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A B S T R A C T

This thesis examines in some detail an important area of the poetry of one of the principal literary figures of Spain's *Siglo de Oro*, a part of his work that has received less than its share of serious critical attention.

The study seeks to examine Góngora's sonnets in a way not previously attempted, approaching them via the classification system adopted in the poet's lifetime, and selecting specific works for analysis within the broad areas defined by the headings: *Amoroso, Burlesco, Fúnebre, Heroico, Moral, Sacro and Satírico*. The analytic commentaries are intended to reveal both the quality of inspiration and the fine workmanship found in the sonnets, and from these, general statements as to the nature and scope of Góngora's achievement in this poetic form are made. Although over two hundred sonnets by Góngora are in existence, very few of these appear in anthologies - even in those of Góngora's own work. One aim of the thesis has been to extend the appreciation of these works beyond the small number that are regularly printed and discussed.

Chapter I (Introduction) discusses the number, publication and editions of Góngora's sonnets. Their ordering and classification, from the poet's time onwards, are examined and judgments are made as to the effectiveness of the procedures employed by different editors. A brief resumé of criticism of the sonnets and of the scope of the present study concludes this section.

Chapters II, III and IV contain the major work of the thesis, and examine respectively the large groupings of sonnets which appear under the headings given above. Each of these Chapters is divided into two halves. In Chapter II, devoted to the *Sonetos Amorosos*, the division is between works of the poet's youth and early manhood, and those written in the same form in his later years. Chapters III and IV are divided between, in the former, *Sonetos Heroicos*, and *Sonetos Burlescos y Satíricos*; and, in the latter, *Sonetos Fúnebres*, and *Sonetos Morales, Sacros y Varios*.

The Conclusion, Chapter V, draws attention to the major points that have emerged in the thesis, and takes the opportunity to indicate the areas of divergence of opinion between some accepted critical attitudes and those of the present writer. This Chapter concludes with suggestions for the further development of the study of Góngora's sonnets, including the need to relate this area of his work with both the remainder of it, and with similar works by the most important of his contemporaries. An Appendix to the thesis contains an alphabetical list of the sonnets analysed, and a Select Bibliography of those works cited in the text.

THE SONNETS OF LUIS DE GONGORA

by

R P CALCRAFT

I declare that I have composed this thesis on the basis of work done by me in Portsmouth, London, Warwick, Madrid and Córdoba, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree in the University of St Andrews or elsewhere. I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of B Phil under General Ordinance No 12 on the 1st October 1971.

R P Calcraft
Candidate

I certify that the conditions of the Ordinances and Regulations relating to the degree of B Phil have been fulfilled.



Professor L J Woodward
Supervisor

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THE SONNETS OF LUIS DE GONGORA

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The number, publication and editions of Góngora's sonnets. Their ordering and classification. Critics and criticism of the sonnets. The present study.

INTRODUCTION

Góngora composed sonnets from at least 1582, when he was aged 21, to 1624 or 1625, two years before his death. His cultivation of and fondness for this particular poetic form was as extensive as with the *Romances* (1580 to 1625/26) and the *Letrillas* (1581 to 1626). Although smaller in bulk than either of these, the *Sonetos* nevertheless form a substantial part of the poet's entire output. The severe challenge of the Petrarchan sonnet form remained an artistic stimulus to Góngora throughout his career. In his hands it lent itself to a wide variety of themes and styles, as the present study seeks to show, and many of his finest small-scale compositions are to be found within this group of works.

One hundred and sixty-seven sonnets are universally accepted as being by Góngora, with approximately fifty more of likely or possible authenticity. As with the majority of his compositions, the sonnets first circulated in manuscript, both among friends and acquaintances and also later in society and court groups, achieving for him a reputation as one of Spain's leading poets before 1600. In this early part of his career, Góngora apparently gave little thought to the preservation of copies of his works. It was much later that he began seriously to collect his poetry for transcription and possible publication, partly owing to a desire to obtain the favour of those most influential at court. The steps by which he may have moved towards the idea of publishing his complete poetry are shown below, in the description of the editions which did eventually appear. The

first sonnet by Góngora to be printed, *Cantastes, Rufo, tan heroicamente* (CIP 1)¹ appeared in the introduction to his friend Rufo's *La Austríada* in 1584. Unlike the majority of Góngora's works to appear in print during his lifetime, this undoubtedly had the poet's authorization. Several of the sonnets were included in collections of poetry produced during the first two decades of the seventeenth century, but only with the Vicuña edition of 1627 are the majority printed for the first time.

