

Sources, Syncretism, and Significance
in Calderón's *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634)

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Calderón de la Barca's *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634), first published by Pablo Cabañas in 1948, makes use of a mytho-allegorical narrative to tell the story of the creation, fall, and redemption of humankind. This study offers fresh insights into Calderón's handling of the mythological sources used in the creation of his Christian allegorical play beyond the eponymous Orpheus and Eurydice. Specifically, I focus upon Calderón's interaction with four additional mythological episodes: creation from Book 1 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus in the Garden of the Hesperides, the abduction of Proserpina, and the entry of Aeneas and the Sibyl of Cumae into the Underworld in Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*. These myths are shown to form part of a syncretic *a lo divino* allegorical drama that recognises the importance of select pagan texts as valuable contributors to our comprehension of key issues in Christianity, such as the immortal soul, the culpability of humankind for Original Sin, and Christ's dual nature as mortal and divine. Within this syncretic narrative, I explore Calderón's use of symbols common to both traditions as a means to engineer challenging new perspectives from which an educated courtly audience could explore the mysteries at the heart of this religious drama.

Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634), precursor to the more commonly known 1664 rewrite of the same name, has been the subject of intermittent attention since its publication by Pablo Cabañas in 1948.¹ Notable contributions to date include those by Pedro León, Enrique Duarte, Bojana Tomc, and a critical edition of both versions of the play by Duarte in 1999. Despite these studies, there remains a paucity of scholarship with regard to Calderón's handling of mythological sources in his creation of the Christian allegorical play. In the most recent offering, Tomc highlighted the major characteristics of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth carried over by Calderón from the poetry of Ovid and Virgil. My intention is to move beyond Orpheus and Eurydice to identify and consider the influence of four additional mythological episodes incorporated by Calderón: creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus in the Garden of the Hesperides, the abduction of Proserpina, and the entry of Aeneas and the Sibyl of Cumae into the Underworld. I will examine how Calderón's use of these myths contributes to the depth and complexity of the catechistic, syncretistic, and didactic religious drama, and challenges an educated courtly audience to better comprehend the mysteries at the heart of the *auto sacramental*.

The c.1634 version of the *auto* constructs a narrative allegory that Christianises the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and via which it tells the stories of creation, the fall of humankind, and its redemption through Christ's sacrifice (León, "El divino" 689). This altering of the myth to serve as a vehicle for the Christian message of the *auto sacramental* continues the syncretic tradition of the European Middle Ages that had particularly affected Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Kluge, *Baroque* 98). The contemporary focus on the *Metamorphoses* does not

preclude the influence of other mythological texts, as we will see, although Ovid's text did enjoy an unprecedented fame and enduring influence well into the baroque era (Kluge, *Early* 5). Additionally, the *auto* begins to move away from the older tradition of symbols read in isolation within a frame narrative and towards the construction of a cohesive allegorical whole based upon the Orpheus and Eurydice myth that portrays the underlying story as a "distorted version" (Heiple 222) of the Christian rendition of events. While the earlier version of the play is more faithful to the Latin source texts than the 1664 rewrite (Osma 165), its *a lo divino* nature necessitated plot changes by Calderón. Barbara E. Kurtz notes that Calderón generally had no issue with altering Greco-Roman myth in this way and that it could involve the conflation of myths, the addition and omission of characters and material to ensure adherence to scripture, and alterations based on the playwright's own ideas and contributions ("No World" 265). For this reason, a résumé of the plot serves to orient the reader in light of such changes prior to analysis.

The *auto* begins when Aristeo, a demon who falls from grace, witnesses Orfeo effect creation through the mighty power of his song in accordance with the description given in Genesis. Orfeo crafts Eurídice, who represents humankind, and gives her Gracia, Amor, and Albedrío as companions. Aristeo is envious of the privileged place afforded Eurídice and vows to steal her away from Orfeo, thus he enters the paradisiac garden in disguise and attempts to woo her with the promise of gifts greater than Orfeo's rustic offerings. Initially she entertains his advances because Albedrío told her that he was but a fool, but she soon comes to see the danger behind his sophistry and rejects him in favour of her beloved. Eurídice comes upon the fruit tree forbidden her by Orfeo while

collecting flowers and so ensues a battle between Albedrío, who encourages her to eat the fruit, and Gracia, who pleads she leave it be. Gracia is unsuccessful and leaves Eurídice to follow Albedrío's counsel to eat the fruit and she is poisoned as a consequence. Aristeo emerges in the guise of a serpent that spirits her off to the Underworld to be his wife, which leaves a grief-stricken Orfeo to descend in pursuit of Eurídice and commit the perilous act of crossing the River Lethe. Orfeo undoes Aristeo, who has now been revealed to be Plutón, the god of Hades, or the Devil in its Christian transposition, through the awesome power of his song and completes the redemption of mankind by rescuing Eurídice.

Creation

Calderón's play opens with the creation of the universe and involves a series of events that have no basis in the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. The spectacle that unfolds on stage is based on Genesis and includes the discovery of the sun, moon, birds, fish, and various other animals. Calderón's rendition will be shown to draw upon Ovid's account of creation in the *Metamorphoses* also, and employ syncretised pagan elements as part of the mythological *auto*. Aristeo acts as expositor throughout the process and explains for the benefit of the audience that Orfeo has:

hecho un globo, una masa está de modo
sin ley, sin forma, ni uso,
opaco, triste, lóbrego y confuso
y porque informe y ciego, los poetas
caos le dirán y nada los profetas.
¿Quién creará de este modo
su fábrica mezclada

que siendo el todo nada y nada el todo,
por estar todo junto no sea nada? (20-28)²

Aristeo's description of the newly formed Earth as "sin forma" and "nada" borrows from Genesis: "In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram. Terram autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi" (Gen. 1:1-2). [In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void.]³ This observation is supported by Duarte, who also notes that the line "*et omne factum est ita*" (80) and the description of Orfeo as "la majestad de este *fiat*" (82) are clear references to Genesis in the vulgate (Calderón de la Barca, *Orfeo* 314). In addition to the influence of Genesis, an educated courtly audience may also acknowledge the allusion to the Ovidian account of creation taken from Book 1 of his *Metamorphoses*:

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unas erat todo naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum. (1.5-9)

[Before the sea was, and the lands, and the sky that hangs over all, the face of Nature showed alike in her whole round, which state have men called chaos: a rough, unordered mass of things, nothing at all save lifeless bulk and warring seeds of ill-matched elements heaped in one.]⁴

Calderón's implication that this stage of creation is known to pagan "poetas" as "caos" draws upon existing views of Ovid as a prophet (Born 364) who foreshadowed the truth of the void, as it would be described in Christian terms. In this example, the focus on the world as "sin ley, sin forma," "confuso,"

and composed of a “fábrica mezclada” serves to reflect the chaotic, unordered mass at odds with itself in Ovid’s depiction. Calderón uses the similarities between both accounts to encourage a reading whereby Ovid’s foreshadowing is brought under the yoke of Genesis. In this way, the playwright seemingly rids Ovid’s account of its unacceptability as a heretical mythological text and reframes it as valuable for the comprehension of God’s creation of the world.

