ</i> .....	89
Fire.....	91
The Crossbow.....	95
Artillery.....	103
CHAPTER 5: “FORTITUDO,” “SAPIENTIA,” AND LEADERSHIP IN <i>EL VICTORIAL</i> AND THE <i>HECHOS DEL</i> <i>MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ</i> .....	117
<i>El Victorial</i> .....	123
Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz.....	136

CONCLUSION: THE ALTERNATIVE KNIGHT.....	148
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	152

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The Knight and War: Alternative Displays of Masculinity in *El passo honroso de Suero de Quiñones*, *El Victorial*, and the *Historia de los hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*” focuses on depictions of the knight and of battle scenes in three representative fifteenth-century nonfiction texts. In chronological order, they are Pero Rodríguez de Lena’s *El passo honroso de Suero de Quiñones* (1434; hereafter *El passo honroso*);<sup>1</sup> Gutierre Díez de Gámes’s *El Victorial* (1448);<sup>2</sup> and the anonymous *Historia de los hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* (c.1492; hereafter *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*).<sup>3</sup> These works contain a unique portrayal of a knight that is affected by changes in technology, by the political objectives of war, and by his experiences in battle during the late medieval and early renaissance periods.

Knights had been traditionally defined by how well they demonstrated martial prowess in real war and then in chivalric competitions. When the methods of achieving victory in battle were adjusted to account for new weapons, tactics, and strategies, the way that warriors were depicted altered accordingly. The texts studied in this dissertation, because

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<sup>1</sup>Amancio Labandeira Fernandez’s edition of the text, published in Madrid in 1977, has been criticized by Noel Fallows for inaccuracies in its transcription of the original manuscript (El Escorial MS f.II.19). It remains, however, the most current published version. Other later copies of the manuscript are housed in the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid, MS 9-2-4/213), and Biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo (Santander, MS m-104).

<sup>2</sup>This study uses Rafael Beltrán Llavador’s 2005 critical edition. He notes two important editions of the text in print: Eugenio de Llaguno y Amirola’s 1782 edition, which is incomplete; and a complete edition prepared by Juan de Mata Carriazo (1940). Alberto Miranda has also prepared a contemporary critical edition (1993). Manuscript editions exist in the following libraries: Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (MS. 17.648; also MS. 5.978); Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid (MS. 9/5112; also MS. 9/5618; also MS. 12-4-1); and the Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo de Santander (MS. 328).

<sup>3</sup>At present, Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio’s 2003 critical edition is the only text in print. It is based on the only preserved manuscript housed in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (MS. 2.089).

of their closer adherence to actual events, reveal clues about how real fifteenth-century knights acted, and how the changes I spoke of altered the nature of the displays of manliness that had existed for centuries in genres like the epic. These texts anticipate the Spanish knight's evolution from a knight mounted on a horse to an infantry commander charged with organizing, motivating, leading troops, and who was destined to become the backbone of Spain's future military operations throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Americas.

*El passo honroso* describes an elaborate tournament, or "passo," organized by Suero de Quiñones to defend a bridge in Orbigo (León). It does not tell a story like the other two, but rather recounts specific encounters in this particular chivalric contest and, in the process, it dissects every maneuver so that the readers can relive the experience (Fallows, *Jousting* 235). Everything is accounted for, including the origin of the knights, their style of armor, heraldry, and mounts; also included are such mundane aspects as the rules governing the joust, the names of the judges, the consequences of each pass, and the relative strength or weakness of each part of the armor. The amount of detail with which it describes most of these things fill in lacunae in the other texts.

Performance at jousts such as *El passo honroso* is also the preferred place to display knightly masculinity, as these men bonded and cemented their social status through violent activities. As Ruth Mazo Karras's study *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (2003) explains, masculinity was ultimately won in combat (4), but skills at arms, strength, and an aggressive attitude were slowly developed by training and confirmed before a public. As Leo Braudy states, "The display of personal honor that overwhelms one's enemies, in other words, requires an audience, even an imagined one... the presence of some spectator is crucial to validate the behavior of the combatants and to carry

their story both to those not present and to future generations” (57). The manliness of the participants was conferred by peers and, in ideal circumstances, under the gaze of a beautiful lady (37).

In spite of its importance, *El passo honroso* has attracted little scholarly attention to date, most notably from Noel Fallows, who has examined jousting on the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. His study explains the background, history, and literature of these contests while doing a textual analysis of *El passo honroso* and other primary works that describe jousting in detail or depict the weapons and armor in woodcuts and drawings.

In contrast, *El Victorial* chronicles the life of don Pero Niño, a soldier and nobleman who lived and was active during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Considered by Rafael Beltrán Llavador to be the first example of a biography in Castilian, the text, written by his page Díez de Games, exalts its protagonist as one of the greatest knights ever. It is divided into parts describing the particular stages of Pero Niño's life: boyhood, early knighthood, and marriage, service, and death. This allows the writer to treat his lineage, his upbringing, his innate talents (revealed by prophecies that tie him to his future glory), and his entrance into knighthood. However, it is Pero Niño's battles that receive the most attention and let us see the manner in which this portrayal of a knight diverges from the standards of the chivalric romances.

Although *El Victorial* has received attention from scholars, it has mainly appeared in the introductions to different editions, with Rafael Beltrán Llavador's being the most complete and up-to-date.<sup>4</sup> While recognizing its purpose to document chivalric society, these

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<sup>4</sup>Others include Juan de Mata Carriazo (1940), Jorge Sanz (1989), and Alberto Miranda (1993).

discuss the text's relation to potential sources, such as the *Libro de Alexandre*, as well as its role in historiography and influence on the biographical genre, but are limited in the work's larger implications for the fifteenth-century chivalric enterprise.<sup>5</sup> Martín de Riquer has studied and contextualized the use of weaponry in the work ("Las armas en el *Victorial*," 1983), but I aim to further exploit this by arguing that certain weapons like the crossbow change the perception of what is considered masculine in combat.

Finally, there are many works that refer to Rodrigo Ponce de León's actions and achievements during the latter part of the fifteenth century, such as Alonso de Palencia's *Guerra de Granada* and Diego de Valera's *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, yet the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* is the only text that deals exclusively with him. Its narrative, like *El Victorial*, is a biography that focuses specifically on his military career, but does not recount other parts of his life such as his childhood or romantic relationships. It further differs from Pero Niño's chronicle by emphasizing a number of skills that increasingly characterize the chivalric hero. Recognized mainly for its value as an historiographical document, the work has received sparse attention from literary scholars and has yet to find its place amongst other canonical examples of chivalric writing.<sup>6</sup>

My study uses these three narratives to show that an alternative view of knightly display and behavior emerges during the fifteenth century and coexists with the image of the knight-errant propagated by the books of chivalry. Many of them can provide an image to contrast with the real knight, but I have deliberately limited my comparisons to Garcí

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<sup>5</sup>Mata Carriazo states, for example, "El *Victoria* es, pues, simultáneamente, la biografía de un noble caballero y un tratado en ejemplos del arte y oficio de la Caballería. Este doble carácter es esencial de la obra, en la que lo narrativo y lo ejemplar, la historia y la doctrina, se dan y justifican recíproca e inseparablemente" (XVIII).

<sup>6</sup>Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio, the editor of the latest published edition (2004), has published many articles on Ponce de León's career.

Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (1508) because its overall formulaic style is repeated in later books in the genre, and because this particular text offers the best examples to contrast make-believe and real knights.<sup>7</sup> Although these knights are judged by their beauty, honor, obedience to God, and romantic aptitudes, the knights-errant of chivalric romances are first and foremost warriors who, in addition to having a royal pedigree, display near invincibility.

According to María Luzdivina Cuesta Torre, Rodríguez de Montalvo revises his text during a period of intense conflict that includes ongoing struggles in the Canary Islands, Portugal, Granada, and Italy (329, 355-57). These wars utilized knights, but also infantry and artillerymen to bolster the army (Ladero Quesada 242-280). Yet soldiers other than knights are generally absent from *Amadís de Gaula*, which gives most of its attention to the hero and to face-to-face combat (Cuesta Torre 348). As she explains,

Esto es así, en parte, en el *Amadís de Gaula*, donde el comportamiento caballeresco del héroe admite cierto traslado a la realidad del siglo XV, pero conforme los ejércitos renacentistas fueron cobrando un carácter moderno (basado en el uso de la infantería y de las primeras armas de fuego), el alejamiento entre las batallas descritas en los libros y las guerras del mundo real fue cada vez mayor. (357)

Alternative practices of warfare, as she further explains, are not entirely absent from the *Amadís de Gaula*. Neither are mass encounters in open fields or inside cities, naval battles, and sieges (Cuesta Torre 336). This plethora has led critics like Juan Bautista A Valle-Arce to point out that “las tácticas bélicas del siglo XV están muy presentes en todo momento” (350). Nevertheless, single combat is the most frequent form of actual engagement described in *Amadís* (Cuesta Torre 330) in spite of the fact that it is at this very time that knights are

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<sup>7</sup>The most obvious example is the *Libro del caballero Zifar*, the first chivalric romance written in Castilian. However, in terms of a representative text, the *Amadís* is the more apt choice for this study since it spawns the future examples of these knights such as Esplandián and Palmerín de Oliva (Viña Liste 35).

becoming less and less important in campaigns, while other types of soldiers—often arising from the lower classes—are becoming crucial to military victories.

This anachronism responds to the very nature of the books of chivalry. Although conflict in them frequently reflects tensions between the monarchy and orders of knights, it often deals with justice in the form of righting the abuse of a love or a lover by a single extraordinary individual (Cacho Blecua 298-99). In one of the early battle scenes, for example, the youthful Amadís, then known only as the “Donzel del Mar,” seeks redress on behalf of a damsel dishonored by four henchmen of the knight Galpano.<sup>8</sup> In this particular scene, he fights against four men, rides to a castle post-haste, engages in more fighting, jousts, and follows this encounter with more ground combat, all during one sequence of events. Unmindful of the odds against him, Amadís confronts the rogues alone and with a single swing of his sword severs one soldier’s arm before turning his attention to another, whom he cuts “por las narizes al través...fasta las orejas” (294). Almost comically, the two remaining soldiers flee for their lives. Amadís then rushes towards Galpano’s castle in order to right the wrongs made to the damsel. There, he and Galpano unhorse each other in a joust before engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Eventually, Amadís seizes the advantage by inflicting a blinding wound on Galpano’s face and decapitating him. He is never fatigued and almost never disheartened, and his stamina makes him superior to real human knights who cannot equal him.

Most of the encounters in *Amadís de Gaula* are much like this. They portray the violence of battle and describe the injuries received by the hero, but it is clear to the reader that these things happen to a special individual, whose qualities are associated with royalty.

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<sup>8</sup>Book I, Chapter 7, pages 293-304.

Therefore, they fail to capture the experience of flesh-and-blood individuals. Indeed, Rodríguez de Montalvo himself is aware of the uneasy tension that exists between fiction and real life. In an attempt to justify the *Amadís* to contemporaries who were writing about the conquest of Granada at the same time, he compares fiction to history, saying:<sup>9</sup>

Considerando los sabios antiguos que los grandes hechos de las armas en scripto dexaron cuán breve fue aquello que en efecto de verdad en ellas passó, assí como las batallas de nuestro tiempo que [por] nos fueron vistas nos dieron clara esperiença y noticia, quisieron sobre algún cimientto de verdad componer tales y tan estrañas hazañas, con que no solamente pensaron dexar en perpetua memoria a los que aficionados fueron, mas aquellos por quien leídas fuesen en grande admiración, como por las antiguas historias de los griegos y troyanos y otros que batallaron parece por scripto. (“Prólogo,” 219)

Rodríguez de Montalvo's comparison of fiction to history employs topoi taken from the introductions of chronicles to underscore that both types of writing share in a common purpose: to encourage heroic admiration in their readers (Fogelquist 9).<sup>10</sup> They both use an element of truth to create a narrative that will appeal to readers and cement in their memory the qualities and ideals that they want them to internalize. For this reason, accuracy is not paramount in either genre, because it is necessary to magnify certain events and

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<sup>9</sup>As James Fogelquist points out (24-25), Montalvo composes his “Prólogo” not long after the Catholic Monarchs completed their mission of taking Granada in 1492, an event written on widely (see Pulgar’s *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, for example). Montalvo lends historical credit to those documenting the feat, affirming that writers from antiquity who, given the chance to view the events surrounding the recapture of Granada, would have embellished the deeds out of admiration of the participants.

<sup>10</sup>According to Fogelquist’s interpretation of Rodríguez de Montalvo’s historiographic point of view (13-15), there exist three categories of historical writing: “historias verdaderas,” texts grounded in and faithful to the events they describe; “historias de afición,” texts based on true events but enhanced out of the writer’s ‘afición’ of the hero being written about; and “historias fingidas,” texts having no basis in historical events. Rodríguez de Montalvo categorizes his rendition of *Amadís* as belonging to the latter, because of its fantastic nature and the author’s self-proclaimed lack of talent. While 15th century Castilian historians agreed that recording the deeds and customs of the past were critical to cement societies’ values, they also scorned the fictionalization of past deeds, which they believed unintentionally created a skewed model of virtue. Writers who, in Rodríguez de Montalvo’s words, aimed to “crescer y ensalçar” their protagonists’ feats of arms did so at the expense of verisimilitude. Richard Kaeuper has described this attitude about chivalry as more “prescriptive” and aimed at advancing ideals rather than as “descriptive” of a present state (33). Nevertheless, as Martín Riquer has pointed out, while these fantastical tales promoted the unreal models feared by Castilian chroniclers, they maintained the chivalric principles of honor, loyalty, faithfulness, and gallantry (*Caballeros andantes*, 168).

characteristics in them in order to create heroic exemplars for their audiences. Therefore, although *Amadís* is an imaginative tale, its fiction is based on elements of truth so that “los cavalleros mancebos como los más ancianos hallen en ellos lo que a cada uno conviene” (Montalvo 225).

When we compare the Galpano episode in *Amadís*, for example, with accounts of what actually happens in battle, we realize that its depiction of the hero's prowess is far from the behavior of actual knights, who have acquired their battle skills over years, and who are exposed to the vagaries of chance, which normally rules every battle in which they engage. Success, as it were, is an infrequent occurrence in a world in which it often depends on the repeated exertions by groups of men dedicated to the goal of inflicting the type of damage that is ascribed to one individual in *Amadís*.

The "coup de grace" to the figure of the knight-errant represented by the books of chivalry has often been ascribed to Miguel de Cervantes's masterpiece, *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605), whose blundering Alonso Quijano, with his outdated equipment and geriatric horse, ridicules the ideals of the chivalric romances by placing them in a real world in which they represent a form of madness. Don Quijote determines "hacerse caballero andante y irse por todo el mundo con sus armas y caballo a buscar las aventuras y a ejercitarse en todo aquello que él había leído que los caballeros andantes se ejercitaban, deshaciendo todo género de agravio y poniéndose en ocasiones y peligros donde, acabándolos, cobrase eterno nombre y fama" (Book 1, Chapter 1) To this end, he arms himself with:

unas armas que habían sido de sus bisabuelos, que, tomadas de orín y llenas de moho, luengos siglos había que estaban puestas y olvidadas en un rincón. Limpiólas y aderezólas lo mejor que pudo; pero vio que tenían una gran falta, y era que no tenían celada de encaje, sino morrión simple; mas a esto suplió su industria, porque de

cartones hizo un modo de media celada que, encajada con el morrión, hacían una apariencia de celada entera. Es verdad que, para probar si era fuerte y podía estar al riesgo de una cuchillada, sacó su espada y le dio dos golpes, y con el primero y en un punto deshizo lo que había hecho en una semana; y no dejó de parecerle mal la facilidad con que la había hecho pedazos, y, por asegurarse deste peligro, la tornó a hacer de nuevo, poniéndole unas barras de hierro por de dentro, de tal manera, que él quedó satisfecho de su fortaleza y, sin querer hacer nueva experiencia della, la diputó y tuvo por celada finísima de encaje. (Book 1, Chapter 1)

Don Quijote completes his accoutrement with his "baciuelmo," which is no more than a shaving bowl used as a helmet, and a nag. He sets forth on his quest in the company of a fat Sancho Panza, who serves as his squire. His adventures, though, invariably end in ridiculous defeats. His comical and pathetic attempts to mimic the principles found in *Amadís de Gaula* signal their lack of applicability to his times. It is my contention that Don Quijote's description is not a criticism of knighthood or of service in the army, but of the books of chivalry. As such, it is the end product of an ideological struggle between two competing representations of the hero that begins in the fifteenth century and of which our three texts are part.

This ideological struggle overlays a reality. The primary aim of war in fifteenth-century Iberia is the same as in earlier centuries: gaining or maintaining control over land and cities.<sup>11</sup> These objectives agree with the development of war theory in the Middle Ages regarding the protection and expansion of territory, and the rulers of the Peninsula understand themselves to be tasked with this duty (Ladero Quesada 225).<sup>12</sup> However, after the major

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<sup>11</sup>Whetham explains that, in general, medieval warfare included controlling fortifications because they were the key to controlling territories. The aim was not, he notes, imposing one's will on the enemy (11).

<sup>12</sup>As a result, siege warfare, which was largely declining across Europe, remained important on the Peninsula as a primary way to conquer territories, and thus played an important role in how raids were conducted (Nicolle 62). Battles were not limited to ground engagements. The sea, too, was strategically important. The northern kingdoms of the twelfth-century began developing their navies and, by the thirteenth century, naval warfare was an essential component of the medieval war machine, as evidenced by Fernando III's employment of warships on the Guadalquivir during his conquest of Seville (O'Donnell 432-33), and by Alfonso X's attempt to disrupt supplies crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa to Murcia. Sporadic patrols and battles by sea had

battles of Tolosa, Córdoba, and Seville in the thirteenth century<sup>13</sup> there is an increased centralization of political power, a more robust economy, improvements in long-range weaponry (including gunpowder), and greater professionalization of soldiers.<sup>14</sup> As Ladero Quesada explains:

Lo relativamente nuevo en la Edad Media tardía fue la dimensión de los conflictos, su duración, la amplitud de sus escenarios y la capacidad que mostraron los poderes monárquicos, u otros que superaban los ámbitos locales y comarcales, para dirigirlos y sostenerlos, apoyados en recursos financieros más fuertes, en tipos de ejército más eficaces y, también, en la multiplicación de las reflexiones *de re militari*. (217)

These aspects of warfare have an increasing impact on how men engage each other in battle, and thus alter a knight's performance in combat and his self-concept.

In the early Middle Ages, for example, the sword served as a cutting weapon and as a symbol of nobility and leadership (DeVries 19). By the thirteenth century, improvements in armor forced the sword to change from a slashing to a stabbing weapon with a narrower blade and a longer grip to allow use with one or two hands. By the mid-fifteenth century, it had become a rapier, often made of lighter steel and ornately decorated, and formed part of a nobleman's dress. This development marked the end of the heavy battle sword used in the Middle Ages (DeVries 21-23), and argued for a more agile and dexterous knight.<sup>15</sup> Stronger and more accurate projectile weapons like the bow and crossbow were also securing their

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become routine in the fifteenth-century, and the Castilian navy assisted the French in fighting the English during the Hundred Years War (O'Donnell 441).

<sup>13</sup>The dates for these battles are: the Crusade of Las Navas de Tolosa (July 13-16, 1212); the siege of Córdoba (1236); the siege of Seville (1248). See O'Callaghan for a complete history.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, Prestwich pages 134-145 for a summary of the debate regarding the terminology 'military revolution' in the Middle Ages. Also, Charles Briggs, who observes that the arguments for a military revolution rest on four pillars: the growth of the size of armies; the shift from heavy cavalry to infantry; the introduction and importance of gunpowder weapons; the duration of time spent in the field, coupled with greater professionalism and a more scientific approach to warfare (154).

<sup>15</sup>This, of course, does not mean that it was never used as a weapon, but used in a different way that is evident by the increased production of fencing manuals written around that time.

place atop the list of the most devastating instruments of the fifteenth century. The crossbow in particular was a versatile weapon that proved effective both on the battlefield and in sieges, where gunpowder weapons made significant inroads (DeVries 41-46).

Despite their initial imperfections and clear knowledge of how to employ them, guns and gunpowder had also begun to be widely used in Spain during the second part of the fourteenth century. As the technology was perfected, these weapons became the centerpiece of Castilian warfare, with a concomitant change in the skills and tactics valued in a warrior, who had to begin to contend with death from afar.<sup>16</sup> These unique developments influenced how authors interested in bellicose themes presented their versions of the masculine exemplar in late medieval Castilian literature.<sup>17</sup>

The knights in our texts adjusted to the changing reality of warfare in ways that are not addressed by the chivalric romances. They were faced, among other things, with lack of provisions, declining morale, poor tactical positioning (e.g. fighting behind enemy lines), inferior weapons, and fear of personal injury. They also increasingly confronted archers, crossbowmen, infantrymen, and artillerymen—types of opponents who, although not knights

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<sup>16</sup>Examples of gunpowder artillery being used in Spain include: the war between Pedro I of Castile and Pedro IV of Aragón (1359); the siege of Calatayud (1362); Enrique de Trastámara's entrance in Burgos (1367); the battle of La Rochela (1371); the battle of Aljubarrota (1385); the battle at Egea (1394). And later, by Fernando in the sieges of Zahara and Antequera (1407 and 1410, respectively). See Sánchez Saus 400-401.

<sup>17</sup>Perhaps the broadest study to date of medieval Spanish warfare is José María Gárate Córdoba's *Espíritu y milicia en la España medieval* (1967). It nevertheless does not answer the questions I seek to explore. Gárate Córdoba relies on his experience as a military scholar and general to examine the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, the *Poema de Fernán González*, the *Siete Partidas*, as well as various chronicles. However, this study's gross fragmentation of focus (easily seen by simply browsing the table of contents) and lack of detail are its weakness. He also perpetuates the myth of Spanish heroism in war since Roman times. In addition, the author relies almost exclusively on Menéndez Pidal's scholarship and ideas for his theoretical framework, and takes little else into consideration. The author was heavily involved with Franco's political regime. Other scholars, like Spurgeon Baldwin, John Hall, and Jean Keller have also studied war in major works like the *Cantar de Mio Cid* and the *Poema de Fernán González*. Nevertheless, scholarship on warfare and literature in the fifteenth century has lagged far behind.

like themselves, had surged in importance as the horseback charge became less useful on the battlefield.<sup>18</sup>

This has not gone completely unnoticed. Certain critics have begun to describe the nature, training, and function of knights in the fifteenth century. Jesús Rodríguez Velasco's *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV* (1996) and María Elvira Roca Barea's *Tratado militar de Frontino* (2010) have examined how fifteenth-century Castilian writers assimilated Classical writings on warfare, which had begun to circulate more widely in translation, into a body of thought that resulted in a unique version of chivalry. These writers include Alfonso de San Cristóbal's fifteenth-century translation of Flavius Vegetius Renatus's *Epitoma rei militaris* (*Epitome of Military Science*) and the translation of Sexto Julio Frontino's *Strategematon* as the *Cuatro libros de la guerra*. Also important are Castilian treatises on knighthood, including Alonso de Cartagena's *Tratados militares*, and moral works that nonetheless review aspects of training and fighting like Alonso Martínez de Toledo's *Arcipreste de Talavera* (1438).<sup>19</sup> Collectively, these works began to appear more frequently in the fifteenth-century and consequently inform the image of the knight in the three primary texts I study.

Pairing what authors say about their warriors with what is known about the ongoing technological and strategic advancements guides the analysis of *El passo honroso*, *El Victorial*, and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*. This dissertation grounds its study in the work of Kelly DeVries and Robert Douglas Smith's *Medieval Military Technology* (2012), and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada's medieval edition of the *Historia Militar de España*

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<sup>18</sup>Several studies exist on medieval warfare that describe these conditions and how they change with time. See, for example, Andrew Ayton and J. L. Prince, Jim Bradbury, Phillipe Contamine, Maurice Keen, and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada.

<sup>19</sup>Fallows has contributed to this "debate" by editing and studying the chivalric works of Alonso de Cartagena.

(2010). Their research functions to close the gap between text and artifact, and serves to prove that the three texts I study are different from the books of chivalry but coexisted with them.

The second chapter, "Warfare, Epic, and the Castilian Knight," provides the background for our discussion. It begins by briefly tracing the historical relationship between war and men but quickly moves to identify and explain how the concept of "just war" informs medieval warfare, how it pervades the ideals of chivalry, and how it inspires medieval nobles to pursue arms. It examines how the Castilian hero was traditionally portrayed in medieval Spanish texts, particularly the epic, and outlines the major changes in warfare that take place during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and their effect on later works that respond to different settings and circumstances.

Chapter 3, "The Knight's Body: Training, Combat, Armor, and Wounds in the *Passo Honroso* and *El Victorial*," looks at different ways the body conveys manliness in combat. While heroes like Amadis are characterized as indomitable natural-born fighters, real knights have to train their bodies through drill and practice and endure the hardships of battle. Therefore, this chapter draws on some of the earliest European sources of martial training, and links those sources to Castilian literature. Next, it examines two distinct types of fighting: foot combats and jousting. Each was important to establishing the knight's martial prowess, but descriptions of the first agree with the fanciful encounters found in chivalric romances, while descriptions of jousting bend more towards the knight's actual experience with the sport. Then, the chapter rightly examines how armor accentuates the knight's masculinity in chivalric competitions as well as real war, before finally exploring the knight's

vulnerability using wounding scenes from *El passo honroso* and *El Victorial* to show that the knight reveals his mettle most when injured.

Chapter 4, “Armies, Weapons, and Tactics in *El Victorial* and the *Historia de los hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*,” discusses how weapons like the crossbow and gunpowder artillery change the landscape of warfare due to their ability to engage the enemy from greater distances. As a result, projectile volleys and static artillery assaults began to eclipse the shock tactics as the preferred offensive strategy that had earlier facilitated the individual battlefield glory sought by knights. Both the crossbow and cannon alter the tactics used by knights, and call into question their role in war since years of martial training, coupled with elaborate ceremonies, suddenly brought nothing to bear on the enemy. The effect this has on writers is immediate, yet subtle, as it is evident that they were trying to reconfigure the ideal knight amidst the presence of these new weapons, while keeping alive outmoded traits of hand-to-hand combat.

While new weapons limited the effectiveness of the cavalry charge, Chapter 5, “‘Fortitudo,’ ‘Sapientia,’ and Leadership in *El Victorial* and the *Historia de los hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*,” looks at how the military nobility began to place a premium on leadership, particularly as armies were growing in size and becoming more closely tied to state organizations rather than religious military orders. As a result, and due to the increased availability of classical military treatises translated into Castilian like the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* and *Strategematon*, as well as contemporary works on war and knighthood by Alonso de Cartagena, the best of knights pursued attributes like wisdom, rhetorical competence, and leadership. Here, special attention is paid both to the message of these

knights to their men through harangues, as well as to the rhetorical style, which indicates the presence of an educated nobility schooled in letters as well as weapons.

## CHAPTER 2: THE EPIC AND THE CASTILIAN KNIGHT

The desire to depict exemplary heroes seems to begin in Homeric times, but according to John Keegan, it is "almost as old as man himself, and reaches into the most sacred places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king" (3). Epic poetry has been a favorite genre for authors to convey the deeds of a superior class of men who live "for action and for honor" (Bowra 1), and the medieval Castilian epic shares this goal by celebrating the knight as the epitome of manliness. The purpose of this chapter is to pinpoint the characteristics appearing in the *Cantar de Mio Cid* (c. 1208, hereafter *CMC*), the *Poema de Fernán González* (c. 1255; hereafter *PFG*), and the *Mocedades de Rodrigo* (c. 1360; hereafter *MR*) that make the medieval Castilian knight masculine.

People have always risked their lives for tangible or intangible gains so long as these are greater than the dangers they face (Gat 137). As a result, societies have invariably been concerned with the support and training of warriors, and with the creation of exemplary heroes to emulate. These depictions have always responded to wider ideological, religious, or political conflicts emanating from their societies.<sup>20</sup> As Herbert Sussman explains, "The

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<sup>20</sup>Scholars often avoid studying the facets of war in favor of questions of identity, or seek to interpret it from the point of view of its marginalized victims instead of looking at the circumstances that give rise to the conflict and the battle itself (Braudy xxi; Hanson, *The Father of Us All* 9). Victor Davis Hanson's *The Western Way of War*, which focuses on the experience of the fighter during battle rather than ancillary cultural forces that drive warfare, is an example of the importance of studying the battles themselves.

warrior is an individual, but, as with all forms of masculine identity, he derives his identity from the values and structures of the society into which he is born” (1.2).

Societies have for centuries transmitted these values and structures through literature. Classical works like Homer’s *Iliad* and Virgil’s *Aeneid* grappled with the questions: “How can words best evoke the experience of war? How can they best benefit society? Which literary tropes are effective, and permissible? Which tropes are to be decried, as generating the inappropriate effect?” (Pitcher 71). The answers to these questions adapt to the values and structures of the times, but always leave their readers with an “imaginative freedom” to fill the gaps (McLoughlin 15).<sup>21</sup> This alteration affects the works over time, and ultimately our understanding of them. Franz Albract, for example, states that Homer:

is not a military author but a poet, that his purpose is not to sing of the art of contemporary warfare but the heroic exploits of his people, that he does not set out tactical principles in order to justify or explain the military dispositions that have been made or the orders that have been given, but at most weaves them into his descriptions to heighten their clarity and vividness. (*Battle and Battle Description in Homer* 19)

Albract also says that, even though Homer bases much of his descriptions on practical experience or real observation, his poetic imagination amplifies his portrayals of warfare, but always in accord with the ideals of his time. This is also true of medieval Castilian literature, which aims to inspire readers through heroic portrayals of warriors during the myriad of conflicts then taking place in the Iberian Peninsula.

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<sup>21</sup>Kate McLoughlin has traced these authorial shortcomings to factors like censorship or the writer’s lack of personal experience in conflict.

## Warfare and Medieval Culture

The nature of warfare is a complicated subject that has occupied historians and critics for decades. Even a summary of its scope is too large a task for this study, but by immediately narrowing it to medieval Europe, we can reveal the traits valued by its societies.<sup>22</sup> In his introduction to *Medieval Warfare: A History*, Maurice Keen observes that Europe's boundaries were largely 1) shaped by the Crusades, characterized by him as a “great confrontation,” and 2) punctuated by struggles rooted in smaller familial disputes or territorial gains.<sup>23</sup> The Iberian Peninsula is no exception. Wars shifted the geographical and cultural boundaries of its countries in a process that lasted over seven centuries.

After the Moorish invasion in 711, some Visigoths settled in northern Iberia and established medieval kingdoms there. Of particular importance were Asturias, León, and Castile, whose kings eventually came to believe it was their responsibility to recover the lands lost by their Visigothic ancestors (O’Callaghan 3). This enterprise, designated as “the Reconquista” by Hispanists,<sup>24</sup> was a slow and complicated process “unfolding in the context

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<sup>22</sup>Traditionally, these reasons have belonged primarily to social and behavioral scientists, while the military historian has taken care of the “how.” Recent scholarship, however, has suggested that both should be examined in concert. As Keegan explains, “perhaps military historians would be better historians if they did take time to reflect on what it is that disposes men to kill each other” (79), given the fact that, for the most part, man exists within a social context geared to promote a common good. When approaching the question “Is man violent by nature or is his potentiality for violence motivated by material factors?” Keegan points to two categories of thought: materialists and naturalists. Materialists, as the name suggests, argue that man is motivated to be violent by some form of profiteering in the form of land, food, wealth, etc. Naturalists, on the other hand, tend to view violence as an inherent trait in human beings originating through evolved instinct or, as Christian theologians tend to proclaim, original sin (79-80).

<sup>23</sup>Keen defines “great confrontations” to be “wars waged on the authority of popes, kings, and princes” (2). Some examples include the Wars of Investiture (1077-1122), the War of the Sicilian Vespers (1282-1302), and the Hundred Years War of England and France (1337-1453).

<sup>24</sup>Hispanists have debated the validity of the term “reconquista” at length. Derek Lomax argues that this term is not merely a construct of contemporary historians, but instead dubs it “an ideal invented by Spanish Christians soon after 711” (1). Peter Linehan dates the conceptualization of this at around 880 (103). For a complete summary of the debate, see O’Callaghan “Chapter 1: Reconquest, Holy War, and Crusade.”

of the changing political, religious, social, and economic circumstances of each epoch” that advanced “from one river frontier to another and was accompanied by the colonization or repopulation of occupied territory” (O’Callaghan 19). But it was only after the eleventh century that the “Reconquista” was viewed as similar in intent with the crusades that were bent on freeing Palestine from control of the Muslims (Keen, *Medieval Warfare* 2).<sup>25</sup>

The Iberian and Middle Eastern crusades were based on an extensive theological examination on the nature of "war" that sought to answer the question of why men fight,<sup>26</sup> and to reconcile the brutality of war and the taking of men's lives with the prohibition of such acts in Scripture. Augustine got around the problem by justifying warfare as a punishment for the sin that led to man’s fall from grace: war therefore could be contemplated only if there was “justa causa,” or just cause as a reason for it.<sup>27</sup> It followed that it should be reactive and not proactive in nature (i.e. it must respond to some wrong committed); serve as a remedy for a wrong; and only be engaged in as a last resort. Finally, Augustine believed that only kings, emperors, or generals were vested with the proper authority (“auctoritas”) to wage war (Corey 54-59).

The Moorish offensive put the Christian kingdoms in Iberia on the defensive, thereby creating a situation that met the "justa causa" requirement. Christians, who had been fighting Muslims in other parts of the Mediterranean for over three centuries, also defended

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<sup>25</sup>O’Callaghan remarks that northern Europeans paid little attention to the Muslim occupation of Iberia until the crusading fervor of the 11<sup>th</sup> century took hold. Afterwards, northern European influences—particularly crusading ideology—“permeated Spain in every way” (19).

<sup>26</sup>For studies on Christian just war theory, see for example David D. Corey and J. Daryl Charles, Henrik Syse and Gregory M. Reichberg, C.J. Cadoux, Frederick H. Russell, and Roland H. Bainton.

<sup>27</sup>Thinkers such as Gratian, who sought to unify various perspectives on just war under one clear umbrella of thought, was one of the first to raise concerns about the threat other religions posed to the church (Corey 72).

themselves from the religious obligation of jihad in the Koran, which justified the use of force to conquer and subdue non-believers. These conditions created an environment for conflict unlike any other in Europe.

Just-War theories originally developed at a time when economic and cultural changes were beginning to encourage the development of an agrarian model of society, for which land was at a premium. As a result, writers such as Isidore of Seville regarded its protection and recuperation as equally essential to the defense of city or people. However, protecting and recuperating lost land was not the only rationale for warfare, so was the expansion of religion.<sup>28</sup>

Religion became the paramount justification for going to war. In 1095 Pope Urban proclaimed the First Crusade (1095-1099), absolved the soldiers of Christ for their behavior, and rewarded them with eternal salvation (Bachrach 108). Gratian followed the Pope's lead with the *Decretum* (1140), which holds that any threat to the Church could be resisted by war, and considered waging it "a positive moral duty" that was without "limits ... on the extent of violence that could be employed" (Russell 76).<sup>29</sup> This is the context in which the earliest descriptions of medieval knights were forged.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>While Roland Bainton suggests the connection between just war theory expanding to include the recovery of property and the medieval dependence on agriculture (106), Corey points out that it was Cicero who first suggested war was justified if its objective was to secure lost lands (69).