THE VICUÑA EDITION

Juan López de Vicuña's edition of Góngora's poetry, *Obras en verso del Homero español*, appeared in 1627 soon after the death of the poet². It is the first work printed to be devoted entirely to Góngora, and its appearance caused something of a stir in several quarters. It immediately fell foul of the Inquisition³, partly due to the hostility of a priest, and was also severely criticized by friends of the poet, one at least of whom may have had his own private reasons for hoping that Vicuña's endeavour would be unsuccessful⁴. It is also likely, to judge from internal evidence, that Góngora himself was not on good terms with Vicuña - at least in the last years of his life - and he may even have expressly refused his permission for Vicuña to publish the collection. Although critics as recent as Foulché-Delbosc have agreed with contemporary critics that the Vicuña text is highly suspect⁵, Dámaso Alonso has argued that the opposite is in fact the case, and that almost the whole of the Vicuña text must be based on an extremely good manuscript dating from the poet's Cordoban years (1617 or before)⁶. If that is so, then this edition does indeed represent the earliest versions of Góngora's poems that can reasonably be trusted, whether or

not Vicuña had the advantage of the poet's collaboration at any stage in the process of compilation.

The Vicuña edition includes 136 sonnets, classified under the titles: *Heroicos, Amatorios, Satíricos, Burlescos, Fúnebres, Sacros, Varios*.

In 1633 Gonzalo de Hoces y Córdova published *Todas las obras de don Luis de Góngora en varios poemas*⁷. In contrast to Vicuña, this had an immediate success, nine editions appearing between 1633 and 1654. It reproduces the Vicuña text with reasonable accuracy, adding certain other poems previously known only in manuscript. The majority of these, forty-five in all, are sonnets.

Seven more sonnets were printed for the first time in the first volume of Salcedo Coronel's commentaries on the poetry (1644): *Segundo tomo de las obras de Don Luis de Góngora*⁸. The remaining sonnets known to be or suspected of being by Góngora appeared in many different publications between the years 1646 and 1919⁹.

THE CHACÓN MANUSCRIPT

In 1921 the French Hispanist Foulché-Delbosc published the works of Góngora, in three volumes, based on a hitherto unused source, the Chacón manuscript¹⁰. The latter, which had been preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, was a carefully prepared and luxuriously produced collection of almost all the poems of Góngora, with the exception of most of the *Sonetos Satíricos*. A prologue declares the manuscript to have been compiled with the collaboration of the poet himself, over a period of approximately eight years. Foulché-Delbosc

quotes paragraphs from letters of Góngora to Cristóbal de Heredia, from 1623 to 1625, in which the poet clearly refers to his efforts in attempting to assemble the whole of his artistic production¹¹. There is also a reference to a possible dedication of the collection to the Conde-Duque de Olivares¹². This, and the space of eight years between the supposed break with Vicuña (1620) and the eventual dedication to Olivares (1628), leads Foulché-Delbosc to believe that the collection referred to by the poet in his correspondence and the Chacón collection are one and the same¹³. If this is accepted, then the Chacón manuscript, reproduced by Foulché and subsequently used as the basis of the Millé edition¹⁴, represents the poet's final thoughts on the versions of his poems that he wished to present to the Conde-Duque.

It can be reasonably assumed, therefore, that when Góngora's poems are to be found in both Vicuña and Foulché-Delbosc (Chacón), the former will be early versions, collected and prepared for publication (with or without the poet's help or agreement) prior to 1620, and in most cases prior to 1617¹⁵. Chacón, on the other hand, most probably presents the last revision of the poems by their author, assembled and arranged with Antonio de Chacón during the poet's final years in Madrid. As Foulché sensibly points out, although he does not refer directly to Vicuña, it is possible either that the Chacón version of any given poem is the final corrected one, or that both it and an alternative version from whatever source are equally authentic, though from different times in the poet's career¹⁶.

The third volume of the Foulché-Delbosc edition is devoted to all the

poesías atribuíbles, the poet's correspondence and testament, Pellicer's two versions of the life of Góngora, and indices. All the *Sonetos Atribuíbles* are printed here (see below).

THE MILLE EDITION

The well-known Aguilar publication of Góngora's complete works, edited by Juan Millé y Giménez, reproduces the Foulché-Delbosc (Chacón) edition, adding a further twenty-two *poesías atribuíbles* to the seventy-seven contained in volume III of Foulché-Delbosc. None of these are sonnets.

THE CIPLIJAUSKAITĖ EDITION OF THE SONNETS

The first edition of the sonnets to appear separately from the remainder of the poet's work is that of Biruté Ciplijauskaitė: *Luis de Góngora: Sonetos Completos* published in 1969¹⁷. It follows the Foulché-Delbosc and Millé editions in using the Chacón text, and like them includes the *Sonetos Atribuíbles* in a supplementary section. Where the earlier editions have fifty-three of these, Ciplijauskaitė has only fifty, omitting the three sonnets *El Duque mi señor se fue a Francia*, *Yo vi vuestra carrera, o la imagino*, and *Orfeo, el que bajó de Andalucía* on convincing evidence¹⁸. This edition has been used throughout the present study, and all references are to it (CIP) unless otherwise stated.