This foreshadowing would suggest a shift to a figural historical interpretation of both events akin to that which was practiced by the Church Fathers and remained common into the European Middle Ages, and up to the eighteenth century (Auerbach 60-61). In this example, we see how Calderón frames the classical account as prophetic, but inexact. It is an educated courtly audience’s ability to recognise the similarities between the accounts and embrace the first as a herald, and the second as the fulfilment of the first (Auerbach 53). I would argue, however, that Calderón’s use of figural interpretation also imbues the prediction with its own legitimacy, even if “distorted” (Heiple 222), because it often provides details absent from the fulfilment that Calderón will later be shown to draw upon to corroborate and explain aspects not covered within the Bible. Thus, details of the prophecy itself will be shown below to contribute to the overall fulfilment of the figural interpretation that the viewer can use as a vantage point from which to explore better the mysteries at the centre of the *auto sacramental*.

In the present example, the superiority of the Genesis account is made clear to the audience by the anaphora of “nada” in Calderón’s lines, in which it serves both as a noun and adjective, and its appearance within the antimetabole of “siendo el todo nada y nada el todo,” which together rhetorically privilege the

nothingness of the Christian prophets over pagan chaos. This device could be linked to the classical encomium of *nada* that had re-emerged during the Renaissance and survived into the baroque period with its accompanying rhetorical features of anaphora and a relationship between God's will and the nothingness (Cacho Casal 227). In particular, Francesco Coppetta's *Capitolo di Noncovellet* (1509) served as a model for such poetry and cast the nothingness as a divine instrument for the creation of new life (Cacho Casal 226). A similar point is made by Calderón insofar as he has the prophets label the raw fabric of the universe, with its infinite creative and generative potential, as nothingness: "y nada los profetas." Ovid would appear to serve as a well-known and prophetic intertextual reference point whose account lends credence to Calderón's exploration of the play's mysteries through pagan myth. Nevertheless, the need to bring the text into line with the biblical rendition reminds an educated courtly audience that such texts are incapable of standing alone as a faithful representation of events. The lesser status of the pagan texts echoes the discussion above regarding the biblical fulfilment correcting the supposedly distorted pre-figural account from mythological sources.

Allegorical interpretations of Ovid's texts were nothing new. Christian interpretations of the *Metamorphoses* had spawned the highly popular *Ovide moralisé* (c.1317-28) and Giovanni di Bonsignori's *Metamorfoseo volgare* (1497) in the Renaissance (Javitch 100); while later Spanish translations included those by Jorge de Bustamante (1577), Antonio Pérez (1580), Felipe Mey (1586), Pedro Sánchez de Viana (1589), and Juan Baptista Varesio (c.1609). Lester K. Born suggests that the medieval method of interpretation in which Christian allegory and pagan mythology were "glibly reconciled" was waning in the

Spanish Renaissance, and that there is cause to doubt whether the translations and adaptations of Ovid's writings gave much attention to the moral content whatsoever (377-78). For example, John C. Parrack (27-28) notes that Sánchez de Viana's text does not enforce a single moralising reading of the *Metamorphoses*; instead, he invites the educated readers to make up their own mind to an extent based on guidance, or partial exegesis, from the Humanist scholar.

Additionally, there was emerging a distinction between mythological material as art and its religious significance as allegory *in factis*, that is to say, the level at which the stories were read as (distorted) historical truths (Díaz Balsera 36). This required mythological texts to embrace their dualism as both amoral and moral (Kluge, *Early* 14). For example, Juan Pérez de Moya, a prominent Spanish mythological commentator in the same vein as Giovanni Boccaccio, Vincenzo Cartari, and Natale Conti, described the mythological fable as “una habla que con palabras de admiración significa algún secreto natural” that is useful “para mostrar a los niños doctrina” (65, 68). The mythological tales may be considered fictional and reflective of the “more unbiased interest in the ancient fables” and, most importantly, of biblical parables (Kluge, *Baroque* 99), but this does not prevent their content serving as a vehicle for moral didacticism.

Calderón's focus on the consistencies between the mythological and biblical accounts in this *auto* reflects more the syncretic mood of the Corpus Christi festivities generally (McKendrick 244). Such an approach may be considered medieval insofar as it is much more reconciliatory than contemporary readings which had come to praise the narratives more for their entertainment value than their buried moral truths (Schevill 159). Thus, contemporary opinion

on the use of myth suggests that Calderón's synthesis of Ovid and Genesis could have run the risk of appearing tired were it not to offer his audience an alternative way to experience, comprehend, and contemplate the divine act of creation. I would argue that A.A. Parker (34) was correct to point out the "novelty and depth" that stems from the medium of dramatic poetry employed by Calderón, but he did not go far enough because he ignored the effects generated by the complex interweaving of a number of mythological sources to create a unified narrative arc that explores the Christian mysteries and acts to frustrate the apparent split between aesthetics and moral content that had come to affect Ovid. The intellectual challenge posed by this synthesis of sources, which at moments departs from the well-trodden narrative of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth to ensure a coherent syncretic plot, would have invited an educated courtly audience to unpick the complex webs of intertextual references and reflect upon the parallels between the pagan and biblical accounts of events. Indeed, Sofie Kluge (*Early* 15) recognises that baroque mythological literature allowed for the self-aware presentation of controversial contemporary issues in a manner that encouraged educated audiences to question and critique issues from a fresh perspective, such as Calderón's negotiation of the complex relationship between pagan myth and Catholicism in this *auto*. The true "novelty and depth" of Calderón's play, as Parker put it, therefore exists at a level more fundamental than expression; rather, it is the very construction of an elaborate synthetic foundation narrative for the *auto* that negotiates the refigured relationship between aesthetics and moral content in the seventeenth century to generate new perspectives and vantage points from which to experience the mysteries at the heart of the play.

Calderón continues his intertextual dialogue with Ovid as he broaches the creation of humankind:

¿Qué es esto, ay de mí, qué veo?
 Esta es la mujer altiva
 que vi en rasgos y bosquejos
 de matices y de líneas,
 cuando envidioso de ver
 estupendas maravillas
 en el barro ejecutadas,
 en el lodo conseguidas,
 la naturaleza humana
 con amagos de divina
 no quise adorar turbando
 superiores jerarquías. (83-94)

The depiction offered by Calderón distances itself from Genesis 1:27, which states: “Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam: ad imaginem Dei creavit illum, masculum et feminam creavit eo.” [So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.] This divergence from scripture to cast a sole female, Eurídice, as the embodiment of humankind is a necessity borne of the cross-mapping of the details from both stories. In the myth Eurydice is Orpheus’s wife, so Calderón draws upon the trope of humanity as the bride of Christ in his *a lo divino* interpretation; a trope that can be traced to the Song of Solomon in which the soul takes on the role of a bride and sings of her heavenly desire for the groom, who is God (Norris 2). It is also possible that Calderón incorporated the image

from Spanish mystic poetry, which had assimilated the original trope from its biblical source (Heiple 224) and subsequently consolidated its place in the Spanish literary tradition.