<sup>29</sup>Gratian drew on works of Augustine and Gregory the Great concerning the defense of the Church against its enemies. His *Causa* 23, representing a large portion the *Decretum*'s second section, deals at length with war. See Corey, pages 68-84; and Russell, pages 55-85.

<sup>30</sup>Crusading, while not exactly the same thing as chivalry, incorporates religious ideology into its ethos. It is important to distinguish between chivalry and crusading, noting that the former is concerned with a large spectrum of martial and aristocratic activities that were not necessarily related to a specific military pursuit (Keen, *Chivalry* 44).

## The Epic

The predominant genre for modeling behavior in war was the epic, but unlike Classical heroes from the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid*, the Castilian knight of the medieval epic always acts against the aggressively expanding believers of Islam and with the Christian God's approval and as His instrument. This releases him of much of the responsibility for his actions. As Keen explains, "We are ... brought up against [the knights'] complete lack of self-consciousness about their role as Christian warriors. They are soldiers of God and of their earthly lords, and do not depend on any special authority the Church has given them" (*Chivalry* 51). As "miles christi," this dispensation truly separates medieval knights from the actions of Achilles, Odysseus, or Aeneas.

The effect of this dedication of his instrumentality to God gave his acts permanence. The Moorish presence made medieval Spain a zone of "permanent crusading" and "created an ongoing opportunity for expansionist militancy" (Briggs 175). The Castilian epic hero endeavors to protect the Faith from Islam, and thus ranges himself with God on the battlefield. In the *CMC*, for example, a conversation with the Archangel Gabriel during a prophetic dream explains that the Cid will be successful in all of his endeavors:<sup>31</sup>

Un sueño priso dulce, tan bien se adurmio.  
El angel Gabriel a el vino en [vision]:  
'Cavalgad, Çid, el buen Campeador,  
ca nunca en tan buen punto cavalgo varon;  
mientras que visquieredes bien se fara lo to.' (405-10)

The dream vision, coming as it does at the beginning of the *CMC*, is echoed in other ways, but most significantly by the Christians shouting "God" or the name of their patron saint during a battle: "Los moros laman '¡Mafomat!' e los christianos '¡SantiYagu[e]!' (731). It is

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<sup>31</sup>I use Colin Smith's 2003 edition of the poem.

also seen in the fact that the Moors are often routed and incur heavy losses: “Cayen en un poco de logar moros muertos mill e .ccc. ya” (732). The meaning is that binding oneself to God is a necessary ingredient for knighthood.

In the *PFG*, there are three particular battle scenes that pit the hero against the Moorish general Almanzor, a tough enemy with ample fighting experience. As in the *CMC*, we expect that the Christians will be overwhelmed by the Moors, but one would be incorrect in assuming that victory always favors superior numbers, weapons, or strategies. In both the *CMC* and the *PFG*, the heroes rely on their Christian faith to save themselves and their men from defeat,<sup>32</sup> because, in the theocentric Middle Ages, God consistently favors an ostensibly weaker warrior.

A good example of this is a scene from the *PFG* in which the poet mentions that Fernán González overcomes his men's fear of a vastly superior force by making it clear that they have God on their side, and like the biblical David will also defeat their Goliath.

Therefore, Almanzor is to Goliath as Fernán González is to David:

Por non vos detener en otras ledanias,  
fue Almançor vençido con sus cavallerias  
alli fue demostrado el poder del Mexias,  
el conde fue David e Almançor Gollias. (270)

The poet of the *PFG* says that outmatched opponents can still be victorious with God's help and the right leadership. The story of David demonstrates the power of faith and obedience.

The poet also cites a previous miracle in the fight between King Pelayo and the Moors during which Christ participates as the champion of Pelayo and his troops, when they are assailed by a heavy curtain of arrows:

alli quiso don Cristo grand milagro mostrar,  
bien creo que lo oyestes alguna vez contar.

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<sup>32</sup>I use Juan Victorio's 2010 edition of the poem.

Saetas e quadriellos quantas al rey tiravan,  
a el nin a sus gentes ningunas no llegavan,  
tan iradas commo ivan, tan iradas tornavan,  
si no a ellos mismos a otros non matavan.  
Quando vieron los moros atan fiera fazaña,  
que sus armas matavan a su misma conpañia,  
desçercaron la cueva salieron de montaña. (118cd-120)

The hail of arrows fired at Fernán González and his troops is miraculously redirected towards the Moors, and with this supernatural assistance the Christians end up winning the battle instead of perishing.

A further example of supernatural intervention in the *PPG* is the battle of Hacinas, which begins with a prayerful petition from the hero at San Pedro de Arlanza's hermitage before Fernán González engages his foe:

Señor, tu me aguarda d'error e d'ocasion.  
Señor, por grand amor de fer a ti serviçio,  
passo mucho lazerio e dexo mucho viçio,  
conest' cuerpo lazrado fagot e sacrificio,  
con moros e cristianos meto me en grand bolliçio...

Vençi los [moros] e mate los, Señor, con tu poder,  
nunca fui contra ti, segunt mi entender,  
tengo me por pagado sit e fize plazer,  
bien tengo que non has por que me falesçer...

Señor, tu siervo so con mis cavallerias,  
no m'partire de ti en todos los mis dias...

Señor, da me esfuerço e seso e poder  
que pueda a Almançor o matar o vençer.<sup>33</sup>

His prior service, suffering, and sacrifice, as well as his need for help against Almanzor's superior army is answered when he is visited by the spirits of King Pelayo and Saint Millán,

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<sup>33</sup>Due to its length, the inclusion of the full prayer is unnecessary for my purposes. Therefore I have selected specific parts essential to the discussion of God's perceived role in winning battles. The prayer is found in quatrains 392-404.

who, as God's messengers, predict victory in the coming battle. The vision, however, does not ensure success, and the poet recounts how God rescues Fernán González from certain defeat, when he asks for Heaven's help again in a prayer:

Castiella, quebrantada, quedara sin señor,  
ire con esta rabia, mesquino picador;  
sera en cautiverio del moro Almançor:  
por non ver aquel día, la muerte es mejor. (549)

In response, God appears in the form of Santiago the Moor-slayer, and proceeds to attack and destroy Almanzor's army.

The supernatural army first decimates the enemy; and second, it reinvigorates the Christian forces exhausted from battle:

Los cristianos mesquinos, que estavan cansados,  
de fincar con las animas estavan desfiuzados;  
fueron con el apóstol muy fuerte confortados,  
nunca fueron en ora tan fuerte esforçados. (561)

Santiago does what no other can: His appearance nullifies their weakness and simultaneously links Fernán González with Heaven. The poet thereby reminds his audience that even the best knights have limitations and that they must humble themselves before God to gain celestial support in battle. Devotion to God, therefore, is fundamental to the medieval hero's characterization.

Nevertheless, knights still have to prove their mettle as independent fighters, and this meant single combat. In the medieval epic, heroes engage in single combat to gain honor or to resolve conflicts, but such combats make up a small portion of the poems. They do play, however, an important role in the hero's characterization by associating him with certain other motifs that are reflective of male exemplarity.

In the *CMC*, the Cid's single encounter with the Moorish king Búcar is an opportunity for the hero to display his masculinity.<sup>34</sup> It begins with a shouting match as the two posture towards each other:

Mio Çid al rey Bucar cayol en alcaz;  
‘¡Aca torna, Bucar,! Venist d’alent mar,  
verte as con el Çid el de la barba grant,  
¡saludar nos hemos amos e tajaremos amistad!’  
Respuso Bucar al Çid: ‘¡Confonda Dios tal amistad!  
El espada tienes desnuda en la mano e veot aguijar,  
asi commo semeja en mi la quieres ensayar;  
mas si el cavallo non estropieça o connmigo non caye  
¡non te juntaras connmigo fata dentro en la mar!’  
Aquí respuos mio Çid: ‘¡Esto non sera verdad!’ (2408-18)

The Cid reveals his aggressive intentions by drawing his sword; additionally, when addressing Búcar he refers to his beard as the ‘barba grant.’ Both the sword and beard function as symbols of the Cid’s masculinity, and are intimidating to his adversary. The presentation works, and Búcar—clearly fearing for his life—tries to escape, believing he has a faster horse. Not surprisingly, however, the Cid’s Babieca is the quicker mount, and he runs down Búcar and then kills him with a single blow:

Buen cavallo tiene Bucar e grandes saltos faz  
arriba alçó Colada, un grant colpe dado l’ha,  
las carbonclas del yelmo tollidas gel as ha,  
cortol’ el yelmo e, librado todo lo ál,  
fata la cintura el espada llegado ha. (2421-2424)

The juxtaposition of the Cid’s masculine symbols—his sword and beard—and his riding and fighting ability are uniquely exhibited during the single combat. This pursuit and sword strike reveal the strength of the Cid, especially because he raises his sword above his head while in the mount—which would compromise the balance of a lackluster rider—and then delivers a

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<sup>34</sup>The poem contains few scenes of individual combat. In the final scene of the poem, some of the Cid’s men participate in jousts to celebrate the upcoming marriage of his daughters after the vindication at the Toledo Courts, but the Cid is merely an observer here. See Raulston.

blow that cuts Búcar's armor and inflicts a mortal wound.<sup>35</sup> This is an example of the “grand golpe” motif, a characteristic of the super-strong male warrior present throughout chivalric literature in Spain, especially in fanciful texts like *Amadís de Gaula* but also seen in the three primary texts studied here.

Likewise, the *PFG* contains examples of face-to-face combats, among which is the fight between Fernán González and the Navarrese king Sancho. In fictional battles, it was not uncommon for the principal leaders of different sides to seek one another out during battles, because the outcome of these confrontations reveals who is the better man and creates excitement for the reader.<sup>36</sup> Of the nineteen quatrains that are devoted to the battle of Era Degollada, two deal with the confrontation between both champions, who square off on the field:

El conde e el rey buscando se andudieron  
fasta que uno a otro a ojo se ovieron,  
las armas que traian çerteras las fizieron,  
fueron se a ferir quant de rezio pudieron.

Entramos uno a otro tales golpes se dieron,  
los fierros de las lanças al otra part salieron;  
nunca de cavalleros tales golpes se vieron,  
todas sus guarniçiones nada non les valieron. (317-18)

The blows—the likes of which have never before been seen—are given and received by both fighters. Both men exude prowess, but only Fernán González comes out of the fight alive:

“Cuitado fue el rey de la mala ferida / entendio que del golpe ya perdiera la vida” (319ab).

He therefore is the better man, even though both are great warriors.

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<sup>35</sup>See Harney, “Violence in the Spanish Chivalric Romance.”

<sup>36</sup>For example, Menelaus vs. Paris and Achilles vs. Hector in the *Iliad*; David vs. Goliath in the *Bible*; Cúchulainn, who slays a barrage of different opponents individually in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

As these scenes of single combat show, successful face-to-face combat in open war (and jousting) is essential to the knight's characterization. These battles separate champions from the rest, while also showing their most masculine traits in an exciting way for the reader (or audience).

Medieval Castilian epics suggest, however, that at some point during his lifetime, the warrior will veer away from normal behavior and succumb to battle fury. This abandonment of reason has always been part of warfare. As Sussman explains, "from Homer to the present day the most highly and intense life moment comes when the self as conscious identity and rationality disappears in a zone of pure instinct and the frenzy of killing more akin to the animal rather than the human" (1.7).<sup>37</sup>

Knights evince this berserker-like behavior when they fight, because a fury that boils when honor is challenged hides behind their prowess (Kaeuper 144). For instance, in the *MR*,<sup>38</sup> Rodrigo agrees to a fight with the Count of Navarre after having completed a pilgrimage, and being visited by Saint Lazarus's spirit, who warns him that he will be afflicted by a supernatural fever that will magnify his prowess. It is then that fury manifests itself:

que te dé un resollo en las espaldas,  
que en calenture seas tornado;  
que cuando esta calenture ovieres,  
que te sea membrado,  
cuantas cossas comenzares

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<sup>37</sup>The common term "berserker" is derived from the ancient Norsemen's state of battle rage, which according to Sussman is present in every warrior society in some way (1.7).

<sup>38</sup>I use José María Viña Liste's 2006 edition in the Fundación José Antonio de Castro publication of the poem. Other recent editions include Leonardo Fune's *Mocedades de Rodrigo: estudio y edición de los tres estados del texto* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2004), and two from Matthew Bailey: *Las Mocedades de Rodrigo: The Youthful Deeds of Rodrigo, the Cid* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), which has accompanying English translations and notes to the text, and *Las Mocedades de Rodrigo: estudios críticos, manuscrito y edición* (Exeter: Short Run Press Ltd, 1999), a series of critical essays that accompany a facsimile copy of the poem.

arrematar l'as con tu mano. (592-97)

Despite Saint Lazarus's assurances of divine help, Rodrigo is not completely confident in his ability to defeat the Count, and instead turns to a stimulant—a potion in this case—to provoke the unnatural fury within. However, the “heat” of battle overcomes him before he drinks: “en logar de tomar la sopa tomó la rienda del cavallo” (622). During the fight, both men exchange heavy blows, but the young Rodrigo unhorses and then decapitates the Navarrese count.

Battle fury is characterized by an increase of physical strength, feelings of invulnerability, and the lessening of apprehensions about killing (Sussman 1.7). That is why Rodrigo decapitates his opponent, a fellow knight. Ironically, this move, which appears repulsive, is the result of the emotion that propelled him to victory in the first place. The lesson is that, when properly channeled, fury aids the young warrior in battle.

Fernán González, for example, overcomes his fatigue through fury and defeats the Count of Tolosa. He chides his enemy with an aggressive taunt that is not seen in previous battle scenes, stating “¿Dónde estas, el buen conde?” and “¡Sal lidiar aca al canpo!” (*PFG* 368c-d). These verses foreshadow the hero's coming fury, and exemplify his manliness in comparison to the impotence of his companions. Once the adversaries find each other on the field, the Count is “espantado / ca vio a don Fernando venir mucho irado” (371):

El conde don Fernando, omne sin crueldat,  
olvido con la ira mesura e bondat:  
fue ferir a ese conde d'ira e de voluntat,  
non dudo de ferir lo sin ninguna piedat. (372)

This sudden display of rage occurs at the apex of the battle and is decisive in securing the victory. The poet, in fact, notes that fury overcomes the customary knightly qualities of “mesura e bondat” and enhances the hero's state as a “guerrero natural” (373).

Fernán González's rage, however, is only temporary and does not define his chivalric ethos. Once the victory is secured, the hero tempers his aggression and treats his fallen enemy—a fellow nobleman—with proper respect at his burial:

Ahe el castellano, de coraçon loçano  
oiredes lo que fizo al conde tolosano:  
desguarneçio le el cuerpo el mismo con su mano,  
no l'fizo menos honra que si fuera su ermano. (376)

Sussman explains that “men cannot live in battle rage. It must pass, and they must return to live within a society at peace” (1.7). Fernán González's society expects noblemen to treat members of their rank with proper dignity, for to do otherwise would be shameful, and therefore unmanly. His exemplarity, and that of other epic heroes, is therefore based on both his martial prowess as well as his ‘mesura.’

To check any emotions that could potentially alter focus and thereby compromise a mission, the medieval knight appeals to his “mesura,” (Kaeuper 145). Such is the case in the *CMC*, when the young lieutenant Pero Vermudez gives in to emotion and assaults the Moorish lines, thus thwarting the battle preparations of the Cid and compromising the victory:

Aquel Pero Vermuez non lo pudo endurar,  
la seña tiene en mano, conpeço de espolonar;  
‘¡El Criador vos vala, Çid Campeador leal!  
Vo meter la vuestra seña en aquella mayor az;  
¡los que el debdo avedes veremos commo la acorrades!’  
Dixo el Campeador: ‘¡Non sea, por caridad!’  
Respuso Pero Vermuez? ‘¡Non rastara por al!’  
Espolono el caballo el metiol en el mayor az;  
moros le reçiben por la seña ganar.  
dan le grandes colpes mas nol pueden falssar.  
Dixo el Campeador: ‘¡Valelde, por caridad!’ (704-714)

The Cid must abandon his attack plan and follow his fellow knight into the fray. Even though he wins, it shows that overexcitement causes miscues on the battlefield, and therefore it is imperative that leaders maintain control over their men.

In order for knights to know when is the proper time to demonstrate ‘mesura,’ they must acquire ‘sapientia.’ The topos ‘fortitudo et sapientia’ has been widely defined by critics. According to Ernst Robert Curtius, it was introduced to a European courtly audience through didactic writings (such as Castiglione’s *The Courtier*). For the Renaissance, it meant pairing “arms and letters,” or “the pen and the sword,” a juxtaposition of skills beginning to be celebrated in Spain in the fifteenth century (Curtius 178).<sup>39</sup> Yet, there is a broader definition of “sapientia” present before the fifteenth century: that is, warriors demonstrating intelligence in battle regarding tactics and strategies. This view is shared by others such as Robert Kaske and Norman Schafler, who have examined the topic in *Beowulf* and the *CMC* respectively.

Epic heroes are often touted as astute thinkers who exhibit both qualities, so much so that Schafler has argued that the military episodes in the *CMC* are expressions of “sapientia” rather than “fortitudo”. Through this optic, the Cid’s stealthy approach to the city’s gates at night during the battle of Castejón “is not a very ‘heroic’ way for an army to travel” (45), however, it is practical, because it offers him protection (45).<sup>40</sup> Schafler identifies the Cid’s intelligence in both his immediate and long-term planning skills, and sees it as the foundation of his heroic characterization:

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<sup>39</sup>If the pairing of soldier-scholar began appearing in the fifteenth century in Spain, it certainly exploded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the likes of Garcilaso de la Vega, Miguel de Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and others. Curtius explains that either writing or soldiering were considered acceptable paths to fortune and fame, but that some (Cervantes *Don Quijote*, book I, chapter 37) view a military career as more honorable (178).

<sup>40</sup>As an example of critics questioning this episode, Bandera Gómez asks “¿Qué heroísmo puede existir en sorprender a un enemigo descuidado, ocupado en los mismos menesteres que podían ocupar a cualquier pueblo castellano? Extraña manera de presentar la fiereza guerrera del Campeador” (85).

The Cid's "sapientia" and "fortitudo" complement each other. They are the bases of his heroic idealness, which the poet emphasizes at every opportunity. No other aspects of the Cid's character are so constant, nor so often depicted or emphasized. It is interesting to note that "sapientia" is the one most often characterized. Although in general it can be described as a practical "sapientia," it takes on various specific forms during the course of the action of the poem: caution, shrewdness, self-control, future planning, psychological wisdom, and intuition. The hero's first recourse is always to his wits. (49)

The Cid's "sapientia" is evident during the successful surprise attacks against Castejon and Alcocer (also discussed in chapter 5), which may seem less heroic than a stand up, face-to-face scrum only when we fail to account for his actual tactical situation. Although victory might depend on the Cid's "fortitudo" and make him appear more heroic, the reality of his situation is that he is not prepared to undertake a pitched battle due to the lack of size of his fighting force and its limited resources. He must therefore win smaller battles in order to gain as much booty as possible for his current and future "mesnada," while avoiding great losses. He understands these limitations and takes advantage of his strengths only after careful thought, a sign of wisdom.

Through their portrayal in epic poetry, medieval Castilian knights are celebrated for their hardiness and skill ("fortitudo"), which includes at times episodes of "berserker-like" battle fury. Good knights, however, tempered their behavior with the virtue of "sapientia." Paired together, these virtues represent the epitome of the ideal man.

### CHAPTER 3: THE KNIGHT'S BODY: TRAINING, COMBAT, ARMOR, AND WOUNDS IN THE *PASSO HONROSO* AND *EL VICTORIAL*

A knight's identity depends on a functional, well-conditioned body capable of moving dynamically, riding, hunting, and wielding weapons. Unlike the clergy or the lower classes, which can often work despite impairments, knights need their bodies at near full working order to be able to complete their tasks. The inability to perform any of them places their identity—and thus their masculinity—in jeopardy, because it is through the body that "identities may be claimed or imposed" (Robinson 79).<sup>41</sup>

The authors of *El passo honroso* and *El Victorial* describe the feats of their heroes in greater detail and place their portrayal in realistic contexts. However, they utilize the same fund of rhetorical devices used by writers of fiction to describe the incredible feats of their knights. *El passo honroso* and *El Victorial* were also written at a time when interest in the technical side of the martial arts increased, as instruction manuals that helped men reach their fighting potential were printed and disseminated more frequently. They also reflect new developments in armoring and horsemanship, and depict a knight who remains physically fit while also adjusting to changes in combat and his role in war. This chapter will examine these two works to see how they reflect these changes in a way that diverges from the books of chivalry.

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<sup>41</sup>In *Framing Medieval Bodies*, Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin state that although "the human body was both an outer, misleading shell, and a psychosomatic whole," authority over it was contested between physicians and priests. They add that the "body was a privileged site, vehicle, and metaphor of political struggle" (1-5).

Other fifteenth-century Castilian authors such as Jorge Manrique, Juan de Mena, and Íñigo López de Mendoza write accounts of the activities of knights that rely on motifs that speak to the environment of the battle but not of its technical aspects (Domínguez 7). Their works, like the books of chivalry, are meant to inspire readers by glorifying the heroic atmosphere of battles and the heroes who fight them. In *El laberinto de Fortuna* (1444), for example, Mena describes an assault on Gibraltar in coplas 176-79:

El conde y los suyos tomaron la terra  
que era entre el agua y el bordo del muro,  
lograr con menguante seco y seguro  
mas con la creciente del todo se cierra;  
quien llega más tarde presume que yerra,  
la pavesada ya junta sus alas,  
levantan los troços, crecen las escalas,  
crecen las artes mañosas de guerra.

Los moros, sintiendo crecer los engaños,  
veyéndose todos cercados por artes  
y combatidos por tantas de partes,  
allí socorrieron do ivan más daños,  
y con necesarios dolores extraños  
resiste su saña las fuerças ajenas;  
botan los cantos desde las almenas,  
y lançan los otros que no son tamaños.

Bien como médico mucho famoso  
que tiene el estilo por manos seguido  
en cuerpo de golpes diversos ferido,  
luego socorre a los más peligroso,  
así aquel pueblo maldito, sañoso,  
sintiendo más daños de parte del Conde,  
a grandes cadrillas juntado, responde  
allí do el peligro más era dañoso.

Allí desparavan lombardas y truenos,  
y los trebuchos tiravan ya luego  
piedras y dardos con flechas de fuego,  
con que fazían los nuestros ser menos.  
Algunos de moros tenidos por buenos  
lançan temblando lass us azagayas;  
passavan los lindes, palenques y rayas,

doblando su fuerza con miedos ajenos.

The poetic imagery captures the battle's ambiance by describing the preparations, maneuvers like wall scaling, and the efforts of the Moors, who use different projectiles to fend off the attackers. Frank Domínguez has observed that the description of the battle “ni habla de la importancia simbólica de la batalla o la trata con el horror que se ve en la prosa” (10).

Additionally, it gives no specific clues about how soldiers scale a wall, or protect themselves from arrows and rocks, or counterattack from a lower position. While we might expect poetry to gloss over such facts, it is more surprising that prose fiction also fails to describe fighting in detail.

One reason for these shortcomings is that chivalric texts shorten or describe combat more fancifully. They seldom address the technical side of fighting, or, like Ramon Llull's *Libro de la orden de caballería*, they focus on allegorical meanings. In Llull's example, weapons like the sword, lance, and shield signify respectively the cross of Jesus—“para significar que así como Nuestro Señor Jesucristo venció en la cruz a la muerte en la que habíamos caído por el pecado de nuestro padre Adán, así el caballero debe vencer y destruir a los enemigos de la cruz con la espada” (65); the truth—“pues verdad es cosa recta y no se tuerce,” (66); and his office—“pues así como el escudo lo pone el caballero entre sí y su enemigo, pues así como el caballero está en medio entre el rey y su pueblo” (68).<sup>42</sup> When authors do deal with combat scenes, they ultimately produce a “patchy” and unrealistic picture of the ideal knight. The reader finds provocative displays of dexterity and strength,

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<sup>42</sup>What is impressive about Llull is his extensive knowledge of arms and armor beyond the basics. He discusses the allegorical role of eighteen different pieces of equipment that include the knight's armor, weaponry, and transportation on horseback. Although an isolated example, this would suggest he was addressing readers with a collective understanding of arms and armor. Even so, Llull's work, while potentially inspiring to the knight, does little for the warrior's skills in fighting.

but inadequate and unreliable evidence on how to reconstruct the techniques of personal combat (Anglo 18).

Amadís slashes and strikes his foes fiercely, leaving them with severed limbs and broken bones, all while remaining relatively unharmed by comparison as these three examples illustrate:

Y luego ferir tan bravamente por cima del yelmo...Mas el Donzel del Mar lo alcançó por unas gradas y tomándole por el yelmo le tiró tan rezio, que le hizo caer en tierra estendido, y el yelmo le quedó en las manos, y con la espada le dio tal golpe en el pescueço, que la cabeça fue del cuerpo apartada. (297)

Y [Amadís] perdió la lança, mas puso luego mano a la espada y dexóse ir al otro que fería, y dióle por cima del yelmo, assí que la espada llegó a la cabeça. (309)

[Amadís] fue para el cavallero y heriólo por la orilla del yelmo contra hondón y cortóle dél una pieça, y la espada llegó al pescueço, y cortóle tanto, que la cabeça no se pudo sofrir y quedó colgada sobre los pechos, y luego fue muerto. (417)

These actions, argues Michael Harney, are in tune with “the quintessential component of the superhero’s profile,” which he characterizes as “quicker, and more agile than ordinary men. He or she is possessed of preternatural courage, stamina, resistance to pain, and fighting skills” (“Superhero” 292). Passages like these pervade Montalvo’s text, but do not answer certain questions.<sup>43</sup> How does Amadís execute his moves? How does he move his feet, or

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<sup>43</sup>Another example is the Endriago scene, one of the most vivid combat scenes of the story. Given that the Endriago is not a knight, but rather a monster, the scene does not directly belong in our discussion. The fight between the two—a clear allegorical battle “good” and “evil” playing out between Amadís and the monster—nevertheless is an excellent example of how prose fiction describes a battle: “Como el Endriago le vio tan cerca de sí, pensóle tomar entre sus uñas, y no le aclañó sino en el escudo, y levólo tan rezio, que le fizo dar de manos en tierra. Y en tanto que el diablo lo despedaçó todo con sus muy Fuertes y duras uñas, ovo el Cavallero de la Verde Spada lugar de levantarse; y como sin escudo se vio, y que la spada no cortava ninguna cosa, bien entendió que su fecho no era nada si Dios no le endereçasse a que el otro ojo le pudiesse quebrar, que por otra ninguna parte no aprovechava nada trabajar de lo ferir... Y con la gran fuerça que puso y la qu’el Endriago traía, el spada caló, que le llegó a los sesos. Mas el Endriago, como le vido tan cerca, abraçóse con él, y con lass us muy Fuertes y agudas uñas rompióle todas las armas de las spaldas, y la carne y los huessos fasta las entrañas... [el Endriago] no se pudiendo ya tener, abrió los brazos y cayó a la una parte como muerto sin ningún sentido. El cavallero, como assí lo vio, tiró por la spada y metiógela por la boca quanto más pudo tantas vezes, que lo acabó de matar” (1143-44). The description of the fight alternates between the Endriago and Amadís, as each takes advantage over the other. When Amadís is near the monster, the wounded Endriago tries to grab him.

hold his sword? Also, we do not know what his thoughts are, and can only interpret them through his actions.

Even though authors of fiction describe their fighting scenes with hints of accuracy, they ignore the complexity of the fifteenth-century sword fight and favored instead broad strokes, or “golpes fuertes,” that hacked off body parts and seemingly left enemy combatants maimed and dead. These scenes speak nothing of the intense training that a knight must have undergone in order to learn technique and master the kinetics of fighting.<sup>44</sup> In the real world, learning these skills would translate into achieved prowess in battle. It appears that Amadís is merely swinging his sword as hard as possible, targeting the head and neck areas of his opponents. This type of attack, explains Robert Jones, was a good way to get a warrior killed: “fighting with a medieval sword, whether on foot or horseback, was like a modern fencing bout; it was about feints and parries, combinations of cuts and thrusts” (*Knight* 73).

### **Training and Foot Combat<sup>45</sup>**

The limitations of the human body can be easily ignored in works that paint an exaggerated portrayal of male physicality. As is almost always the case, the books of chivalry narrate the deeds of heroic warrior-protagonists through a myriad of combat scenes that pit the knight against a singular opponent, making these types of combats fundamental to the

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This move is countered by Amadís, who holds out until the beast releases him, and then strikes the Endriago through mouth while he is vulnerable.

<sup>44</sup>For a discussion on how knights trained, see Robert Jones, *Knight: The Warrior and World of Chivalry*.

<sup>45</sup>I follow Fallow’s use of the term “foot combat” to mean a fight between two opponents that occurs on the ground instead of in the mount. These types of combats take place in real battles and chivalric contests when knights fall from their horses; sometimes the knights may begin fighting on the ground, too. The term is inclusive and comprises wrestling, sword fighting, and other hand-to-hand combats.

narrative (Cuesta Torre, “Combate Singular” 519). It would have been impractical for them to describe every hold, strike, and swing of the sword, especially in a text replete with fighting scenes. They would have distracted the reader from understanding the larger chivalric ideals in play, but left audiences without a sense of the feasible drills and movements for proper one-against-one fighting. One way to expand human capabilities is through the training that was going on at the time.

Knights underwent a long and grueling course of training that began as young as ten or twelve years old, when the noble boy would leave his home and enter the household of another knight as his squire (Jones, *Knight* 81; Karras 29). Horsemanship would be one of the first things the knight learned, since this is what separated him from everyone else. He had to learn to mount and dismount quickly while carrying a weapon and encased in armor, as well as maneuvering thorough obstacles and staying in the saddle (Jones, *Knight* 68-69). In order to learn to fight, squires practiced wresting, which built the foundation for handling weapons by increasing strength and balance, and developing the basics for footwork and judging distance and timing (Jones, *Knight* 84).<sup>46</sup> When it was time to practice with a weapon like the sword or mace, trainees used “pells,” or man-high stakes set in the ground, in order to learn distance and accuracy when striking (Jones, *Knight* 84). An ancient way of training, Vegetius encourages the use of these “pells” or “estacadas” in the *Epitoma rei militaris*:

E el mançebo usávase con aquel escudo de zarzo e con aquella porra contra aquella estaca como si fuese contra su adversario con escudo e con cuchillo lançándose golpes; e a las vezes fería la Estacada como si le diese por la cabeça o por la cara, a las vezes la amenzava como por los costados, a las vezes la fería como si cortase los inojos e las piernas, a las vezes fuía e escuchava e le açechava, como si toviese su adversario presente, e así provava e tentava aquella estaca con toda fuerça e con todo movimiento del cuerpo e con toda arte de batalla. En el qual pensamiento se guardava

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<sup>46</sup>This would eventually be written down by Castiglione, who in his *Il Cortegiano* deems it “very important to know how to wrestle, for it is a great help in the use of all kinds of weapons on foot” (25).

esta cabtela: que ansí se levantava el mançebo a ferir que non fincava parte alguna porque a él pudiese otro dar ferida nin llaga (Book I, Chapter 13).

As a training tool, pells are used to practice attacks against the legs—a weak point in battle—because a knight cannot fight properly if he cannot stand or maintain proper body posture while striking.

We can perceive the influence of this type of training in the most unexpected places, for example, the *Arcipreste de Talavera* or *Corbacho*, a highly misogynistic didactic work by Alfonso Martínez de Toledo. The *Corbacho* is meant to instruct young courtiers on the dangers of sexual misconduct (Naylor 10), but one of its sections—the foot combat between Fortuna and Pobreza—suggests that the author has a more comprehensive knowledge of hand-to-hand fighting.

While it is difficult to prove this knowledge, it is nevertheless surprising how much detail this portion of the *Arcipreste de Talavera* contains. It begins with Fortuna posturing and flailing her body in an attempt to intimidate Pobreza before any real fighting begins:<sup>47</sup>

Descendió la Fortuna del cauallo muy soberuiamente, e soltóle las rriendas por tierra, e vínose fazia la Pobreza a grandes pasos contados, a manera de gigante, toda asy como venía loçana con sus arreos, faziendo grandes continentes a manera de luchador; e apretóse mucho el cuerpo, viniendo de puntillas en tierra, meneando los onbros, estirándose como gato, bramando como león, los ojos encarniçados, los dientes apretando, pensando sumir la Pobreza luego que della trauase. (293)

Fortuna's behavior suggests she would prefer to avoid a fight, even though she is physically superior and boastfully confident. Pobreza, however, notes that “non vale nada la braueza de muestra” and that “non es para nada el dicho syn el fecho” (293).

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<sup>47</sup>Dave Grossman explains that posturing is an instinctive behavior displayed with frequency during an interspecies conflict in which “both creatures instinctively go through a series of posturing actions that, while intimidating, are almost always harmless. These actions are designed to convince an opponent, through both sight and sound, that the posturer is a dangerous and frightening adversary” (6).

When the posturing fails, the two begin circling each other in order to set up their first moves:

Enpero, las dos, Fortuna y Pobreza, juntáronse ya en uno e andouieron un rrato en torno, buscando presas la una contra la otra. La Pobreza tomó a la Fortuna, la una mano a los pechos e la otra a la çintura. La Fortuna echo mano a la Pobreza, la una mano al cuello, la otra al braço derecho, e començáronse a tentar de fuerça” (293-94).

These moves closely mirror the holds examined in Fiore de’ Liberi’s *Flos duellatorum*.<sup>48</sup>

Folios 8v, 9, 9v, and 10 show sketches of men engaging in this style of grappling with hands on the waist, neck, chest, arms and back in search of an advantageous position. Fortuna pushes Pobreza by the arm and tries to trip her to no avail. The neck area attacked by Fortuna is one of the body’s most vulnerable and includes the sternocleido-mastoid muscle and the carotid artery (Anglo 178). Pobreza counters by bracing herself on Fortuna’s hip and upper-body, thereby nearing the distance between the two, which in turn limits the force Fortuna is able to apply on her. Pobreza’s defensive stance enables her to leverage a weakness to her advantage in order to counter Fortuna’s greater strength. It serves as an example of how technique can help someone to deal with a stronger opponent.