* * * * *

The first printed edition of Góngora's works, Vicuña, followed common practice in the early seventeenth century by ordering and classifying the poems under particular headings¹⁹. For the *Sonetos*, which come at the very beginning of the volume, the headings and numbers are as follows, in order: *Sonetos Heroicos* (34 pieces); *Sonetos Amorosos* (39); *Sonetos Satíricos* (24); *Sonetos Burlescos* (15); *Sonetos Fúnebres* (13); *Sonetos Sacros* (5); *Sonetos Varios* (6). The total is one hundred and thirty-six sonnets.

In the Chacón manuscript the sonnets appear in volume 1, and again at the beginning. They are arranged as follows: *Sonetos Sacros* (4); *Sonetos Heroicos* (46); *Sonetos Morales* (4); *Sonetos Fúnebres* (18); *Sonetos Amorosos* (48); *Sonetos Satíricos* (5); *Sonetos Burlescos* (27); *Sonetos Varios* (15). The Chacón total is one hundred and sixty-seven, to which are added two more at the end of the manuscript amongst a group of poems which Chacón states came into his hands only after Góngora's death²⁰.

COMPARISON OF THE VICUÑA AND CHACÓN CLASSIFICATIONS

The majority of the sonnets in Vicuña are classified under the same headings in Chacón, with the exception of the *Sonetos Satíricos*. The following are those which change:

	VICUÑA	CHACÓN	CIP
<i>Generoso esplendor, si no luciente</i>	<i>Heroicos</i>	<i>Amorosos</i>	37
<i>No entre las flores, no, señor don Diego</i>	"	"	35
<i>Ilustre y hermosísima María</i>	<i>Amorosos</i>	<i>Varios</i>	150
<i>Mientras por competir con tu cabello</i>	"	"	149

	VICUÑA	CHACÓN	CIP
<i>Urnas plebeyas, tímulo reales</i>	<i>Sacros</i>	<i>Morales</i>	157
<i>Deste más que la nieve blanco toro</i>	<i>Varios</i>	<i>Heroicos</i>	3

The following sonnets are classified under *Satíricos* in Vicuña and *Burlescos* in Chacón:

	CIP
<i>¡Son de Tolú, o son de Puertorrico</i>	114
<i>Icaro de Bayeta, si de pino</i>	118
<i>¡A la Mamora, militares cruces!</i>	122
<i>Valladolid, de lágrimas sois valle</i>	108
<i>¡Vos sois Valladolid, vos sois el valle</i>	107
<i>Duélete de esa puente, Manzanares</i>	101
<i>Señora doña puente segoviana</i>	112
<i>Jura Pisuerga, a fe de caballero</i>	105
<i>¡Oh, qué malquisto con Esgueva quedo</i>	106

Many satirical sonnets were deliberately excluded by Chacón from his manuscript, probably due to the fact that it was to be presented to a person of considerable importance, almost certainly Olivares. Those printed in Vicuña but not in Chacón are:

	CIP
<i>De humildes padres hija, en pobres paños</i>	XXIX
<i>Anacreonte español, no hay quien os tope</i>	XVIII
<i>Deja las damas, cuyo flaco yerro</i>	XXIV
<i>Con poca luz y menos disciplina</i>	XXI
<i>Sentéme a las riberas de un bufete</i>	XIV
<i>Soror don Juan, ¡ayer silicio y jerga</i>	XXVII
<i>¡Qué es, hombre o mujer, lo que han colgado?</i>	III
<i>Señores académicos, mi mula</i>	XXVI
<i>Yace debajo desta piedra fría</i>	X
<i>Bien dispuesta madera en nueva traza</i>	I
<i>Las no piadosas martas ya te pones</i>	XXX

Two of the Vicuña *Burlescos* do not appear in Chacón:

<i>No más moralidades de corrientes</i>	XX
<i>Señora doña Luisa de Cardona</i>	V

But one, *Por niñear, un picarillo tierno* (CIP 98) is included within Chacón's small group of *Satíricos*.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SONNETS IN THE CIPLIJAUSKAITE EDITION

Although Ciplijauskaitė has based her text on the Chacón manuscript, as stated above, she has altered the classification of the sonnets in several places. The groups *Morales*, *Sacros* and *Varios* are printed together (CIP 149 - 167), with no indication as to their original headings in Chacón, and the first group of sonnets is re-titled *Dedicatorios* instead of the familiar *Heroicos* (CIP 1 - 52)²¹. In addition, the following sonnets are re-classified as shown:

	CIPLIJAUSKAITE	CHACON	CIP
<i>Hermosas damas, si la pasión ciega</i>	<i>Morales, etc.</i>	<i>Amorosos</i>	153
<i>Al tronco descansaba de una encina</i>	<i>Fúnebres</i>	<i>Varios</i>	148
<i>No entre las flores, no, señor don Diego</i>	<i>Dedicatorios</i>	<i>Amorosos</i>	35
<i>Generoso esplendor, sino luciente</i>	"	"	37
<i>En la capilla estoy, y condenado</i>	"	<i>Varios</i>	50
<i>En villa humilde sí, no en vida ociosa</i>	"	"	36
<i>Hurtas mi vulto, y cuanto más le debe</i>	"	"	45
<i>Volvió al mar Alción, volvió a las redes</i>	"	"	14