Aristeo is shocked to see Eurídice, whom he recognises as the embodiment of God's plans for humanity. The lexis focuses on the sketches and drawings that formed the template for humanity: "rasgos," "bosquejos," and "de matices y de líneas." While the creation of a female beloved suggests the Ovidian tale of Pygmalion, the focus on the design or technical drawing lends itself more to the biblical motif of the *Deus artifex*. This trope presents God as a divine craftsman (Wisdom 13:1) who focuses on harmony, measure, and proportion (Wisd. 11:21) in his work. Even so, the Song of Songs (7:1-9) serves as Calderón's most likely Christian source when we consider the particular attention paid to the perfection of the female form created by God, which resonates with the female allegory of humankind as the work of a gifted artisan. For example, in the Song of Songs reference is made to the craftsman: "Quam pulchri sunt pedes tui in calceamentis, filia principis! Flexurae femorum tuorum sicut monilia, quae fabricata sunt manu artificis." (Cant. 7:2) [How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.], and her neck, eyes, and nose are fashioned like impressive manmade structures: "collum tuum sicut turris eburnea. Oculi tui sicut piscinae in Hesebon, quae sunt ad portam Bathrabbim; nasus tuus sicut turris Libani, quae respicit contra Damascum." (Cant. 7:5) [Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.]

Aristeo goes on to discuss how God fashioned Eurídice from mud and clay (89-94). Here Calderón shapes Eurídice as an analogous expression of the biblical account of humankind's creation: "sed fons ascendebat e terra, irrigans universam superficiem terrae. Formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae" (Gen. 2:6-7). [But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.] The playwright's description makes explicit reference to both "barro" and "lodo", elements that are only present by implication in Genesis when one considers the wet earth that God would have shaped after the mist. The same image of earth and water mixed to fashion clay is present in Ovid's account of creation:

natus homo est, sive hunc divino semine fecit
 ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,
 sive recens tellus seductaque nuper ab alto
 aethere cognati retinebat semina caeli.
 quam satus Iapeto, mixtam pluvialibus undis,
 finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum (1.78-83)

[Then man was born: whether the god who made all else, designing a more perfect world, made man of his own divine substance, or whether the new earth, but lately drawn away from heavenly ether, retained still some elements of its kindred sky—that earth which the son of Iapetus mixed with fresh, running water, and moulded into the form of the all-controlling gods.]

Prometheus, son of Iapetus, created humankind in the image of the gods as part of his design for a more perfect world, which mirrors both the Christian *Deus artifex* trope and that of the divine template for humanity present in

Genesis 1:27. More importantly, Ovid elucidates that earth was mixed with fresh running water to make a substance akin to the “barro” and “lodo” that Calderón describes in his *auto*. Calderón relies upon Ovid’s account to make clear the details of the story of humankind’s creation, which recalls the earlier discussion of Calderón’s use of the “distorted” prophetic text to elucidate aspects of the biblical fulfilment. Kurtz (“No World” 265) noted how Calderón altered Greco-Roman myth to fit scripture, which is of course also the case in *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634), but it is clear that the playwright also supplements these biblical materials with mythological details in a manner that goes beyond mere homogenisation of sources for narrative cohesion.

Aristeo goes on to mention that Orfeo’s creation is made “con amagos de divina” (92). These divine remnants are not clearly explained by the account in Genesis; rather it presents the image of a cohesive whole, divine in and of itself: “tunc formavit Dominus Deus hominem pulverem de humo et inspiravit in nares eius spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem” (Gen. 2:7). [Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.] Both dust and divine breath combine to form one living whole with no mention of a separate soul, never mind any indication of numerous fragments of divinity. Ovid, on the other hand, describes the clay used as so recently cleaved from the heavens that it possessed some elements of them still. Whether intentional or not, Calderón’s verses read as vague with regard to the number of these divine particles present in each being, which fosters greater ambiguity when we consider Eurídice’s existence as a solitary figure representative of all humankind compared to the plural used in reference to Orfeo’s creative acts: “estupendas maravillas / en el

barro ejecutadas, / en el lodo conseguidas” (88-90). We could, as a result, consider that Calderón refers to the fabrication of numerous human beings, each with its own singular vestige of the divine, or soul, that the audience is intended to comprehend through the allegory of Eurídice. It is this understanding of the text, shaped as it is by prophetic Ovidian influences, that allows us to interpret it also as a vehicle for the idea of the soul rooted in Neoplatonic philosophy and subsequently syncretised by the Church Fathers.

Calderón possessed a wide-ranging knowledge of theology and philosophy, although his overall approach might best be described as Augustinian (Parker 69). In particular, his appreciation of the philosophy of music resulted in the adoption of a Platonic-Augustinian approach (Sage 289) that permeates the act of creation in *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634). Certainly, within the play, Calderón explains creation through musical concepts (Duarte 76), which is exemplified by his reference to Orfeo’s control over “la música del orbe” (161). This casts Orfeo in the role of the Augustinian “God-Artist” who, much like the abovementioned *Deus artifex*, or craftsman, shared his ideas through harmonious composition (Spitzer 31) on a planetary scale as part of the Music of the Spheres. This Neoplatonic concept was one of many that were adopted by the Church Fathers, who are known to have shown “no hesitation about turning to Christian use the resources of pagan philosophy” (Elsee 91). Calderón’s attribution of the source of the Music of the Spheres motif to Clement of Alexandria (159) instead of Plato would appear to follow the trend observed by Elsee, and once again serves to privilege Christianity over paganism within the play. If we return to humankind as harbouring an element of the divine, we see the clear influence of a syncretised Neoplatonic concept of the soul as an

entity separate from the body. Indeed, the microcosmic human soul was acknowledged as being patterned upon the macrocosmic harmony of the world soul and not the physical human body (Spitzer 14-15), thus the soul is distinct from the body as its source is recognisably other. The union of the body and soul in life is explained by the soul's need of a vehicle through which it can experience the world by virtue of the senses until its ultimate release upon death. Such an understanding can be traced back to the pearl and oyster image presented in Plato's *Phaedrus* (250c6); yet it is perhaps Plato's *Timaeus* (41d-e) that had the most profound impact upon Calderón's view of the soul as a fragment of the divine:

For the rest, do ye weave together the mortal with the immortal, and thereby fashion and generate living creatures. [...] Thus He spake, and once more into the former bowl, wherein He had blended and mixed the Soul of the Universe, He poured the residue of the previous material, mixing it in somewhat the same manner, yet no longer with a uniform and invariable purity, but second and third in degree of purity. And when He had compounded the whole He divided it into souls equal in number to the stars, and each several souls He assigned to one star, and setting them each as it were in a chariot. He showed them the nature of the Universe, and declared unto them the laws of destiny. (89-90)