Fortuna, persistent in her attack, attempts a variety of moves to off-balance Pobreza, who holds steady:

E como la Fortuna estaua gruesa e muy ponderosa, paresçia al comienço como que sobraua a la Pobreza de grand fuerça...E començola de estremeçer, que asy sonauan los huesos como nuezes en costal, e armóle la mediana, cuydándola derribar. Desdeque vido que non le valía nada aquella manera, cometióle de una encontrada por ver sy la lleuaría; vido que no le enpeçió con las dos que le avía parado, púsole un traspie pensándola derrocar. Desdeque vido que non podía por aquellas maneras su voluntad conplir, tentóla de sacaliña por ver sy la vençería, e non la pudo sobrar. Dixo: “Le yo

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<sup>48</sup>Fiore de’ Liberi was an Italian knight and nobleman active during the latter part of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. His fighting treatise, known as the *Flos duellatorum*, the *Flos Duellatorum in Armis*, and the *Fior di Battaglia*, is described by John Clements as “unarguably the most important Italian fighting treatise” that “forms a cornerstone of historical fencing studies” (“Fiore” 117). The *Fior di Battaglia* is considered to be the most definitive version, and is housed in the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA (accession number 83.MR.183; call number MS Ludwig XV 13). For a detailed study on Fiore and his treatise, see Clements, “Fiore dei Liberi”.

dare a esta villana dos tornos e le fare desmemoriar.” Vido que a mal nin a byen non la podía de tierra arrancar, tomó tanta malenconía que cuydaua rrebeutar; dixo: “Aquesta villana, de torno de braços, con un gayón, de pura fuerça, la avré de derrocar.” Cometióle, mas non pudo algo en ella mellar. Prouóla con un desuío sy pudiera con ella maestramente en teirra dar; quisiera a braço partido algund tanto de la tentar con algund arte de pies, por se poder della honrrar; pero ya a mal nin a byen non la podía sobrar, nin lo peor que era, de sy desuiar. (294)

Fortuna embodies a style of fighting that uses “every deceit, falsity and cruelty that can be committed” (Anglo 178).<sup>49</sup> She uses the “sacaliña” to deceive her opponent.<sup>50</sup> The term is referenced in Pietro Monte’s *Libro del exercicio de las armas* (c. 1509), an abbreviated Castilian version of his *Exercitiorum Atque Artis Militaris Collectanea* (1509) that underscores the importance of proper footwork, coordinated feints, and attacks at the beginning of the manuscript:

En principio d[e] la lucha dar corto de pasos que beniendo el otro adelante algun poco atrás y si él acomete traspie torno lo sacalina al pie derecho tornado atras sobre el otro es muestra que el lado delante que viene a la parte si muestra fuir a la derecha e se puede acometer en diversas guisas por facer engaño. (1v)

One of the main points of Monte’s *Libro* is to move in cadence with one’s opponent, always adjusting those movements to keep him (or her) off balance. He states, “siempre es util acometer a una parte y tirar a la otra” and “siempre que el otro acometese deue mover

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<sup>49</sup>Fiore advocates that fighters be able to gauge their opponent’s power, skill, and age while striving to attain strength, speed, knowledge of advantageous tricks such as joint locks and throws (Anglo 178).

<sup>50</sup>The exact meaning behind the term “sacaliña” is difficult to determine. According to Antonio de Nebrija’s *Vocabulario español-latino* (1495), the word is a synonym for “garrocha,” or a long staff used to direct cattle from horseback, sometimes equipped with a harpoon-tip. This meaning would suggest the presence of a weapon in the scene. This definition, however, is unsatisfactory given the context. Marcella Ciceri provides a more appropriate definition in her notes to her edition of the *Arcipreste*: “movimiento de la lucha, finta o amago” (327, note 39). The RAE dictionary defines “finta” as “amago de golpe para tocar con otro. Se hace para engañar al contrario, que acude a parar el primer golpe” (web version). This definition, therefore, makes more sense given the back-and-forth nature of the fight, and the fact that Fortuna’s attempt with the “sacaliña” is unsuccessful but mentions no type of blow delivered. The English translation by Eric Naylor and Jerry Rank, too, finds this definition of the “sacaliña” acceptable: “When she saw that she couldn’t follow through with her intentions by using those tricks, she tried to make a feint to see if she could vanquish her, but she couldn’t overcome her” (211).

qualquier cosa...la mano asaz al contrario de la suya” (3v-4r). An unskilled fighter or one unaccustomed to such a move would be easy prey, but Pobreza manages to stay her ground.

In a way, Pobreza models Monte’s instructions by allowing Fortuna to become overworked to the point of exhaustion. Martínez de Toledo states

Enpero, la Pobreza emaginó en sy: “Esta villana está gruesa como toro. Sy la yo dexo porfiar, guardándome de sus maneras, la fare fuertemente sudar; pero quiero estar agora queda. Ella sus fuerças prueue en mí, e cometa lo que quisyere, fuerça e maneras; que jamás non la armaré fasta que la vea cansada con su orgullo, fuerça, e locura, e entonçe tomarla he a tienpo, que non podrá rresollar; averá perdido fuerça...”(294-95).

When this happens, Pobreza strikes:

E quando la Pobreza vido que era ya tienpo de tomar vengança de la Fortuna, la qual no se podía ya mouer, nin menear, nin rresollar, tanto estaua ya cansada de la grand fuerça que con la Pobreza prouado auía, entonçe la Pobreza entró en ella e armólede rrezio e parole l’ancha, e alçóle las piernas en el ayre, la cabeça escontra la tierra, e dexóla venir, e dio con ella una tan grand cayda, que la cuydó çiertamente rrebenar. (295)

Ott the Jew, a fifteenth century martial master from Austria, adds that when a fight involves unmatched opponents (such as Pobreza and Fortuna), the weaker should allow the stronger to make the first move. Then, the weaker should attack the legs of the stronger and throw him (or her) off balance (Anglo 182). This is precisely what Pobreza does when she grabs Fortuna by the legs and turns her upside down, dropping her on the head. Her throw confuses Fortuna, and provides the opening needed to launch the final attack that ends the match:

E como la cuytada dio de espaldas, alcançó a dar con la cabeça en tierra, e dio tan fuerte cabeçada que vesiblemente le pareció que le quebrantara la cabeça e le saltara fuego de los ojos, en tanto que del todo la vista perdió, e parecióle el mundo todo ser estrellado...E estando asy la Fortuna en tierra como muerta, syn sentido alguno, entanto que todo el estómago se le rreboluío e decaesçió por tornar lo que en él tenía, la Pobreza luego saltóle ençima e púsole el un pie en la garganta...E dáuale con el pie

en la garganta, tanto que la lengua le fazía un palmo sacar, e con el otro pie en el cuerpo le dio de coçes que la quería rrebentar... (295-96)<sup>51</sup>

Even though Monte's instructions appear in Castilian some seventy years after the Arcipreste de Talavera's publication, the examples drawn from Ott the Jew and Fiore de' Liberi make it clear that they are part of a number of works written over time throughout Europe.

Works like *Arcipreste de Talavera* reflect the spread of one variety of these training manuals, but there were others. Even though Monte's instructions appear in Castilian some seventy years after the Arcipreste de Talavera's publication, the examples drawn from Ott the Jew and Fiore de' Liberi refer to them as part of the art of fighting illustrated by a number of works throughout Europe.

Masters of arms compiled and formulated combat treatises that aimed to enhance the body, particularly when encased in armor and wielding a weapon. These texts used their own unique vocabulary and idiolect, and they have as their goal to teach useful skills to be used on the battlefield, in judicial or private duels, in street fighting, and in self-defense (Clements, "The Literary Tradition" 2). But what is more important, as Pietro Monte also explains in the *Collectanea*, these kinetic skills are not acquired merely by reading. Students of the martial arts must not only see practical illustrations, but they must practice the moves repeatedly themselves; learning is expedited by someone who can serve as coach to teach them the finer points of fighting and correct their mistakes (Anglo 2).

This "boom" in the production of training manuals for an audience of knights-in-training happened during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but particularly between 1434 and 1458, when a "newly perceived need" made possible fresh attempts to describe weapons and armor (Sydney Anglo 206). Their appearance coincided with numerous military and

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<sup>51</sup>Fortuna's symptoms are clearly those of a concussion. See <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/concussion/basics/symptoms/con-20019272>.

chivalric texts like the *Passo honroso*, *El Victorial*, and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*. It is unclear whether Suero de Quiñones, Pero Niño, or Ponce de León read or used these manuals, but it would not be wrong to assume, given their education, that they had access to European technical expertise and writings on the martial arts, and that they underwent rigid training under the watchful eyes of martial arts masters.

### **Sword Combat on Foot**

Chivalric romances create imaginative settings where knights such as Amadís perpetually travel to exotic lands on their horses looking for adventures fighting miscreants and imaginary beasts like dragons and giants (Riquer, “Caballeros andantes” 11). As Edwin Williamson explains, the knight-errant’s identity is created through these adventures: “Las aventuras definen a los personajes, ordenándolos en las categorías morales básicas de bueno y malo, valeroso y cobarde, honrado e innoble” (55-56). Their battles are therefore the cornerstone of manly characterization in early modern chivalric texts.

Considering the sheer amount of detailed knight-against-knight (or against monster) combats in *Amadís de Gaula*, one must assume that these scenes were very popular with its readers. This is likely due to the fact that in the fifteenth-century knights began to assume roles more akin to foot soldiers rather than sole combatants, and therefore had fewer opportunities to engage in single combat, much less with a supernatural opponent. Stressing single combat scenes would certainly seem entertaining to these noblemen, since this type of fighting generally produced a clear victor, making it paramount to manly characterization.

In *Amadís de Gaula*, for example, the young Amadís faces a worthy adversary in King Abiés. Their fight begins on horseback, and their first strokes destroy their armor; they then have recourse to their lances, but end up on the ground battling with their swords:

se fueron acometer sin ninguna detenencia a gran corer de los cavallos; como aquéllos que eran de gran fuerça y coraçón, a las primeras heridas fueron todas sus armas falsadas, y quebrando las lanças juntáronse uno con otro assí los cavallos como ellos tan bravamente, que cada uno cayó a su parte [...] mas como ambos fuessen muy ligeros y bivos de coraçón, levantáronse presto, y quitaron de sí los pedaços de las lanças, y echando mano a las espadas, se acometieron tan bravamente, que los que alderredor estaban havían espanto de los ver. (319)

On foot, Abiés appears more physically imposing—fighting him is like fighting a giant: “mas el rey Abiés era tan grande que que nunca hallo cavallero que él mayor no fuesse un palmo, y sus miembros no parecían sino de un gigante” (319).<sup>52</sup> Montalvo describes the battle melodramatically and in a way characteristic of these types of scenes:<sup>53</sup>

La batalla era entre ellos tan cruel y con tanta priessa, sin se dexar holgar, y los golpes tan grandes, que no parecían sino de veinte cavalleros. Ellos cortavan los escudos, haziendo caer en el campo grandes rachas, y abollavan los yelmos y desguarnecían los arneses. Assí que bien hazía el uno al otro su fuerça y ardimiento conoscer. Y la su gran fuerça y bondad de las espadas hizieron sus armas tales que eran de poco valor, de manera que lo más cortavan en sus carnes, que en los escudos no quedava con que cubrir ni ampararse pudiessen, y salía dellos tanta sangre, que sostenerse era maravilla, mas tan grande era el ardimiento que sonsigo traían, que cuasi dello no se sentían. (319-20)

Despite the incredible blows each delivers, the destruction of their armor, and the copious amounts of blood said to be flowing from their wounds, what carries the men on is their courage. Neither shows signs of fatigue or cowardice until midday, underneath the hot sun, at which time Abiés suggests the two pause to straighten their helmets and rest: “Estad y enderecemos nuestros yelmos, y si quisieredes que algo folguemos, nuestra batalla no

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<sup>52</sup>Fighting a giant is a standard motif in chivalric literature. See Chapter 2 for examples.

<sup>53</sup>Cuesta Torre (“Combate singular”) identifies the French Arthurian influence in these scenes, which begin with a challenge by one knight to another, words between the two, the preparations for an initial joust, the joust followed up with a sword fight.

perderá tiempo” (320). Amadís, who argues that Abiés would not grant the same repose to a lesser enemy, denies the request, because he wants him to feel “lo que a ellos sentir hazías aparéjate, que no holgarás a mi grado” (320).

Even though Abiés calls for a break, he is still considered to be a fierce fighter:

Y cometiéronse muy más sañudos que ante, y tan bravo se herían como si estonces començaran la batalla y aquel día no ovieran dado golpe. El rey Abiés, como muy diestro fuesse por el gran uso de las armas, combatíase muy cuerdamente, guardándose de los golpes y hiriendo donde más podía dañar. (320-21).

He fights prudently as if trained from manuals or masters like those previously mentioned, using his defenses effectively and looking for openings. An older fighter, the quote suggests he has undergone more training for these foot combats.

Amadís, on the other hand, is celebrated not for any particular knowledge of arms, but instead for his instincts and the strength of his blows that conquer Abiés’s learned skills:

Las maravillas que el Donzel hazía en andar ligero y acometedor y en dar muy duros golpes le puso en desconcierto todo su saber, y a mal de su grado no le pudiendo ya a sufrir perdía el campo, y el Donzel del Mar le acabó de deshazer en el braço todo el escudo, que nada dél le quedó, y cortávale la carne por muchas partes, assí que la sangre le salía mucha y ya no podía herir, que la spada se le rebolvía en la mano. (321)

Amadís is simply stronger and quicker than his older adversary, and his youth makes him superior. The traits that lead the fictional Amadís to victory and their universality make the character more inspiring and easily internalized than reading the technical treatises. Audiences wanted combat scenes that celebrated feats of strength and agility, which is why chronicles and biographies also include narrations of combats that are largely folkloric in nature.

In *El Victorial*, for example, Pero Niño’s first foot combat against a giant opponent is similar to the scene from *Amadís de Gaula* we have just cited, and it reveals three of the

motifs identified earlier in Chapter 1: 1) the engagement of a superior opponent, 2) the search for each other on the battlefield, and 3) the heavy blows of the fighters. The scene takes place during a larger battle between Portuguese and Castilian forces at Pontevedra. At the time, Pero Niño is still young (“aunque hera moço”) and not fully-grown. His fight against the esteemed Portuguese soldier Gómez de Domalo, therefore, significantly contributes to his perceived manliness.

The battle is characterized as a “rezia [e muy peligrosa] escaramuça” in which all types of soldiers including “hombres de armas, e ballesteros, e e escudados” turn out to fight in front of the ladies of Pontevedra, who come observe the fight: “e muy buen lugar para los que quisiesen fazer en armas por amor de sus amigas, ca todas las dueñas e doncellas de Pontevedra heran a mirar por el adarve de la villa” (251). Men could show themselves to be manly by attracting and enticing a potential lover through martial prowess. Hence, the female presence entices the knights to fight with vigor in hopes of attracting the attention of a maiden. Consequently, the author describes Pero Niño’s extraordinary strength in moving through the chaotic battle on foot once his horse is wounded:

E luego en començando la pelea, firieron el cavallo a Pero Niño; e púsose a pie, e tómo la delantera de la gente, dando e firiendo de tan fuertes golpes del espada, que el que ante él se parava bien le fazía entender que no lo avía con moço, mas con hombre fuerte e acabado. Alli fazía golpes muy señalados, en que llevaba e cortava grandes pedaços de escudos, e a otros dava muy fuertes espadas en las cabeças, e a otros que venían armados, a unos derrocava e a otros fazía fincar las manos en tierra, e les fazía, mal su grado, dexar la calle e retraer atrás.

Although the protagonist fights multiple opponents in *mêlée* fashion, the author closely follows Pero Niño while his adversaries remain anonymous “otros” that are victims of his blows as he cuts them down. The narrative structure becomes more focused, however, when he confronts Domalo, a Portuguese champion.

Díez de Games focuses his description in a way that makes the reader see the pair isolated from the surrounding battle. Amidst the chaos, Pero Niño and Domalo seek out one-another: “Éste afincava muy fuertemente a Pero Niño, e le avía dado muy fuertes golpes. E Pero Niño avía muy grand cobdiçia de llegar a él a lo ferir...” (252). There, he fulfills one of the conventions of the books of chivalry in which the hero must face a superior opponent, usually a giant; or, as Díez de Games describes, a “peón muy famoso” and “honbre muy rezio.”<sup>54</sup> The author then goes on to characterize the two warriors as comparable combatants while fighting:

El Gómez se escudava de un escudo que traía muy de bantaja, en manera que no le podía ferir. E una vez se juntó tanto con él Pero Niño, e él con él, que se vinieron a dar tan fuertes golpes de las espadas por ençima de las cabeças, a que dixo Pero Niño que de aquel golpe le fizo saltar las çentellas de los ojos. E Pero Niño dio al Gómez tal golpe por ençima del escudo, que le fendió bien un palmo en la cabeça fasta los ojos. E allí quedó Gómez Domalo. (252)

The two trade the customary “fuertes golpes” equally, with neither harming the other until Pero Niño lands a killing blow. Once he has defeated Domalo, he gains more prestige as a fighter and as a man, especially in the presence of many onlookers.

Like *El Victorial*, in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* there are hardly any sophisticated examples of single combat, the lack of examples is indicative of the infrequency of this type of fighting in real war, and the preference for a more literary type of encounter. The majority of the operations in which Ponce de León participates, for example, are battles against the Moors for territory rather than fanciful opponents or chivalric sport. Nevertheless, the text does present sparse details of a foot combat that reveals the author’s familiarity with, and understanding of, the motifs used to construct these scenes.

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<sup>54</sup>The giant, explains Beltrán Llavador, is often a foreigner and described as absurdly large, as in the case of the knight Kirieleison de Muntalbà in *Tirant lo Blanc*. Of course, it is Cervantes’s *Don Quijote* that ultimately parodies this when the title character attacks helpless windmills.

Of the two scenes, one is a joust while the other is a foot combat. The foot combat takes place during the sack of the Málaga village El Burgo (chapter 26), where “el marqués arremetió con los moros. E la batalla fue tan crudamente ferida que por más de dos horas nunca se conoció quién avría el vencimiento” (235). Here the author sets up the foot combat by first appealing to the dire circumstances of the battle, noting that it is impossible to predict a victor at this point. Then, he introduces Ponce de León: “Y el marqués adereçó a vn moro, valiente cauallero, que le pareçió segund su arreo ser el más principal y cabeçera de todos, y diole vn gran golpe de encuentro por la escotadura del sobaco yzquierdo, que cayó muerto en el suelo” (235-36).

The description contains the motifs of the “golpe fuerte” as well as the best knights seeking each other out in battle. In this example, killing the opponent’s top soldier ultimately ends the conflict: “E commo los moros vieron aquel cauallero muerto, y de tres banderas que trayan no vieron ninguna, enflaqueçieron e començaron a fuyr, cada vno por donde mejor podía” (236). Carriazo Rubio notes regarding the author of the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*, “Ya hemos comprobado anteriormente el gusto del cronista del marqués por los combates singulares” (236, fn. 367). “Los combates singulares se reiteran en los libros de caballerías,” argues Cuesta Torre, and “el lector encuentra combates singulares ocasionados por varios motivos” (“Combate singular” 527).<sup>55</sup> Whatever the scenario, the hero’s body appears more superhuman in its capabilities, taking on stronger and more skilled opponents but always defeating them. Jousting—the nobility’s pastime—was different.

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<sup>55</sup>These motivations are the random meetings between knights not known to each other who want to prove their martial skills, two rivals or enemies who meet, a fight over a possession or disagreement, a pas d’ armes, etc. (527).

## Jousting

Jousting was one of the ways a knight could become famous. His body and what he could do with it is in plain sight of others, who in turn honor and admire him. However, even though these encounters continued to foster the old chivalric ideals, the skills required no longer have much of a place on contemporary battlefields (Hale 37; Saunders, “Medieval Warfare” 84). This fact, though, did not stop jousting or make jousts a less important spectator sport for noblemen, as the tournament at Binche in 1549 evidences.<sup>56</sup> These types of jousts are prearranged and heavily regulated for safety; thus, they are not the same as jousts between two knights who square off in pitched battle.

Most single combat scenes in *Amadís de Gaula* begin with two men jousting against each other on horseback and end with them fighting on the ground. Amadís’s battle with Dardán is a good illustration of this formula:

Y Dardán y Amadís movieron contra sí de lueñe, y los cavalleros eran corredores y ligeros, y ellos de gran fuerça, que se herieron con sus lanças tan bravamente, que sus armas todas falsaron, mas ninguno no fue llagado, y las lanças fueron quebradas y ellos se juntaron de los cuerpos de los cavallos, y con los scudos tan bravamente que maravilla era; y Dardán fue en tierra de aquella primera justa, mas de tanto le vino bien, que llevó las riendas en la mano, y Amadís passó por él y Dardán se levantó aína y cavalgó como aquel que era muy ligero, y echó mano a su espada muy bravamente. Cuando Amadís tornó hazia él su cavallo, violo estar de manera de lo acometer, y echó mano a la espada, y fuéronse ambos acometer tan bravamente, que todos se espantavan en ver tal batalla; y las gentes de la villa estaban por las torres y por el muro y por los lugares donde los mejor podían ver combatir, y las casas de la Reina eran sobre el muro y havia aí muchas finiestras donde estaban muchas dueñas y donzellas, y vían la batalla de los cavalleros que les parecía espantoas de ver, que ellos se hirían por cima de los yelmos, que eran de fino azero, de manera que a todos parecía que les ardían las cabeças, según el gran huego que dellos salía, y de los arneses y otras armas hazían caer en tierra muchas pieças y mallas y muchas rajas de los escudos. Assí que su batalla era tan cruda, que muy gran espanto tomavan los que la vían; mas ellos no quedavan de se ferir por todas partes, y cada uno mostrava al otro su fuerça y ardimiento. (370-71)

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<sup>56</sup>See Alberto del Río Nogueras.

Both are agile and comparable opponents, which heightens the anticipation of the joust and makes for an interesting narrative. They both display their arms before going at the other. This gives the battle an aesthetic quality beyond the depiction of the chaos. It is a spectacle watched by ladies and others who gather along the castle walls to witness the combat, hoping to see something they have not seen before. Amadís and Dardán do not disappoint, and fight so hard that the onlookers are frightened for them.

Similar characteristics from foot combats stand out in the scene: the ferocity of the fighters and their strength and heavy blows, as well as how their strikes create sparks off of their helmets when they use swords. These descriptions were meant to entice the reader's emotions rather than provide a particularly detailed recap of the details of each pass.

Fallows points out that the joust eclipsed the *mêlée* tournament in popularity for several reasons. First, organizing and hosting a *mêlée* tournament was no small feat, and "the logistical difficulties of staging and publicizing large-scale events within the amorphous and permeable political frontiers of the Christian kingdoms at the time of the Reconquest" prohibited the proliferation of these spectacles (*Jousting* 7). Also, men had ample opportunities to fight in real battles through the Reconquest, making the *mêlée* tournament less appealing.

Jousting, as it were, provided the opportunity for close observation of individual performance in one-on-one situations that were highly controlled (Fallows, *Jousting* 7-8). "From both a physical and a symbolic point of view," Fallows argues, "jousts offered tangible evidence of a man's prowess, of the meaningful role that he played in the masculine active life" (8).

As jousting was such an important gauge of nobility, it is not surprising that the three texts most closely studied in this dissertation include jousting scenes.<sup>57</sup> What is interesting, though, is that, unlike the fanciful formulaic portrayals of foot combats shared by both chivalric romances and chronicles—which are meant to titillate readers the way an action or escapist genre might (Harney, “Violence” 332-33)—jousting scenes in *El passo honroso* and *El Victorial* seek to interest a readership that is knowledgeable of jousting.

An important training ground for inexperienced knights, as well as a testing ground for champions, jousting was always a full-contact sport that “involved a certain amount of risk;” yet, it “was never simply a matter of brute force or aimless thrill-seeking. Form always complemented function ... because ... the joust was as much a question of elegance, beauty and neatness as it was a question of splintering lances and drawing blood” (Fallows, *Jousting* 168-9). For these reasons, jousting competitions like those described in *El passo honroso* and

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<sup>57</sup> There is only one single combat jousting scene from the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*, but it is fictitious and follows a similar formula as those in the *Amadís*. In Ponce de León's first battle against the Moors in Madroño (chapter 3), he and his men “pasaron de la otra parte firiendo, derribando e matando muchos dellos. E así juntos, dieron otra vuelta sobre los moros e fizieron en ellos grand destrucción” (164). However, he is unhorsed and finds himself face to face with “vn valiente moro” (165). The autor then focuses on the single combat: “E pasóle el moro con su lança el braço derecho, y el marqués encontró al moro por la cara, que le pasó de la otra parte, e dio con él en tierra e lo mató” (165). We see that the Moor strikes Ponce de León's right arm strong enough to severely wound him (“la ferida del marqués fue muy graue,” 165). Ponce de León's counterattack, however, strikes a deadly blow to the Moor's face, which interrupts the generalized narration of the battle presented to this point. This description, while brief, is significant, because it is the author's invention. As previously explained in the case of Pero Niño, the first single combat—whether fanciful or true—represents an important component of a young knight's initiation into the chivalric world. It is his first opportunity to display his valor against another knight who, in this case, is described as “valiente” and therefore a worthy opponent. Despite its brevity, the author intends for the scene to speak to his hero's prowess as an individual fighter, and through this detail his text conforms to the conventions that appear in other chivalric literature. The scene contributes to Ponce de León's characterization as an exemplary knight. The fact that other accounts of this battle corroborate the Marqués's arm injury, yet do not mention he fought with a distinguished Moorish soldier, casts doubt on the authenticity of the single combat. Carriazo Rubio's thorough scholarship lists these others sources as Andrés Bernáldez's *Memorias del reinado de los Reys Católicos*; Diego de Valera's *Memorial de diversas hazañas*; Galíndez de Carvajal's “Anales breves de los Reyes Católicos,” in *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla*; and, finally, Ponce de León himself would go on to comment in a letter to his nephew some twenty years later in 1483 that he was wounded during this battle. See his edition, page 165, note 135.

*El Victorial* were heavily regulated,<sup>58</sup> and thus bore little resemblance to real combat (Vale, *War and Chivalry* 64).

Nowhere was control more enforced than in sanctioned jousts like the one described in *El passo honroso*. As the text shows, the men taking part in these chivalric competitions were subject to strict rules meant to eliminate any strategic advantage on either part, as well as any hostile behaviors unbefitting this type of noble enterprise. This obsession with order is perhaps best illustrated when, during one of the opening passes, a servant of Lope de Stúñiga encourages his master to attack with more gusto, yelling “¡Señor, a él!” (164). Nevertheless, unlike *mêlées* where animated spectators were encouraged to participate, jousting restricted what onlookers could do out of respect for the presence of nobles or monarchs, as well as the fact that judges were required to evaluate competitors and thus needed a distraction-free environment (Fallows *Jousting* 182). While this type of outward enthusiasm might be acceptable in a chivalric romance, Stúñiga’s servant is sternly reprimanded and ordered to have his tongue cut out (the sentence is later reduced to thirty body-blows with a stick), a punishment indicative of the seriousness with which the judges sought to maintain a controlled environment.

This control, of course, extended to the participants. As Rodríguez de Lena outlines, the jousts at Orbigo consist of knights who are capable of fighting “trezientas lanças rompidas por el asta con fierros fuertes, en arneses de guerra, sin escudo nin tarja, nin más de una dobladura sobre cada pieza.” Those who are part of his select group will compete “sin ninguna ventaja ni mejoría de mí nin de los cavalleros que allí conmigo serán” (91). The measures safeguard the equality of combatants extend all the way to the competitor’s lances,

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<sup>58</sup>It is important to distinguish between jousts and *mêlées*, as they are often mistaken to be one and the same. Jousting usually refers to two men; a tournament is more of a *mêlée*.

which are provided to them in order to ensure they are all of the same length and quality (Fallows, *Jousting* 200).<sup>59</sup>

The judges' insistence on having no unfair advantages in either arms or mount is emphasized throughout the first chapter of *El passo honroso*. For example, a comprehensive inspection of Suero's and the German knight miçer Arnaldo de la Floresta Bermeja's weapons before they compete against one-another assures the audience of a fair fight:

fuesen luego a la tienda do el alemán estava e armarse avia, e que viesen las armas por él escogidas e tomadas, en todas la quales en el paso tenía, en tal manera e vía que firme e verdadera igualdad sobrellas e ambos fuesen guardada, sin que ventaja a alguno dellos obiesen ... rogando que igualdad verdaderamente fuse guardada (144).

Since *El passo honroso* is essentially a blow-by-blow record of the jousts that take place in Orbigo during the summer of 1434, Rodríguez de Lena carefully chronicles its many passes as they happen using various rhetorical methods to describe each "carrera."<sup>60</sup> He focuses on the exact point of the lance's impact and consequent effect, for example, a helmet sent flying during the opening jousting sequence between Suero de Quiñones and Arnaldo:

De la primera carrera luego encontró el discreto cavallero, capitán Suero de Quiñones, al honrrado caballero alemán en la arandela, e salió della, e tocóle en el guardabraço derecho e desguarneçióselo, e rompió su lança en él por medio, e el alemán entró a Suero de Quiñones en el guardabraço ezquiero, e desguarneçióselo e levóle un pedazo del borde sin romper lança; e tomó el alemán un comunal revés, así del enquentro que dio como del que recibió, según vista de los juezes e rey de armas e faraute. (151-52)

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<sup>59</sup>This stipulation is the nineteenth article (out of twenty-two) that regulate the 'passo': "allí darán lanças e fierros sin ventaja, a todos los del reino que llevaren armas e cavallos para fazer las dichas armas, [e] non podrán fazer con las suyas en caso que las lieven, por quitar la ventaja" (94).

<sup>60</sup>A "carrera" is a single pass in which the knights go at one another before resetting to repeat the exercise.

The details allow the reader to imagine the event as close as possible to what the spectators would see, and those familiar with the sport would be able to perceive Suero's skill in delivering a lance-breaking blow to his opponent's right side.<sup>61</sup>

Encounters such as these remain largely formulaic throughout the text, albeit sometimes in briefer versions depending on the importance of each combatant, or if the contest drags on without any significant strikes.<sup>62</sup> Since all competitors are treated equally according to the objective nature of Rodríguez de Lena's narrative, these portrayals result in a somewhat stagnant presentation of manliness. Winning or losing, according to the lances broken and to the dictates of the judges, is declared with no fanfare. Therefore, if the competitors wish to demonstrate more valor, they must challenge the parameters of the competition.

Rodríguez de Lena includes several examples of men trying to bend the rules of the tournament with the aim of making the competition more dangerous, which, in theory, would enhance their achievements. These are artificial attempts to display manliness, born out of frustration with the regulations, are quickly put down by the judges.

In the second chapter, for example, Suero enters the list with his "lanza en el muslo," resting vertically with the sharp end pointed toward the sky, the way a knight in battle formation would stand at the ready before the charge. While there are clear phallic implications to having the lance in this position, the text's intention is to alert the onlookers to his experience in real battle, since a man's accomplishments in war were considered more

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<sup>61</sup>Fallows identifies "hypotyposis" as the rhetorical term of narrating in minute detail. See *Jousting* 13-14.

<sup>62</sup>For example, when Diego de Benavides jousts with Pedro de Vesga (chapter 33), the pair endures twenty-two passes before breaking enough lances to end the round. Rodríguez de Lena omits the fifteen passes where no contact is made, which leaves seven to describe according to the same conventions. These are the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> passes.

honorable than those in a tournament.<sup>63</sup> According to the judges, however, this would compromise his ability to control the weapon: “por quitar los peligros que en perder de la lança se podría recreçer” (149). Instead of showing it couched and pointing towards his opponent, Suero would have to lower the lance from an upright position with his horse on the move, which would show his martial skill, but is an unnecessary risk in the judges’ opinion. Therefore, for safety reasons they rule that all participants enter with the lance “enristrada,” or in the horizontal position pointed at the opponent.

Throughout *El passo honroso*, the participants engage in repetitive “carreras” seeking to unhorse each other and break the obligatory three lances required to mark a clear winner. This repetition, though, does away with any exceptional displays of force, because none can be performed within the limitations of the rules. Men like Suero, out of a desire to stand out as the most valorous knight, are thereby driven to bend and break the rules, which only yields trouble for them.

Like *El passo honroso*, the jousting scenes in *El Victorial* depend on the reader’s familiarity with the sport. The purpose of their depictions is different, however, because *El Victorial* uses jousting as a form of combat that takes place around the court instead of in war. As a knight of Enrique III, who was a fan of chivalric sports and who enjoyed celebrating religious festivals and diplomatic visits by putting on “justas, e torneos, e juegos de cañas” (255), Pero Niño had opportunities to show his skills. By including these events in the chronicle, Díez de Games provides his subject with another chivalric platform in which to

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<sup>63</sup>According to Geoffroi de Charny’s *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*, the ‘deeds of arms at tournaments’ are inferior in stature to the ‘deeds of arms in war.’ While both, he explains, provide the knight with opportunities to win glory, as well as enjoy substantial financial windfalls should he be successful enough, they do not carry the same prestige. What a man does in war is most honorable because “in the practice of arms in war it is possible to perform in one day all the three different kinds of military art, that is jousting, tourneying, and waging war, for war requires jousting with the point of the lance and striking with the edge of the sword as in a tournament, and attacking with the sword thrust and other weapons, as war demands” (49-50).

show his excellence: “Pero Niño fazía estos juegos de armas tan bien e tan apuestamente, que hera una gran maravilla, que yo puedo dezir que tantos cavalleros derrocó él solo en justas en su vida más que todos los otros que usaron justar en Castilla derrocaron en cincuenta años” (256).

*El Victorial* agrees with what *El passo honroso* demonstrates, that jousting in Spain was more controlled than in other places. It describes a competition in France, pointing out that: “los françeses justan por otra guisa que non fazen en España: justan sin tela, a manera de guerra, por el topar” (411). From the author’s point of view, these jousts are somewhat reckless, their only stated regulation being the length of the lances themselves: “Las varas son todas medidas; non las faze sino un maestro o dos en toda la corte: éste con liçençia de los gobernadores, e aquél es el fiel” (412). Everything else was uncontrolled:

ni justa uno con otro señaladamente, sino quien más se atiene. Todos son ventureros; pónense a la una parte diez, o veynte, o treynta, o más; ál tantos de la otra. En tomando uno la vara, ya el otro tiene la suya; e non solamente sale uno, mas con la grand cobdiçia conteçe que salen a él dos, e aunt res, non enbargante que son corteses, que si se viesen no yría más de uno. Ansí es menester que el cavallero que allí justare que lo aya bien usado, o sea fuerte, o grand cavalgador. (412)

Their potential for accidents in such jousts makes the passes more dynamic but also more dangerous by putting the body at greater risk. However, it is through this risk and danger that Pero Niño can best display his martial skills.

Díez de Games begins with a general summary of how Pero Niño breaks many lances and withstands two simultaneous opponents:

justó aquel día Pero Niño, e fizo allí muchas carreras con rezios cavalleros, e quebró aquel día muchas varas. Tanta hera la cobdiçica que avian los françeses de encontrar con él, que una vez salieron dos caballeros a par, e amos e dos encontraron en él; e Pero Niño estuvo tan firme que non le removieron, ni ovo reveses, nin fizo mala contenençia. (412)

This basic description matches other portrayals of his prowess in open combat, but offers the reader only sparse details for a complete characterization of his jousting abilities. In order to describe his skills more fully, Díez de Games later writes about his abilities with similar attention to detail as Rodríguez de Lena.

Towards the end of the narrative, after Pero Niño is firmly established as an excellent fighter and leader both on land and sea, Díez de Games tells of how he competes against three different opponents during a jousting competition that is part of a wedding celebration in Paris. Its length leaves the public somewhat in awe—“tanto durava Pero Niño en la justa, e tanto fazía en ella, que la fama yva por toda la çivdad fablando de un español, que andava en la justa tan maravilloso cavallero, e tantas valentías fazía” (414)— and his victories tell us that Pero Niño has maintained his chivalric mettle even later in life.