ORDERING OF THE SONETOS IN THE MODERN EDITIONS

Although Foulché-Delbosc has included details of the ordering of the Chacón manuscript in his 1921 edition of Góngora, he does not follow this in the lay-out of the three volumes. The poetry is printed as far as possible in chronological order, so that the sonnets appear always under their supposed year of composition. Naturally in these

circumstances he also dispenses with the classification headings found in Vicuña and Chacón. The task of studying the sonnets as a whole is thus made extremely taxing, though it is conversely very easy to compare the sonnets with works being composed at approximately the same time.

The Millé edition, also based on Chacón, follows Foulché in terms of a chronological arrangement of the poetry, but chooses to print all the examples of a given poetic form together. The sonnets can thus be studied as a group, and in chronological order, but again without the original classifications. Such an arrangement is perhaps the most satisfactory for the general reader of Góngora's poetry.

The Ciplijauskaité edition, having only the sonnets to consider, takes the alternative course of restoring the original groupings under the Vicuña and Chacón headings (slightly adapted), and then printing the sonnets of each group in chronological order. The value of this to the student wishing to specialise in the sonnets is obvious, but it is unfortunate that the Chacón headings were not adhered to throughout, as the few amendments introduced by Ciplijauskaité are of arguable validity. The matter is essentially of interest only to the reader wishing to study the sonnets as they originally appeared in manuscript and print, and Chacón's classification, which may well have had Góngora's agreement, is of special importance in this way. A modern critic's slight adaptation of the original titles results only in confusion.

A more serious criticism of the Ciplijauskaité edition is that she has failed to take the opportunity of attempting to authenticate the

Sonetos Atribuíbles. As has already been stated, it was Antonio de Chacón's decision to exclude the greater number of the *Sonetos Satíricos* from his manuscript, presumably with the consent of the poet. The accident of this has relegated to the status of supplement a considerable number of Góngora's sonnets, many of which are obviously authentic. In all the principal modern editions, however, they continue to appear in a separate section, a fate usually reserved for works of fairly doubtful parentage. It was to be hoped that a special edition of the *Sonetos Completos* would have at last distinguished between those pieces left on one side by the poet and Chacón for their special manuscript, and those whose authenticity is doubted by every authority. But the final section of the Ciplijauskaitė edition places such works side by side. This is particularly to the detriment of the *Sonetos Satíricos* as a whole, where the range and variety of achievement is in fact far wider than could be imagined from a reading of only those works included in the *Satíricos y Burlescos* section as it stands. Such a valuable piece of investigation might also have revealed clearer lines of distinction between the two categories *satírico* and *burlesco*, justifying an illuminating separation of the works under these headings, instead of a common grouping explained by the following: "Hemos unido los satíricos y los burlescos, puesto que en muchos casos resulta imposible hacer una distinción plausible."²²

As the majority of the *Sonetos Atribuíbles* come under the heading of *satíricos*, they are dealt with in the second half of Chapter III below, together with the other works in the Ciplijauskaitė grouping.

* * * * *

Criticism of the poetry of Góngora begins seriously in the poet's own lifetime, on both a general level, as in Pedro de Valencia's *Carta en censura*²³, and the attacks and defences mounted by many contemporaries on the works of the poet within a few years of his death²⁴. This tradition has been re-established in the twentieth century, through the work of many eminent critics and creative artists, Dámaso Alonso the most notable of them. The first critic to devote serious attention to the *Sonetos* was Salcedo Coronel, in the first volume of his *Segundo tomo de las obras de Don Luis de Góngora*. His technique consists in reproducing the text of each of the sonnets (occasionally differing considerably from Vicuña and Chacón), and following this with a commentary of considerable erudition in the familiar style of the famous annotations of the works of Garcilaso de la Vega by el Brocense and Herrera in the previous century. Salcedo Coronel's commentaries are often extremely thorough and can provide valuable knowledge of specific references contained in the text. Rarely, however, do they impress by particular insight into the essential complexity of the poetry. There is also a certain pedantry in his general approach which has been remarked upon in an article by E M Wilson²⁵. As the Ciplijauskaitė notes make clear, however, all modern critics rely heavily on Salcedo Coronel's detailed commentaries.