The pagan godhead appears as the craftsman of the universe in what was the only Platonic text available during the Middle Ages (Curtius 544). Plato describes how he combines the essence of the universe, "Soul of the Universe," with other materials to create a partly divine mixture that he divides and forms

into souls. Stars serve as vessels for these souls until they fall to Earth and become the divine “amagos” more akin to the Calderonian depiction than that of Ovid, which supports a view of the Ovidian creation myth as a popular and prophetic scaffold onto which Calderón grafts the Neoplatonic concept of the separate soul that had entered Christianity. The pagan texts resonate with each other on the theme of humankind as materially divine in some small way, thus providing the audience with an avenue to access and reflect upon the creation of man and the universe. Genesis, on the other hand, fails to offer such an opportunity for Calderón’s catechistic spectacle. Much in the manner of the Church Fathers themselves, Calderón makes use of a pagan source to facilitate comprehension of the Christian view of creation by reframing aspects of the Genesis myth through the relative safety and familiarity of a ‘prophetic’ Ovidian lens.

A further consequence of this usage of the text is the *de facto* legitimisation of the contribution of the mythological account in the Christian comprehension of creation. Calderón’s *auto* clearly favours the biblical account, but also casts the supplementary role played by the selected mythological materials in a positive light. This would appear to confirm that the figural interpretation inherent within the text is a two-way process and affords the Ovidian account an importance extending beyond the provision of a cohesive version of events to support the allegorical narrative. Furthermore, it suggests that a synthetic reading of both accounts is required by an educated courtly audience in order to render meaning from the complex interweaved narrative.

The Garden of the Hesperides

The second of the pagan influences that Calderón draws upon is that of the Garden of the Hesperides: a verdant garden that hosts a tree on which golden apples grow with the power to grant immortality. Three nymphs, the Hesperides, and Ladon, a never-sleeping serpent-dragon entwined about the tree, protect the garden and its valuable contents from theft in the source myth. Orpheus and his fellow adventurers stumble upon the garden in the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, which is the same myth that inspired another of Calderón's nine mythological *autos*, *El divino Jasón*.

The most extensive source text on this mythological episode is to be found in Apollonius of Rhodes's Greek epic poem *Argonautika* (4.1390-460).⁵ The Roman poet Gaius Valerius Flaccus penned a Latin version of the poem based upon Apollonius's text but died upon completion of the eighth book of the ten required. It was not until 1519 that the humanist scholar Giovanni Battista Pio produced a commentary to accompany the Latin text that also included a supplement featuring his own translation of the final two books to complete the *Argonautika* (Kobusch 125). It is in Battista Pio's supplementary translation (10.427 ff.) that we find the episode in question.⁶ It proves difficult to conclude whether or not Calderón interacted with either text directly, however, because the playwright draws upon the link between Orpheus and the Garden of the Hesperides as a platform from which to explore the details of the garden's syncretism with Eden, as well as an opportunity to introduce Virgilian bucolic allusions, thus much of the narrative of the episode is jettisoned.

The Garden of the Hesperides, like the Elysian Fields, benefitted from idyllic pastoral descriptions in Greco-Roman literature that came to be fused with the Garden of Eden in the medieval era (Delumeau 14-15). Of particular

influence in these syntheses were Latinate sources, such as those of Virgil and Ovid, in which pastoral scenes became the ideal model for the paradise lost after the golden age (Gómez 122). Among Virgil's poetry, it is *Georgic IV* that contains his version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth in which he introduces the character of Aristaeus and gives vivid descriptions of nature's bounty. The poem was particularly favoured in Spain: Fernando de Herrera had translated sections for inclusion in the explanatory notes of his *Anotaciones* (1580) (Osuna 217); while poets such as Francisco de Medina, Juan de Mena, and Diego de Mendoza also offered their own imitations and versions (Pollin 420). Calderón's *a lo divino* emulation incorporates the character of Aristaeus, which suggests Virgil's popular poem was an influential model in the construction of the pastoral setting of the *auto* and his choice to feature Aristeo as the principal antagonist.

Virgil's prominence in Spain did not stem from the popularity of his poetry alone; rather, like Ovid, it was his position as a Christian prophet in Middle Ages that had first led to his rise (Bourne 396). Calderón may have been exposed to this message via Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (Bourne 392), given his theological education and propensity for Augustinian philosophy. Virgil's prophet status stemmed from a Christian figural reading of *Eclogue IV*, in which a sibylline prognostication tells of the arrival of a special child who will restore humankind to the happiness it had once known in the golden age. The amalgamation of Latinate literary descriptions of pastoral paradises, such as the Garden of the Hesperides, with the Garden of Eden meant that the prophecy in *Eclogue IV* came to be read as prefiguring the coming of the Christ child who would eventually sacrifice himself to redeem humankind and grant life everlasting. The prominence of Virgil's influence may be related to the

acceptance of the Christianised sibylline prophecy given that the acts of creation and redemption are themes central to the *auto sacramental*. Virgil's rise in popularity in general goes beyond allegorical readings of his poetry (Gómez 114-15), which is exemplified by Calderón's interaction with the fertile pastoral tradition of the Renaissance that the *Georgics* had spawned in Spain and beyond (112).

Calderón engages with details from the pastoral tradition throughout his play. For example, Orfeo invites Eurídice to his cabin to rest in the shade out of the sun:

Sube a mi cabaña. En ella
con las sombras te convida
la siesta; pasa el rigor
del sol, dulce esposa mía,
en mis brazos. (229-33)

This sheltering from the sun is reminiscent of the Song of Songs 1:7 that sees the swarthy bride question whether she might rest at noon like the flock: “si ignoras te o pulchra inter mulieres egredere et abi post vestigial gregum et pasce hedos tuos iuxta tabernacula pastorum.” [Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?] This allusion evokes the idea of a rustic, if not pastoral, existence. Aristeo describes the landscape as one of “altos montes” (293) and “campos bellos” (332), while Eurídice speaks of “valles” (868), “campos de Gracia” (881), and describes the forbidden tree as “hermoso” (946). The overall description draws upon the features of the Renaissance conception of the pastoral *locus amoenus* that

included, although was not limited to, a focus on trees, verdant plains, and a water source (Curtius 195). The stage directions also call for the characters to wear pastoral garb: “Orfeo de pastor galán” (Calderón de la Barca, *Orfeo* 312), while the relatively familiar meter of the Spanish ballad is employed by Orfeo to win over his audience and intimate his rejection of the fanciful sophistry of foreign meters, such as the *octava real* spoken by Aristeo (León, “Orpheus” 189). The garden setting is an important facet of the *auto* that taps into a long tradition of Eden conceived of as a Greco-Roman pastoral scene, such as that described in Virgil’s popular *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, and serves to illustrate for the audience the otiose existence that marked the golden age of humankind prior to the fall. Calderón then moves beyond this level of syncretism to invoke allusions specific to the myth of the Garden of the Hesperides that take advantage of the synthetic nature of the Eden as a pastoral commonplace.