The first opponent, Juan de One, is characterized by his physical stature. The author describes him as “muy grande” and adds that he “pareçía hombre espantable en armas” (414), thus recalling the theme of the opponent as a giant.<sup>64</sup> The repetition of the ‘giant opponent’ motif recalls in the reader that part of his characterization and ensures that his reputation against opponents superior in size and strength is sustained. The author describes their combat in precise detail, capturing each pass and explaining how Pero Niño achieves victory:

Fizieron [Juan de One] e Pero Niño muy hermosas carreras, con fuertes varas, e Juan de One vio que Pero Niño hera tan fuerte caballero e tan diestro que non podía en él mellar. Fizo una carrera en que venía todo çerrado en él, pensando le llevar del encuentro del cavallo, que así lo usan ellos; mas el buen caballero, que siempre supo dar buena çima a sus fechos, entendido lo tenía por las otras carreras cómo le quería llevar de maestría, si él pudiera. Arredró un poco el cavallo, e queriendo igualar con él, puso las espuelas al cavallo, e encontróle en meytad del escudo; e tan áyna como quebró en él la vara, tan áyna se encontraron de los cuerpos de los cavallos, e derrocó

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<sup>64</sup>Beltrán Llavador points out that here the author is no doubt taking advantage of folkloric giant opponent often found in books of chivalry (414, fn. 352).

a él e al cavallo en tierra. E acorriéronle, e levantáronlo, ca de tal manera cayó que estava en peligro de morir él e el cavallo. De aquella caýda se le desencaxó el braço, e anduvo lisiado muchos días. (415)

The author uses this scene to show, step by step, how his protagonist is superior to Juan de One. Pero Niño makes a slight adjustment to the speed of his horse in order to be able to perfectly strike his opponent's gridded shield (sometimes referred to as an "ecranche" or "gridded grand guard") and force him off balance, causing him to fall and injure himself. The conclusion is that Pero Niño surpasses the French champion in strength and dexterity.

The second opponent is a German called Sinque, who represents the "extranjero bravucón y cobarde... que acaba huyendo ridículamente" (Beltrán Llavador 425, fn. 354). Despite his cowardliness, Sinque is nevertheless noted to be an expert horseman: "Éste fizo muchas carreras con Pero Niño, todas de mañas, non porque nunca el alemán esperase encuentro, mas fazía muchas maneras en la rienda del cavallo, que los sabía fazer" (415). Even though this skill poses a different threat than the Frenchman's strength, proficiency in equestrianism is expected in a good knight. Thus, this contest shows Pero Niño's skill and valor in a different way:

E Pero Niño conosçio que el cavallero andava de maña contra él, e que non le quería esperar el encuentro, e cómo se aprovechava de la rienda. Súpose dél bien guardar, e dondequier que el alemán yva, delante lo fallava, tanto que el alemán nunca de so la vara le pudo salir; así que hera una fermosa cosa de ver. Óvolo por ventura de tomar en tal lugar al alemán que bien cuydó Pero Niño que non se le podía yr: puso las espuelas al cavallo, e fue contra él. E en tanto, el alemán fizo una vuelta e hechó a fuyr tan de rezio como si allí le fuera la vida. Pero Niño non lo siguió más; e así corriendo entró por la puerta de la çivdad, e non paresçió más.<sup>65</sup> (415)

Through the scene's rich descriptions, the reader sees how Pero Niño matches and exceeds each step of the German, and in doing so displays his own exceptional martial skills.

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<sup>65</sup>Beltrán Llavador again points out the connection between the German knight and other literary cowards who flee in battle, specifically referencing Búcar from the *PMC* (fn. 353, p. 415).

The final pass lacks the detail of the previous two, but echoes their message as the onlookers shout three times, “¡La costura resta por el capitán de España! ¿Ay quien venga?” (416). The opponent that shows up is a young knight jousting for love, arguably the greatest motivation in these contests, and his challenge to Pero Niño is meant as a compliment because the young “galán” surely seeks to test his worth against the best opponent. In the end, though, Pero Niño overmatches him and goes on to earn the verbal praise of the gathered crowd.

Together, all three opponents allow Pero Niño to display his range of abilities as a jouster. His domination of men characterized by a variety of skills serves to remind us that, although he has grown old, he has retained the martial abilities he so aptly displayed at the beginning of the text. Díez de Games remarks “no vino justador de allí adelante” (416).

### **The Form and Function of Armor and the Horse**

By the sixteenth century, the question whether or not knights wore armor for form instead of function was clearly answered. At this point, projectile weapons could fire shots with enough velocity to penetrate most armor (Springer 6), thereby nullifying its protective capabilities. Plates heavy enough to stop a bullet existed, but were too cumbersome and inhibited movement, thus rendering them useless; on the other hand, plates that were light and thin enough for proper movement could offer some protection, but were not impenetrable (Springer 6). Despite this apparent paradox, the nobility continued to don armor because it served as a medium of social display through which the wearer transmitted prestige.

Armor—specifically the plate kind—was nevertheless advancing in composition as well as protective effectiveness.<sup>66</sup> Plate armor defended well against the crossbow, longbow, and even early gunpowder weapons (DeVries 78), making it a logical choice for those able to afford it.<sup>67</sup> Its “brilliant shine” spoke of the wearer's wealth and status (DeVries 79).<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the nobility continued to don armor because it served as a medium of social display through which the wearer exuded prestige.

One need only pass through the Real Armería of the Royal Palace in Madrid to see the importance the sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish monarchs and high-ranking nobility placed on parade armor.<sup>69</sup> These outfits were for display rather than combat evidence the continued need for an outward symbolic display of masculinity that enhanced the physique (Springer 6). However, this was not previously the case in the fifteenth century, when armor was both highly functional and highly symbolic.<sup>70</sup>

In the *Passo Honroso*, for example, the knights impress through their decorated horses and outfits in addition to their jousting abilities.<sup>71</sup> Rodríguez de Lena describes how Suero de Quiñones enters the list for his first joust:

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<sup>66</sup>For a summary of the debate surrounding the protective power of armor, see Robert Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, chapter 5.

<sup>67</sup>The expense of plate armor all but eliminated foot soldiers from being able to purchase and use it, but some wealthy foot soldiers from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries did buy and wear it (DeVries 85).

<sup>68</sup>Fallows points out that sometimes white armor, which was very shiny, denoted a lower skill-level for the knight's who wore it while jousting (80-81).

<sup>69</sup>Three of the best examples are the “Barda de Carlos V” (A. 149), rich in engravings of Classical mythology; the “Celada de Carlos V” (A. 151), a helmet that forms the shape of an eagle; and Carlos's parade shield, which projects a three-dimensional lion's head from its center.

<sup>70</sup>See the discussion on Llull's allegorical interpretation of arms and armor earlier in this chapter.

<sup>71</sup>See Fallows, *Jousting* chapter 2 for a thorough discussion of what the participants in *El passo honroso* wore during the competition.

luego, alegre e muy apazible cavalgó en su cavallo cubierto de unos ricos paramentos de aceituní borado, vellud vellotado, azules, e llevaba en las espaldas sobre las armas media huça italiana azul, rico brocado de aquel mismo paño de los paramentos del cavallo, e una espada desnuda en la mano, e muy honradamente por las riendas del cavallo levan con sus manos los generosos caballeros...(148).

He juxtaposes the beauty of Pero Niño's outfit to the danger of the joust. First, in a light-hearted manner, he rides in on horses draped in expensive, colorful fabrics meant to signal his wealth and prestige to the audience. Then, he carries his sword unsheathed in his hand, which adds aggressiveness to the pageantry.

In the next joust, his fellow nobleman Lope de Stúñiga enters “ençima de su cavallo, todo encubertado de unos azules paramentos bordados de dorado, en figura de colores de la empresa e divisa quel capitán mayor Suero de Quiñones traía, según más largo vos antes desto es contado” (163). Descriptions like these, which appear sparingly in the text, show the competition to be much more than an athletic contest; it was also a parade of style and elegance in which onlookers observed the newest designs in chivalric fashion.

These trends were not without their critics, either. Writing around 1444, Alonso de Cartagena criticizes the nobility's obsession with new garments, and argues that they should refocus their energy on the Moors of Granada:

y mucho querría que parasen mientes los valientes y poderosos en la caballería, que no consiste el loor de los caballeros en tener muchas armas ni en mudar el tajo de ellas y poner su trabajo en hallar nuevas formas de armaduras y poner nombres nuevos, que si nuestros antecesores se levantasen no los entenderían, mas en exaltar con ellas la santa fe y ensanchar los términos del reino. (Fallows, *Tratados Militares* 266)

Commentaries such as these did not make much headway against new advancements in armor design because of its fundamental role in shaping the knight's identity. In addition to

both its protective and status-giving applications, acquiring armor was also considered a rite of passage.

The transition from man into warrior is marked by ritual, and the most glaring example of this transformation is the dubbing ceremony (Jones 111-12).<sup>72</sup> This conveyed the social superiority and nobility of the knight (Nicholson 104-05) and provided an opportunity for the gaze of a female audience to reaffirm his masculinity (Karras 49).<sup>73</sup> Bestowing arms signified that a young man was now capable of participating in battle under his own device.

When King Perion dubs Amadís a knight, it is the young man's armor that accentuates his natural beauty:

fuese el Donzel a la capilla y armóse de sus armas todas, salvo la cabeça y las manos, y hizo su oración ante el altar, rogando a Dios que assí en las armas como en aquellos mortals desseos que por su señora tenía le diesse vitoria...El Rey vio el Donzel tan hermoso que mucho fue maravillado” (276-77).

Amadís's beauty is more surprising given the fact that he is dressed in armor from the neck down. This aesthetic makes armor an outward reflection of inner goodness and distinguishes him from other aspiring and current knights.

The dubbing of Pero Niño is very different. Young like Amadís when the first battle in *El Victorial* takes place, he is only a fifteen-year old “donzel” who has been ordered by the king to learn the behaviors, customs, and skills of knights but has yet to undergo a chivalric

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<sup>72</sup>The term “dubbing” originally meant the delivery of arms to a new inductee into a war band, and knighthood in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was often associated with young men coming of age and entering a military or vassal-group (Keen, *Chivalry* 67).

<sup>73</sup>According to Karras, if conditions were right, a tournament or battle could give men the opportunity to exhibit themselves in front of women as well as each other. If a knight appealed to women, this increased his worth in the eyes of other men (48).

initiation or engage in actual combat.<sup>74</sup> His initiation is not an elaborate ceremony, but instead part of an urgent need to add men to the king's forces.

Pero Niño follows Enrique III's army to Gijón as a squire to lay siege to a coastal fortress of the Count of Noreña (chapter 23).<sup>75</sup> Díez de Games explains that the circumstances of the first attack spring from a desire of Enrique's knights to destroy the skiffs that sit anchored in the mud outside the castle of the Count during low tide. Since the King's forces have blockaded the fortress ("el rey ovo asentado su real," 243) these boats are likely to represent the Count's primary supply line.<sup>76</sup> Given their tactical significance, the assault on the boats provokes an immediate response, and Pero Niño seeks the King's permission to join the clash. Since he is not properly outfitted with weapons and armor, he must first ask for admittance into knighthood and be given armor and a horse: "e pidióle [al rey] merçed que le mandase dar armas, pues estava en guerra e en tal lugar que le fazían menester, que aún él no las avía ningunas suyas" (244).

Satisfaction of this request marks Pero Niño's entrance into the Castilian warrior class. He not only receives proper weapons and armor, but he is also symbolically

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<sup>74</sup>Chapter 19 of *El Victorial* places Pero Niño in Enrique III's care at ten years of age. This chapter, along with 20-22, presents the content of his instruction while serving Enrique at court.

<sup>75</sup>Beltrán traces the roots of this conflict to Enrique's youth and regency that followed his father Juan I's death in 1390. In 1393, while Enrique was in his early teens, the Trastámara family was heavily engaged in political maneuvering to maintain control over government positions. Don Alonso Enriquez, the count of Noreña, opposed them from his principal fortress in Gijón.

<sup>76</sup>Robert Jones explains that in most cases fortifications such as the Count's did not fall due to direct assaults or bombardments, but that instead most sieges ended when supplies ran out or relieving armies failed to aid the besieged (*Bloodied Banners*, 165). For this reason it is clear that Enrique's attack plan to stifle the supply lines is in accordance with besieging tactics at that time.

empowered by a higher authority he serves (Beltrán 79; Neal 16).<sup>77</sup> And since this dubbing takes place on the eve of battle, Pero Niño asserts his manhood by participating in a fight.<sup>78</sup>

While the dubbing ceremony was paramount to the knight's transition from squire to warrior, nothing substituted the chance to prove oneself in such physical combat against other knights (Karras 33). Therefore, in the formation of masculinity, wearing armor for protective purposes on the eve of battle takes precedence over armor worn only for show or ceremonially.

Pero Niño enters a later battle at Pontevedra on horseback encased in armor. Chain mail covers his body, and a bassinet helmet protects him from the neck up. In addition, he wears shin-guards and carries a thick wooden shield: “E llegó allí Pero Niño ençima de un cavallo. E las armas que traya heran una cota e un baçinete con camal, segund que estonçe se usava, e unas canilleras, e un adarga muy grande de barrera” (251-52). In addition to its tangible protection, armor affords him a psychological advantage, in that he is perceived (and perceives himself) as less vulnerable to attack, and allows him to fight with more bravery (Jones 97).<sup>79</sup>

The importance of armor, however, cannot be reduced to its mere functionality, and these complementary effects must be considered as part of the knight's masculine display.

This is why Díez de Games, in spite of describing Pontevedra as “una rezia escaramuça e

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<sup>77</sup>Receiving arms from one's king is one of the characteristics of chivalric biographies identified by Beltrán Llavador (79).

<sup>78</sup>Karras explains that “it was not the ritual of knighting, but the participation in tournament and battle that made [the knight] part of the knightly community” (62).

<sup>79</sup>The debate regarding how effective armor was in medieval warfare remains unresolved. For example, scholars like Philippe Contamine and J.F. Verbruggen maintain different conclusions, with the former arguing that casualties from battle were very high and that bodies in battle were extremely vulnerable, while the latter posits that armor provided a distinct advantage when fighting. See Robert W. Jones for a thorough review of this debate.

muy peligrosa” (251), also treats it as an event that is necessary for those who “quisiesen fazer en armas por amor de sus amigas” because “todas la dueñas e donzellas de Pontebreda heran a mirar por el adarve de la villa” (251). Like the uniforms of competing teams, the knight’s attire not only distinguishes him before onlookers, but it intimidates his opponents while enhancing his chances with the fair sex.

Armor accentuates the knight’s strength and masculinity by altering the silhouette of his natural physique to emphasize his muscular frame. This is especially true with the introduction of plate armor in the second part of the fourteenth century, when a combination of developments of armor gave the impression that the knight’s legs were longer, his waist was higher, his chest thicker, and his shoulders broader.<sup>80</sup> Together, these modifications had the profound effect on making the knight appear more physically striking than he actually was, because “they are the very traits which we use to assess the strength, masculinity and dominance of an individual, and which transmit signals about an individual’s health and sexual maturity” (Jones 99). Combined with the psychological gains in confidence that resulted from the armor’s protection, the knight’s attire naturally promoted strong posture and a dominating body language (Jones 101).

Critics have recognized this double effect of armor. According to Rachel Dressler, “knights are most fully men only when they are completely encased in armor” (109). Michael Prestwich agrees, stating “the potential shock effect of fully armored troops, mounted on heavy horses, lances couched, was immense. The visual effect of brightly colored surcoats

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<sup>80</sup>Jones explains that the mail shirt hugged the contours of the knight’s body, therefore accentuating the layers of padding underneath to create the perception of a larger physique (*Bloodied Banners* 99-101). For studies explaining the relationship between a man’s physique and perceived attractiveness, see R. Gross, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behavior* and Desmond Morris, *Bodywatching: A Field Guide to the Human Species*.

and trapers, and the noise of rattling armor and neighing horses, must have combined to terrorize even before the charging cavalry thudded into the lines of their opponents” (325).

The knight’s attire functioned as an exoskeleton of his persona and, as Barry Taylor has observed in his analysis of *The Faerie Queene*, the knight’s body encased in armor represents a form of ‘dutiful masculinity’ (33). Springer adds that armor:

is a three-dimensional portrait of the individual and a map of his place in the world. It is also, by definition, a mirror of his masculinity. In this respect, body armor might be viewed as a metonymic expansion of the codpiece—an object that aestheticizes masculine power and actively produces an idealized somatic form. It erases the infinite morphological variations of the individual bodies by substituting a normative ideal. Armor constructs the elite male body through the process of prosthetic addition. This process illustrates the variability of the physical silhouette identified with masculinity...Armor monumentalizes the body and displays it in heroic and aggrandized form; it literally confers *gravitas*. (11-13)

The surviving samples of armor (and artwork portraying armor) attribute specific masculine qualities to the knight who wears them. It is not so clear in literature, and one scene from the *Passo honroso* needs further examination.

Prior to his third joust, Suero Quiñones begins intentionally removing certain parts of the armor, essentially dismantling his “mirror of masculinity” one piece at a time: “la cara del elmete, el guardabraço izquierdo, el piastrón de las platas” (267). These particular pieces were of significant importance to the knight. The helmet (“elmete”) protected the head, a targeted area where points could be won (Fallows, *Jousting* 229).<sup>81</sup> The left pauldron (“el guardabraço izquierdo”) was also crucial to protecting the knight’s body, as it was the area most frequently struck (Fallows, *Jousting* 87). And the plackart (“piastrón de las platas”), the lower half of the breastplate covering from the waist to mid-chest area, was obviously an important piece to protect against unintended disembowelment.

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<sup>81</sup>Fallows explains that wearing a helmet could lessen the percussion to the head, unless the blow penetrated the visor. Often injuries consisted of bloody noses and loosened teeth, but fatal wounds did sometimes occur in this area of the body (229).

Suero's apparent recklessness is a calculated ruse that seeks to make him look manlier. As the jousts are pre-arranged, Fallows theorizes that:

Suero had made a secret pact with his opponent to strike lightly, or not to strike at all, in order to continue his rhetorical conceit. Or perhaps he banked on the judges standing firm in their resolve and disallowing the request, in which case he would make himself look dashing, daring and fearless in front of his lady-love and other (male and female) participants and spectators. (178)

By removing these pieces of armor, Suero de Quiñones's goal is not to emasculate himself, but quite the opposite: he hopes to prove that his bravery exceeds that of his fellow jousters. Because this places him in lethal danger in the eyes of the judges, they do not allow it and, furthermore, they detain Suero de Quiñones for his actions. This possibility of plotting suggests a high degree of conscious performativity on the part of the protagonist. If either scenario proposed by Fallows is true, then Suero essentially manufactures his manliness by subverting the rules intended to keep displays of prowess in check.

However, upon closer examination, the desire to remove armor not only contradicts the knight's original need for protection, but raises questions about the overarching importance that armor plays in constructing masculinity. According to Rodríguez de Lena, Suero Quiñones responds to the judges' rejection of his incomplete attire by stating:

que non curava cosa ninguna de aquello, mas que todavía les pedía por merced que le diesen licencia para que él pudiesse quitar, e quitasse la tal pieza, pues ya sabían cómo lo había embiado decir, e publicar por muchas partes por Monreal faraute. E que ya en otro lugar más peligroso había él quitado pieza de arnés por amor de su dama, e Dios le había librado, et que él era en la batalla de los moros que el rey nuestro señor venció en la vega cerca de la ciudad de Granada, e que allí llevaba el brazo derecho desarmado, e que en todo él non llevaba salvo una manga de inpla, e assí lo truxo mientras la guerra duró, e él allá estovo... (270)

Fallows believes that by removing armor "por amor de su dama," Suero appears to be suffering from love-sickness, and "it is only right that [he] make such a mad—and

maddening—request” (178). There is, though, another explanation that is tied to the knight’s career stage.

This example suggests a paradoxical relationship of men to armor relative to their experience in battle. First, men without armor like Pero Niño seek it because it conveys social status and offers a higher degree of protection than simple clothing. At a certain point, however, armor—likely due to the protection it offers—works against any man who attempts to show his bravery, especially in a controlled joust. In response, the knight removes it in an attempt to appear braver and, by doing so, he returns to the original state of having less armor.

Like armor, the horse is also both a functional tool for the knight that simultaneously offers a three-dimensional enhancement of the male physique, and an integral part of the knight’s attire. “Knighthood at its core is an embodied performance,” confirms Crane, “a mastering of techniques and technologies that produce the ‘chevalier,’ the ‘ritter,’ the ‘cavallero’ as one who undertakes adventures and combats while mounted on a horse” (69). Domesticated since about 1750 BCE, it has always enjoyed a prominent role in society as the preferred mount of kings and nobility, warriors and heroes (Cooper 130-31). This is especially true in early modern Spain, as evidenced by the rather large collection of parade armor and matching bards that is housed at the Royal Armory in Madrid. Those samples dress knight and horse in similar styles, and reveal that the interplay between them results in a “continuous being,” a “single identity machine” (Springer 67).

It was up to the individual knight, though, to know how to use the horse to advantage in combat, where it became an extension of his body (Jones 139). Together they fought as a

single unit, allowing for faster attacks with greater force (Ayton 26).<sup>82</sup> The horse conveyed the social superiority and nobility of the knight, which was central to the ceremonies and festivities of the later Middle Ages (Nicholson 104-05). However, as was the case with armor, the aesthetic enhancements provided by the decorated horse were secondary to its performance. A strong and well-trained horse could tip the advantage towards its rider. A strong and well-trained horse could tip the advantage towards its rider by augmenting his power.

In the *Passo Honroso*, the horse is the centerpiece of the joust, but, as explained earlier, what is most important is that each knight's horse be of equal stature so that neither man has an unfair advantage. Prior to the first joust between Suero de Quiñones and the German miçer Arnaldo, the judges declare that “por ellos visto sus armas e cavallo, en proviso pronunçiaron ser iguales e sin ventaja alguna los cavallos e las armas de ambos a dos,” (146) before noting that the German's steed is actually superior but that Suero had agreed to that disadvantage: “como quiera que declararon que era más valiente el cavallo quel alemán fazer avía, que non el de Suero de Quiñones tenía, pero dixeron que, pues Suero en placer venía que en aquel cavallos las armas fiziese, aquellos eran contentos” (146).

Despite its less-important role after the mid-fourteenth century in actual battles, the importance of horses to the nobility remained high because they were celebrated in the single combats of chivalric romances like *Amadís de Gaula*. Many battles here, for example, begin

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<sup>82</sup>Perhaps the best example of how the horse changes the human profile to be more intimidating appears in Bernal Díaz de Castillo's *Historia Verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* when Hernán Cortés, believing the indigenous warriors saw a hybrid human-horse, puts on an equestrian display to frighten the natives.

on horseback only to end up on the ground, as Montalvo's text evidences during a battle in which Amadís's brother Galaor fights mounted on a horse that is failing:

a esta hora començó a cansar y desmayar el cavallo de don Galaor, que ya no podía a una parte ni a otra ir, de que muy gran saña le vino, porque bien cuidava que la culpa de su cavallo le quitava tan tarde la vitoria, mas el cavallero estraño le hería de grandes golpes, y salíase dél cada que quería; y quando Galaor le alcançava feríalo tan fuertemente, que la espada le fazía sentir en las carnes, pero su cavallo andava ya como ciego para caer...pero no en tanto grado que no le pensasse vencer si su cavallo no lo estorvase..y el cavallero le fue herir, y con recelo del cavallo que le no matasse, juntóse mucho con él...y cayeron ambos en el suelo abraçados... (621-22)

Galaor's fatigued and meandering horse hinders his victory, and it is clear that, although they fight together as one, the horse and knight here are two separate beings. If it were not for his lackluster mount, he would have achieved an easy victory. As it were, he ends up on the ground.

While the ideal situation is to remain astride a fit horse, this seldom happens in battle, and therefore recognition of the importance of the horse is rare in texts. In *El Victorial*, Díez de Games states that “un buen hombre fará ençima de un buen cavallo más que farán otros diez, e aun podrá ser más que çiento, en una ora, en una batalla” (204). In the *mêlée* that takes place in Pontevedra, having a good horse provides Pero Niño with a distinct tactical advantage, as scattered foot soldiers—unable to form ranks and effectively defend themselves from cavalry charges—become easy targets for knights.<sup>83</sup>

*El Victorial* celebrates the actions of Pero Niño's horse, and ties his manliness to the courage of his mount. During a battle against the Moors near Sentenil in 1407, the intense volley of stones forces a mounted Pero Niño to grudgingly withdraw: “e diéronle tan gran conbate de piedras, fasta que le fizieron dar media buelta. De lo qual ovo él grand desplacer e grand vergüença, como aquel que nunca avía sido retraýdo nin vueltas las espaldas por

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<sup>83</sup>In the *CMC*, for example, the Cid uses a feigned retreat at Alcocer to draw the enemy troops out of file before he and his forces circle back to pick them off. See Spurgeon Baldwin and W.S. Hendrix for studies on this.

ninguna fuerça” (469). Even though he is under heavy fire, even a prudent retreat always calls into question the hardiness of the warrior. In the case of Pero Niño in this particular battle, his horse bravely turns back into the fighting: “el allí bolvió el cavallo, quer hera bueno e leal” (469). By reengaging Pero Niño in the fight, he is able to prove his mettle yet again, “feriendo e matando en ellos” while astride his horse.

Together, the pair exudes the type of manliness admired by knights, and the horse is converted into a symbol for the courage it displays during the battle. The author states

E así andando, sintió que enflaquecía su cavallo. E mirándolo, vio que corría dél sangre mucha, e que ya non le podía traer, e que fazia poco por las espuelas. Bolvió a su gente, el cavallo que non podía más. E él firiendo e delibrándose dellos, asíanse dél. El cavallo hera de buena natura, e aunque le fallesçía la fuerça, de los golpes e grandes feridas que le avían dado, non le fallesçía el coraçón, con que sacó a su señor de tal lugar. Ante que el cavallo cayese, dióle un su paje otro cavallo. E dende a poco, cayó el buen cavallo muerto en tierra, colgando las barrigas e las tripas fuera por muchos lugares. (469)

The horse mirrors his rider in this way by never giving up despite receiving countless debilitating wounds over the course of the battle. Together, it collaborates with the armor to enhance the knight’s battle function. Battlefield needs, however, continue to change, and as weapons and armor develop throughout the fifteenth century and beyond, the need for armor is eventually eclipsed, substituted by uniforms that were cheaper for larger standing armies (Braudy 120). The nobleman then continued to take advantage of tournaments to display his wealth and mettle. Despite armor’s protective qualities, it no longer ensured that its wearers would leave a battle unscathed.

## The Wounded Body

The *Passo honroso* illustrates how the knight's body displays manliness when Asbert de Claramunt is accidentally killed jousting, as his eulogy celebrates the features of his physique most:

era un home tan alto que era marabilla, e tan seguido que cosa en sí non pareçia mal puesta, e muy ancho de spaldas, e de muy fuertes mienbros, ca dubda sería si en mil homes escogidos se pudiera fallar cuerpo de home tan fuerte, ni tan aventajado. E era home muy fermoso...(368).

Described as tall and beautiful, with a broad build and strong leg and arm muscles, Asbert's body is symmetrical and recalls the Classical 'bella figura,' three-dimensionally carved in stone by Michelangelo in his *David*.<sup>84</sup>

The body's symmetrical beauty was not only crucial to the display of virtue, it also had to be able to execute athletic feats like jousts and foot combats. The first step to acquiring the necessary skills for martial success was training, for the body provided the knight with the needed appendages protected by armor to hold and wield deadly objects, and allowed him to exercise violence at his discretion. Chivalric clashes, however, put that body at risk despite armor, and authors used wounding scenes to reveal the grit of their protagonists.

Classical scholars have long known that the non-fatal war wound is a crucial component of the characterization of the warrior-hero in texts like the *Iliad*.<sup>85</sup> This is because wounding and being wounded demonstrates bravery by emphasizing the hero's courage; additionally, injuries shine a light on the hero's mortality, exposing his frailties as well as his moral fortitude (Neal 1, 14).

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<sup>84</sup>Later, plate armor would be sculpted in order to replicate through its form (Springer 25).

<sup>85</sup>For example, see Tamara Neal and Cristine Salazar.

Even knights outfitted with armor could sustain wounds, and both chronicles and fiction took advantage of these scenes to enhance the heroic characterization of their protagonists. The battle scenes from *Amadís de Gaula*, in particular, detail serious wounds suffered by the title character. Harney explains how:

Saturated in blood and guts, the late medieval Spanish novel of chivalry is a genre in which violence is not represented as institutional. Combat most frequently occurs between individual men, or between single men and beasts or monsters...Virtually every scene of knight-to-knight combat and warfare between clans in *Amadís*...is characterized by graphic descriptions of wounds inflicted, of organs and parts affected.” (“Violence” 324)

These wounds typically involve broken bones, puncture wounds, shattered teeth, and cracked skulls (Harney, “Violence” 324-25). Because he is the best of knights, however, Amadís rarely suffers injuries like the ones he inflicts.

This changes in the most revealing wounding scene in *Amadís de Gaula* during the title character’s battle with the Endriago monster. Almost defeated, the Endriago, with its sharp claws, squeezes Amadís and tears through his armor, cutting deeply into his torso: “abraçose con [Amadís], y con las sus muy fuertes y agudas uñas rompióle todas las armas de las spaldas, y la carne y los huesos hasta las entrañas” (1144). Amadís, barely conscious and clearly delirious, is taken to by his physician Elisabad to be examined. Almost miraculously, none of the Endriago’s claws have penetrated the vital organs, and it is announced that the hero will recover. Furthermore, Amadís appeals to God for mercy of his soul, and the physician responds “Señor cavallero, mucho me plaze de os ver con tal conoscimiento, porque de aquel que vos pedís merced os ha de venir la verdadera melezina, y después de mí como de su siervo, que porné mi vida puesta por la vuestra, y con su ayuda yo os dare guardido” (1147).

The scene recalls the fanciful and idealistic images typical in *Amadís* and other romances of chivalry, in which the hero is always in danger but never really so because he is a gifted individual who, by faith, will survive. Also, the injuries occur while fighting an imaginative mythological creature whose power reaches far beyond the capabilities of normal human beings. Yet, the depiction of combat in other texts is quite different.

Men who participated in a charge or siege, or found themselves in a *mêlée*, risked being injured or killed from blows coming from all sides. These battles often were against archers, crossbowmen, and later on musketeers, who reined down volleys of arrows and bullets that could strike at anytime. Even jousts, which were designed to be as safe as possible, could result in injuries ranging from the inconsequential broken finger to the deadly impalement by a shattered lance. Therefore, scenes like the above from the *Amadís*, while intending to promote an heroic ideal, were not indicative of how knights related to the dangers of fighting, nor how they overcame their injuries. For these answers, we must look at texts like those studied here that align more closely to a knight's experience with injury in jousts and war.

Even though men wore armor in jousts like the *Passo honroso* and precautions were taken to avoid serious bodily harm, sustaining a terrible injury was a real possibility for the knights competing.<sup>86</sup> These dangers were documented by Rodríguez de Lena, often sparing

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<sup>86</sup>As with any contact sport, injuries were common. Fallows notes that blows to the eyes could blind or even kill by causing trauma to the brain (171); Tristan suffers a grotesque thigh injury (176), a literary precursor to Henry the VIII, who was famously injured in the thigh as well; and Wolfram von Eschenbach's King Anfortas, who is also struck through the thigh and left with "a length of bamboo shaft lodged permanently in his scrotum" (176). Hand injuries in the form of finger dislocations, he explains, were also common (234). Modern day jousters (who are not actors or stunt-performers, but who consider themselves true athletes and practitioners of full-contact jousting as it was known in the Middle Ages and Renaissance) also accumulate a barrage of injuries, and these can give us clues as to the inherent dangers of jousting. For instance, in an ESPN television segment ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya\\_9ShuBDaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya_9ShuBDaY)) entitled "Jousting: the Original Extreme Sport," professional jouster Charlie Andrews tells of the injuries he has sustained throughout his career. These include broken hands (x4), a dislocated hip, a fractured back, broken ribs, and a punctured lung. Along with these types

few details. During a pass between Lope de Aller and Diego de Mansilla, the former strikes Mansilla below his armband close to the unprotected area near the armpit, resulting in a puncture wound that forces him to abandon the contest: “e allí le sacaron el fierro e troço del braço, y en sacándose lo corrióle su brazo un gran chorro de sangre, a manera como sale vino de cuva, en poniéndole la canilla, de lo qual tomó gran desmayo el cavallero Diego de Mansilla” (208). Rodriguez emphasizes the great volume of blood that causes the knight to faint. It takes wounds of this severity to keep the knights of the *Passo honroso* from continuing to joust, in spite of the judges’ disapproval.<sup>87</sup>

While competing against his third opponent, Suero de Quiñones injures Gonzalo de Castañeda by striking through his armor into the flesh:

a las cinco carreras encontró el honrrado cavallero Suero de Quiñones a Gonzalo de Castañeda en el cañón del braçal derecho, e sortió dél por debaxo de la guarda, e pasóle el fierro por meitad de los morcillos del braço e falsógelo, e así mesmo falsó el braçal, e passóle el fierro quanto un palmo con el asta de la otra parte, e fizole una grande ferida. (244)

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of injuries, Shane Adams of the History Channel’s series *Full Metal Jousting*—a reality-based program of jousts competing for a \$100,000.00 prize—points out that falling from the mount also puts stress on the ankles and back; mouth injuries from head shots are also common. Competitions like these may alert us to new clues about jousting and life in the Middle Ages by offering scholars the chance to study first hand what these activities were like. Studies that duplicate past conditions are nothing new. For example, Donlan and Thompson have studied the conditions Greek hoplite soldiers would have faced at Marathon. For information regarding modern jousting competitions, see the World Jousting Tournament <<worldjoust.com>>, the Tournament of the Phoenix <<www.tournamentofthephoenix.com>>, and the Knight School <<www.knightschool.us>>.

<sup>87</sup>This is true throughout minus one unique example when Gómez de Villacora and Fernando de Liñan meet in the lists (chapter 10, “Libro de armas”). After thirteen passes with no lances broken, Fernando de Liñan approaches the judges asks permission to quit in the middle of the competition: “E luego estas carreras acabadas, embió a dezir Fernando de Liñan a los juezes e rey de armas e faraute que allí eran con Antón de Funes, su compañero, que supiesen en cómo él estava muy desfallecido del corazón, por tal manera que non podía fazer armas algunas al presente fasta que Dios ordenase del lo que le plugierese. Por ende, que pedía por merced a los juezes que le diesen liçençia para que se pudiese desarmar e ir a su tienda, e que en la tarde, si fuese dispueso, que él tomaría a cumplir sus armas” (178). His given reason that his “heart” has failed him merely implies that he has lost the will to continue, for whatever reason that the author tells us we may never truly know. What stands out in this scene when compared to the rest of the text, though, is that this knight—physically healthy as far as can be seen—simply quits. The act of quitting stands out because the *Passo honroso* is filled with examples of knights who conceal injuries and carry on through pain in order to avoid being noticed by the judges, who would be quick to remove a competitor if it was believed his life might be in danger.

The judges see this wound and immediately stop the competition, even though the lances have not been broken and technically the contest should not end. Rodríguez de Lena emphasizes that it is a strike that pierces the right forearm jointure of Castañeda's armor and exits under the upper arm guard piercing both and burying the lance in the body up to a hands-breadth. This stops both competitors, and though it appears he wants to continue despite his injury, Gonzalo de Castañeda must abide by the judges' ruling, and he announces that he is leaving with honor: "dixo a altas voces, que él se había visto en muchos lugares tan peligrosos, e más que aquél fiziendo armas, e nunca caballero ni gentilhome que con él hiziesse había lebadado lo mejor dél, sino entonçe Suero de Quiñones..." (204).