In the twentieth-century revival of interest in Góngora, the *Sonetos* have had perhaps less than their fair share of critical attention, the majority of the most famous critics preferring to tackle the larger-scale complexities of the *Soledades*, *Polifemo* or *Panegírico al Duque de Lerma*. Nevertheless, two studies solely devoted to the *Sonetos* have

appeared, Ernst Brockhaus's *Góngoras Sonettendichtung*²⁶ and Oreste Frattoni's *Ensayo para una historia del soneto en Góngora*²⁷. The latter is a small-scale and superficial production of little value, but the former has much to offer. Following Salcedo Coronel's example in printing the texts with commentaries, it paraphrases the contents of each sonnet and adds brief notes on particular features. These do not attempt Salcedo's overall vision of each poem, for the most part, but limit themselves to underlining special points of interest. Brockhaus's particular strength is in his awareness of Góngora's use of and indebtedness to a variety of sources, both classical and contemporary. However, the attempted coverage of almost all the sonnets perforce leads to occasional superficiality, or very limited terms of reference.

Dámaso Alonso has made a considerable contribution to the study of the *Sonetos*, in particular in his selection of poems with accompanying commentary to be found in *Góngora y el Polifemo, II*²⁸. Many of the best-known works of this type are to be found here, and the commentaries are always of interest. However, some of these are surprisingly brief, while others have almost the status of an historical monograph²⁹.

Ciplijauskaitė makes clear that Alonso intends eventually to produce a complete work on the *Sonetos*³⁰, and the commentaries in the cited book are perhaps an anticipation of this. For the moment, however, these notes and the articles in various publications in book form are the sum of his work on this part of Góngora's poetry.

All students of Góngora must be indebted to Robert Jammes' large-scale work on the poet, published in 1967³¹. It contains one complete

chapter devoted to the *Sonetos Amorosos* (Part 3, Chapter 1), and several other chapters contain direct or indirect comment upon the sonnets, either individually or as a whole. As is to be expected in a work of such scope, many of the expressed opinions are controversial, and many comments upon the content and significance of several of the sonnets can be challenged.

The recent book on Góngora by D W and V R Foster contains a valuable and detailed chapter on the *Sonetos*³². It concentrates on a handful of the works, dealing with particular aspects of Góngora's use of the sonnet form in stimulating and controversial ways.

Several studies of individual sonnets have been published, as well as articles dealing with this part of the poet's work in more general terms. References to both books and articles are made throughout this thesis, and a list of those consulted appears in the Select Bibliography.

* * * * *

The present study seeks to examine the *Sonetos* in a way not previously attempted, approaching them via the classification system first adopted in the poet's lifetime, and possibly by him, but selecting specific works for analysis within the broad areas defined by such concepts as *amoroso*, *fúnebre* or *satírico*. In this way I shall attempt to assess the poet's achievement in his general handling of the sonnet form, and provide a number of detailed commentaries sufficient to reveal both the quality of inspiration within the poetry and the workmanship which renders it so effective. The numbers of works involved precludes an

entire discursive commentary of the Salcedo Coronel type, but their quality demands more lengthy treatment, in many instances, than the Brockhaus approach permits. Although some of the better-known sonnets appear regularly in anthologies, careful analyses of even these are rare. In such cases, there are sometimes only brief comments or a reference in this particular study, although more detailed treatment is given to those works that do not appear to me to have been examined adequately. For the most part, however, the analyses that follow are of sonnets that deserve to be far better known than they are.

Restriction of overall length and the need for coherence of argument make it inevitable that only a small proportion of Góngora's sonnets be considered here, if their qualities and complexity are adequately to be suggested. The reasons for selecting particular sonnets rather than others will often be clear from the nature of the argument, although personal preferences have also inevitably played a part. Reference to other works of the poet, as well as to the poetry of other major figures of the *Siglo de Oro*, has been kept deliberately to a minimum, except where this would have led to important questions remaining unanswered. Within these general limits, I hope to show that many of the qualities for which Góngora is sufficiently esteemed in his great poems may equally well be found in works composed according to and inspired by the severe constraints of the classical sonnet form³³.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

- 1 All references to individual sonnets are to the Ciplijauskaitė edition, *Sonetos Completos*, Clásicos Castalia, Madrid 1969, unless otherwise stated.
- 2 Juan López de Vicuña, *Obras en verso del Homero español*, Madrid, 1627, published by Dámaso Alonso in Clásicos Hispánicos, C S I C, Madrid, 1963.
- 3 See Alonso's introduction to the Vicuña edition, op cit pp XIII - L.
- 4 In particular Pellicer, whose *Lecciones Solemnes a las obras de ... Góngora* appeared shortly after Vicuña. Alonso comments: "Lo que es cierto es que eran, Vicuña y él, competidores en la carrera de editar a Góngora, y que Vicuña había llegado antes." (Op cit p XLII)
- 5 R Foulché-Delbosc, *Obras Poéticas de D Luis de Góngora*, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1921, repr. 1970, Vol I, p VIII.
- 6 Alonso, op cit pp L - LIII.
- 7 Gonzalo de Hoces y Córdova, *Todas las obras de don Luis de Góngora en varios poemas*, Madrid, 1633.
- 8 D García de Salcedo Coronel, *Segundo tomo de las obras de Don Luis de Góngora comentadas por ...*, Madrid, 1644.
- 9 See the *Bibliografía* in R Foulché-Delbosc's *Obras Poéticas ...*, op cit, Vol III, pp 111 - 126.
- 10 R Foulché-Delbosc, op cit, Vol I, pp V - XVI.
- 11 Op cit, pp X and XI.
- 12 The letter of 14 October 1625, quoted by Foulché, op cit p X.
- 13 Op cit, p XI.
- 14 Luis de Góngora y Argote, *Obras Completas*, ed J e I Millé y Giménez, Aguilar, Madrid, 6th ed 1972. (1st ed 1933).
- 15 "Creo exacto lo que ya deducía Millé: el manuscrito en que se basó Vicuña corresponde a la época cordobesa. Góngora se instaló en Madrid en abril de 1617. El manuscrito estaba, sin duda, formado antes de su partida." Alonso, op cit, pp LII - LIII.