One such allusion is Calderón’s inclusion of a serpent-dragon reminiscent of Ladon, the serpent in the Tree of Immortality killed by Heracles. Aristeo, by his own admission, is the serpent in the tree in the garden: “La escondida serpiente, / Eurídice, soy yo, / entres las hojas verdes” (980-82). The image of Aristeo as a snake in the garden also captures the episode of Eurydice’s death by snakebite in Virgil’s *Georgic IV* (457-59) because she only stepped on the creature as a consequence of Aristaeus’s unwelcome lascivious pursuit. The line itself would appear to be taken from Virgil’s *Eclogue III* (92-93) owing to the snake in the grass motif: “Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga, / frigidus, o pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba.” [You lads who cull flowers and strawberries that grow so low, begone from here; a chill snake lurks in the grass.] The *demonio galán* later extends this image to include a serpent that exhales

smoke and spits fire when he describes the pennants that adorned his tents on the battlefield before his fall:

Para coronar mis tiendas
jeroglíficos compuse
de serpientes coronadas
que humo exhalan, fuego escupen. (671-74)⁷

Aristeo's association with the image of the serpent-dragon recalls the descriptions of Ladon as both of these creatures in Greco-Roman literature, including those put forth by Apollonius Rhodius (4.1396-98), Battista Pio (10.431), Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (4.647, 9.190), and Virgil in the *Aeneid* (4.484-86). The specific invocation of the serpent-dragon imagery of Ladon imitates the description of the Devil in serpentine form found in the Book of Revelation 12:9: "Et projectus est draco ille magnus, serpens antiquus, qui vocatur diabolus, et Satanas, qui seducit universum orbem: et projectus est in terram, et angeli ejus cum illo missi sunt." [And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.] Genesis 3 never makes it clear that the serpent in the garden was the Devil, thus the construction of Aristeo in this image shared by Ladon in the Garden of the Hesperides and the Devil in Revelation supports the reading that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was in fact the Devil. Indeed, the issue of whether the snake in Eden was the Devil only receives clarification in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and is not stated expressly elsewhere in the Bible. Accordingly, the association of the serpent-dragon coiled around the trunk of the mythical tree could be a conscious

effort on Calderón's part to make clear the associations between the Devil and the serpent in the Garden of Eden that are only to be found beyond Genesis.

Calderón carefully crafts the portrayal of the Aristaeus figure as a serpent to serve as an emblem for temptation, wrongdoing, and evil that foreshadows the revelation that he is in fact Plutón, ruler of the Underworld and analogue for the Christian Devil (1267). Both Aristeo and the serpent are rendered as a single *jeroglífico* reminiscent of the serpent on the battle pennant that furnishes the audience with a cohesive and memorable caveat based upon a synthesis of biblical and mythological references. This was likely a conscious decision by the playwright given the play's allegorical nature and the choice of "jeroglífico," which served as a contemporary synonym for the *emblema*: a signifier of a hidden moral truth (Gállego 27-28). Additionally, Calderón's adaptation of the emblem in verse to delight and edify his audience fits the description offered by Juan de Horozco y Covvarubias in his *Emblemas morales* (1589): "se ordenaron en versos para que se lea con más gusto lo que se dixere en ellos" (A6v).

Calderón also makes use of the allusion to the Garden of the Hesperides as an opportunity to elaborate upon the undefined fruit in the Garden of Eden, as per Genesis 3:3: "de fructo vero ligni quid est in medio paradisi, praecepit nobis Deus ne comederemus, et ne tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur." [But the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.] Eurídice describes it thus in the *auto*:

Ya sé, Señor, que hay serpientes
y que escondidos habitan
los áspides en las flores

y las pomas que iluminan
 gualda, grana, oro y carmín,
 tornasoladas a listas,
 del veneno están tocadas. (241-47)

The unspecified fruits in Genesis are explicitly referred to by Eurídice as being both red and gold apples that shine brightly: “pomas que iluminan / gualda, grana, oro y carmín.” Eurídice considers them to be surreptitiously deleterious and compares them to the danger of a venomous asp hidden among a beautiful carpet of flowers. An educated courtly audience would be aware that this comparison serves not only as an allusion to Eurydice’s death by snakebite in the source myth, as mentioned above, but also to remind the audience of the warning issued by God in Gen. 3:3 and humankind’s subsequent loss of immortality. Furthermore, the specific mention of the asp reinforces the allusion to the serpent sophist in Genesis, which serves as an emblem-caveat against the dangers of succumbing to temptation and contravening God’s instructions.

Be that as it may, Calderón’s imitation of the golden apples of the Garden of the Hesperides offers a confusing mix of symbolism that would see the golden apples that grant immortality, thus preventing the introduction of death by Adam and Eve for their transgression, as also being those tainted by the “veneno” that Eurídice fears. Greater clarity abounds when the apples are instead read as a synthetic signal, as opposed to a mixed one, via which Calderón marks the syncretic nature of the tree in the *auto* for the benefit of his educated courtly audience. Additionally, the apples offer a point of intrigue after the play’s conclusion insofar as they pre-empt the eventual use of the tree as an instrument for the salvation of man by Orfeo (1101-07). This figural reading of the tree

suggests Calderón's contradiction of the dominant Christian idea of there being a separate Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9) in addition to the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 2-3), although Tryggve Mettinger points out that "irregularities" in the biblical account can produce readings of both one and two trees (5-11). As noted above, the prophetic component of a figural reading, in this case that of the Hesperidean tree, appears to 'correct' a distortion at the level of fulfilment; however, interpretation of Genesis allows room for manoeuvre and ensures Calderón need not risk contradicting Christian scripture. Confusion could also result from the Calderón's decision to include both red and gold apples which has no basis in either Genesis, or the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, and may in fact be an allusion to the myth of Proserpina's abduction, which will be discussed below.

At this point we come to recognise the importance of Calderón's incorporation of Virgil's writings based on his status as a prophet stemming from figural readings of, and continued contemporary interest in, *Eclogue IV*. Calderón uses the Virgilian depiction of an idyllic and otiose pastoral setting as a representation of humankind in the classical golden age, thus he offers a familiar analogue of the Garden of Eden prior to the fall, one that has the Tree of Immortality as its lynchpin. Calderón's selective reading of the legitimised pagan poet permits the incorporation of the Aristaeus character, which, alongside the serpent, is responsible for Eurydice's death. In Calderón's hands these two condense to offer the audience a caveat in regard to the danger associated with the serpent-dragon figure that appears throughout the chosen textual references, including the Bible, as a malevolent force and temptation to go against God's word. This careful shaping of the underlying narratives supports Heiple's earlier

observation that Calderón moves away from the presentation of isolated symbols and towards a cohesive allegorical narrative in which such symbols continue to exist and can be meaningfully ‘read’.