Tournaments, despite the lack of support from the Church,<sup>88</sup> supplement war as a setting where masculine prowess can be achieved, displayed, and documented for future readers. Therefore, knights are inclined to push their physical limits at the expense of their wellbeing. As Gonzalo de Castañeda shows, honor can be gained from being wounded. He delights in his wound, because it is inflicted by Suero de Quiñones, a knight of the highest caliber "que por tal vía fuese ferido, que le plazía que era ferido de mano de tan noble

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<sup>88</sup>The *Passo honroso* shows the conflict between Church doctrine and the practical needs of the joust. After Asbert de Claramunt's death, Suero sends for friars to deliver the last rites to the fallen knight, but the friars refuse: "e [los frailes] le dixieron que aquel home non le podían fazer aucto ninguno que fiel christiano devía haver, por ser muerto en el hávito que moriera" (367). The refusal is not without reason. European ecclesiastics like Alonso de Cartagena believed that knights should dedicate themselves to fighting all non-believers and enemies of Christendom instead of engaging in martial contests against each other (Fallows 174). In an effort to minimize the latter, various Church Councils including the Councils of Clermont (1130), Rheims (1131), and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) imposed dire spiritual penalties on a knight who died jousting.<sup>88</sup> Although these penalties were later revoked by Pope John XXII, Castilian laws often followed these interdictions, as Cartagena's *Doctrinal de los caballeros* attests "Comoquier que el derecho civil bien parece consentir estas pruebas de armas que por mostrar la Fortaleza y virtud del cuerpo se hacen, pero el derecho canónico, en uno de los concilios que se hicieron en san Juan de Letrán, expresamente veda los torneos, privando de sepultura a quien torneando muere. Y luengos tiempos después, el papa [Clemente V], en una extravagante, vedó las Justas y torneos en Francia y en Inglaterra y en Alemania y en otras ciertas partes del mundo, so grandes penas. Mas el papa Juan XXII, su successor, considerando que muchos incurrián en ellas, revocó la extravagante de su antecessor" (*Tratados Militares* 311). As Fallows says, "beneath the glossy veneer of the Pass of Honour of Suero de Quiñones a viper's nest of political intrigue hissed and writhed. Poor Asbert de Claramunt could not have been killed in a worse place at a worse time, for at this moment in history the Bishop of Astorga could do nothing but deny him a church burial" (174-75).

caballero como él era” (244). The wound therefore marks his body as belonging to a brave man and can lead to honor even in the absence of victory.

Other knights try to minimize or mask their wounds before the judges in order to keep competing. Suero (the son of Álvaro Gómez)<sup>89</sup> conceals his wound “en caso que le fue catado por los farautes que allí eran” (181) and quickens his pace in an effort to overcome the effects of his injury: “e deque se sintió ferido, demandó a muy gran priesa que le diesen la lança e luego ge la dieron...” (181). And when Diego de Bazán is injured near his left eye, the spectators “pensaron que era mal ferido de muerte” (265). Despite this wound, he exclaims “non es nada, non es nada” and continues with a “muy gran revés” that delivers “un tan gran golpe en el guardabrazo izquierdo que por muy poco ge lo falsara, e fizole tomar un gran revés, e rompió en él su lança en dos partes” (265).

Suero de Quiñones is also severely injured in the face during a pass, leaving the public to believe him dead: “e quantos lo vieron pensaron que era ferido de muerte, según el lugar por donde había sido encontrado” (199). By noting the spectators’ despair upon seeing the wound, Rodríguez de Lena creates an opening in the narrative for Suero’s heroic response: “e luego a altas voces dixo: ‘Non es nada, non es nada. ¡Quinones! ¡Quinones!’” (199). Suero, appearing stronger than ever despite the apparent injury, reinforces his hardiness by yelling his name for all to hear, and then continues jousting.

In *El Victorial*, there are three wounding scenes that occur at different moments in Pero Niño’s chivalric career that reveal his mettle: his initial battle, which marks his transition into the world of real martial combat on behalf of the king (Chapter numbers 243-44); his first single-combat against a physically superior opponent where he demonstrates the ability to continue fighting despite incurring many injuries (Chapter numbers 251-56); and,

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<sup>89</sup>This is a different “Suero” than the title character.

as an older and established captain, the challenge of facing a life-threatening leg injury (Chapter number 290-313).<sup>90</sup> Each wounding scene uniquely presents a climactic tone that is underscored by Pero Niño's consistent hardiness displayed from his youth through adulthood. Like the heroes of chivalric fiction, Pero Niño is strong from the beginning, but his wounds reveal the human vulnerability of real war.

The battle scenes of *El Victorial* memorialize the wounds Pero Niño received in historical battles, but supported the model of masculine behavior that it espouses. Its emphasis on the hero's fortitude at the expense of his body not only creates drama, but is of significant importance. These narrative segments convert the body of Pero Niño into a vehicle through which he confirms his dominance over others and plays a decisive role in teaching readers how to be a knight.<sup>91</sup>

However, for a young fighter like Pero Niño, the wounds received further ritualize his transition into knighthood. Unlike the female, for whom the onset of menstruation triggers an awareness of feminine identity, the male must often undergo a staged trial or ritual that marks him as a man (Badinter 67). In many instances, this ritual leaves physical signs in the form of scars or wounds that show outwardly that he has endured physical harm in order to cross a symbolic threshold. Rituals reveal the imperceptible qualities of a person, often through body modifications from costumes or scaring (Rodríguez-Velsaco 16), and Pero Niño's chivalric characterization depends on both being armed as well as surviving injuries. The wounds he

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<sup>90</sup>The following analysis of *El Victorial* is previously published as "Idealizing Wounds: Reality and Fiction in the Depiction of Injuries in *El Victorial*." *Hispanic Journal* 35.2 (2014): 11-22.

<sup>91</sup>Through violence, the knight was able to enhance his manhood in the eyes of others (Karras 21). As she explains, masculinity "does not refer to the male body, whose biological and anatomical features remain relatively constant among different men and over time, but rather to the meanings that society puts on a person with a male body, which do change over time" (3). I agree and follow her definition of masculinity as an outward perception of identity based on action or lack thereof.

receives validate his heroic identity because they are incurred while fighting bravely and thus prove he has approximated, but escaped, death (Neal 15).

After receiving his armor prior to the battle of Gijón, Pero Niño proceeds to take part in the assault force tasked with burning the fortress's supply boats, when it is met with heavy enemy resistance, resulting in "una gran pelea que duró mucho" (244). Pero Niño's armor does not offer full-proof protection for his body, and he is "herido de dos heridas" (244). These wounds are of textual significance because, not only are they a tangible sign of his crossing into the chivalric world, they begin his rise to the level of an exemplar, a fact that is confirmed by the praise heaped on him by Diez de Games, who describes Pero Niño's performance using the literary topos of "outdoing:" "peleó tanto este donzel, que se esmeró de los otros allende dellos tantas vezes, que non fue y ninguno aquel día que tanto fiziese por sus manos. E dio allí muchos golpes señalados, en los cuales sacó sangre de los deservidores de su señor el rey" (244).

Since being wounded in his first combat experience solidifies Pero Niño's transition from "donzel" to "caballero," future injuries sustained must add to this characterization, although in different ways. According to Kenneth Hodges, "injuries sustained give weight and worth to the abstract issues being fought about: they visually announce that the issue was so important that it deserved this much suffering, memorializing the conflict in the lasting scars they leave behind. Injury is thus essential to create meaning out of conflict. If there is no injury, then the fight does not matter: neither side is forced to remember the conflict and neither side gives up anything for asserting its beliefs. Moreover, the winner's wounds are necessary to create meaning" (16). The barrage of wounds he suffers at the battle of Pontevedra (Chapter 29) illuminate the knight's physical and mental strength, while also

fulfilling the needs of the narrative to produce an ideal hero who is vulnerable to injury but capable of prevailing in battle (Hodges 16).

Díez de Games uses his realistic descriptions in order to emphasize Pero Niño's hardiness as a fighter. After all, war's objective is to inflict injury on the opposition to a greater extent than oneself (Scarry 89), and therefore the vulnerability of bodies often determines the outcome.<sup>92</sup> A wounded body able to sustain blows, bullets, or both and remain combat effective is an advantage, whereas an incapacitated soldier is a liability either because he can no longer fight the enemy or because his condition warrants the attention of his fellow soldiers, thus distracting them from the fighting.<sup>93</sup>

In Pontevedra, Pero Niño enters the battle on horseback encased in such armor to prevent or reduce the severity of any injury that could otherwise kill him or minimize his fighting capabilities. His body is safeguarded from top to bottom by chain mail, a bassinet helmet protecting him from the neck up, shin-guards, and a thick wooden shield: “E llegó allí Pero Niño ençima de un cavallo. E las armas que traya heran una cota e un baçinete con camal, segund que estonçe se usava, e unas canilleras, e un adarga muy grande de barrera” (251-51).”

However, this is not the main purpose of Díez de Games's descriptions. The combination of man and horse was not invincible, and the threat of losing one's mount was

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<sup>92</sup>Although Scarry approaches the subject from a modern perspective, her characterization of war as a contest between two sides to see who can “out-injure” each other is perhaps more appropriate for medieval warfare when considering that a modern soldier, wounded, may still be able to discharge a firearm and remain a lethal combatant, whereas a medieval soldier wounded in an extremity may lose the dexterity to wield a weapon, thus severely limiting his combat role.

<sup>93</sup>Examples of wounded or overwhelmed men in battle exist in earlier Castilian literature, specifically the epics. In the *CMC* for example, an over-eager Pero Vermudez charges into battle, forcing his companions to alter their attack plan in order to save him. In the *PFG*, Fernán González is gravely injured during the battle of Era Degollada, and many of his men are injured or killed trying to rescue him.

normal in medieval battles, which is what happens to Pero Niño.<sup>94</sup> Without the advantage of his mount, he has three options: take another mount from a squire (if he had one) or a fellow soldier;<sup>95</sup> continue to fight on foot; or flee.<sup>96</sup> This choice represents a pivotal point in the narrative because it reflects directly on his unusual fortitude, the main quality of an exemplary warrior. Rather than turn back or look for a new mount, Pero Niño pushes forward to the vanguard of the battle: “e tomó la delantera de la gente, dando e firiendo de tan fuertes golpes del espada, que el que ante él se parava bien le fazía entender que no lo avía con moço, mas con hombre fuerte e acabado” (252). Those in the front faced the greatest risk, and Pero Niño’s bravery and prowess distinguish him as a man. The author states

Allí fazía golpes muy señalados, en que llevaba e cortava grandes pedaços de escudos, e a otros dava muy fuertes espadadas en las cabeças, e a otros que venían armados, a unos derrocava e a otros fazía fincar las manos en tierra, e les fazía, mal su grado, dexar la calle e retraer atrás (252).

Pero Niño shines beyond what most men are capable of physically accomplishing. He decimates his opponents, forcing them to retreat from his ferocious blows, without regard to the barrage of wounds he receives, until he reaches Gómez de Domalo, a superior foot-soldier and the most formidable adversary in the enemy’s host.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Many sources point to the frequent unhorsing of knights in battle. In the *CMC*, Álvar Fáñez loses his horse but is given another by the Cid. The *PFG* describes a battle in which “fazien muchos cavallos sin señores salir” (169). Nicholson points to the battle at Agincourt (1415) when cavalry was ineffective due to muddy conditions (104). Referring to an earlier European battle, Prestwich notes that the English defeat by the Scots at Bannockburn (1314) was due largely to the latter’s tactics, which involved creating man-made geographical obstacles like pits, aimed at unhorsing the English cavalry and forcing the knights to fight on foot (327).

<sup>95</sup>As does Álvar Fáñez from the Cid.

<sup>96</sup>Prestwich cites the example of the Scots King William at the battle of Alnwick in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, having been unhorsed by an enemy sergeant who struck his mount with a spear, had no choice but to surrender to Ranulf de Glanville (328).

<sup>97</sup>Beltrán identifies the “lucha contra el ‘gigante’” as part of the chivalric biographical framework, originating from folklore. In *El Victorial*, the huge foreigner Gómez de Domalo manifests this component.

Lacking a mount, Pero Niño cannot match this giant “peón” who is accustomed to ground combat. The disadvantage, however, provides the hero with an opportunity to display his fortitude, as he continues to fight despite the efforts of his larger opponent to kill him. Both bash each other in the head with heavy blows (“se vinieron a dar tan fuertes golpes de las espadas por encima de las cabeças”, 252). Pero Niño is dazed by a strike that “le fizo saltar las çentellas de los ojos” (252), but, since his head is protected by a helmet, only the impact of the strikes affect him.<sup>98</sup> In the end, Gómez de Domalo cannot withstand the force of the hero’s blow: “E Pero Niño dio al Gómez tal golpe por encima del escudo, que le fendió bien un palmo en la cabeça fasta los ojos. E allí quedó Gómez Domalo” (252).

The battle, however, does not end there. After defeating Gómez de Domalo, Pero Niño is struck in the neck by an arrow:

Estando faziendo Pero Niño en los deservidores de su señor el rey como faze el lobo entre las ovejas, quando no an pastor que las defienda, vínole una saeta que le dio por el pescueço. Mas esta ferida ovo él luego en el comienço, que le traya el camal cosido con el pescueço. (252-53)

The shot does not kill him because his helmet has chainmail that extends down to the neck area, but it is not strong enough to completely impede the entrance of the point of the arrow.

The resulting wound hinders his dexterity by making it painful to move his head: “le estorbava mucho al bolver del pescueço” (253),<sup>99</sup> but overcoming this wound is another

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<sup>98</sup>Absorbing a blow to the head would have no doubt been painful and possibly concussing, but as long as the helmet prevents the blade from making contact with the skull, it is conceivable that a soldier could survive strikes to the head. A side-effect of the helmet was that it guarded the soldier’s identity by concealing his face. According to Devries, the *bascinet* (*baçinete*) was the common head armament of the time, which is what Díez de Games describes Pero Niño wearing “segund que estonce se usava”. This helmet covered the head and face entirely, with only a small slit around the eyes to allow the knight to see. Without any other identifying insignias, this helmet would have made a fighter in a *mêlée* virtually unidentifiable by any other means besides his fighting style.

<sup>99</sup>Riquer explains that the “camal”, a derivative of the French *camail* and Catalan *capmall*, was chainmail connected to one’s helmet. Additionally, he points out that Díez de Games’s mention of Pero Niño’s armor at Pontevedra being outdated shows that the author was cognizant of defensive gear. Also, he notes that “es bien

opportunity for the protagonist to demonstrate his mettle. According to the author, “e tanta hera la su voluntad en dar fin a lo que avía començado, que poco o nada sintía la ferida...” (253). In spite of his injury, his mental fortitude remains intact, and he is able to continue fighting.

Paradoxically, however, it is not merely carrying on that enhances Pero Niño’s masculinity, but the effect of the wound, which incites him to fight harder. The author states that “E de allí començó su pelea más rezio que de ante” (253), and he describes how the protagonist’s body absorbs more blows and sustains greater injuries. Many enemy lances, for example, become embedded in his shield and make his defense more difficult. Despite this encumbrance, he fights with vigor to the point that that he attracts the attention of the enemy crossbowmen, who unleash even more missiles at him “como quien las lança a un toro quando anda corridor en medio de la plaça” (253).<sup>100</sup> This crossbow assault results in Pero Niño receiving “un fuerte viratón por medio del rostro, que él tenía descubierto, que le apuntó çerca de la otra parte, por las narizes, de que él se sintió mucho, tanto que le atordeçió” (253).

The presence of enemy crossbow fire striking the hero is absent from the heroic narratives of knights like Amadís, who seem impervious to the innate dangers of a dynamic battlefield. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, the crossbow became an important weapon on the fifteenth-century battlefield, and Pero Niño is lauded for inflicting the very same types of wounds he receives from such weapons. The shooters are unknown

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natural que una saeta clavada en la nuca, atravesando las mallas traseras del camal, o almófar haga incómodos y dolorosos al caballero los movimientos de la cabeza.” (167).

<sup>100</sup>The allusions to an animal—a bull in this example—occur on more than one occasion throughout the narrative, and demonstrates how Díez de Games, while constructing battle scenes through realistic descriptions, maintains a foothold in the fictional world of chivalric literature (Beltrán 252, fn. 136).

soldiers amongst the fray, and the wounding scenes are absent the face-to-face combat that characterizes the knightly encounters of texts like *Amadís*.

Still, Pero Niño must press forward, and he again forces his injured body to suppress the pain—which the author notes is significant—and fights with renewed ferocity: “E con el grand dolor que sintió, tornó muy más bravamente a ellos, más que nunca ante fuera” (253). Attacking rather than retreating, Pero Niño subjects his already injured body to more blows. As he approaches a bridge, he suffers “muchos golpes de espadas en los hombros e en la cabeça, e a la fin por fuerça gel as ovo de subir.” Some of these strikes hit the arrow still lodged in his face, causing him excruciating pain (“que a la vezes le tocavan en el viratón que traía por las narizes, donde él avía grand dolor”, 253), and in particular one drives the arrow deeper into his flesh (“E acaesçio que uno, por se escudar dél, le dio con el escudo tan grand golpe en el viratón que ge lo fizo entrar en la cabeça más que no estava de antes”, 253).

It is obvious that Díez de Games constructs Pero Niño’s masculinity by appealing to the pathos of the hero’s wounds and his ability to overcome them. This does not involve death because, as Karras explains, “a man could acquire honor without taking it from someone else” (60), meaning killing was not always required for honor to be gained. Pero Niño is an exemplar because of his extreme fortitude. He never stops fighting until the goal is achieved: “E quando Pero Niño salió de la pelea, la su buena adarga toda hera ya cortada e fecha pieças, e la espiga del espada torçida, a ora de quebrar e descabeçar, e toda mellada, fecha sierra, tinta en sangre” (253). According to both imaginative and historical writing, for knights the fighting itself is “exhilarating and fulfilling” and “the key to identity” (Kaeuper 143).

Despite Pero Niño's ability to transcend wounds and continue fighting with greater force, he is ultimately faced with a life-threatening injury. In Chapter 44, while fighting in Túnez, he is laid low by a wound, but the same chivalric attitude towards pain, injuries, and the body sustains him. Now a veteran captain commanding a crew that patrols the Mediterranean, Pero Niño engages in a battle exhausted: "aquel día ovo muchos golpes de piedras, e lanças, e saetas, e hera muy cansado e quebrantado" (293). In particular, a "saetada" to the leg incapacitates him for the foreseeable future and causes him great pain: "lo que más le enpeçia hera una saetada que le dieran en la pierna, de que se sentía muy maltrecho; mas non que durante la pelea ninguno ge lo sintiese" (293). As before, he does not allow the wound to impede his fighting and only after the battle has concluded does he acknowledge the pain, and recognizes that his body is too damaged to be effective. He is therefore reduced to plotting strategy and directing the assault on the coastal settlements in order to obtain supplies (Chapter 50).

Before the attack, Pero Niño extolls his men, saying "Amigos, ya vedes en la priesa que somos si esta agua non se toma. ¡Subid a ellos! Ya vedes que non puedo yr con vosotros—ca estava ferido de la ferida que le dieran en Túnez—. ¡Fazed como buenos!" (306). His body at this point is unfit to inspire the men in battle, so his harangue must serve to motivate the troops.<sup>101</sup> His speech reveals that he is conscious of his body's present limitations. His prior injuries have been to the torso, neck, and face—areas of the body more protected by armor and which are not disabling—but his injured leg cannot support his

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<sup>101</sup>Gravatt identifies this harangue as the second in *El Victorial*, and notes that his contributions prior to being wounded afford him the authority to ask his men to assault the Moorish coast without him (159).

body,<sup>102</sup> and his identity as a knight-warrior is in doubt because he cannot do what knights do.

The king summons Pero Niño and his men to Seville, where surgeons examine the wounded leg and determine it must be amputated in order for him to survive.<sup>103</sup> The loss of an extremity would be calamitous for a knight, handicapping his ability to fight and thus stripping him of his identity and compromising his masculinity. Aware of this, Pero Niño states “Si la ora es llegada en que yo devo morir, sea fecho en mí lo que a Dios plaze. Ca el cavallero, mejor le es morir con todos sus miembros juntos, segund que Dios ge los dio, que non bivar lastimado e menguado, e verse e non ser para bien ninguno” (312). For him, the diagnosis is as good as a death sentence and thus unacceptable. He implores the surgeons to seek an alternative, which they agree must involve cauterizing the wound in order to have any hope of recovery.

Díez de Games imparts tension into his narrative by describing a medical procedure, which again tests Pero Niño’s hardiness on a surgeon’s table rather than a battlefield. He describes how the surgeons “calentaron un fierro tan grueso como fasta de viratón, blanco” (312). Although the goal of the surgeons is to heal, they hesitate to continue because of the pain that applying the viraton would inflict, “la pena que le faría pasar” (313). However, Pero Niño is underterred, because “feeling pain was a badge of honor, a test successfully taken, and the sufferers did not seek alleviation” (Esther Cohen 198). In such situations, pain was an important marker of masculinity as the human body is one of the places where the battle

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<sup>102</sup>Fallows’s study on jousting calls attention to the importance of the knight’s lower body and that it be well developed in order to support chivalric combats. He cites examples from history such as Don Álvaro de Luna and England’s Henry VIII, as well as fictional knights from the Arthurian romances (175-76).

<sup>103</sup>Penetrating wounds like the one Pero Niño suffers to his leg could lead to infection. Amputation, though, was also a dangerous operation with high mortality rates. See Mitchell 152-159.

between good and evil takes place, and impassivity towards it functions as a symbol of knightly identity (Cohen 210-11). Unlike other battlefield wounds which are obstacles to be overcome, here Pero Niño shows his manliness by cauterizing the gash himself: “E Pero Niño, que hera ya usado de tales trabajos, tomó en su mano el fierro caliente, blanco, e metiólo él mesmo todo por la pierna fasta la otra parte. E diéronle luego otro tal. E así lo puso, dos vezes, que nunca hombre le sintió fazer ni mostrar quexo ninguno” (313).

While chivalric works like *Amadís de Gaula* narrate battles in a way that is formulaic and show little understanding of a knight's body, beyond the fact that it is almost indestructible and indefatigable, *El passo honroso*, *El Victorial*, and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* challenge this view. They intimate that knights undergo formalized training that includes foot combat (with or without the sword), the handling of lances, and jousting. They also show the interplay between the functionality and form in armor, the inherent dangers combat posed for the body, and give special attention to height, shoulder width, and muscularity, as these all contributed to a knight's excellence in performance. Above all, they codify a concept of the male physique that has changed, as armor increasingly enhanced “the powerfully articulated musculature, formalized stomach, and rectangular chest reflected a physical ideal that was associated metaphorically with the highest military and moral virtue” (Springer 25).

Our conclusion is that these works present their protagonists in very realistic battle scenes that nevertheless are connected to some aspects of idealistic chivalric works. Pero Niño, for example, constantly places his body in danger in order to achieve the highest honor possible in battle. He fights against larger men with insufficient protection and against seemingly insurmountable odds. He also confronts bodily injury and death bravely from

youth to old age. These achievements and wounds elevate his masculinity to the level of an exemplar. Works like *El Victorial* depict a hero who is virile, presses on despite being wounded, faces risks other than those present in war, but always remains close to reality.

#### CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF WEAPONS IN *EL VICTORIAL* AND THE *HISTORIA DE LOS HECHOS DEL MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ*

Chapter 3 discussed a variety of ways the body displays knightly masculinity in the chivalric chronicles and biographies as compared to *Amadís de Gaula*. This chapter examines specific weapons and tactics such as fire, the crossbow, and gunpowder artillery that are particular to *El Victorial* and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*. While its knights still deliver the heavy blows that characterize combats in the books of chivalry, *El Victorial* and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* portray missions and attacks that reveal behaviors that were conditioned by these weapons, which are barely mentioned in works like the *Amadís* but that have subsequently come to be considered as heroic as the single charge.

Knights trained for combat as required by their social status (Harari 34-35), individually or in small groups and in the presence of older men of their own class.<sup>104</sup> Their elite status provided them opportunities to learn about different types of engagements, and as a result they were hardened to the extreme conditions of war and knew how to meet new challenges. In the *CMC*, for example, the Cid's *mesnada* is weakest at the beginning of the poem, but his autonomy from Castile frees him to conduct his military undertakings as he

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<sup>104</sup>Although they were the best prepared to participate in and lead special operations, medieval knights are not to be considered “special forces” because they did not “specialize” in a specific type of field operation nor receive collective formal training in groups.

sees fit. In order to take Castejón, the Cid approaches under cover of darkness and waits until the unsuspecting Moors leave the fortress poorly guarded at dawn.<sup>105</sup> Then he pounces:

El Campeador salio de la çelada,  
corrie a Castejon sin falla.  
Moros e moras avien los de ganança,  
e essos gañados quantos en derredor andan.  
Mio Çid don Rodrigo a la puerta adeliñava;  
los que la tienen quando vieron la rebata  
ovieron miedo e fue desempurada.  
Mio Çid Ruy Diaz por las puertas entrava,  
en mano trae desnuda el espada,  
quinze moros matava de los que alcançava.  
Gaño a Castejon y el oro e la plata. (464-73)

The taking of Castejón is not unusual. Knights frequently utilized ambushes to achieve difficult objectives when at a numerical disadvantage. While his actions may have run counter to the common chivalric concept of warfare, its presence in text nevertheless implies that they were popular with audiences who enjoyed the tales of small bands of knights accomplishing the seemingly impossible (Harari 9).<sup>106</sup> The poet recognizes this when he says “¡d’aqueste acorro hablará toda España” (453). The scene reveals the Cid’s courage and exalts “bravery, teamwork, self-sacrifice, frankness, loyalty, and camaraderie,” because these

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<sup>105</sup>As previously discussed in Chapter 2, critics have disputed the heroic merits of deceptive tactics—especially the movement at night—but these types of maneuvers reveal the Cid’s “sapientia” as a leader, as well as the poet’s understanding of what appeals to audiences.

<sup>106</sup>The scene has received much debate, largely because the Cid does not confront the fortress head-on, but instead relies on trickery to take it. Hall argues that the military maneuvers presented in the poem were common tactics during the Middle Ages, and the poet could have easily known about them without needing to consult earlier Latin sources for the scene’s inspiration. He aims to dispel earlier arguments made by scholars such as Colin Smith, Hook, and Baldwin, who believe that the poet derives the inspiration for his battle scenes from earlier Latin texts such as Frontino’s *Strategmaton*, Vegetius’s *De re militari*, and Caesar’s *de Bello Gallico*, and thus argue for a single poet who was a learned man with access to these types of texts. However, as Hall convincingly shows, the tactics used by the Cid, while similar to certain episodes from the aforementioned Latin texts, were actually commonplace during the Middle Ages, and thus “the author of the *Poema* need not have been literate and familiar with Roman history to conceive the capture of Alcocer, just reasonably well informed about contemporary military practice” (616). Lomax notes that the historical Cid employed ambush tactics at Cuarte against the Almoravids attempting to retake Valencia (74), thereby hypothesizing that the Cid was known for his skillful strategies.

are “the elements of true manliness. To become a truly virile man, the Cid must emulate the heroes of the epic” (Harney, “Pre-War Propaganda” 82).

As Harney points out, “in Reconquest Spain, virile leadership chiefly means conducting sieges, devising strategy, distributing plunder, extorting ransoms, levying tribute, managing prisoners and captives” (“Pre-War Propaganda” 81).<sup>107</sup> These remain important throughout the history of war, but are expressed differently with the advent of newer weapons.

Later knights like Pero Niño and Ponce de León execute missions that economically and politically benefit their respective sovereigns. When their efforts result in winnings, they simultaneously imply losses for an opposing side, which likewise uses force for political and economic gain. This cycle of violence plays out on the battlefield, and requires using unconventional weapons to achieve victory.

## **Fire**

Fire has been employed in warfare for thousands of years, but its presence in Castilian texts has been largely understudied. Medieval soldiers were no strangers to tactical incendiary devices such as Greek fire. Used as offensive weapons, fire had long been acknowledged to have many benefits, especially at sea (Ladero Quesada 276). Burning was perhaps this epoch’s equivalent to carpet-bombing: a way to uniformly destroy an area’s infrastructure and ability to wage war. Unlike edged weapons more commonly used by

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<sup>107</sup>The *CMC* provides an excellent example of such a knight. Many scholars attest to the Cid’s characterization as an astute military commander who understands and utilizes surprise tactics, safeguards the provisions and establishments of his forces while disrupting those of the enemy, gathers and protects intelligence, and of course besieges as well as breaks the sieges laid against him. For example, see studies by Baldwin, Hall, Hendrix, Ramsden, Hook, and Schafner.

knights, such as swords, lances, and sometimes arrows or even projectiles of limited range, fire consumes everything in its path once it is lit until there is nothing left; it does not distinguish heraldry, rank, friends or foes. Fire is also uncaring of religious, political, or social distinctions.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, the practice of burning was a fundamental technique in the fifteenth century intended to impede the enemy's ability to wage war (Vale, *War and Chivalry* 156-57; McGlynn 242).<sup>109</sup>

The use of fire contrasts with the many examples of honorable, face-to-face combat meant to reveal character found in *El Victorial*. But, if literature praises heroes for their 'mesura' and their prowess in face-to-face combat, how does burning a countryside or village translate into being manly? The answer is in the way that it is presented.

Pero Niño defeats the enemy using fire during a supply raid on the Moorish coast (chapter 49). Díez de Games shows the grisly details of the mission—one which Pero Niño plans and organizes, but in which he does not participate personally. His men begin their assault by sacking the countryside and herding the enemy's cattle to their galleys, a standard resupplying measure for military forces on the move. The Moors mount a counter-attack as Pero Niño's forces penetrate their camp looking for goods, but the Moors are finally overcome and their tents burned: "E entraron por las tiendas, feriendo e matando en los

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<sup>108</sup>Defining what was considered cruel in the Middle Ages is challenging. According to Daniel Baraz, "one problem that is immediately apparent in attempts to characterize an era is that modern notions of cruelty, or the lack thereof, are imposed on a remote historical period. In addition, the characterization of a period as cruel is based on the mistaken assumption that cruelty is an objective category. Burning heretics at the stake seems cruel to our modern Western sensibilities, but the American prison system may seem equally cruel to observers from another culture" (2).

<sup>109</sup>Vegetius states "the main and principal point in war is to secure plenty of provisions and to destroy the enemy by famine." Also, Prestwich cites Scottish raiding successes in the fourteenth-century as evidence of fire's effectiveness in war (198).

moros...e pusieron fuego al alhorma” (301-02). The intention is to cripple their ability to reorganize and launch a proper counter attack, thus facilitating the Castilian’s escape.

Even though the mission is successful, it is striking that Pero Niño leaves it up to his men and does not go inland initially with the raiding party. The reason for his absence is that, while necessary for the purposes of war, such a raid lacks the potential for the type of chivalric glory grounded in a doctrine of service. Since there is no single combat with an equal or superior opponent, there is no need for him. Using fire requires no martial skills, and, in this case, is a bad tool to reveal manly prowess.

Since Pero Niño’s characterization does not benefit by participating in this part of the battle, Díez de Games reserves his action for when his men, overburdened with booty, are pinned down by the Moors and on the verge of defeat. At this point, he appears because there is an implied contrast between the avariciousness of his men, and his own selflessness in rushing to save them: “quando vio Pero Niño su gente en tan grand peligro, salió en tierra e fizo salir consigo todos quantos con él avian quedado, e dexó las galeas solas, encomendadas a Dios, e acorrió a los suyos” (303).<sup>110</sup> Pero Niño can exhibit his chivalric mettle during the rescue and not the raid.

In a later episode, Pero Niño ventures into southwest France and the Garonne River and confronts a set of circumstances that are different than those he faces at the Moorish encampment. Unlike his supply raid, on the Garonne he engages enemy forces as part of a mission against English settlements. This part of France was a hostile zone during the

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<sup>110</sup>Beltrán validates the author’s verisimilitude, stating “la persecución que sufren los codiciosos robadores está plasmada con dramático verismo...las dotes de Gutierre Díez, que sabe hacer del episodio un emocionante capítulo novelesco, culminan en este epílogo feliz” (303, fn. 198).

Hundred Years War, where English forces utilized scorched-earth tactics to subdue the French economy and limit their military capability (Prestwich 200-02).

Pero Niño systematically pillages English encampments along the river: “salió la gente en tierra, e robaron muchas casas que avía por la ribera, e prendieron hombres, e traxeron mucho ganado a la ribera, de vacas e ovejas, e tomaron dello lo que ovieron menester; e después acogieron la gente, e llegaron çerca de la çiudad” (356). At Bordeaux, they take fire from English artillery before torching “unos fermosos palaçios” (357). This tactic diverges the enemy’s forces to defend the palaces and facilitates Pero Niño’s movement farther up river, where his men disembark and burn 150 homes, food stores, as well as rob and kill all in their path: “e pasaron las galeas a la otra parte de la ribera, e mandó el capitán poner fuego a todas las casas, e a los panes, que avía muchos por aquella tierra, e matar e robar quanto fallasen” (357). Pero Niño’s operation clearly involves mass destruction of the enemy’s homes and infrastructure in order to cripple its forces, and “fazer más daño en la tierra de los yngleses” (357).

Gascony puts Pero Niño at odds with a superior opponent in a region characterized for its hardiness: “todos los que dellos sabían heran muy maravillados del grand acometimiento e esfuerço que el capitán fizo en entrar en tal lugar, donde nunca entraron otras galeas, e quemar la más guardada tierra e bien poblada de toda Gascaña” (358). His tactics, despite their gruesome nature, are thus appropriate because he defeats these opponents and further handicaps its ability to wage war. In doing so, however, *El Victorial* also reveals the unfortunate realities of war.

This battle highlights the literary conflict that existed between idealistic and realistic displays of warfare. The dichotomy of good versus evil at the core of the chivalric romances

allowed authors like Rodríguez de Montalvo to repeatedly display the violent behaviors of their protagonists in way that did not dishonor them. This dichotomy exists because in the Spanish chivalric romance, “Combat most frequently occurs between individual men, or between single men and beasts or monsters...but institutions, including the state, are seldom the perpetrators” (Harney, “Violence” 324). Real knights in *El Victorial*, however, participated in a different type of encounter that required them to use weapons that, at times, are characterized as dishonorable or unchivalric, but that ultimately provided smaller forces with a necessary tool to win.

### **The Crossbow**

In chivalric literature, the sword is the weapon most commonly associated with the noble warrior. Historically, it was considered a symbol of a nobleman’s hereditary rights to leadership (DeVries 19; Von Bloh 203), and, putting aside any phallic implications, it was an extension of the knight’s manliness. In many instances, as with the Cid’s swords “Tizona” and “Colada” in the *CMC*, this weapon reflected the hero’s prowess if won in battle, and was considered a treasure to be passed down through the generations of a family. In the “Introduction” to his foundational study of the medieval European sword, Ewart Oakeshott describes the sword as “a most noble weapon which once had high significance in the minds of men, and fulfilled the most vital and personal service in their hands” (11). Don Juan Manuel, one of Spain’s writers, wrote that “Et esta espada significa tres cosas: la primera, fortaleza porque esde fierro; la seguna, justicia porque corta de ambas las partes; la tercera, la

cruz.”<sup>111</sup> According to Llull, its cross-shape is representative of Christ’s sacrifice and triumph over death.<sup>112</sup>

Since *El Victorial*’s goal is to cement Pero Niño as one of history’s greatest knights,<sup>113</sup> the reader expects a logical connection between the warrior and his primary weapon, the sword. Instead, this text identifies the crossbow as the hero’s fundamental weapon and the agent of his masculinity. The crossbow overshadows the sword because of its unique utilitarian application as a weapon for special missions, ones that often match he and his men against greater numbers who possess a geographical advantage.