- 16 R Foulché-Delbosc, op cit, I, p XIII.
- 17 Luis de Góngora: *Sonetos Completos*, ed B Ciplijauskaitė, Clásicos Castalia, Madrid, 1969.
- 18 Ciplijauskaitė, op cit, p 44.
- 19 "Así encontramos las clasificaciones por géneros en tantos libros de versos de aquella época: las poesías de Quevedo se reparten entre las nueve musas arbitrariamente escogidas por don José González de Salas; Vicuña y Hozes imprimen los sonetos de Góngora divididos en clases separadas como heroicos, amorosos, satíricos, burlescos, fúnebres y sacros." E M Wilson, "La estética de don García de Salcedo Coronel y la poesía española del s XVII", *Rev de Fil Esp*, vol XLIV, 1961, p 13. If Chacón's assertion of Góngora's collaboration in the drawing up of his manuscript is correct, then Wilson's implication that it was the editors, rather than the poets, who classified poetry in this way, is untrue in at least one important case.
- 20 "Obras que comunmente se han tenido por de D Luis de Góngora i hasta despues de su muerte no auian llegado a manos de D Antonio (Chacón)." Foulché-Delbosc, op cit, III, p 155.
- 21 "Dentro de lo posible hemos conservado la división original en grupos y el orden de éstos, cambiando el subtítulo "heroicos" por "dedicatorios", usado en uno de los códices; corresponde mejor al contenido de los sonetos." Ciplijauskaitė, op cit, p 43.
- 22 Op cit, pp 43 - 44.
- 23 Millé, pp 1070 - 1091.
- 24 In particular, the works of Pellicer and Salcedo Coronel already cited.
- 25 E M Wilson, "La estética de don García de Salcedo Coronel ...", *Rev de Fil Esp*, vol XLIV, 1961, pp 1 - 28.
- 26 Ernst Brockhaus, *Góngoras Sonettendichtung*, Bochum, 1935.
- 27 Orestes Frattoni, *Ensayo para una historia del soneto en Góngora*, Buenos Aires, 1948.
- 28 D Alonso, *Góngora y el Polifemo*, 3 vols, Gredos, Madrid, 1967.
- 29 Compare, for example, the commentaries on *Ilustre y hermosísima María* and *La dulce boca que a gustar convida*, op cit, pp 137 - 140, with that on *Al tronco descansaba de una encina*, pp 184 - 192.

- 30 Op cit, p 10.
- 31 R Jammes, *Etudes sur l'oeuvre poétique de don Luis de Góngora y Argote*, Bordeaux, 1967.
- 32 D W & V R Foster, *Luis de Góngora*, Twayne, New York, 1973.
- 33 "... not a few critics have concluded that Góngora scored his greatest successes not in the well-known poems mentioned but in his sonnets." P E Russell, *Spain: A Companion to Spanish Studies*, London, 1973, p 321.

Chapter II

SONETOS AMOROSOS

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Any study of Góngora's sonnets must begin with the *Sonetos Amorosos*. Many of the poet's sonnets appearing in anthologies of his work, or of Spanish Golden Age poetry, are taken from this group of some fifty pieces. Although they account for approximately one quarter of the poet's output in sonnet form, the majority date from his earliest years as a writer, a period in which the influence of Góngora's reading of Classical, Italian and Spanish authors is most clearly apparent. What he responded to and chose to imitate and develop, thematically or stylistically, from these authors can be seen most directly in the poetry of the 1580s and 90s, even though the same processes *con diferencia tal, con gracia tanta* are the basis of his poetry throughout his career¹.

Although Góngora remained faithful to the sonnet form during his forty-five years as a practising poet, the subject matter of the sonnets varies greatly. Whether or not the general classifications *Amorosos*, *Heroicos*, *Fúnebres*, *Satíricos*, etc. are Góngora's own, they effectively characterize the central theme or themes of the majority of sonnets found under these headings. It is particularly noticeable, however, that one type of sonnet is predominant in the early stages of his career, the *Amoroso*, while the later years are devoted to *Fúnebres* and *Morales* in particular. It remains to be seen whether the possible equation of a young man's amatory experiences with the *Amoroso* period, and of the depression and loneliness of old age with the *Morales*, is true or illuminating for our understanding of the poems themselves. It

will become clear in what follows that the answer is not as simple as some critics would have it appear.