The Abduction of Proserpina

Two further mythological influences that involve the Underworld emerge as the play moves towards Orfeo’s redemption of Eurídice from Plutón. Calderón will be shown to intertwine the imagery and ideas he draws from both myths before their subsequent incorporation into the overarching Christianised narrative allegory of *El divino Orfeo*. The first of these mythological episodes is that of Proserpina’s abduction by Dis Pater, the Roman equivalent of Plutón, most famously portrayed by Ovid in Book 5 of the *Metamorphoses* and Book 4 of his *Fasti*; while the other is the descent of Aeneas and the Sibyl of Cumae into the Underworld taken from Book 6 of Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

Calderón cross-maps Eurídice’s predicament onto select elements of Proserpina’s abduction based on her own experience of entering the Underworld early in life. Calderón’s Eurídice innocently picks flowers for Orfeo with her entourage when she comes across the fruit tree that will be her downfall (923-1000), which not only mirrors the actions of Eurydice and the Naiads in the moments preceding her death in the Ovidian version of the myth (Ovid 10.8-19), but may also allude to the abduction of the rustic goddess Proserpina while she and the Dryads collected blooms (Ovid 5.391-96).

Aristeo, now revealed as Plutón (1267), echoes the reason for Proserpina’s abduction (Ovid 5.507-8) when he claims his intention is to make Eurídice his wife regardless of her wishes: “Eurídice, has de ser esposa mía” (1279), which speaks to his luring humankind from God’s grace and into

temptation. When Orfeo is unable to locate Eurídice, he enquires: “Gracia, ¿dónde está mi esposa?” (1051) Gracia replies:

En el reino del espanto
cautiva está con eterno
dolor; el dios del infierno
dueño es suyo. (1055-58)

Eurídice has been taken to the Underworld, as was Eurydice’s fate, but it is the concept of her captivity signalled by the use of “cautiva” that recalls Proserpina’s imprisonment against her will. Eurídice later declares herself to be a captive who is forced to reside with Plutón and holds out hope for an escape: “Cautiva estoy, pero liberarme espero, / pues confieso que aquí forzada muero.” (1277-78). The theme of imprisonment, reminiscent of Proserpina’s experience, is somewhat contradictory insofar as the audience is aware that Eurídice ate the apple in contravention of Orfeo’s order. Thus, I would argue that we are looking at a plea regarding the perceived extent of the culpability of Eurídice, or humankind, owing to the impact of the serpent sophist on her decision to countermand his instructions in the first instance.

The extent of humankind’s culpability resurfaces in another of Calderón’s *autos sacramentales*, *La inmunidad del sagrado* (1664). Kurtz notes how the character of the Mercader, who represents Christ, “reasons back and forth between the alternatives of rigor and mercy. Finally, he acknowledges this to be a case of reasonable doubt and inclines towards the clement sentence” (*Play* 41). This is because blame is apportioned in no small part to the serpent:

echadiza serpiente,
con alevoso trato,

en él a la mujer
 persuadió, con que es llano
 que el engaño fue quien
 le violó; y en tal fracaso,
 vale el sagrado a quien
 le pierde por engaño. (1149-56)⁸

The text is clear that that treacherous serpent coaxed Eve into eating the fruit of the tree, “con alevoso trato,” but that such victories are hollow and count for nothing against the Lord: “vale el sagrado a quien / le pierde por engaño.” The clemency noted by Kurtz is not specified, but I would suggest we might consider it to be representative of Christ’s self-sacrifice given that humankind’s redemption is a key theme of the *auto sacramental*.

An analogous scene (979-1050) is portrayed in *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634) in which Calderón appears to suggest that Gracia, in her role as inspirer of virtuous impulses and combating temptation, abandons Eurídice in her moment of greatest need: “Huyendo va la Gracia / el miedo que le tiene” (971-72).⁹ Calderón does not simply attribute the decision to Albedrío alone; rather he exemplifies Aristeo’s sophistry through, among other things, his use of the *octava real* to persuade Eurídice. The powerful rhetorical force with which Aristeo has been endowed, as well as Gracia’s abandonment of Eurídice at this pivotal moment, could be interpreted as an intimation that humankind was not alone in its culpability for the ill-informed choice to eat of the forbidden fruit and that circumstances behove the clemency outlined above. This same treatment of the subject of humankind’s culpability may be at the heart of the allusions to both Eurydice and Proserpina’s premature entry to the Underworld owing to an

external influence, which here is condensed into the single image of the Devil as a serpent and ruler of an underworld kingdom.

Calderón's allusion allows for the extension of the allegory insofar as Proserpina's liberation was conditional upon her not having eaten the food of the Underworld (5.530-32). This information was unknown to her and she had eaten seven seeds from a pomegranate in the orchard of the Underworld:

non ita fata sinunt, quoniam ieiunia virgo
 solverat et, cultis dum simplex errat in hortis,
 puniceum curva decerpseat arbore ponum
 sumptaque pallenti septem de cortice grana
 presserat ore suo [...] (5.535-38)

[Not so the fates; for the girl had already broken her fast, and while, simple child that she was, she wandered in the trim gardens, she had plucked a purple pomegranate hanging from a bending bough and peeling off the yellowish rind, she had eaten seven of the seeds.]

The outcome was that Proserpina now pertained to both realms and had to split her time between them: "nunc dea, regnorum numen commune duorum, / cum matre est totidem, totidem cum coniuge menses" (5.566-67). [Now the goddess, the common divinity of two realms, spends half the months with her mother and with her husband, half.] These two realms to which Proserpina belonged capture the lifecycle of humankind after the fall: Proserpina above ground with connotations of germination and springtime represents human life, while her time spent as the Queen of the Underworld stands for death. Thus, the parallels drawn between Eurídice and Proserpina's respective captivity may serve to highlight the introduction of death as a consequence of humankind's

transgression and the need for Christ's redemptive act, or clemency, to grant the possibility of a life everlasting.

Calderón's use of the characters's common downfall in eating fruit is not coincidental. The playwright draws upon a shared etymology in the Latin, a common technique to show "prefiguraciones y protorevelaciones" between myths and the Old Testament (Pollin 420). In this particular example, both apple and pomegranate share *pomum* in their Latin names and Calderón's description of the fruit in the *auto* is "pomas" (244). He eschews the Spanish word *manzana* in this particular circumstance, although it does appear elsewhere in the text (258), in favour of the play on words in the Latin that highlights the lexical similarity of the two fruits. As discussed, the playwright tacitly refers to the red hue of the pomegranate in his description of the gold and red "pomas" that populate the forbidden tree: "y las pomas que iluminan / gualda, grana, oro y carmín" (244-45). The unspecified fruit of Genesis that resulted in Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden and loss of immortality (Gen. 3:22-24) becomes a dynamic and deeply symbolic point of reference in Calderón's religious drama. The single fruit tree embodies both the biblical Tree of Immortality, as shown by the golden apples of the Garden of the Hesperides; as well as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is illustrated by both the allusion to the pomegranate that secured Proserpina's place in the Underworld, and the connotations of venom and the serpent-dragon coiled around the tree that represent Eurydice's demise.