Portraying the principal knight fighting with a crossbow seems odd when considering the weapon’s tumultuous history. For example, it did not carry the same favor with the Church or the nobility as the sword during the high Middle Ages, evident by the Second and Fourth Lateran Council’s attempts to prohibit its use because it was deemed a “punishment from Heaven” (Bruhn 89).<sup>114</sup> Neither was it a common weapon for knights, whose purpose was to fight on horseback with swords and lances (Jones, *Knight* 44-46).

Even so, despite its reputation as a diabolical invention, the Moors and Christians of the Iberian Peninsula employed the weapon during battle because of its incredible effectiveness (García Cuadrado).<sup>115</sup> Alfonso X even makes note of the expertise of the

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<sup>111</sup>Don Juan Manuel, *Libro de las armas*. Taken from *Diccionario de ciencias militares*, Vol II (“Espada”) by Mariano Rubió y Bellvé.

<sup>112</sup>See Chapter 3, “Armor and the Horse”: “para significar que así como Nuestro Señor Jesucristo venció en la cruz a la muerte en la que habíamos caído por el pecado de nuestro padre Adán, así el caballero debe vencer y destruir a los enemigos de la cruz con la espada” (65).

<sup>113</sup>Beltrán Llavador affirms this in his “Introducción” (21).

<sup>114</sup>The crossbow was a staple of medieval armies during the Crusades, used by the French, the North Italians, the Genovese, and the Flemish. Philippe Auguste of France founded a special corps of crossbowmen, and Richard the Lionheart used it despite being banned (Bruhn 88-89).

<sup>115</sup>For example, the crossbow was a key weapon at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). See Bruhn 90.

crossbowmen from the Balearic Islands in his *Primera crónica general*: “Et Baleares tanto quier dezir en el lenguaje de Castilla como cosas que pertenesca a ballestas, porque dizen que en aquellas yslas suele auer aquellas meiores ballestas et los meiores Ballesteros del mundo et más sotiles et que maior sepan abenir en fecho de ballestas.”<sup>116</sup>

Centuries later in the seventeenth century, Alonso Martínez de Espinar explains in his *Arte de ballestería y montería* that, as firearms progressed, the crossbow remained a viable and even preferred option because of its safety in use (it would not explode as a gun might) and silence (a gun gives off a loud ‘pop’ when fired), even though it was mostly carried into battle by foot soldiers:

El manejo de la ballista es mas seguro para la vida del hombre que el arcabuz; porque no se ha visto que con ella aya sucedido desgracia de muerte por quebrarse la vergo, o cuerda, que son las dos cosas que tienen peligro, y que suelen faltar muchas vezes [...] Tiene la ballesta muchas cosas mejores que el arcabuz; mas secreta, y entre la caza mata, y no espanta (11).

Martínez de Espinar’s description appeals strictly to the weapon’s utilitarian function, and mentions nothing about any possible symbolic value, even though it was the nobility that came to rely on it for hunting.

Although the weapon was used for hunting, the fact that the knight was measured by his physical force created a cultural barrier that prevented it from becoming a regular part of his arsenal (Jones, *Knight* 49). He could demonstrate his martial prowess by fighting with his sword or lance, but certain types of missions could limit the effectiveness of these close-range slashing weapons.

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<sup>116</sup>Taken from García Cuadrado, 315. Also, certain illuminations of his *Cantigas de Santa María* show scenes of the crossbow in battle, particularly with the Moors using it (see the illuminations for “canción XXVIII” for a good example). Also, see the illuminations from the *Gran Conquista de Ultramar*, which also show the weapon in battle.

Most of Pero Niño's military activities could be termed "guerrilla warfare" or "special operations," because he fights with small forces in geographically challenging locations like the sea and coastal zones, and does not lead conventional forces. His actions are normal in medieval warfare, since fighting commonly avoided larger confrontations. His fighting, like special operations today, "is limited to a small area, takes a relatively short span of time, and is conducted by a small force, yet is capable of achieving significant strategic or political results disproportional to the resources invested in it" (Harari 1).<sup>117</sup>

These operations rely on a myriad of weapons that function as "force multipliers," defined as objects or skills that permit the standard resources used in regular missions to produce extraordinary results (Harari 1-2; Hall 612).<sup>118</sup> As the key figure of these special missions, the knight functions in a manner akin to the contemporary male action hero.<sup>119</sup>

In the hands of skilled fighting men, the crossbow becomes a force multiplier because it could be armed and then later discharged at the soldier's discretion, the shooter could move on foot, stop, and still fire at a moments notice, or even fire while moving.<sup>120</sup> Pero Niño uses

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<sup>117</sup>Yuval Noah Harari's study offers a wide-range of examples of special operations taking place during the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, but medieval Spain is largely absent and only examples from Hernán Cortés's conquest of Mexico are mentioned. He argues that the kidnapping of Moctezuma and the events that lead to the conquest of the Aztec Empire amounted to a special operation "performed by a gang of adventurers with no special skills, little military experience, no group training, and questionable group cohesion" (37). Since communications were abysmally slow—especially for men exploring deep into unknown territories—operations such as the one undertaken by Cortés were executed on the authority of the group leader instead of the authorization of the highest command. Harari's claim, however, is vaguely explained and reveals a lack of deep understanding of how Cortés and his men understood themselves and their mission.

<sup>118</sup>Hall argues that "the application of modern military technology to a literary text dealing with medieval warfare may seem anachronistic but need be no more so than the application of modern literary theory or psychoanalysis to works whose authors had never heard of Derrida or Freud" (612).

<sup>119</sup>Curiously, as the knight did in medieval times, the contemporary action hero has come to personify exemplary national maleness in both literature and film (Harari 6).

<sup>120</sup>The crossbow's major advantage over the longbow was that it could remain in the shooting position for sustained periods of time, whereas a longbow required the shooter to release the projectile at the moment of full draw (DeVries 42).

weaponry such as the crossbow in unconventional ways in order to deal with challenging terrain and numerical disadvantages.

Two examples of this occur during missions to secure water at Alcoçébar. In the first, Pero Niño and his crew are patrolling the Barbary Coast when their water supply begins to run low (chapter 38). They prepare to land at a cave known to have fresh water: “El acuerdo fue que fuesen tomar agua dulce a unas cuevas que llaman de Alcoçébar, que son ribera de la mar” (277). However, the elevated topography surrounding the cave poses a challenge to Pero Niño’s mission in that his adversaries already hold the high ground and know how to defend it: “E está ençima dellas la tierra mucho alta, tanto que de ençima dellas pueden defender el agua que no la tomen...que aquellos moros son muy usados de guerra” (277). These few men positioned above can defend their position more effectively; hence, the common phrase “fighting an uphill battle” to mean something of greater difficulty.<sup>121</sup> This military concept is well known, evidenced by Vegetius’s comments of the importance of achieving the high ground in battle in his *Epitome de Rei Militari*:

E si la fuerça manifiesta fuere aparejada en los montes de los henemigos, entonçe conviene que para la defensión sean ocupados los lugares más altos porque quando el henemigo viniere él se falle más baxo de guise que non ose cometer nin fazer obra quando viere los armados delante sí e ençima de su cabeça. (395)<sup>122</sup>

What his argument does not account for, though, is a force multiplier like the crossbow, which, if used properly, can negate this topographical advantage and provide the upper hand.

Pero Niño’s troops take advantage of the crossbow’s long-range effectiveness, which allows them to fire at the Moors from a greater distance by organizing a battle formation that

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<sup>121</sup>Another well-known example of a small band of soldiers using terrain as a force-multiplier is the famous Battle of Thermopylae, where it is reported that 300 Spartan warriors stalled the advance of an exponentially larger army by funneling their march through a narrow passage that nullified their numerical advantage. Several studies exist on this battle. See, for example, Ernle Bradford and Paul Cartledge.

<sup>122</sup>Book III, chapter 6.

offers maximum protection and simultaneously ensures a high-rate of fire (Riquer, “Las armas” 174-75). In order to compensate for his disadvantages, Pero Niño uses crossbow fire with mobile cover of twenty “paveses,” or body-size shields for protection of the firing units of crossbowmen: “e puso su bandera que estuviere queda en un lugar, e hordenó fasta veynte pavesados, e los ballesteros (e) en pos ellos, que non fazían sino lancer toda vía” (278). Since Pero Niño’s goal is not to gain territory, but instead to secure fresh water, he does not overcommit his troops to fight the better-positioned Moors. However, while these men create a curtain of fire to occupy the Moorish defenders, a second group proceeds to secure the water. This tactic, combined with the crew’s valor, is enough to overcome the enemy’s geographical advantage:

Ellos fueron muy de rezio, e él con ellos, a ferir en los moros, así que mataron de aquella arrancada muchos dellos; ca son muy desarmados, aunque son muy denodados, e pelean muy bien con esas pocas armas que ellos usan. E fuyeron los otros. E tornó [Pero Niño] con su gente a salvo a las galeas, e falló que avian tomado los suyos quanta agua ovieron menester. (278)

The text focuses on the heroic efforts of the soldiers directly fighting the Moors, and only mentions at the end the successes of the other unit that secured the water. This attention enhances the crossbow’s role as an effective tool of battle and vehicle for demonstrating prowess. Attempting this mission with only swords would have been suicidal given the Moor’s terrestrial advantage. Yet the crossbow is the perfect weapon to use during this unconventional assault. As such, it acts as the agent of masculinity by allowing Pero Niño and his men to perform feats that would otherwise be catastrophic, or impossible, with a different weapon.

The second example of a water raid at Alcoçebbar characterizes Pero Niño as a skilled sharp-shooter who uses the crossbow to participate in the fighting from the safety of his

galley (chapter 50). Prior to this mission Pero Niño is wounded, and he cannot go ashore with his men during the current assault. Since he is unable to participate in the most valorous part of the operation, the author crafts the scene to spotlight Pero Niño's strength and expertise at using the crossbow:

Estavan en lo alto muchos moros, e las galeas estavan tan llegadas a la tierra, que las piedras que lançavan muchas dellas. E los ballesteros de las galeas matavan e ferían muchos dellos; e armavan al capitán muy rezias ballestas, e fazía tiros muy señalados, en que fería hombres e cavallos. (305)

Even though he is lame, Pero Niño fires well-placed shots from the galley, and therefore still has an impact in the outcome of the battle.

The author imprints on Pero Niño a certain and unique skill-set as a way to distinguish him in battle, even though he is far from the action. It was difficult for unskilled soldiers to fire "accurate shots" with early models of the crossbow. Additionally, men needed to be strong in order to arm these in the fifteenth century, as they were largely made from composite materials or entirely of steel (DeVries 45). In order to be accurate, they had to develop their shooting skills, since most crossbows lacked true aiming sites (DeVries 46). These challenges would, of course, be magnified while engaged in combat against enemy troops.

As these examples of combat show, the crossbow is a valued weapon in the hands of a skilled knight, but in order for it to have a deeper meaning as a reflection of Pero Niño's masculinity, it must achieve symbolic importance akin to the sword. Díez de Games, therefore, fulfills this need through a scene where Pero Niño demonstrates his physical prowess in front of his peers by arming a reputable crossbow, "la Niña."

When Pero Niño attends a courtly banquet at Marseilles in honor of the Pope, several "ballesteros" present are renowned for their crossbowmen skills and strength at arming large

crossbows, and all try their hand at arming the famous “Niña.” Several swords are given names throughout chivalric literature, such as the Cid’s “Tizona” and “Colada,” King Arthur’s “Excalibur,” and Roland’s “Durendal,” thus branding them the most recognizable weapon in the knight’s arsenal. Yet, the only weapon given a name in *El Victorial* is this crossbow, and its purpose is to be a test of strength for courtly entertainment:

E en este comedio adoleció allí Pero Niño, e veníanle a ver los cavalleros del Papa; otrosí venían a él los más famosos ballesteros armadores que entonce heran en aquella partida, Antonio Bonora, E Françisco del Puerto, e otros buenos ballesteros, a la fama que Pero Niño tenía de grand armador de ballista, e por ver e tentar sus ballestas. E él avía muchas buenas, entre las quales avía una famosa ballista, e fuerte, que llamavan “la Niña.” E probáronla e non la pudieron armar. (283)

Although just a test of strength, the fact that it takes place in front of others changes the dynamic of the scene. Success would be public, and therefore celebrated; failure, too, would not be hidden, and thus implications of honor are at stake. While the failures of other men to arm the weapon may not make them less-honorable, it does make it seem as though the task is an impossible one, which sets the stage for Pero Niño to stand out by accomplishing it: “E levantóse Pero Niño de la cama, aunque aquella ora estava con calentura; vestido un camisón, armó la ballista a çinto” (283). By arming it, he wins, and by winning he gains honor.

The ideals of strength and prowess that are usually associated with the sword are now projected onto the crossbow. Just as only King Arthur can extract Excalibur from the stone, so too is Pero Niño the only knight able to arm the legendary “Niña.” And not only does he assert his manliness by arming the crossbow, he does so while sick with fever and absent full strength.

The crossbow, therefore, is both a weapon worthy of displaying strength in court, but also highly practical for the battlefield since it facilitates smaller forces or forces at a distinct

disadvantage to successfully complete difficult missions. Its somewhat convoluted history oscillates between that of a weapon disdained by the theological shapers of chivalry and that of a highly functional tool essential to effective combat operations. These two poles collide in *El Victorial*, which portrays and even celebrates the crossbow's functionality in unconventional warfare, but that also considers it a noble instrument.

## Artillery

The Granadan frontier, as a literary setting, is especially known for having inspired the “romancero fronterizo” genre, but this 650-kilometer stretch of land also plays host to the majority of the deeds of the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*. Historically, the frontier was the backdrop for constant military and political activity, where both the Moors and Christians maneuvered to maintain and secure territory, and although they coexisted through peace agreements and cultural exchanges, these did not prevent skirmishes or tensions from escalating into full-scale war.<sup>123</sup>

The Moors and the Christians had distinct reasons for fighting. The Castilian nobility consistently pursued territorial expansion and the establishment of a dominant military presence in the southern part of the Peninsula (Ladero Quesada 329).<sup>124</sup> Controlling territory along the frontier meant 1) taking and holding “ciudades-base,” which included first and second-line fortified villages of varying sizes and defensive capabilities; 2) disrupting

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<sup>123</sup>Speaking of the truces that governed behavior along this stretch of land, Ladero Quesada explains that “las treguas fueron acuerdos destinados a suspender las hostilidades en gran escala y a dulcificar una convivencia fronteriza muy intensa, en la que no faltaron elementos de coexistencia pacífica y, a veces, de buena vecindad, pero marcada por el signo de la rivalidad, la violencia y las represalias, que manifestaban la situación general de enfrentamiento entre las partes” (329).

<sup>124</sup>In order for the nobility living in the southern part of the peninsula to ascend the ranks of Castilian society, they needed more economic influence, which meant gaining more lands. Also, they needed to provide a strong military service to the monarchy, and expanding territories offered an opportunity for that as well. See Ladero Quesada 331.

communications by capturing watchtowers (“atalayas”); and 3) destroying the infrastructure and sustainability of enemy economies through raids (Ladero Quesada 229-31). Open war, however, was avoided whenever possible because of the severity of the campaigns, and because their high cost in precious military and economic resources offered little return on investment.<sup>125</sup> Large incursions into the Moorish territories were harmful to the Moors, but territorial gains were minimal due to the fact that the Castilian forces regularly withdrew to safer zones (Ladero Quesada 331).

The Moorish objective was to defend their lands and, when possible, expand them. The frontier served as the launching point of *jihad*, whose religious underpinnings helped recruit willing volunteers as well as generate more wide-spread enthusiasm about fighting (Ladero Quesada 327). They relied on a static yet stout fortification system to defend themselves against the Castilian’s incursions along the Granadan frontier.<sup>126</sup> Due to the short distance between each fort (at most twelve kilometers), the landscape was covered with castles, walled cities, and watchtowers that represented a connected series of sanctuaries and observation posts (Purton 347).<sup>127</sup> As a result of their abundance of fortifications, they were

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<sup>125</sup>Ladero Quesada argues that fifteenth-century wars “tal vez fueron menos gravosas o insoportables [porque], en definitiva, la guerra tradicional no suele producir bienes económicos sino que destruye o, todo lo más, redistribuye algunos de los que ya hay...” (221).

<sup>126</sup>This defensive approach became necessary because the Castilians had achieved offensive superiority by adopting Moorish guerrilla tactics and pairing them with better artillery. Ground fighting consisted largely of sporadic skirmishes, and raids were low-risk, effective ways of harming the enemy. It was the Moors, though, who established military supremacy initially because the unpredictability of the Castilian raids drove defenders to counter with their own guerrilla tactics, thereby producing an environment of perpetual warfare. As Castilian forces advanced on Granada, their movement was limited by a number of passes through the rugged mountains, and both sides employed a sophisticated early warning system in the form of watchtowers, beacons, and roving patrols that intended to alert inhabitants to secure their livestock and food stores when needed (Nicolle 62).

<sup>127</sup>The key cities—Ronda, Málaga, Almería, Guadix, and Loxa—enjoyed the presence of both a citadel and powerful city walls (Purton 347).

likewise symbolic refuges for both sides, and therefore they assume a central yet complex role in texts like the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* (Jong 15).

For men like Ponce de León, who viewed the Granadan fortresses and the lands they protected first and foremost as opportunities for territorial, material, and ultimately political gain, tactics changed against these locations. Taking and then holding territory became a primary goal, evident in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* where the Castilians steadily gain control the Moorish frontier and drive refugees into other municipalities closer to Granada (Snow 293). In fact, of the fifty-two chapters in Carriazo Rubio's edition of the text, thirty are about achieving territorial control through an assault or siege. Yet, conquering a fortress was a costly and complicated endeavor because they protected from exterior attacks by offering soldiers cover and concealment behind its walls.

Since the overall goal was to breach the walls, two options existed at this time: scaling over the wall, or bombardment with artillery to knock the wall down (Harari 10-12). The former is a soldier-centered tactic, and provides better opportunities for men to display their grit; the latter is a weapon-centered form of assault that removes the knight from his traditional role as shock-trooper, compelling a recalibration of what it means for him to perform manliness in battle. The *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* provides examples of both.

The soldier-centered assaults narrated in *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* underscore the importance of group cohesion through mission planning, as well as verbal displays like singing or the war cries, as alternative paradigms from which to understand manly performativity in battle. Even though soldier-centered assaults required the fighters to engage their targets at close distance, these are not individual feats-of-arms like the joust or foot

combat. Instead, because of the mission complexity, these assaults rely on the careful execution of a plan that requires choreographed movements and steady nerves.

First, the assault force must arrive at its target, not an easy task when traversing a jagged landscape under the cover of darkness. Ponce de León sometimes moves with thousands of men on foot, maintaining a low profile while approaching a fortress, and then positioning his men to climb the outer wall unseen. This is a feat requiring tremendous physical prowess and psychological discipline. Once having arrived at the site of the assault, an ambush of equal or greater difficulty usually followed that involved secretly scaling the inner walls and catching the inhabitants off guard.

While deceiving the enemy like this may appear to run contrary to the examples of face-to-face, “honorable” battle found throughout chivalric romances, the Castilian philosopher Don Juan Manuel argues the merits of guerilla warfare—which were adaptations of Moorish tactics—in his *Libro de los estados*:

La guerra de los moros non es como la de los cristianos; también en la guerra guerreada como cuando cercan o combaten o son cercados o combatidos, como en las cabalgadas et correduras, como en el andar por el camino et el posar de la hueste, como en las lides, en todo es muy departida la una manera de la otra...Et cuando en cabalgada andan caminan quanto pueden de noche et de día fasta que son lo más dentro que pueden entrar de la tierra que quieren correr. Et la entrada entran muy encobiertamente et muy apriesa; et de que comienzan a correr, corren et roban tanta tierra et sábenlo tan bien facer que es grant maravilla, que más tierra correrán et más daño farán et mayor cabalgada ayuntarán doscientos homes de caballos moros que seiscientos de cristianos...Cuando han de combatir alugunt logar, comiéndanlo muy fuerte et muy espantosamente; et cuando son combatidos, comiéndanse a defender muy bien et a grant maravilla...que yo díría que en el mundo non ha tan buenos homes de armas ni tan sabidores de guerra ni tan aparejados para tantas conquistas.<sup>128</sup>

Don Juan Manuel also praises the Moors for being strong soldiers that are highly schooled in warfare. Moorish tactics involve marching either at day or night, as well as quick and

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<sup>128</sup>Chapters LXXV and LXXVI.

stealthy assaults that are highly functional in all types of combat, including sieges and charges. These allow smaller Moorish forces to engage an enemy three times its size.

This trickery became a fundamental part of medieval warfare. Honoré Bouvet's *Árbol de batallas* absolves Christians from the problem of whether or not deceiving one's enemy shows valor by offering the biblical example of Joshua ambushing his enemies:

según la Escritura e según Dios yo puedo vencer mi enemigo por engaño o por barato sin hazer pecado, después que la guerra es juzgada e ordenada e notificada entr'él e mí, después que yo lo é desafiado. E Nuestro Señor nos da d'ello enxemplo, quando él mismo enseñó a Josué cómo hiziese una celada por detrás de sus enemigos, por la cual ellos serían desbaratados. (109)

Additional recent scholarship has also supported this. David Whetham explains that surprise and deception were used regularly in medieval warfare, but these tactics were not acceptable in every situation and depended largely on the applicable legal and moral precepts (*Just Wars and Moral Victories* 248-49).<sup>129</sup> Deceiving one's opponent while jousting would have been seen as cheating and a dishonorable act, but in open combat against a foreign enemy (especially one of a faith that threatened the hegemony of the Church and Christianity like the Moors and Islam) a feint or ruse could mean the difference between victory and defeat.

This is evident when Ponce de León assaults Alhama (chapter 15):

Grandes honrras mereçen los nobles caualleros que en lo bueno nunca desfallecen. Y ved qué cosa marauillosa deste tan noble cauallero marqués de Cádiz, que continuamente jamás dexaua de pensar cómo podría fazer todo mal a los moros ynfieles. E continuando su lypio deseo, siempre mouido al seruiçio de Dios y de la Corona real, estando en la su villa de Marchena, vnos adalides suyos vinieron a él e le dixerón que avían tentado la çibdad de Alhama, commo por él les avía sido mandado. La qual, avnque era muy fuerte e asentada sobre vna mota de penna muy alta cerca de vn río, e non tenía más de vna salida para la fortaleza, muy agra e alta, pero con todo

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<sup>129</sup>Whetham debunks the common view of medieval warfare that places the knight front and center as the only element worthy of close attention, historically speaking. In a similar vein, Rose Mary Sheldon's *Ambush*—particularly the chapter on the Night Attack (chp 6)—refutes the idea that certain tactics like night attacks were things that Greeks did not do. Studies such as these affirm that men were not confined to a prescribed type of fighting, and were flexible in their strategies given the circumstances facing them.

eso, les parecía que, segund el mal recabdo que en ella tenían, se podría bien escalar.  
(199)

The author predicts how challenging attacking this city will be because of its defensive structure, high topography, and location near a river. Despite these difficulties, it is possible to scale its walls, and therefore great honors await the men, and especially Ponce de León, who are able to invade and sack the village.

By contextualizing the effort needed to successfully assault Alhama, the author indirectly draws a parallel between this action and staring down a superior opponent in face-to-face combat. True in both chivalric chronicles and romances, a knight gains more honor when he defeats a superior rather than a weaker opponent. Amadís, for example, is celebrated for defeating the Endriago because the latter is an invincible monster, and so his thrashing heightens the knight's perceived prowess. Yet, Ponce de León is a real knight tasked with real missions by his superiors, and these must be characterized as daunting because a more strenuous task yields more honor. Taking a fortified village or city, therefore, is tantamount to defeating a monster, and makes him appear more valorous.

Through a fictional address from the Virgin, the author indirectly connects Ponce de León to other Castilian exemplars like the Cid and Fernán González, who receive divine assistance during battle.<sup>130</sup> As explained earlier, this is a common motif in the Castilian epics *CMC* and *PPG*, where the hero often asks for celestial support prior to attempting a daunting feat. In the days prior to the assault on Alhama, the Virgin speaks to Ponce de León:

E allí le apareció otra vez nuestra Señora la madre de Dios y le dixo: “¡O cauallero tan deuoto mío! Sepas que porque tus deseos son muy agradables al seruiçio de mi amado fijo Iesu Christo e mío, tú yrás seguro en paz y tomarás aquella çibdad, e la sosternás y defenderás; y ésta será cuchillo y el comienço de toda la destrucción del

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<sup>130</sup>Carriazo Rubio casually notes that the Virgin's appearance is the author's invention and is not chronicled by other contemporary chroniclers like Valera or Palencia.

reyno de Granada y de toda la morería del mundo. E la mezquita de los moros farás luego iglesia, y ponerle has el mi nombre. E sepas que tú saldrás della con grande victoria y a la mayor priesa yo seré contigo.” (200).

This is significant because, due to the complexity of the assault, a tremendous amount of manpower was required, which made it increasingly implausible to suggest that one man could single-handedly secure victory. This fictional scene therefore highlights Ponce de León’s exemplarity at a time when real battles infrequently presented individuals the chance to do so.<sup>131</sup>

The inherent danger of scaling a fortress’s wall did, however, provide a man with the chance to display his courage. Scaling situates the man in an intimately close position with his target, and although casualty rates were high for men who assaulted castles in this manner—particularly for the first man up the ladder—volunteers who undertook this showed great bravery (Norris 174-75). Scaling altered the objective for the climber psychologically, too, since from a distance the knight may only interact visually with his target, but up close he is able to touch it, which makes the danger he faces more ominous. In the end, a victory achieved using this precarious tactic offers great honor, and Ponce de León uses scaling as the first step to attacking Alhama.

Once Ponce de León’s men have reached the fortress and successfully scaled its wall(s), they essentially seal themselves into a location from which it would be difficult—if not impossible—to escape, thus obliging a fight. Leaving no escape route in field combat is considered bad practice, but it can also be a powerful way to get soldiers to fight harder.

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<sup>131</sup>In addition to tying Ponce de León to other Castilian heroes, the Virgin’s monologue signals the changing military policy towards the Moorish strongholds along the frontier from one grounded in hit-and-run raids, to one favoring occupation. Taking Alama is the first step in a plan intending to secure these long-term, rather than following the previous modus operandi of attacking and receding back to territory already controlled.

Vegetius theorizes that if an army fully surrounds an enemy, it will make those trapped battle with heightened aggression:

Muchos que non saben el fecho de las batallas e cavallería cuidan que es mayor victoriasi çercaren los henemigos con muchedunbre de armas o con estrechuras de lugares porque non ayan lugar de se ir. Mas a los ençerrados con desesperaçión cresce osadía e quando non ay esperança alguna entonçe el temor toma armas; e de buenamente cobdiçia morir con otros el que sin dubda sabe que ha de morir. (480)<sup>132</sup>

Ponce de León places his force in such a position where the men's backs are literally against a wall, with little prospect for successful retreat, which incentivizes them more to resist the enemy since there is no escape route.

When warriors find themselves in perilous situations, they have throughout history utilized an interesting custom in response: the battle cry, or 'grita' as it is referred to in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*.<sup>133</sup> The battle cry serves two purposes on the battlefield: to posture and to build aggression. Although these appear to be mutually exclusive since the former's aim is to avoid a deadly conflict, while the latter's is to elevate the warrior's fighting aggression, they function in concert and are distinct displays of manliness.

In war, posturing is commonly manifested through loud sounds like shouts or explosions, and collectively these make up rituals intended to reduce violence rather than provoke it by coercing an enemy to surrender (Grossman 6). As Jones explains, the war cry's primary purpose "is often to cause the opponent to back down before coming to blows, the idea being that the noise and aggression being displayed will be sufficient to make an opponent fear to engage in combat" (*Bloodied Banners* 78).

During the assault on Alhama, the collective shout serves a dual purpose. First, it frightens the inhabitants of the fortress: "E commo los escaladores e otros muchos christianos

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<sup>132</sup>Book III, rule 21.

<sup>133</sup>Battle cries appear in other texts like the *CMC*, where the knights cry 'Santiago.'

se vieron ençima de la fortaleza, dieron una grand grita; de que los moros fueron mucho espantados” (201). The ‘grita’ is an advantage for Ponce de León and his forces because it startles the sleeping Moors, who awaken to the cries of the invaders. In this regard, it is intended to induce panic and compel surrender, or at least inhibit a counterattack on short notice.

The battle cry also enhances the men’s participation in a common cause by fabricating a pack mentality; thus, it provides a psychological advantage for the group regardless of the enemy’s response. As a result, the individual perceives himself to be stronger, or manlier, and in turn his heightened sense of manliness adds more prowess to the collective. Jones explains that the battle cry “acts to build aggression within the performer, triggering a release of adrenalin and preparing him physically for a possible confrontation” (78).

Likewise, Joseph Jordania argues that collective sound-making like singing or shouting takes the individual warrior into a ‘battle trance’ forms a collective identity (99). “This is a very specific state of mind designed by evolution for the most critical moments of life,” he explains, “when the total commitment of every member of the group was needed for a life-or-death fight” (99). The battle cry bolsters unity:

based on total trust and dedication of each member...[that] kicks in when there is a critical situation, a mortal danger for survival of the group or any of its members...group identity brings the most exhilarating feelings to every member of the group. Every member of the group feels bigger, feels stronger, and virtually feels immortal. You can only become truly immortal if you do not fear death. Group members in such an altered state of mind, when they share total trust with each other, emotionally believe that the group cannot be defeated (Jordania 100-01).

For a knight, this type of audible display functioned like heraldry by helping facilitate communication on the battlefield (Jones 75). Ponce de León’s men place themselves in

harms way by sneaking into Alhama, and therefore must depend exclusively on one another. The ‘grita’ that initiates the battle is an outward display of a type of collective manliness that was vital for at best a victory, but at worst survival.

By the fifteenth-century, though, gunpowder artillery had become the best weapon to avoid a prolonged siege, breach defensive walls, and take municipalities in order to accumulate more land (Bradbury 292).<sup>134</sup> The advantages of being able to defeat an opponent from greater distances, too, created a more secure and stable battlefield. As a result, military objectives sometimes demanded the use of more powerful weapons and limited the opportunities for knights to display the type of individual fortitude needed to show manliness.

Weapon-centered assaults consisting of gunpowder artillery were particularly effective against the Moorish defensive fortification system, which, while protracted, was nevertheless based on obsolete architecture that was not able to resist the power of gunpowder projectiles (Sánchez Saus 403-05).<sup>135</sup> Walls, regardless of how strong or tall they were, did not stand a chance against the continuous and concentrated firepower from an artillery assault (DeVries 273).<sup>136</sup> In particular, the Catholic Monarchs incorporated the latest

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<sup>134</sup>See DeVries 273; Bradbury 290; Purton 355; Sánchez Saus/Ocaña Erdozain 399; and Vale 131.

<sup>135</sup>Even though artillery provided the Castilians with a powerful force multiplier, the Moorish fortresses did not always fall easily, and successful counterattacks were common along the frontier. In the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*, for example, the Moors execute a brilliant night attack to capture the Montecorto castle. Using intelligence about a poorly guarded entrance to the fort, they plan their attack to coincide with Christmas in order to take advantage of their enemy’s passiveness: “e estando así los christianos muy seguros en sus plazerer en aquella noche, los moros vinieron” (194). The Christian mayor, upon securing the safety of his people, surrenders the castle and travels to Ronda: “e luego, commo fueron entrados, ataron a todos los christianos en trayllas e lleuáronlos así desonradamente a la çibdad de Ronda, lleuando el alcayde delante dellos, dándole la paga de su mereçimiento por la grand vileza y cobardía que acometió” (194). In response to this dishonor, Ponce de León attacks Villaluenga. Chapters 11-16 illustrate this back-and-forth pattern.

<sup>136</sup>By the mid-fifteenth century, Castilian guns were firing various types of ammunition, including both iron and stone shot, as well as innovative projectiles like inextinguishable incendiary balls of tow dowsed in pitch, oil, and powder (Purton 352).

artillery technologies, and were successful in exploiting these weaknesses. Fernando's place in the ranks of great general-kings is, after all, tied to his propensity for using artillery, and not for any individual fighting skills.<sup>137</sup>

These emerging weapons, therefore, began to change the way sieges and assaults were conducted, and consequently the duties of knights like Ponce de León. While this saves lives, and perhaps psychologically spares men from the horrors of close-quarter combat,<sup>138</sup> artillery displaces the traditional needs of society for warriors with exceptional strength and martial skill. "There are several reasons for the decline in the martial power of the individual warrior since the days of Homer," explains Sussman:

The primary cause lies in developments in military technology, particularly the use of gunpowder. The gun was the great equalizer of martial prowess, killing not only warriors but also their values. Victory no longer depends upon the skill of combatants with spear and sword at close quarters. A single soldier with a gun could, quite simply, kill at a distance the enemy armed with spear and sword. Hand-to-hand combat became rare. And yet, the warrior code with its valuing of bravery and fearlessness persisted even as gunnery improved. (1.2)

The author of the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* illustrates how technology improves a mission's chances by juxtaposing a failed scaling mission with a successful artillery barrage. During an assault against Sentenil (chapter 18), the author punctuates the difficulties of taking a fortress without gunpowder artillery.<sup>139</sup> Ponce de León leads his men to the walls clandestinely through reconnaissance and a silent approach. Then, using verbs like "ordenó",

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<sup>137</sup>Sánchez Saus and Ocaña Erdozain state that "el reinado de los Reyes Católicos fue el momento de la artillería" and that, due to the success of these weapons, "la artillería fue un elemento importantísimo del ejército monárquico permanente" (402).

<sup>138</sup>Grossman's research into the psychology of killing suggests that the further the soldier is from his target, the less impact the assault has on him mentally. Distance allows the killers to deny the humanity of their targets, and prevents them from hearing their screams (102), and therefore stymies the psychological fallout involved in killing.

<sup>139</sup>Carriazo Rubio points out that this particular scene does not appear in other contemporary chronicles, meaning it is likely the invention of the author.

“enbió”, and “mandó,” the author emphasizes Ponce de León’s role as the choreographer of the attack. The attack is thwarted, though, when one of the men breaching the wall makes too much noise and alerts the Moors, who scramble to counterattack. This suggests that, despite careful planning and execution on the leader’s part, complex raids are subject to uncontrollable variables that cannot be resolved through individual martial skill.

Artillery, however, consistently secures the desired outcome since it overpowers the enemy from a safe distance. After realizing his scaling operation is failing, Ponce de León aborts and redirects his raiding mission to the watchtower “Las Salinas,” described as a worthy but challenging target that is “muy fuerte e asentada en un çerro muy alto” and that “guarda e atalaya de toda aquella tierra” (215). Yet, it still takes an artillery barrage consisting of “tyros de póluora y espingardas e ballesterías” to bring it down. Ponce de León is successful when using artillery, but not always when employing the scaling tactics that have defined he and his men as elite knights.

Despite the uncertainty of success of soldier-intensive scaling operations, Ponce de León celebrates the failed scaling operation rather than the successful artillery barrage. After bringing down this tower, he does not mention the weapons, but instead the troops who earlier tried unsuccessfully to scale the walls: “e fizo merçedes a los que aquella torre escalaron” (216). Even though failure to properly use artillery is shown to be a tactical liability, its consistent implementation made it more difficult for knights to win battles using their martial skills.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, as Ponce de León illustrates, lauding their limited (and sometimes fruitless) physical efforts was crucial in maintaining their identities as warriors.