The *Sonetos Amorosos* are forty-five in number in the Ciplijauskaitė edition, three less than the corresponding group in Chacón. The missing sonnets are: *No entre las flores, no, señor don Diego* (35), *Generoso esplendor, sino luciente* (37), which are both assigned to her *Dedicatorios* group; and *Hermosas damas, si la pasión ciega* (153) which appears under *Morales*². Even were these three sonnets to be restored to the *Amorosos* group, however (they are from 1616, 1615 and 1603 respectively), the preponderance of *Sonetos Amorosos* belonging to Góngora's early years is still striking. Of the forty-five printed by Ciplijauskaitė, no less than twenty-six date from 1582 - 85 (53 - 78). There is then a gap in time, a further fourteen sonnets being written between the years 1594 and 1609 (79 - 92). The final five pieces are composed between 1620 and 1623 (93 - 7).

If it is tempting to see in Góngora's preference for amatory subjects in his early years the natural inclination of a young man to use poetry as a vehicle for the description or expression of personal feelings, some knowledge of accepted theories of poetry in the late sixteenth century and of prevalent themes and fashions should put us on our guard³. In the edition of Góngora's sonnets being used for the present study one can discern an underlying thread in the editor's comments, seeming to indicate that she does view the poetry as a kind of autobiographical document. Numerous examples of this could be cited, such as the comment, for example on No 95, *Prisión del nácar era articulado*, where, following Jammes, she writes "... en este año (1620)

Góngora mismo tendría pocas ganas de galanteo, con sus 59 años, sus deudas, y el sentimiento de desengaño cada vez más fuerte." (p 153)

It is difficult, nevertheless, to maintain that such direct correlation of life and art is fundamental to the *Amorosos* when one notes the early dependence of Góngora on Classical, Italian or Spanish models for the subject matter of many of the sonnets, or if one agrees with Robert Jammes' general strictures on the *Sonetos Amorosos* that they are conventional exercises on classic themes, distinguished in the main by their formal but cold perfection. As the French critic has advanced this thesis in some detail, devoting a chapter of his large-scale work on Góngora to the *Sonetos Amorosos*, I intend to look briefly at some of his comments before undertaking analyses of several of the sonnets⁴.

The chapter devoted to the *Sonetos Amorosos* in Jammes' *Etudes sur l'Oeuvre Poétique de don Luis de Góngora y Argote* is found at the beginning of the third part of the book, *Du Pétrarquisme aux Grands Poèmes*, between pages 352 and 374. In the Introduction Jammes writes as follows:

Nous avons examiné jusqu'à présent deux attitudes opposées de Góngora, qui font penser aux deux points extrêmes d'un mouvement pendulaire: l'une, nettement anticonformiste, correspond à sa poésie satirique ou burlesque, tandis que l'autre, beaucoup plus docile, s'exprime dans ses vers courtisans. En simplifiant beaucoup on pourrait dire que, dans le premier cas, le poète va souvent au-delà de sa pensée, tandis que dans le second cas il reste en-deça et tend à se dépersonnaliser.

(p 353)

While admitting that there is an obvious danger in such generalisations Jammes maintains that such distinctions can be useful for our

understanding of the main features of Góngora's poetry. He asserts that the vast majority of the poems can be classified as falling within these two extremes; and, having distinguished four main groups of poems in Góngora's oeuvre, places the early love poems - principally the *Sonetos Amorosos* - at one extreme of his pendulum swing. At this point he sees the young Góngora attempting exercises upon established themes in a detached search for formal technical perfection. Jammes dismisses those critics who have sought to find in the sonnets evidence of a serious personal relationship:

... don Luis a connu, dans sa jeunesse - et sans doute aussi plus tard - quelques aventures amoureuses qui ne se reflètent pas directement dans les sonnets de cette période; ces sonnets expriment seulement une certaine conception idéalisante de l'amour, de la femme, et, peut-on dire, de la vie en général.

(p 373)

and quotes with approval J P W Crawford's important 1929 article *Italian Sources of Gongora's Poetry*⁵ in support of his assertion that these early poems exhibit a fundamental lack of originality of inspiration⁶. Indeed, the French critic goes so far as to assert that there is an essentially "second-hand" quality to these sonnets, in which nothing is new and little, apart from formal perfection, is to be praised:

... c'est surtout l'impression de "déjà vu" qui émerge, qu'on le veuille ou non, de cette étude: la mythologie, la pastorale, l'amant plaintif et adorant, la femme idéale, l'amour platonique, rien de ceci n'est bien nouveau, et l'on a constamment l'impression d'un "garcilasisme" qui s'efforce de se prolonger.