Humankind's fall from grace is reframed via mythological allusions as an issue of how best to comprehend its culpability owing to the Devil's influence in the decision to contravene God's order. The myth of Proserpina's abduction and

imprisonment provides a mythological narrative via which Calderón seems to invoke Proserpina's lack of knowledge of the consequences of her actions as an analogue for the manipulation of Eurídice by the serpent sophist. The effect is such that an educated courtly audience may acknowledge that the mythological allusion raises the issue of apportioning blame, which in turn is linked to Christ's sacrifice and exemplifies the divine mercy that tempers the divine justice meted out by God in Genesis (3.22-24). This move toward clemency is evidenced by Orfeo's upset at the loss of Eurídice, "Anegue el llanto / de los tristes ojos míos" (1058-59), and his questioning of how she, as a metaphor for humankind, might be restored to him despite the transgression:

¿Cómo mi bien se verá
otra vez restituido
a mis brazos, a mi lecho,
a mi regazo, a mi fe;
cómo otra vez la podré
dar hospedaje en mi pecho? (1069-74)

The images of her return to his embrace, lap, and bed all link with the aforementioned bride and groom trope from the Song of Songs; while her return to his faith, and place in his heart, as intimated by the periphrastic image of the bosom, demonstrate that he does not wish to lose Eurídice/humanity and his willingness, perhaps, to accept clemency as the only response. This was a refreshing alternative to the divine justice meted out in contemporary *comedias* of a moral and religious nature, such as in the bleak condemnation to eternal hellfire that rounds off both Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla* (1630) and *El condenado por desconfiado* (1635). Consequently, it is a combination of the

two key themes of the fall and redemption of humankind, representative of God's justice and benevolence, which drive the play towards its climax and the introduction of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a mythological source text.

Aeneas and the Sibyl of Cumae

Calderón again calls upon Virgil in his conflation of the characters of Orfeo and Amor with those of Aeneas and the Sibyl of Cumae, respectively, in a scene partly inspired by their descent into the Underworld from Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. Calderón's decision to use this episode signals the playwright's allusion to the success of Aeneas's endeavour in lieu of Orpheus's failure to maintain the cohesion of the underlying mythological narrative. Additionally, the Sibyl of Cumae is crucial to the success of Aeneas's mission and she, like Virgil and Ovid, had come to attain the status of a Christian prophet (Kiefer 223-24) from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. This was the result of the allegorical interpretation of *Eclogue IV* in which the Sybil supposedly sang the prophecy of Christ's birth and his role in returning humankind to paradise (Bourne 392-93). In the same way that Dante calls upon the Christianised Virgil to be his guide in his *Divina Commedia*, Calderón invokes the 'Christian' Cumaean Sibyl as a hero's aid, which simultaneously drives the allegorical narrative forward and marks its deviation from the underlying Orpheus and Eurydice myth.

Orfeo seeks advice from Amor on how best to enter the Underworld in a move that recalls Aeneas's petition for guidance from the Cumaean Sibyl (6.103-44) before their descent:

¡Ay, Amor! pues siempre has sido
ingeniero, industria da.
¿Cómo mi bien se verá

otra vez restituido

a mis brazo, a mi lecho (1067-71)

Orfeo, like Orpheus and Aeneas before him, seeks the shade of a loved one. Amor, here described as “ingeniero,” is portrayed as possessing the knowledge to accomplish this endeavour. Amor tells Orfeo that, much like Aeneas, he will require a specific object to grant entry into the Underworld. In this case it is a musical instrument, a lyre harp, which represents the awesome power of the God the Father: “esta arpa acorde y pura / será una sombra y figura, / Orfeo, de la arpa mía” (1097-99). The choice of instrument is not coincidental given that the lyre harp is associated with Orpheus and ensures the allegorical narrative continues to invoke Latin source descriptions of the role and power of music in his descent to reclaim Eurydice: “ad carmina nervis” (Ovid 10.16). [Then, singing to the music of his lyre.] Additionally, the focus on music recalls the display of Orfeo’s power in effecting the creation of the world at the outset of the *auto*. Calderón’s greatest boon from the synthesis of this Virgilian episode has yet to come, but by including the allusion to the need for a fetish, the golden bough, he has prepared the foundations for further mythical conflation to shape the religious drama’s message.

Amor explains the specifics of the lyre harp that Orfeo requires:

Labrarla a mi modo quiero

de aquel tronco, aquel madero

mismo que el áspid mordió.

Si la culpa introducida

hoy por un árbol se advierte

el mismo árbol de la muerte

será el árbol de la vida. (1101-07)

The instrument is to be carved from wood taken from the tree from the Garden of Eden from which Eurídice picked the fruit: “de aquel tronco, aquel madero / mismo que el áspid mordió.” This is the same tree that Calderón earlier shaped to be the tree upon which grew the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides, thus the carving of the instrument from the tree reinterprets Aeneas’s golden bough and brings the episode in line with the overarching religious tone of the pagan narrative allegory. Ultimately, the tree will undergo a metamorphosis: “el mismo árbol de la muerte / será el árbol de la vida.” These lines capture the transformation of the tree from a signifier of humankind’s expulsion from paradise (Gen. 3:22-24) and its loss of immortality to its new role in this self-sacrifice of Orfeo/Christ to redeem humankind and grant it life everlasting. Here, again, we see the complexity of Calderón’s text as the tree becomes a multivalent metaphor that not only exemplifies transgression, redemption, and immortality, but also serves as a lynchpin in the wider narrative allegory that helps to combine and syncretise the pagan and Christian source narratives.

Calderón’s redemption theme continues as Amor advises Orfeo that their success is dependent upon traversing the River Lethe, which evokes the idea of oblivion: “los dos hemos de pasar / del Leteo hasta tocar / en las puertas del infierno.” (1161-63) Arquetonte, the ferryman of the Lethe, explains that he does not transport mortals:

Leteo, olvido y muerte,
y ya que todo he sido
podrán muerte y olvido

pasarse a ti, si tienes
 tanto poder que vivo hasta aquí vienes;
 dándote yo licencia
 no has de vencerme en esta [competencia. (1203-09)

While Orpheus is also met with a similar response in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, his attempt comes after his failed effort to rescue Eurydice and he is unsuccessful in gaining access to the Underworld a second time (10.72-75). I would argue, therefore, that Calderón continues to draw on the Virgilian episode in which Aeneas and the Cumean Sibyl are told by the ferryman that the vessel cannot ferry the living:

Ergo iter inceptum peragunt fluvioque propinquant.
 navita quos iam inde ut Stygia prospexit ab unda
 per tacitum nemus ire pedemque advertere ripae,
 sic prior adgreditur dictis atque increpat ultro:
 quisquis es, armatus qui nostra ad flumina tendis,
 fare age, quid veias, iam istinc, et comprime gressum.
 umbrarum hic lucos est, Somni Noctisque soporae;
 corpora viva nefas Stygia vectare carmina. (6.384-91)¹⁰

[So they pursue the journey begun, and draw near to the river. But when, even from the Stygian wave, the boatman saw them passing through the silent wood and turning their feet towards the bank, he first, unhailed, accosts and rebukes them: Whoever you are who come to our river in arms, tell me, even from there, why you come, and check your step. This is the land of Shadows, of Sleep and drowsy Night; living bodies I may not carry in the Stygian boat.]