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<sup>140</sup>Take, for example, the contemporary chronicle *Hechos del Condestable Don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo* (~1471), which illustrates how conquering a fortress without some massive weapon system could be quite difficult. This text, as it were, blames the failed siege against Arenas precisely on a lack of artillery. The same siege motifs presented in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* appear in Lucas de Iranzo’s chronicle: a secret night

Given the changing circumstances of battle, it was also crucial to establish a clear link between Ponce de León and revered warriors from the past, which also compensates for the lack of individual glory offered by battle by treating his manliness through association rather than performance.

During a later attack against Sentenil (chapter 28), one in which a ten-day assault with cannon fire levels many homes and leaves most of the exterior wall in ruins, the author draws a comparison between the Ponce de León and past heroes:

E segund estos fechos de cauallería, bien parece el marqués de Cádiz a los nobles antiguos, el conde Fernand Gonçález e Çid Ruy Díaz, nuestros naturales, e avn a otros nobles romanos, así commo Plácido, que fue capitán del enperador Trajano, que fizo muy grandes destruyçiones en los barbarous que fazían gran guerra al Ynperio Romano. E avn algunas vezes aconteció en sólo oyrlo mentar o verlo venir con sus batallas, caer algunos dellos muertos en tierra del grand temor y espanto que le tenían... Y no menos se espera deste noble cauallero marqués de Cádiz, don Rodrigo Ponçe de León. (239)

As is explained in the second chapter of this dissertation, the Cid and Fernán González are celebrated for their valor in pitched battle, face-to-face combat, and reliance on God when things get difficult. What the battle of Sentenil shows, however, is that Ponce de León wins because his side has better firepower, and there is no opportunity for him to display the martial characteristics attributed to these older knights. Therefore, by associating his accomplishments with those of historical knights, the author can classify Ponce de León as an exemplary knight, even though the circumstances of war no longer offer him the chance to prove it in the field.

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approach followed by loud trumpets (instead of a shout) that signal the beginning of the assault. Don Miguel's role, too, mirrors Ponce de León as a leader: "y tan braua y apresuradamente el combate se dió, el dicho señor Condestable ynçitando y acuçiando la gente..." (77). However, Don Miguel's forces must retreat due to a lack of artillery to combat the Moors, who are more prepared to repel the attack than had been earlier reported: "como porque para aquello no avía mandado leuar artellería conuiniente, porque era ynformado que no estaua con tanta recabdo de gente y de guardas como después falló" (77).

The developing weapons technologies used during the fifteenth century expose an unresolved tension between “the practical needs of winning wars and the ideals of chivalric fair play, which stressed that war was not a continuation of politics but rather a way of life, and that fighting honorably was more important than gaining victory” (Harari 9). Whetham echoes Harari, stating “the proud chevaliers were bound in their behavior by the rigid code of chivalry that meant that honor above all else was the thing for which men fought” (7). Fighting honorably spoke directly to the nobleman’s masculine identity, but the need to use utilitarian weapons and effective tactics to win battles and wars often overmatched the warrior’s desire for head-on fights.<sup>141</sup> Even though certain prescriptive texts like De Charny’s *Book of Chivalry* argue against ‘excessive subtlety,’<sup>142</sup> if a battle required men to employ surprise or deception, or use a particular weapon in order to achieve victory, then that is what they did (Whetham 19). Pero Niño and Ponce de León epitomize how real knights exhibit alternative displays of manliness by using a mixture of weapons for different military operations.

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<sup>141</sup>Certain scholars like Huizinga have famously argued that the two are disconnected, but recently more scholars debate this point-of-view by arguing that chivalry had a real and lasting impact in all areas of medieval life, most of all military, and that honor—perhaps the most important chivalric ideal—represented the essential martial value of the epoch (Harari 8). Soldiers, therefore, would have wanted to exercise their individual martial skills even though they were not necessarily needed.

<sup>142</sup>See Kaeuper and Kennedy’s translation-text, context, translation. U Penn P, 1996. p. 151.

## CHAPTER 5: “FORTITUDO,” “SAPIENTIA,” AND LEADERSHIP IN *EL VICTORIAL* AND THE *HECHOS DEL MARQUÉS DE CÁDIZ*

The previous chapters dealt with the ways in which the three texts this dissertation studies display the physical prowess of knights. The fifth and final chapter describes how the knight evolves into an infantry commander in need of different skills (Keen, *Chivalry* 240), which, for some scholars, eventually condemns him to becoming a cog in a larger army.<sup>143</sup> These texts show that there were new ways to display prowess and attain recognition through education and rhetoric.

In the romances of chivalry, there is little need to flesh out the actions of a knight in battle, or tell us much about his personality, as he is guided strictly by a static moral compass that determines the nature of his adventures. Williamson states:

Y como la habilidad de concluir con éxito una aventura es una muestra de la valía del caballero, no hay necesidad de ahondar más en su conciencia o psicología. Las aventuras definen a los personajes, ordenándolos en las categorías morales básicas de bueno y malo, valeroso y cobarde, honrado e innoble. (55-56)

The fictional knight Amadís, therefore, is good because he meets all of the criteria of a hero fighting monsters and dishonorable knights as part of the “búsqueda de la aventura” (Viña Liste 52-53). His martial talents are appropriate and unquestionably masculine from the start, even when he deviates from a particular mission in order to right a wrong committed against himself or maidens in the name of ‘honor’. Such affronts required immediate retribution,

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<sup>143</sup>See, for example, Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*.

regardless of their consequences to any comprehensive military goal. Amadís is indicative of the way knights-errant live in and for the moment, with little regard for the future.

*Amadís de Gaula* briefly comments on military leadership when King Perión—an older and more established knight—prepares and organizes his troops to face King Lisuarte:

Pues sabido eso, luego otro día de mañana [Perion] se levantó, y mandó llamar todos los capitnaes y cavalleros de gran linaje, y díxogelo, y cómo su parescer era que el real se levantasse, y, la gente junta en aquellos prados, se fiziesse repartimiento de las hazes porque todos supiesen a qué capitán y seña avian de acudir, y que hecho esto moviessen contra sus enemigos con gran esfuerço y mucha esperança de los vencer con la justa demanda que levavan. Todos lo tuvieron por bien, y con mucha afición le rogaron que assí por su dignidad real y gran esfuerço y discreción tomasse a su cargo de los regir y governor en aquella jornada, y, que todos le serían obedientes. Él lo otorgó, que bien cnonsció que le pedían guisado, y no se podía con razón escusar dello. Pues mandándolo poner en obra, el real fue levantado, y la gente toda armada y a cavallo puesta en aquella gran vega. (1442)

According to this description, Perión orders his men to form ranks under their banners and move against the enemy in their just cause. However, it is his status and rank that procures immediate obedience and collective cooperation amongst the cadre, and reveals nothing about how he addresses his men, who appear to simply accept his leadership as proper. This is true of his son, Amadís, yet this scene focuses more on the aesthetics of effective leadership rather than on the marshaling of forces itself or on the rhetoric of the speeches that Perión delivers. This exceptionality is also evident when it describes the king's physical appearance, while he takes his place in the ranks of soldiers: “El buen Rey se puso en medio de todos en un cavallo muy fermoso y grande, y armado de muy ricas armas, y tres escudos que las armas levavan, y diez pajes en diez cavallos, todos de una devisa...” (1442). His age, too, is a factor in constructing his leadership abilities, as the text depicts him in a later stage in life:

Y como él era ya de tanta edad que lo más de la cabeça y la barva toviesses blanco y el rostro incendido con el calor de las armas y de la orgulleza del corazón, y como todos

sabían su gran esfuerço, paresçia tan bien, y tanto esfuerço dio a la gente que lo estava mirando, que les fazía perder todo pavor, que bien cuidavan que después de Dios aquel caudillo sería causa de les dar la gloria de la batalla. (1442)

Such scenes do not talk much about a knight's education, other than brief references to his training, and avoid describing the actions of knights in performing their duties. They also lack in rhetorically complex speeches in favor of brief narrative descriptions. Bold knights like Perión, Amadís's model knight from the beginning, seamlessly command their troops while evidencing no special rhetorical skills.

Real knights, on the other hand, faced challenges like maintaining order amongst the troops under their command, which were often foot-soldiers. This task increasingly came to be considered as honorable for a nobleman as direct participation in war (Keen *Chivalry* 240), although it implied a realignment of the heroic concepts that had been ingrained in Castilian society. As Keen explains, "the forces that in the medieval past had given [chivalry] life and impetus were still at work, but the outward aspects in which they found expression were changing" (239). In practice, this change meant an emphasis in learning new skills such as proper and effective oratory, and other intangibles appropriate to an expanded leadership role. Also affected is an alteration in the way the knight relates to God, to whom he had been traditionally linked, but now his devotion becomes redefined and his "sapientia" expanded.

Although "fortitudo" and "sapientia," as explained in Chapter 2, are the qualities that best exemplify the ideal man as far back as the Homeric epics (and were standard *topoi* in medieval epics), a notable change in their treatment occurs at the beginning of the Renaissance. "Fortitudo" is the defining trait when displaying manliness because it translates into prowess and honor (Lida de Malkiel 283), reflects "battle-lore" (Curtius 172), and involves proficiency with weapons, virility, and boldness of speech. These are always the

basic skills that yield immediate, tangible benefits to the battlefield, and therefore they are understood to be the foundation of manliness.

A warrior's "sapientia," however, is what guides his actions in life, in court, and in war, and is therefore less visible to others. Since "sapientia" is invisible, in texts we must rely on other clues about the persona of the hero. These clues may elude the choices made or his eloquence, in other words, "the ability 'to be both a speaker of words and doer of deeds'" (Curtius 172).<sup>144</sup> Additionally, "sapientia" is grounded in soldierly virtues such as cunning and prudence (Lawrence "Spanish Humanism," 64), yet remains a quality that belongs to a moment later in life. As a knight ages, his "fortitudo" naturally diminishes, but the lessons he has learned from his actions become more important. Even though his body can no longer perform at its peak, his "sapientia" shows him as still manly,<sup>145</sup> as situations arise that require the use of wits rather than brawn.

Real knights also tailored their actions to meet the challenges of their immediate context. Increasingly, they were called to fight in response to their lord's political alliances, and duty precluded them from deviating from his missions for private reasons. This meant that they did not fight for personal glory, or were supposed to take offense at slights to their honor. The soldiers they commanded, in turn, needed to be inspired by more than an ideal image, shiny armor, or imposing warhorse; they needed to be convinced of their mission's

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<sup>144</sup>Curtius gives examples of classic cases of men who have these characteristics: Nestor has wisdom; Odysseus has the cleverness of the old man; Both Nestor and Odysseus have eloquence (172).

<sup>145</sup>The theme of the male body's frailty is briefly breached in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* when Ponce de León is called upon by a neighboring nobleman to prepare for battle against the Moors, and visits his ailing father to report that he will be entering combat. It begins with a subtle contrast between the young, robust Marqués and his aging father (chapter 3). This type of opposition between young and old was common in medieval literature, with the body playing a central role in the juxtaposition of the young with the old (Shahar 47). Ponce de León's father is in a debilitated state, "en cama de vna grande enfermedad" (161). The father's condition contrasts with the robustness of the much younger Marqués, but this is the nature of ageing and it was understood in the Middle Ages that the old could not be restored or rehabilitated to their original state (Shahar 38).

purpose and given the assurance that there would be potential rewards from the spoils of battle. A knight's honor, therefore, had become tied in a web of increasingly complex expectations that went beyond a particular battle.

Alfonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera, as well as true warrior-writers like Jorge Manrique and Íñigo López de Mendoza, wrote a number of texts that commented on these new chivalric expectations.<sup>146</sup> These writers envisioned a civic function for the knight that pointed to other pathways to fame and glory. These paths began with a proper education. Cartagena, for example, encouraged knights to follow the lesson of Publius Scipio Africanus, who “muchas vezes se apartau a algunos onestos estudios” (Fallows, *Chivalric Vision* 80),<sup>147</sup> and he argued that knights should limit their fighting to enemies of the Catholic faith (Fallows, *Chivalric Vision* 25), thereby negating the need for competitions or errantry.

These chivalric writers worked during the appearance of translations of military treatises like Sexto Julio Frontino's *Strategematon* and Publius Vegetius Renuat's *Epitoma rei militaris*. Their availability contributed to the change in the conception of a knight.<sup>148</sup> According to María Elvira Roca Barea, these translations were due to a desire among many Castilian nobles to find “un modelo clásico al que parecerse cuando a las armas unieron el

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<sup>146</sup>Roca Barea states that “los caballeros se interesan por las letras, no solo para protegerlas como mecenas al modo italiano sino también para cultivarlas ellos mismos y ser, al tiempo que guerreros, escritores” (64). In addition to the writers named above, Lawrance names several other learned knights from the Peninsula, affirming that “abundant evidence from fifteenth-century libraries, and from the pattern of thought reflected in fifteenth-century literature, shows that a growing class of noble lay readers in Iberia really were interested in precisely the kind of classical questions which appealed to [the Catalán fictional knight-errant] Curial” (“Spanish Humanism” 65).

<sup>147</sup>Fallows points out that “Una de las virtudes caballerescas más notables era la cordura adquirida mediante la experiencia y, según Alonso de Cartagena, mediante el estudio atinado de los libros” (*Tratado Militar* 36).

<sup>148</sup>For complete studies on the chivalric conversations taking place in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain, see Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV*; María Elvira Roca Barea's “Introducción” to her *Tratado militar de Frontino*; and Carlos Huesch, *La caballería castellana en la baja edad media*.

interés por la cultura, y lo hallaron en aquellos romanos y griegos a quienes la vida militar no estorbó su amor por el saber” (13).<sup>149</sup>

Alfonso de San Cristóbal’s late-fourteenth or early fifteenth-century Castilian translation of Vegetius’s *Epitoma rei militaris* attributes Roman success on the battlefield to men—captains especially—who are both wise and bold.<sup>150</sup> This double excellence, Vegetius claims at the very beginning of his treatise (Book I, Chapter 1), allowed Rome to defeat the world’s most formidable armies, but success depends on choosing the right men for the job:

Mas contra estas cosas todas mucho aprovechó a los romanos escoger entre todos los de su gente tirón—que quiere dezir omne mançebo, cavallero ardit e acuçioso, sabidor e artero en el arte de las batallas—e que sepa enseñar la arte e el uso de las armas e esforçar e fortalecer de cada día la hueste por arte e por uso e conosçer primeramente en su pensamiento el canpo e todas las otras cosas que en la haz pueden acaesçer así contra ella como por ella. Ca la sabiduría e la çiencia de la arte de las batallas faze a los que la saben ser muy osados e sin temor, ca non ha ome que tema de fazer lo que bien sabe e bien aprendió, ca fázelo sin miedo. Onde es de saber que en las batallas los pocos sabidores de la arte e usados son prestos e aparejados para vençer, la muchedunbre de la gente ruda e que non sabe arte de pelear está espuesta e aparejada para la muerte. (160-61)

Vegetius’s message is that brute force or greater numbers do not necessarily translate into success, but instead it is the men leading the army who are responsible for it. San Cristóbal’s gloss of this chapter amplifies the point:

En este capítulo pone Vegecio tres cosas...Conviene a saber: por uso de las armas, e sabiduría de asentar e levantar el real e la hueste, otrosí por la arte e saber de la pelea...La segunda cosa...es cosa nesçesaria de escoger capitán, mançebo ardid e

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<sup>149</sup>These texts not only offered examples of the “arte militar” to imitate, but also talked about the need of mastering the art of war and of learning how to govern (Roca Barea 69). Cartagena argues that “Los famosos cavalleros, muy noble señor, que en tiempos antiguos por diversas regiones del mundo florescieron, entre los grandes cuidados e ocupaciones arduas que tenían para gobernar la república e la defender e anparar de los sus adversaries, acostunbravan interponer algund trabajo de sciencia, por que onestamente supiesen regir así aquellos cuyo regimiento les pertenescía, así en fechos de paz como de guerra” (*Doctrinal* 9). The idea of a knight in a civic role is developed between Cartagena and the Marqués de Santillana. Through correspondence, both debate the merits of an educated nobility in the classical model: men who were not only great warriors, but also studied and politically gifted, and therefore able to govern or compose literature whenever they were not on campaign (Roca Barea 71).

<sup>150</sup>The recently edited study by José Manuel Fradejas Rueda (2014) provides a detailed transcription of the *Epitoma*, plus the transcriptions of San Cristóbal’s glosses that accompany each chapter.

artero e sabidor... La tercera cosa que pone es que la çiencia de las batallas que cría osadía en los que la saben, e que más valen pocos e sabidores que non muchos e rudos para pelear. (161-62)

San Cristóbal speaks of practice, knowledge, and experience. This last quality is what distinguishes some knights from others.

As Braudy explains, “cultures and individuals hang on to outmoded styles of masculinity” because “the social and historical setting of masculinity can either alter the simple masculine myths until they mean something quite different to a new audience, or confirm them despite, or because of, their obvious antiquity” (86-87). However, *El Victorial* and the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* did not so much challenge established models of masculinity as they modified “fortitudo” and “sapientia” so that they better fit a new ideal of manliness emerging from an increasingly impersonal yet sophisticated battlefield. Fifteenth century knights were expected to be astute, well-educated thinkers and practitioners in the art of war as was then being fought.

### *El Victorial*

The knights of the chivalric romances possess “sapientia” as a default characteristic of their personalities. Actual knights, however, needed to be educated through books and experience in order to gain wisdom. We get a glimpse of this training when Jorge Manrique reveals that he has spent time reading about the deeds of the ancients and applies the lessons he has learned to the immediate circumstances of Castile.

Such book wisdom, as theorists like Lull argue, must be paired with common sense in order to “to overcome obstacles and achieve optimal success” (Fallows, “Introduction” 9). Lull states:

Caballería y valor no se avienen sin sabiduría y cordura; pues si lo hiciesen, locura e ignorancia convendrían con la orden de caballería. Y si esto fuse así, sabiduría y cordura, que son contrarias a locura e ignorancia, serían contrarias a la orden de caballería, y eso es imposible; por cuya imposibilidad se te significa a ti, caballero que tienes grande amor a la orden de caballería, que así como la caballería, por la nobleza de corazón, te hace tener valor y te hace menospreciar los peligros para que puedas honrar la caballería, así conviene que la orden de caballería te haga amar la sabiduría y cordura con que puedas honrar la orden de caballería contra el desorden y la decadencia que hay en aquellos que piensan cumplir con el honor de la caballería por la locura y la mengua de entendimiento. (36)<sup>151</sup>

We see a practical projection of Lull's concept of "cordura" in *El Victorial*, which contains an example about an English knight whose excellence is predicated on his self-control and focus in battle.<sup>152</sup> While forming ranks, this nameless knight is struck in the "rostró" by a lower-ranking man, and the affront gets a knee-jerk response from the knight's entourage, who demand an immediate retribution: "juntaron allí todos con él, e quisiéranlo luego vengar" (370).

In spite of the fact that the attacker is of a lower social rank, and that there would be no honor found in seeking immediate retribution (Braudy 57), the English knight's reaction is conditioned by his belief that "non hera tienpo ni sazón aquél para nenguno rencurar nin demander su deshonra, aunque sobre tal cosa viesse hombre matar a su hermano; mas que mirasen los henemigos que tenían ante los ojos, e pensase cada uno de fazer su devdo" (370). His "cordura" demands that others do the same for the benefit of the greater good. The soldiers in *El Victorial* therefore get a lesson in discipline, as the English knight reorders their ranks and reorients their actions:

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<sup>151</sup>"Segunda parte," 18.

<sup>152</sup>This example is derived from *El conde Lucanor*, "ejemplo XV," in which three knights compete for the award of 'most distinguished' during the siege of Seville. Lorenzo Suárez Gallinato, the winner, is selected for his ability to hold his place in the line at the expense of suffering the fear that comes with looming battle; the other two, meanwhile, believe themselves to be more valiant for having broken rank and attacked prior to orders to do so. See Beltrán, fn. 277, page 369.

E puso su baçiente, e tornó a la batalla, hordenando e refiriendo todos aquéllos, retrayéndoles que por aquella razón se avian deshordenados. Diziéndoles que todos se fuesen cada uno a su lugar, que non hera ninguna cosa de que se deviesen sentir: pues él lo sufría, que los sufriesen ellos. E que si algo hera, que suya hera la mayor deshonra. E que non hera tienpo ni sazón aquél para nenguno rencurar nin demandar su deshonra, qunque sobre tal cosa viesse hombre matar a su hermano; mas que mirasen los henemigos que tenían ante los ojos, e pensase cada uno de fazer su devdo. (370)

A panel of judges is empowered to reward with "tres chapeletes: uno de oro, e otro de plata, e otro de foja de lata; así, de grado en grado," (370) those who shone in the battle: "los yngleses, en aquella batalla, pusieron juezes por dar la honra después de la batalla a los que major lo fiziesen. Los juezes tenían tres chapeletes: uno de oro, e otro de plata, e otro de foja de lata; así, de grado en grado, para dar a los que major lo fiziesen" (370). The text states:

la batalla ya fecha, heran ya todos en quistión de quién devía aver el chapel de oro. Avía allí muchos cavalleros que avian fecho aquel día muchas notables cosas en armas, que estavan esperando, qual más qual menos, aver la honra, o parte della. Todos ayuntados en la sala con el rey, llamaron los juezes aquel cavallero que fue dada la bastonada en el rostro, e diéronle el chapel de oro. E dieron a otro el de plata, e a otro el da la lata. (370-71)

The English knight earns the gold chaplet precisely for putting the group's interests ahead of his own honor. While victory is the objective, the panel recognizes that it can be achieved only through ordered action, and its reward is worthy of being emulated in the actions of the rest. Other knights are unhappy with the judges' decision, "e los otros, malcontentos por las valientes cosas que avian fecho, començaron a murmurar, todos los cavalleros, que non fuera bien juzgado" (371), but the text indicates that a shift in values is being promoted:

Cavalleros, sed en paz, ca muy justa razón es que el que vençio toda la batalla aya toda la honra della. Nosotros vimos la grand ofensa que a aquel cavaleiro fue fecha en su persona, seyendo de tan grand estado. E vimos cómo la nuestra hueste se deshordenava por le vengar; la qual vengaça fue en su mano de la tomar luego si él quisiera. E sabemos, otrosí, que el otro cavallero de grand valía, e muchos de los que heran en la hueste avían de fazer algo por él, e fuera en tal manera que la nuestra hueste oviera discordia e mal; la qual discordia bien la conosçieran nuestros henemigos, ca son muy guerreros e hombres entendidos de batalla. Vinieran sobre nós, e muy de refez nos destruyeran todos, e nos vençieran e mataran. (371)

The English knight is most deserving of the first prize because of the exemplary nature of his act. The explanation emphasizes the importance of the ultimate goal and the value of discipline in leadership in bringing it about. While not devaluing the English knight's martial skills, it adds: "El cavallero que vos dixе que sufrió la ofensa, él peleó tanto aquel día, e fizo tanto por sus manos, que aunque por aquella razón no oviera el chapel, por lo que en la batalla fizo fuera en debate meresçerlo tan bien como el que más lo debía aver" (371).<sup>153</sup> He is therefore an image of the complete warrior, one with exceptional fighting abilities but who also uses proper judgement.

This example dovetails with how Díez de Games portrays Pero Niño's personality. *El Victorial* focuses first on his physical development—including his fighting skills—while he is a young man, and then it portrays the wisdom he gains over the course of his career.<sup>154</sup> For example, after being knighted by Enrique III and fighting notably well in Gijón (chapter 22), Pero Niño returns with the king to Seville. There, the young knight performs several feats that attest to his physical prowess, including chasing a wild boar into the Guadalquivir:

este donzel Pero Niño venía en pos del puerco, ençima de un cavallo, e entró a nado en pos él. E andando así a nado por el río, firió el puerco, e matólo en el agua, e tráxole metido en la lança por el agua fasta la tierra, ayudándose el puerco. (chapter 24, 245)

He then cuts through a loose fishing net that stretched across the river and threatened to wreck the king's boat:

E paresçió a desora por delante una gruesa maroma, que tenía atravesado todo el río. Hera una red que estava atravesada para pescar sávalos...E luego y muy ayna saltó Pero Niño a la proa, e sacó la espada, e dio tal golpe que cortó la

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<sup>153</sup>Curtius defines this topic to mean when a person or thing establishes superiority through comparison, as in one meriting as much or more praise as anyone else from the battle (162).

<sup>154</sup>See Gerald Heard, 135-36.

maroma, que hera tan gruesa como pierna de un hombre; de lo qual fueron todos muy maravillados (chapter 25, 245-46).

These episodes, according to Beltrán, “mantiene[n] las expectativas acerca del desarrollo militar de su biografiado, incorporando elementos inesperados, que consiguen una variation novelesca muy acertada” (245, fn. 124), while cementing his hardiness as a warrior. Like many noble boys, he learns to use a sword and control a mount, skills favored for youths because “el que á de aprender e usar arte de cavallería, non conviene despende luengo tiempo en escuela de letras” (234). This characterization, however, is incomplete, because at the same time a tutor instructs him in what a prince should know.<sup>155</sup> The foundation of the education is knowledge of God (Miranda 46).

Pero Niño’s tutor is adamant that he understand the commitment to God expected of a knight, and encourages him to have faith, honor God’s commands, and defend his church:

Ante todas cosas conosçed a Dios, e después conosçed a vós, e después conosçed a los otros. Conosçed a Dios por fee... Fijo muy amado, creed e tened muy firmemente lo que cree e tienen la madre santa Yglesia, non sea cosa que vos della arriedre ni vos mueva... en la santa fee soys naçido, e otra vez regenerado en agua de Espíritu Santo. Si te conviniere de pelear por tu solo cuerpo contra qualquier que contradixese la santa fee cathólica, obligado heres a ello. Ésta es buena cavallería, la mejor que ningund cavallero puede fazer: pelear por su ley y fee, quanto más teniendo la verdad... Toma enxemplo de Santiago el cavallero, que fue tajado todo por miembros, desde los dedos de las manos e de los pies... conosçed la grand grandeza de Dios sobre vós... fazed todos vuestros fechos con Dios. Guardad sus mandamientos, fazed sus preçeptos, guardad sus yglesias, honrad sus fiestas e los misterios dellas... Catad que quando oramos fablamos con Dios, e quando leemos fabla Él con nós. (235-37)

Spiritual devotion is characteristic of the best knights, for it confirms a personal relation to the supernatural. This message is clear from the beginning of *Amadís de Gaula*, too, when in

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<sup>155</sup>Alberto Miranda explains in the “Introducción” to his edition of *El Victorial* that the tutor “Es un hombre sabio, y sus enseñanzas, expuestas a lo largo de tres capítulos, constituyen una especie de tratado de formación de príncipes, que podría perfectamente leerse independientemente del resto de la obra. La instrucción recibida por el futuro caballero en los primeros años de su vida marcará de una forma específica las directrices por las que se guiará en sus actuaciones posteriores. Pero Niño nunca olvidará los consejos del ayo y se comportará siempre como un caballero modelo (46).

the second chapter King Perion's personal adviser Ungán tells him to "siempre rogar a Dios, que en esto y en todo lo ál faga lo que su santo servicio sea, porque aquello sin dubda es lo mejor" (252). Real and fictional knights were both expected to be devout followers of God, especially when times were tough and difficult battles needed to be won.

God's importance as the warrior's companion is emphasized in the Endriago scene of *Amadís de Gaula*, when Amadís turns to his brother-squire Gandalín and says, "mira la ventura que Dios me querrá dar contra este diablo tan espantable" (1142). Gandalín also reveals he thinks it will take a miracle from God to save his master: "Gandalín no le pudo responder, tan reziamente llorava porque su muerte vía tan cierta, si Dios milagrosamente no lo scapasse" (1142). To both characters, God appears central. The battle becomes an allegorical struggle between "good" and "evil," with the Endriago labled as the "diablo" and Amadís as God's soldier. Amadís tries to slow the monster with every strike, but relies on a precise moment in which to stab the Endriago through the eye whose with God's help: "y pensando acertarle en el otro ojo con la spada, quísole Dios guiar a que gela metió por una de las ventanas de las narizes, que muy anchas las tenía" (1144). The hero is therefore successful because he has God offering assistance.

This devotion is not surprising when considering how combat and spiritual devotion are linked throughout the Bible, and deeply rooted in medieval Christianity's portrayal of God as the ultimate crusader. This connection influences medieval Spanish writings, according to Francisco López Estrada, who explains that "el estilo bíblico pudo transferirse a las lenguas literarias vernáculas a través sobre todo de los escritores clericales [...] estas manifestaciones podían llegar hasta las obras más diversas, y eran un testimonio de la ayuda que recibieron las literaturas vernáculas del conocimiento de la Biblia" (213). Men who

follow God are akin to vassals who pledge allegiance to a feudal lord, and trust that they will succeed in spite of the overwhelming odds. Chapter 20 of Deuteronomy illustrates this point by saying:

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. (20.1-4)

Later in the Book of Joshua, God promises to accompany the Israelites in battle, and then aggressively destroys their enemies:

Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses. (11.18-20)

Even though the Bible (especially the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus) contained the strongest argument against war and violence between men, it also provided plenty of evidence for those wishing to connect warfare to spiritual righteousness.

According to Geoffroi de Charny, it is God rather than Fortune who allows men to achieve success through arms.<sup>156</sup> This idea that soldiers fought more bravely if they believed they had the support of the gods, as we have seen, is “a centuries-long phenomenon in which religious preparations by western armies and the communities that supported them, that is the ‘home front,’ were intended to obtain divine aid in order to secure military victory”

(Bachrach 1). Religion bound soldiers more closely to each other and to the communities on

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<sup>156</sup> A word search for “battle” in the King James Version yields 171 hits: [www.biblegateway.com/keyword](http://www.biblegateway.com/keyword).

whose behalf they were fighting and instilled them with the confidence needed to perform their best (Bachrach 190).<sup>157</sup> The warrior does God's work:

And if you have the reputation of being a good man-at-arms, through which you are exalted and honored, and you have deserved this by your great exertions, by the perils you have faced and by your courage, and Our Lord has in his mercy allowed you to perform the deeds from which you have gained such a reputation, such benefits are not the benefits of fortune, but are benefits which by right should last, provided that one knows how to conserve them humbly and honorably (De Charny 74).

For Cartagena, a knight was at his best in the service of God, king, and country: "Ca aquel que pone su cuerpo e sus bienes en seruiçio de Dios e de su rrey e de la tierra onde es natural de uida, le es satisfaçion de los daños que rresçibio" (Fallows, *Chivalric Vision* 172-73).<sup>158</sup>

In *El Victorial*, after acknowledging the knight's expected commitment to God, any appeals to Him (or signs of supernatural interference) in combat scenes are fewer and appear insincere. This disingenuousness has been noted by Evans, who argues that "Pero Niño is no Saint Louis: even in ideal he is not the humble servant of God, patiently working out his purpose on earth, with no thought of personal gain. God for him exists to help men in his difficulties, and to give him his desires in a world where, without heavenly aid, the odds would sometimes be heavy against him" (xiv).

Evans's observation, while accurate, does not fully explain the superficiality of Pero Niño's invocations. During the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, military activity and

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<sup>157</sup>Nowhere else in the Middle Ages do we find a stronger connection between chivalry and Christianity than during the Crusades, which vindicated his function with the notion that there was a "spiritual manhood" that ultimately derived its legitimacy from God's commands in Scripture (Braudy 77). The idea of fighting hostile non-believers in the name of God papered over a list of conflicts that separated the interests of the Church from those of the nobility, and pitted material gain against idealism, spirituality against violence, and regional allegiance to loyalty to the Church (Braudy 77).

<sup>158</sup>San Cristóbal's "glosas espirituales" that appear along with his translation of the *Epitoma* likewise suggest an important link between faith and warfare. His gloss of Book I, Chapter 1 (mentioned here above), is a good example. San Cristóbal that the three essential elements the soldier brings to the "batalla espiritual," that is "contra los henemigos espirituales, que son el diablo e su tentaçión": "La primera es uso de bevir virtuosamente...La segunda cosa es fortaleza e firmeza...La tercera cosa es sabiduría e arte" (164).

organization became less about religion and more about political sovereignty. The earlier crusading spirit that filled men with purpose began to change, as war became less ideal-driven and increasingly impersonal. Battles engaged non-noble armies and mercenaries against each other, and conventions of noble war that had influenced warfare for the previous two centuries deteriorated as a result (Vale 147, 160).<sup>159</sup> These changes affected how authors displayed devotion to God.

In describing a battle at Tunis, in particular, Pero Niño is completely cut off from his forces, “e fincó él solo en la galea de los moros” (291). Díez de Games adds that “el buen cavallero vio que non tenían ayuda sino de Dios” and that “que a él solo convenía delibrar aquel fecho” (291). This seems to show Pero Niño to be like the earlier medieval heroes, who rely on the intervention of God, but it turns out to be unlike it. Instead of counting on (or receiving) aid from God, *El Victorial* makes it clear that Pero Niño fights on his own:

peleó tan fuertemente que es una cosa muy dura de creer, salvo a aquellos que lo vieron. Dio atán fuertes golpes, e firió e mató a tantos que en poca de ora desenbargó la gente e los llevó delante sí fasta mitad de la galea. Allí prendió al arráez de la galea, que es el almirante; e ferido, le fizo estar quedo en un lugar, que nunca de allí se osó partir. (291)

The text instead uses a series of verbs that refer to his own actions: “peleó,” “dio,” “firió,” “mató,” “desenbargó,” “llevó,” and “prendió”. These verbs are modified by the adverbs “fuertemente,” “fuertes,” and “tantos” (etc.) to stress that he does so with exceptional strength. Together, they emphasize Pero Niño’s self-sufficiency, and alert the reader that his success is not due to a supernatural boon. Prior to the advent of mass armies and projectile weapons, knights were key to winning battles, because of their role in the charge and

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<sup>159</sup>At the same time, the increasingly centralized government relied to a greater extent on infantry and less on cavalry (Vale 147). In Spain, for example, the 1489 campaign of the Catholic Kings against Granada involved 40,000 infantry, as opposed to 13,000 mounted men (Keen 239). These monarchs also aimed to integrate the famed military orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcántara into the service of the kingdom (Ladero Quesado 224).

subsequent foot fighting (which in raids were also common). Now, knights were called on to serve in other ways.

As leaders, knights needed another ability: good rhetorical skills. Pero Niño's tutor encourages his pupil to master this:

Fijo, quando oveirdes a fablar ante los hombres, primero lo pasad por la lima del seso, ante que venga a la lengua. Parad mientes que la lengua es un árbol, e tiene las raýzes en el coraçón. El su fruto es la palabra: qual está en el coraçón, la lengua lo muestra de fuera. Catad que mientras vós fablades los otros esmeran vuestra palabra, como esmerades vós la suya quando ellos fablan. Pues dezid cosas con razón; si no, mejor será que vos callede. En la lengua se conosçe la sçiençia, en el seso la sapiencia, e en la palabra la verdad e la dotrina; la firmeza en las obras. ¡O, si callase el que no debía fablar, e si fablase el que no debía callar! Nunca la verdad sería contradicha. (241)

He calls on Pero Niño to apply reason over emotion (“logos”), even though intentions may be born of the heart (Gravatt 155), but a soldier must balance his aggression with reason and must be attentive to the opinions of others before countering them. For the tutor, the mettle of a knight can be seen through his words as well as through his deeds. For real knights, though, it takes time to learn this skill.