Calderón's use of the ferryman of the Lethe, who eventually succumbs to the power of Orfeo's *arpa*, serves to highlight the dogma of the hypostatic union. This dogma decreed the dual status of Christ as both mortal and divine (Dietz 98), which is analogous to Aeneas's semi-divine status as the son of the union between Anchises and the goddess Venus (Grimal 20). Erwin Haverbeck notes that to cross the Lethe as a mortal can be understood as surviving death (127) and so attests to Christ's divinity. This is a point made explicit by Arquetonte for the benefit of the viewer: "podrán muerte y olvido / pasarse a ti, si tienes / tanto poder que hasta aquí vienes" (1205-07). In response, the figure of Orfeo proclaims his mortality and pleads for death to take him to ensure his successful passage into the Underworld:

Mortal soy, pues soy humano.

Llega, pues, por esta parte,

atrévete muerte a mí

para que tus ondas pase. (1216-19)

The Virgilian hero's successful endeavour becomes an allegory for the comprehension of Christ's self-sacrifice and the act of redemption that is so vital to the *auto sacramental*. This interpretation would not necessary have been confined to those who recognised the influence of the *Aeneid*. Pérez de Moya's mythography treats the theme of the powerlessness of mortals in the Underworld:

Que esta ciudad de Plutón no pudiese ser destruida de hombres, no caerse, o perecer por infinidad de siglos, significa la necesidad de morir, porque no hay fuerza alguna que no pueda escusar la muerte, cuando Dios es servido que llegue a cada uno. (186)

Those acquainted with this interpretation, which is also present in the popular *Georgic IV*, would comprehend Calderón's message on the dual nature of Christ as key to the success of Orfeo's expedition to the Underworld: his death permits him entry, while his divinity allows for the successful rescue and redemption of Eurídice's shade, and guarantees his own resurrection and seat at the right hand of God the Father (Mark 16:19) to complete the creation-fall-redemption cycle once more.

Conclusion

In this study, I have identified and explored Calderón's inclusion of four additional mythological episodes within *El divino Orfeo* (c.1634) beyond the eponymous Orpheus and Eurydice. In doing so, a refashioned underlying narrative structure is revealed to be a rich syncretic tapestry of allusions to Ovidian, Virgilian, and biblical sources. Such a synthesis speaks to the continuing reconciliatory spirit of the Corpus Christi festivities despite the contemporary decline in allegorical exegesis of mythological texts more generally. The new narrative offers a version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth more suited to serve as a vehicle for a flexible allegorical *a lo divino* rendering that encompasses the Christian version of creation, fall, and redemption of humankind.

Calderón's construction of a readily comprehensible intermediary mythological account of key Biblical events, even as part of a refashioned narrative, invites an educated courtly audience to draw parallels based on Calderón's choice of allusion, as well as critically engage with the ingenious comparisons he draws as a method for refreshing their exposure to the underlying catechistic content. These new perspectives help abate the possible tedium

associated with allegorical exegesis of the unaltered Orpheus and Eurydice, which was a narrative that would have been known to an educated courtly audience either through print editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or glosses thereof. Furthermore, Calderón's text ran less risk of appearing outmoded because his revamped narrative engenders new interest in what is essentially a moralising allegorical drama. More importantly, this intellectual engagement with theological concepts, mediated as they are by the mythological elements, may grant an educated courtly audience greater insight into the mysteries at the heart of the play by virtue of the complex webs of allusion and significance generated ripe for exploration.

Calderón uses prominent symbols, such as the fruit tree and the serpent, as focal points from which these webs of significance emanate, but he does not expect his audience to interpret their significance in a vacuum. Instead he situates them within an *a lo divino* frame narrative that both broadens and deepens their possible readings by the audience within the play's gamut of religious didacticism. The structure of the narrative itself is further conducive to new readings of these symbols insofar as its composite mythological nature provides an educated courtly audience with a variety of vantage points on important theological issues, such as the immortality of the soul, humankind's culpability regarding Original Sin, and Christ's status as both human and divine, from which to explore the religious dimensions of the play. The play offers modernisation insofar as the symbols are to be read in light of the supportive allegorical narrative, yet the context generated is ultimately designed to guide the viewer to a moral Christian interpretation that had gone largely out of fashion by the baroque era.

The ensuing readings rely upon a variation of Erich Auerbach's concept of figural reading to create a point of contact between the synthesized mythological and biblical materials. Calderón's approach is more flexible for the purposes of delivering a cohesive allegorical narrative, a facet previously remarked upon by Kurtz ("No World" 265), which aids his audience's comprehension of the material presented in the *auto sacramental*. Calderón allows the quasi-legitimised mythological material, recognised as a distorted prognostication of the biblical fulfilment, a much greater role by having select elements elucidate or fill gaps in the biblical material. The result is a fluidity in Calderón's use of figural readings that does not preclude the use of pagan details to clarify Christian events and dogma. The playwright is careful to ensure that the biblical account retains its primacy by rhetorically privileging it early in the creation episode of the *auto*, and subsequently throughout the play. Still, the myths undergo their own metamorphoses whereby they change from distorted prophecies to valuable texts with details to aid the comprehension of Christian theology. We can see, therefore, how the hitherto unexplored mythological influences present within Calderón's religious play exemplify the complexities of this early mythological *auto*, while also highlighting the need for greater critical attention to bring this little-explored text in from the peripheries.

Notes

1. Cabañas disputes this dating and places it after the 1663 version (166).
2. Line references as per Calderón de la Barca, *El divino Orfeo*.
3. All Latin biblical references as per the *Bibliorum Sacrorum* with English translations taken from *The Bible*.

4. Line references and accompanying English translations as per Ovid, *Metamorphoses*.
5. Line references as per Apollonius Rhodius.
6. Line references Kobusch.
7. These lines form part of a segment (671-79) later refused in Calderón de la Barca's *La cura y la enfermedad* (c.1657-58) and spoken by the character Lucero in lines 386-93.
8. Line references as per Calderón de la Barca, *La inmunidad del sagrado*.
9. While not necessarily readily comprehensible to a lay audience, I propose that a theological study of this scene in particular could prove fruitful insofar as framing Calderón's understanding of the issue of free will and divine grace.
10. Line references and accompanying English translations as per Virgil.

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