Pero Niño's earlier exploits have given him the leadership skills that serve him well later in life, when he fights the English as part of a coalition of soldiers from France, Normandy, and Castile (chapter 89). Old enough and sufficiently wise to shoulder the burdens of commanding at this point (Burrow 119-20), he supervises his men and cavalry, and orders his ranks according to the trumpeting that signals movements.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, his effectiveness depends on proper understanding of combat (Ladero Quesada 283).

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<sup>160</sup>Prestwich explains the rarity of these pitched battles to be a function of their economic costs. A full-scale battle might be the final attack of a continuing campaign in which much time and effort had already been placed in recruiting and organizing an army large enough for the task. For this reason, the stakes were often very high, and there was much to be lost. See chapter 13.

Pero Niño orders a roll call, a common practice to deter soldiers from deserting pre-battle (Ladero Quesada 285-86): “Esa tarde mandó el capitán juntar los cavallos e la otra gente, e maltráxolos de palabra” (442). He argues that disorganization has been their primary weakness, stating that “por las tales deshordenanças que entre ellos avía heran ellos vençidos muchas vezes” (442), and subsequently presents a standing order that under penalty of death no man can leave the ships to go ashore, or fight, without express command. The author praises Pero Niño’s skills, stating

Estonçe el capitán fabló con ellos todas las cosas cómo se debían fazer, e cómo e quáles quedasen en los navíos, e cómo fuesen hordenadas las batallas, e la pavesada, e la ballestería, e los frecheros; e cómo en caso que vençiesen la batalla fuesen aperçebidos por si uvieses enboscada; e todas las otras cosas que a ello heran pertenecientes. (443)

He also emphasizes Pero Niño’s ability by continuously stressing that he is in command, preparing for battle, and enforcing discipline: “el capitán mandó arredrar os los navíos e la galeas de la tierra”; “mandó estar tres bateles suyos çerca de la tierra”; “e mandóles que si algunos hombres de los navíos, françeces o castellanos, viniesen fuyendo a la mar, que les tirasen de las ballestas e los matasen”; “e mandó aquella noche que toda la gente çenasen e durmiesen un poco”; “y mandó guardar la pasada de la isla” (443). In this case, quick and concise communication is essential due to the impending battle and the inherent difficulty in organizing the men:

Partióse el capitán dellos, e dexólos tanto como treinta o quarenta pasos adelante; e vínose para le gente darmas. E los cavalleros tenían su batalla bien hordenada, segund que el capitán los avía dexado, e los estandartes dellos cabe la bandera del capitán; e quantos dellos so ella pudieron caber, que avía asaz dellos, ansí de los normanes como de los bretones. Podrían ser en la batalla del capitán fasta mil hombres darmas: castellanos, e bretones, e normanes. Bien podedes entender el trabajo que pasaría un solo cavallero en hordenar e regir tanta gente, e él armado de todas pieças, sinon la cabeça” (444).

Díez de Games follows Pero Niño's movements, fully armored except for his helmet, as he moves down the line from the knights to the foot soldiers. He points out that he is now in charge of upwards of one thousand men from different cultures and has organized their ranks prior to fighting. The next step is motivating his troops, which is done through the battle harangue.

The military harangue is given by a commander to motivate troops before combat.<sup>161</sup> In order to be effective, the speaker must use the proper rhetorical devices. In the following example from *El Victorial*, Díez de Games constructs the harangue to reveal the rhetorical prowess of his subject, who must effectively communicate with a contingent of mercenaries unaccustomed to organized warfare, and who as a result do not likely speak Castilian fluently.<sup>162</sup>

Pelead fuertemente. No vos dexedes vençer. Estad todos firmes de un coraçón, que por fuyr non podredes escapar, que moriredes todos en la mar. Pues aunque vos diésedes a prisión, bien sabedes ya cómo lo fazen los ingleses con los castellanos, e cómo son henemigos sin piedad. Si firmes estades, e bien pelearde, avredes la honra e mucho buen despojo. Mirad qué tierra tan rica e tan fermosa. Quanto vedes, tanto será vuestro, sólo que bien peleedes. Agora aperçevdivos, e fazed como hombres buenos. Catad que ninguno no se parta del lugar en que lo yo dexo, nin vos movades fasta que ellos lleguen a vós. ¡Llamad todos a Santiago, que es nuestro patrón de España, que él nos ayudará! (444)

Through this speech, Pero Niño demonstrates his keen understanding of pre-battle exhortations. First, he perceives the need to use “brevitas,” or conciseness, to communicate with the hodgepodge of troops under his command. A common rhetorical strategy in logical

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<sup>161</sup>Michelle Gravatt has studied the military harangue in medieval Spanish literature. She identifies five particular themes present in these speeches: “orders and tactics,” “duty,” “advantage,” “profit,” and “aversion to shame” (163).

<sup>162</sup>It was common to use mercenaries during the Hundred Years War, and both the English and French relied on paid fighters who often appeared when a large battle loomed, and thus were not part of any regular fighting corps (Prestwich 154-56).

argumentation (Fallows, *Order of Chivalry* 17),<sup>163</sup> “brevitas” is manifested through a series of imperative verbs such as “pelead,” “estad,” “mirad,” “fazed,” “catad,” and “llamad,” all of which transmit the message quickly to those who may have trouble understanding. These verbs, too, imply action over contemplation, a trick to halt fear from creeping into idle minds.

Gravatt has argued that the speech uses only emotional appeals to pride, prejudice, fear, and greed (Gravatt 162): pride and prejudice by stating that the English are weaker; fear by reminding them that there is no escape route (i.e. fight or die); and greed by pointing out that a victory yields great honor and riches. Her analysis, however, is incomplete and misses the implications the speech makes about the soldiers’ masculinity and fighting well.

Pero Niño begins by telling the men to fight hard but quickly appeals to their pride, as success in combat is based on their commitment to it. He orders them not to surrender or give in and exhorts them to resist the enemy. He goes on to appeal to their greed by pointing out that this is a chance to win honor and booty: “Si firmes estades, o bien peleardes, avredes la honra e mucho buen despojo” (444). Finally, he commands them to be good men—“fazed como hombres buenos”—by fighting hard and taking no prisoners. Above all, the speech links their fighting ability to being a good man. However, the harangue, it is not sufficient to ensure victory.

After speaking to his men, Pero Niño takes matters literally into his own hands by positioning the soldiers exactly where he wants them stationed. The importance of organization, we are told, cannot be overstated: “non ovo y caballero ni peon en que él non pusiese la mano, requeriéndolos dos o tres vezes, e les mandase cómo avían de fazer” (444).

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<sup>163</sup>As stated in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, “Conciseness expresses a multitude of things within the limits of but a few words, and is therefore to be used often, either when the facts do not require a long discourse or when time will not permit dwelling upon them” (405)

Pero Niño touches each man in order to establish absolute exactness within the ranks. This action is made part of the protagonist's "fortitudo" and "sapientia." A knight should not only be physically strong, capable of work while walking around in a full suit of armor,<sup>164</sup> but calculate carefully the disposition of troops in order to ensure victory. Pero Niño has reached a stage in life when he is both strong and intelligent.

Readers of *El Victorial* experience the development of Pero Niño's personality over his life, from the earliest stages as a young knight through his adulthood, when he is able to combine both "fortitudo" and "sapientia." Overall, the text succeeds in producing a male figure that consistently displays manliness first through his physical accomplishments, and then uses his past experiences to inform future deeds.

### ***Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz***

The main difference between how the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* and *El Victorial* portray the hero is in their scope. The *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* spans just a portion of Ponce de León's life, whereas in *El Victorial* the reader experiences the different life phases of Pero Niño. In any case, he undergoes no development in the text, although we learn that, in his youth, Ponce de León has been reared in a noble house as an "fijo legítimo del muy magnífico, honrrado y noble cauallero, el conde don Juan Ponçe de León" and that "desde su niñez y juuentud siempre se leuantó cortés" (145). Therefore, his innate talents have blended with a noble education to produce a young man who possesses the traits of an older one, and who is presented as strong and wise from the beginning; in other words, he is born with equal

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<sup>164</sup>DeVries reaches his conclusions about movement through modern experiments with full-scale replica armor, which show that knights had free movement and could even turn a somersault if necessary (84). However, by the fifteenth century, plate armor had become the attire of choice and, although heavy, distributed the weight over much of the body and allowed free movement (Devries 84).

amounts of “fortitudo” and “sapientia.” In this way, he appears to approximate the type of knight described in chivalric fictions.

During his first battle against the Moors (chapter 3), for example, the author shows him praying daily before an image of the Virgen Mary: “Y este cauallero era mui deuto de nuestra Sennora la Virgen María; secretamente ante la qual ymagen cada día dos vezes él fazía vna muy deuota oraçión, pidiéndole por merçed le quisiese conplir aquel deseo que tenía” (159). His “deseo” is that he might die “en alguna batalla peleando contra los moros yn fieles” (159).

Ponce de León is rewarded by a manifestation of the Virgen, who tells the young fighter “¡O, buen cauallero, deuoto mío! Sepas por çierto que mi amado fijo Iesu Christo e yo avemos resçebido tu oraçion, y por ser fecha tan continua y con tan lyncio deseo de coraçón, te otorgamos que en todas quantas batallas de moros te fallares, serás vençedor” (159).<sup>165</sup> The Virgen, therefore, acts as a conduit between Heaven and Earth, and her words bind Ponce de León directly to the type of supernatural aid received by the Cid, “al qual apareció Sant Pedro de Cardenna. El qual le reueló de partes de Dios nuestro Sennor cómmo dende en XXX días supiese cómmo avía de morir, y que después de su fallestimiento avía de vençer vna grand batalla de reyes moros” (157); or Fernán González, “que ovo grandísimas victorias contra los moros e fizo grandes fechos.” Ponce de León also belongs to a roster that includes “esforçados caualleros” such as Godfrey of Bouillon, “que fizo cruel guerra a los moros e mató yn finitos dellos conquistando la casa santa de Ierusalem, por la ganar;” and don Peláez Correa, “maestre de Santiago, por el qual Dios fizo muchos milagros.” The list culminates by recognizing him as God’s present-day champion, “el qual continuamente fizo guerra cruel a

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<sup>165</sup>Chronicles that deal with the same historical events and figures make no mention of any appearance by the Virgen (Carriazo Rubio 160, fn. 116).

los moros del reyno de Granada, y vençió grandes batallas y nunca fue vençido...” (158). His story, the author hopes, will take its place amongst those of past knights whose history is recalled through other genres.

In attacking Alhama (chapter 15), Ponce de León leads his men on a scaling operation to assault the city from within.<sup>166</sup> Despite assurances from an apparition of the Virgin, who tells him “tú yrás seguro en paz y tomarás aquella çibdad” (200), the operation turns bad when he and his force lose the element of surprise. Once the Castilians are discovered, the Moors mount a counterattack, and Ponce de León is forced to confront his suddenly disheartened men.

The Moors’s counteroffensive has squeezed Ponce de León and his men into narrow city streets, impeding their ability to fight: “Y commo [el Marqués] entró con toda su gente, los moros desmayaron e se retruxeron por algunas calles más estrechas, donde mejor se podían defender” (201). This becomes a psychological hurdle for the Castilians, who run a greater risk of being killed in face-to-face combat. Grossman terms this the “intimate brutality” of killing at edged-weapons range, and recognizes that “it is psychologically easier to kill with an edged weapon that permits a long stand-off range, and increasingly more difficult as the stand-off range decreases” (120). The claustrophobic space magnifies the fear of being in a *mêlée*, and is confirmed by the toll: “pelearon con [los moros] tan reziamente fasta que todos seys allí murieron por no ser socorridos commo era razón” (201). Bearing witness to some of the best knights killed leads to a breakdown of the collective will, and even the most astute knights suggest aborting the mission:

E los capitanes que yuan con el marqués, caualleros muy prinçipales, commo esto viesen, paresçioles ser cosa muy graue e ynposible de se tomar aquella çibdad; e

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<sup>166</sup>I discuss the first part of this operation—specifically the insertion by scaling—in Chapter 4.

dixeron al marqués que les parecía, segund los moros se defendían, que se deúan boluer para sus casas y no dar lugar que más gente allí pereçiese (201).

The soldier's logic appears sound: they are behind enemy lines fighting skilled warriors, and they would be better off cutting their losses and retreating. This failure of courage, though, creates an opportunity for Ponce de León to assert his individual bravery and leadership.

The author exploits this sudden fear by showing Ponce de León in action inside the walls of Alhama. Ponce de León uses a three-prong approach to rally the men. First, he harangues the troops, of which the text provides a brief description followed by their response:

A los quales el marqués respondió que se marauilla mucho dellos, segund quien eran, tomar tan mal consejo, donde tan grand mengua e injuria podían rescibir; y pues que allí estauan con tanta y tan noble gente, que cada vno deuía esforçar los suyos e trabajar por tomar aquella çibdad, commo esperaua en Dios que la tomarían; e que quando la fortuna les fuse tan contraria que oviesen ally de morir, muy más honrada les sería la muerte que la vida con denuesto entre los otros caualleros. E commo los caualleros oyeron al marqués tan graçiosas y esforçadas razones, respondieron que, pues a él aquello le parecía, que todos querían seguir su mandado e morir debaxo de su vanderá juntamente con él. (202)

Second, he motivates the men by promising them any spoils they claim: “que cada vno ouiese para sí lo que pudiese tomar” (202). Finally, he galvanizes the desired fighting spirit from his men by circulating through their ranks: “y el marqués, andando por todas las estanças esforçándolos mucho, que los christianos cobraron tan grand coraçón y apretaron tanto en el conbate, que retraxeron a los moros...” (202). This third step marks a clear shift in the knight's military role from the principal fighter to the leader whose primary responsibility is maintaining unit cohesion.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>For studies on military cohesion, see F. M. Richardson, W.M. Henderson, Darryl, Manning, and Hanson: *The Western Way of War*.

Establishing and maintaining unit cohesion have been staple military principles for over two millennia, and the leader—whose decisions largely determine if the ranks achieve victory or die—is tasked with generating confidence during the fray (Manning 456, 464). Rather than rely on old models that exclusively laud martial prowess, the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* shows that Ponce de León has the ability to achieve a particular military objective. He arouses his men's fighting spirit when they want to retreat by incentivizing them with the promise of booty, and keeps them organized by moving through their ranks.

Ponce de León exhibits knowledge and understanding of warfare in other ways, such as through his participation in Fernando's war councils on the eve of the Granadan campaign and his pre-battle harangues. He delivers his first harangue at a young age, a significant detail because, as Fallows explains, "en el calor de batalla, las arengas exhortatorias carecían de sentido a menos que se reforzasen con la experiencia y, sobre todo, con una estratagema prudente que se basara en la lectura y el estudio atinado de manuals teóricos" (*Tratados Militares* 38). He displays the abilities of an older man when he quells the fears of his fellow nobleman Luis de Pernía, who tells Ponce de León that he does not want to fight: "catad, sennor, que estos moroses muy gruesa gente y nosotros somos pocos, y es tan grande la ventaja que nos tienen, y no querría resçibiésemos alguna mengua y nos perdiésemos, pues estamos a tiempo de nos poder yr a nuestro saluo" (163).

Ponce introduces and praises an evolved form of knighthood that paves the way for the Renaissance military soldier. As the precursor to the professional officer, this model requires that knights to be leaders of men and able to put the needs of soldiers above their own. As Manning explains, "It is not enough that a leader merely be technically proficient. If

he is to inspire confidence his subordinates must see not only that he will not waste their lives through incompetence, but also that he will not waste them through indifference” (464).

Inspiring men to fight was a common problem dealt with in works about warfare. Men turned to manuals like Vegetius’s *Epitoma* and Frontino’s *Strategematon* for advice on how to motivate troops. For Vegetius, a commander must display confidence and daring in order to inspire his followers:

Onde a los mesmos que desesperan viene osadía con el esfuerço del cabdillo, e si paresçe que él non teme alguna cosa entonçe creçe corasçón a los suyos (III.9); Pero virtud e coraçón creçe a la hueste si el cabdillo los esfuerça e amonesta que fagan su debdo, mayormente si de la pelea que se ha de fazer oyen alguna razón con que han esperança de venir a vitoria (III.12); E debes a los tuyos acresçentar la fiuza con esperança e confiança, e con esto amenguas a los adversaries la fiuza (III.18); Es a saber que si alguna parte de la hueste quedare e alguna parte fuyere non devemos por eso desperar que en tal neçesidad la firmeza e constançia del cabdillo pueda a sí mesmo apropiar e alcançar la vitoria (III.25).

According to Vegetius, he must portray courage and confidence if he expects the same from his troops. The confidence of their leader is a litmus test for them, and thus a brave and strong commander can help engineer a victory by setting a good example.

In the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*, we can see this confidence at work in Ponce de León’s response to Pernía’s fear, as he exhorts his companion to be confident in God and the outcome:

¡O, buen cauallero Luys de Pernía! ¡Pluguiera agora a Dios mi Sennor y tales palabras de vos nunca oyera! ¡Vn cauallero tan esforçado commo vos, y en tan grandes fechos commo vos avéys visto, y siempre ouistes victoria, y dezísme agora tales palabras y a tal tiempo! Yos tengo por padre, y delante destos caualleros y gentes que aquí están, parientes míos, criados y vasallos, yo vos perdono qualquier cosa de mí aconteçiere. Y vamos, y demos en ellos, ca yo tengo tan grand confiança en Dios nuestro Sennor y en la Virgen María, su bendita madre, que oy seremos vencedores, y mi voluntad determinada es dar la batalla avnque con menos gente me fallase. Y, puesto que yo muera, mi muerte avré por bienaventurada, porque soy bien cierto biuiré para sienpre. (163)

The speech echoes the virtues praised by Vegetius and reveals a command of rhetoric, atypical for such a young man. The “exclamatio”<sup>168</sup> salutes Pernía and appeals to his worth as a knight, and then reminds him of his great successes in the past (“exemplum”).<sup>169</sup> Next, he absolves Pernía of any responsibility for what happens to his person, before moving quickly to address the task at hand. Finally, he states that Pernía can earn an eternal life of glory if he dies.

The inspiration for the last two comments is found in Frontino’s *Strategematon*’s “First Book” (chapter XI), which deals with the example of Julio Póstumo who “levantó los ánimos de los suyos diziendo que Cástor e Pólux les ayudavan, e así restituyó la batalla” (77); and Judas, who “sacó de noche las armas que estaban hincadas en los templos por ornamentos e amonestó a sus cavallerso que los dioses havían de seguir su camino e que peleando ellos se fallarían en la batalla” (78). These examples are meant to persuade soldiers into believing victory is achievable, and in the mouth of an eighteen-year-old, they function to distinguish his manliness from that of his older contemporaries, who lack the experience and/or skill to deliver an effective harangue. Ponce de León’s speech changes the course of the battle, as De Pernía abandons his fears and predicts future successes: “Sennor don Rodrigo Ponçe de León, yo soy muy alegre de todo lo que tan bien avéys razonado, mostrando tan esforçado corazón y dando tan noble cuenta del linaje donde venís” (164).

Ponce de León’s rhetorical skills are also made evident at King Fernando’s court, when he debates strategy with other nobles. His first war council with King Fernando (chapter 17) appears, on the surface, to be a failure since his advice is rejected in favor of

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<sup>168</sup>Caplan: Qunitilian, 9.3.97; cited from Murphy 366.

<sup>169</sup>Murphy 372.

another nobleman's. At a meeting in Penna de los Enamorados (situated between Antequera y Archidona), Fernando asks Ponce de León his thoughts on the planned assault against Loxa (Loja), to which the latter responds:

Sennor, pues que Vuestra Alteza sigue esta obra tan santa y tan buena contra los moros, paréçeme que Vuestra Alteza deue buscar el camino más corto para los destruir. El qual es que Vuestra Sennoría quiera poner el sitio sobre Álora, que es muy más ligera cosa de ganar que Loxa, e los moros están muy quebrados, e non tienen logar de venir a la socorrer. E Loxa es cosa muy más fuerte, y es çierto que está muy basteçida, asy de gente, la mejor del reyno de Granada, commo de mantenimientos e artillerías para se defender; y está tan vezina de Granada que non se puede tanto çercar, quanto non ayan lugar de ser socorridos de gente cada día por la sierra syn ge lo poder register. E vuestras gentes podrían resçebir grand danno, porque en Loxa ay oy mucha gente. Y es menester de se poner dos reales, los quales estarán a grand peligro segund el sitio donde se han de poner. E tomándose Álora, perderse yan los valles de Cártama e de Santa María e todos los otros lugares çercanos, en lo qual resçibirían los moros muy gran pérdida, y vuestra enpresa grand fauor. Por ende, Vuestra Alteza faga lo que más le lazerá, que este es mi pareçer. (209-210)

He argues that Fernando and his army should first take Álora instead of Loja for very specific reasons. First, Álora is not heavily defended, and reinforcements are unavailable to rescue it. Loja, on the contrary, is heavily defended and populated, and close enough to Granada that the best Moorish soldiers can quickly come to its aid. In order to take Loja, Ponce de León concludes, Fernando will need two battalions that would, in the end, be in danger of being surrounded because of the area's geography.

His advice, however, is countered by Gutierre de Cárdenas, the "comendador mayor" of León:

Sennor, poner el sitio sobre Loxa es muy más conuenible a vuestro seiçio, porque tomada aquella çibdad, estará mejor aconpanada Alhama e avrá mejor lugar para que la recua entre más segura quando quiera que menester sea. E yo creo byen que Vuestra Alteza muy ligeramente la tomará, quanto más que Vuestra Alteza lo tiene ya asy hordenado, e non se deue este consejo mudar. (210)

Why, therefore, would the author of the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* create a scene in which his protagonist effectively loses a debate on war in front of the king? The answer is that the speech displays Ponce de León's knowledge of war and logic when discussing strategy, something the books of chivalry allude to but fail to fully show. Even some of the chronicles, for good reason, lack details about what is said and by whom during pre-war councils. Diego de Valera's *Crónica de los reyes católicos*, for example, relates how the council arrives at its conclusion, yet does not report any exchanges between Ponce de León and Cárdenas:

E a la fin se determinó que se pusiese çerco sobre la cibdad de Loja, por que aquella se tomando sería grand ayuda para meter la recua a la cibdad de Alhama. E como quiera que todos fueron en este acuerdo, el marqués de Cádiz, como toviese mayor esperiençia de la guerra de los moros que otro alguno de los cavalleros que allí estavan, fué de contraria opinión, dando para ello evidente razones. Pero como ya en la voluntad del rey e reyna estava determinado de poner el çerco sobre Loja, óvose de poner en obra, de que grandes inconvenientes siguieron. (147)

Valera acknowledges Ponce de León's expertise in fighting the Moors and speaks about his making a compelling argument to the Catholic Kings, but the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* uses the council scene to show that Ponce de León is a knight endowed with "sapientia."

During a later council, Ponce de León again responds to a question from Fernando regarding which city to attack next, Rónnda or Málaga (chapter 27). Like the previous example, this scene appears to be the author's own invention, intended only to show Ponce de León's superior grasp of warfare.<sup>170</sup> According to the text, certain unnamed nobles express doubts and appear timid in the King's presence: "e algunos dellos respondieron que todo era mucho bien para el Andaluzía, pero que les parecía ser cosa muy graue e de grand fecho" (237). Their diffidence sets the stage for Ponce de León's speech:

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<sup>170</sup>Carriazo Rubio points out that this episode does not coincide with Valera's *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, and "el cronista del marqués se muestra aquí inexplicablemente sintético" (237, fn. 369).

El qual respondi6 que todo lo que los caualleros dezían era muy bueno, pero pues que 6l era obligado a decir la verdad a su rey y se6or natural, que su voto era que ante todas cosas Su Alteza ganase a 6lora, porque era llave y puerto as6 de M6laga commo de Ronda. E ovo sobre ello algunas alteraciones; tanto, que dixo el marqu6s que si no se tomava primero 6lora, que ninguna de las dichas 6bdades non podr6a estar el real seguro sobrela syn estar a peligro, porque era espada de dos manos, que podr6a por all6 res6ibir el real grand danno. (237)

Again, Ponce de Le6n discusses the advantages of taking 6lora, which include its strategic proximity to a more valuable target, M6laga, and also how controlling it prevents potential security issues from developing. By arguing the importance of taking 6lora to the security of forces besieging Ronda and Malaga, Ponce de Le6n demonstrates that he has a greater understanding of strategy than the others.<sup>171</sup>

A third example (chapter 32) shows how the author presents an apparent adaptation of a war council described by Valera's chronicle.<sup>172</sup> Again, Ponce de Le6n identifies a weakness in the battle plans that other nobles espouse:

Sennor, muchas razones ay para aver de tomar por buen consejo el 6erco de M6laga; en especial que, gan6ndose aquella 6bdad, se aseguraria toda la tierra de la Barb6a que Vuestra Alteza tiene ganada. E as6 ganar6 el Axarqu6a fasta B6lez-M6laga, e sennorear6 Vuestra Alteza grand parte de la mar. Pero para aver de sityar a M6laga, h6nsele de poner tres reales. El vno, el m6s principal, en lo alto, cerca de Gibralfaro, que tome fasta la mar. E el otro real ha de estar en lo baxo, en el onsario. E el otro real, en las huertas, que tome fasta dar en la mar. E para estos reales ha menester mayor cantidad de gente que Vuestra Alteza aqu6 tiene. Y por tanto, se6or, mi pare6er es que Vuestra Alteza deue asentar sobre Loxa, e f6o en Nuestro Sennor que en breue tiempo la ganar6. E de ally, pasar6 el r6o de Genil e asentar6 sobre Yllora; e commo quier que es villa y castillo muy fuerte, tiene muy buena disposi6ion para ser combatida de las lonbaldas, e non se le puede detener quatro o cinco d6as. E de all6 puede Vuestra Alteza yr asentar sobre Mocl6n, e la puede tomar en otros tantos d6as. Porque estos lugares, commo quier que est6n enrriscados en pennas altas, son a mi pare6er muy flacos para el artiller6a que Vuestra Alteza aqu6 tiene, as6 por ser lugares

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<sup>171</sup>The fact that these scenes are constructions of the author of the *Hechos del Marqu6s de C6diz* and are absent from its contemporary chronicles lends evidence that the author was focused on distinguishing his subject (as the work's title clearly suggests), but also that he understood the importance of detailing war councils from other chroniclers like Valera.

<sup>172</sup>See page 200 for Valera's account of Ponce de Le6n's speech written in third person.

pequennos de poca gente commo porque no tienen barreras nin baluartes que tengan traueses nin fosados; y por estas cabsas non son defendederos. Y estas fortalezas tomadas, queriendo Dios nuestro Sennor, la çibdad de Granada se porná en mucha necesidad. E la villa de Montefrío e otro lugar que se llama Colomera luego se darán a Vuestra Alteza, porque quedan atajados de Granada. (248)

A deliberative speech, the author constructs the discourse around four of the five parts Aristotle identifies as the “dispositio”: “exordium,” “narratio,” “confirmatio,” and “peroratorio.”<sup>173</sup> It begins with an “exordium,” which renders the audience attentive and well disposed<sup>174</sup> by acknowledging the “buen consejo” of the other noblemen, and follows this by explaining (“narratio”) that taking Málaga will secure already conquered lands and create opportunities for future conquests, including controlling much of the coast. This objective, he concedes, will not be easy and will require that he isolate the city by capturing three towns and the land between “la Axarquía” and “Bélez-Málaga.” Only then should the king begin the siege of Málaga. A first front will take care of the area between Gibralfaro and the sea, a second will separate the city from its food supply, and a third will take the low land. This, unfortunately, requires more manpower than Fernando has at his disposal. The speech follows Aristotle’s dictum that one must “know the extent of the military strength of his country, both actual and potential, and also the nature of that actual and potential strength” (18) in order to be effective.

Ponce de León’s military intelligence further echoes what Aristotle emphasizes in *Rhetoric*: “With regard to National Defense: [the speaker] ought to know all about the methods of defense in actual use, such as the strength and character of the defensive force

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<sup>173</sup>The question as to why the author constructs a rhetorically-sound speech but leaves out one of the key parts—“refutatio”—is intriguing. Clearly he understands Aristotelian rhetorical structure, so this omission appears to be deliberate. Since the point of a “refutatio” is to refute other arguments, could it be that he does not wish to offend or shame one of the “otros grandes” noblemen who were present during the council?

<sup>174</sup>See Alberic of Monte Cassino’s *Dictaminum Radii*, which cites the Ciceronian objectives of the *exordium* (Murphy 205).

and the positions of the forts” (19). In the “confirmatio,” Ponce de León presents his plan to attack the three easier targets of Loxa, Genil, and Yllora, because they are susceptible to Fernando’s artillery, and none would last more than a few days. From there, Moclin would fall next and just as easily for it lacks proper fortifications. This advice shows that Ponce de León is also in agreement with Vegetius’s manual in that a good general should consider his strengths and explain his enemy’s weaknesses in order to make victory appear easier (Book III).

Finally, Ponce de León ends his argument with a “peroratio” that addresses Fernando’s objective—capturing Granada—and how his plan will help bring this about. As Curtius explains, the conclusion must appeal to something close to the listener’s mind or heart but be plausible in order to convince them (70). In the case of Fernando, capturing Granada and marking the beginning of the end of the Moorish presence on the Peninsula would do just that.

Debates of the sort shown in the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* are a form of “ceremonial combats” and play a significant role in shaping masculinity (Karras 89-91). Ponce’s speech lends evidence to Cartagena’s hypothesis that knights were capable of performing functions beyond fighting, and also shows that some noblemen could best their counterparts in ways other than physical violence.

Both Ponce de León and Pero Niño exhibit an alternative view of knightly display that are inspired by changing battlefield conditions and the translation of ancient military treatises into Castilian. More than simple warriors, they function in ways other than are celebrated in the chivalric romances and therefore represent a new form of masculine exemplarity.

## CONCLUSION: THE ALTERNATIVE KNIGHT

This study has looked at the changes in the portrayal of knights in three early modern Spanish texts and compared them to the rather formulaic examples found in *Amadís de Gaula*. Knights like Amadís are portrayed as exemplary warriors, but they are one-dimensional fighters exercising a mostly outmoded form of warfare. No longer the centerpiece of the battlefield, fifteenth-century knights were performing military functions that required them to be not only masters of traditional skills like riding, jousting, and sword-fighting, but also to undergo training in the use of weapons previously reserved for foot soldiers, to more consistently lead larger units of troops in battle, and to study in order to improve their speaking skills. The best place to look for these changes, we have seen, is in chronicles of the period. They show the emergence of political institutions, the use of larger armies, the employment of better weapons, and the abandonment of the cavalry charge in favor of larger troop movements. These changes occurred under the umbrella of emerging humanist ideas about education and war that resulted in part from the translation and circulation of Classical and newly minted military treatises.

By the end of the fifteenth century, it was impractical for knights to act as their fictional counterparts, however, authors of fiction still looked to past legends such as the Homeric heroes, the Cid, and Fernán González for inspiration. The works coexisted with others that portrayed how a real knight acquired and exercised his skills, and how these skills changed over time. Pero Niño and Ponce de León are both fierce warriors, but also highly skilled orators and tacticians when mature, and it is the latter that marks them as models of

ideal knighthood at this moment in Spanish history. Combined, these changes show a transition from the model knight esteemed in the earlier epic poetry to the modern courtier, most notably exemplified by men like Santillana and Jorge Manrique, who were excellent in handling weapons, wrestling, and horseback riding, but also excelled in letters.

As many critics have explained, and as this dissertation has shown, males of the knightly class are regularly on display and seeking validation. They follow a chivalric code that conditions their behavior, but that is not static. In the case of fifteenth-century Castile, several changes took place that altered how masculinity was expressed as combat was transformed by new weapons and tactics. These changes are visible in the texts studied here.

The *Passo honroso* describes an artificial expression of the masculine prowess expected of individuals replicating conditions that earlier had dominated warfare. Jousting competitions were isolated demonstrations of ability. During these events, men could test their martial skills against others in front of an audience that could judge their performance and name a victor. Although it was a tangible exercise grounded in strict fairness, other behaviors were attached to it, like refusing to wear parts of the armor or concealing wounds in order to continue fighting. These reveal the intangibles of jousting not present in works of fiction but that men use to manipulate their participation or to further distinguish them. These intangibles strive to make the lists more “war-like” and less artificial.

When examining questions of masculinity, however, it is of little concern whether we label a text as a description of a joust, a biography or a chronicle. What is important is that in these longer works one can better see how heroes like Pero Niño change as a soldier and leader over the course of their life, and how they suddenly combine oratorical excellence with the skills of a warrior during the performance of their duties.

As we have seen, *El Victorial* chronicles his transformation as he moves through different life stages, and supports the notion that there was a movement away from earlier knightly values and towards a more humanistic model. He is an ideal fighting nobleman: physically robust but educated in a courtly setting that makes him rhetorically adept. He is a versatile leader capable of coordinating attacks as well as leading them, and a loyal vassal to his king, whether he is shown invading parts of southern England and northern France, or patrolling the Barbary and Andalusian coasts.

Ponce de León is similar to Pero Niño. Both lead armed forces, aggressively pursue difficult missions in the name of their respective sovereigns, and exude “fortitudo” and “sapientia” as the cornerstones of their manly characterization. *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*, however, does not follow Ponce de León's biography. Instead, it just speaks to a particular part of his life, while characterizing him as a person who was born a warrior.

Particularly the first three chapters, the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz* is a narrative searching for its place amongst the “crónicas” that were written around the same time about the same endeavors. The text, as the title implies, focuses exclusively on his deeds and, in doing so, dips into the fantastical waters of the chivalric romances that surrounded this genre.<sup>175</sup> These fantastical elements, however, only serve to highlight a real hero's superiority.

Warfare continued to change rapidly, and soldiers fighting between the fifteenth and seventeenth-centuries were exposed to different types of combat, typified by confrontations of armies by land and sea. This period saw the conclusion of the “Reconquista,” the conquest of the American continent, and the expansion of Spanish might over the rest of Europe. It is

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<sup>175</sup>Some of Ponce de León's correspondence survives, and is catalogued in Carriazo Rubio's edition of the *Hechos del Marqués de Cádiz*.

one of the busiest in terms of military activity for the newly minted Spanish nation. These battles used crossbows and gunpowder weapons instead of horse charges (Rupp 23), and the effect of their use is evident in works like *El passo honroso de Suero de Quiñones* (1434), *El Victorial* (1448), and *Historia de los hechos del Marques de Cádiz*, which foreshadow treatments of war like Palacios Rubios's *Tratado del esfuerzo belico heroyico* (1524), Baltasar Gracián's *El héroe* (1637), and *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647). Together, these works can serve as bookends for a period when knights like Pero Niño and Ponce de León began evolving into the model for future officers. Yet, fictional accounts of knights remained popular for readers.

Cervantes's satire of the knight-errant has been credited with the death of the book of chivalry and its exemplars. Don Quijote is crazy. When he tries to be a reincarnation of Amadís, he encounters nothing but misadventures with windmills and wine casks. Yet, while Cervantes recognizes that this type of "Amadís-like" heroism is no longer possible, in reality, he does not reject military activity at all. His regard for the life of the real soldier is evident in many of his works. By looking at some of these earliest texts, it is my hope that this study shows that there is an alternative picture of the knight that begins to blend into the modern soldier, and that ultimately influences our modern concept of the military hero.

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