(pp 365-6)

Critics, Jammes asserts, have devoted far too much attention to works

that hardly merit it:

C'est uniquement sous cet aspect de "prémices poétiques" qu'il convient d'examiner ce cycle de sonnets ... La critique, en les mettant implicitement (au mépris de la chronologie) sur le même pied que les oeuvres de la maturité de don Luis, commet à mon sens une grave erreur.

(p 370)

He goes on to suggest that anthologies of poetry, by including many of these early works, have done grave injustice to the true nature of Góngora's achievement, encouraging readers and critics alike to look for the "essential" Góngora in poems that are quite untypical of his finest work. Coldness, impersonality, the pursuit of formal perfection and heavy reliance upon models - all of these, according to Jammes, are characteristic of an "apprentice" period which should be given far less attention than it has traditionally had:

... en raison sans doute de leur perfection formelle, ces sonnets ont souvent retenu l'attention de la critique. Il y aura lieu de se demander si, de ce fait, leur importance n'a pas été quelquefois exagérée.⁷

(p 353)

It will become clear from the analyses that follow that my reading of the early sonnets is fundamentally different from that of Jammes. In more general terms, however, it could be observed straight away that although Jammes quotes Crawford approvingly in support of his basic thesis with regard to the "apprentice period" sonnets, a careful reading of Crawford's article leads to rather different conclusions. Its title, *Italian Sources of Góngora's Poetry*, is, in fact, slightly misleading, for although Crawford demonstrates clearly that Góngora was inspired by themes in classic Italian poetry, and even

occasionally by particular turns of phrase in certain poems that attracted him, it is in fact the originality of Góngora's treatment of his themes that is the main feature of the article. Although the reliance on initial models leads Crawford to classify the years up to 1585 as a "period of apprenticeship", his comments throughout the article reveal the fundamental changes wrought by the Spanish poet in almost all the cited instances of "imitation"⁸. His careful conclusion:

With the evidence at hand, we may assume that Góngora's specific indebtedness to Italian poets is limited to his apprentice years. ... Furthermore, it appears that some of the Italian poems suggested as sources of Góngora's inspiration have little relation with his own verse, and that in a number of other cases he merely borrowed a simile or a phrase and developed it independently according to his fancy.

is very well stated, and more acceptable than Jammes' generalised strictures. My reasons for agreeing with Crawford, and for disagreeing with both Jammes and the Fosters, will become clear in the following pages⁹.

Just as the first of the three periods of composition of the *Sonetos Amorosos* contains the majority of these works (26), so the first year of the period in question, 1582 - 85, saw the composition of the majority of the first group, eleven poems in all (53 - 63). On first acquaintance, the poems reveal the strong influence of Garcilaso de la Vega, among Spanish poets, and recognisably recall the themes and language of Petrarch and later Italian sonneteers¹⁰. The majority of these eleven poems are written in apparent homage to the poet's lady and her beauty. Comparisons of the latter are drawn with an idealized

natural world in which she and the narrator move, and whose beauty mirrors or rivals hers. In some poems the homage takes the form of simple praise (55, 62); in others, the praise is linked with complaints that the lady remains cold to the expression of his feelings (58, 59, 61). Still others express quite different moods, revealing an intensity of language and apparent emotional involvement that seem to mark them out clearly from the remainder. The first of the following analyses is of a delicate "homage" poem (56); the second, of one of the most striking pieces in the group, dedicated to erotic passion and the irony of its limitations (60).

¡Oh claro honor del líquido elemento, is a sonnet inspired by what at first appears a somewhat conventional admiration for the poet's lady: *la por quien helar y arder me siento*. This phrase, the lover's "icy fire" familiar from Petrarchan amatory tradition¹¹, balances the girl's white and pink complexion in a clear parallel to Garcilaso's opening quatrain of Sonnet 23, although the subtle interaction of images in the earlier poem is missing here¹². If Garcilaso's sonnet was at the back of Góngora's mind in these particular lines, the overall direct parallel, pointed out by every commentator, is with Bernardo Tasso's sonnet *O puro, o dolce, o fiumicel d'argento*. As I believe Góngora's general "indebtedness" to the Italian poets may be typified by the relationship between these sonnets, they will be examined together in the following analysis.

Tasso's sonnet, No 37, is as follows:

O puro, o dolce, o fiumicel d'argento,
 Più ricco assai, ch'Ermo, Pattolo, o Tago,
 Che vai al tuo cammin lucente e vago
 Fra le sponde di gemme a passo lento;

O primo onor del liquido Elemento,
 Conserva integra quella bella immagine,
 Di cui non pur quest'occhi infermi appago,
 Ma pasco di dolc'esca il mio tormento.

Qual ora in te si specchia, e nelle chiare
 E lucide onde tue si lava il volto
 Colei, che arder potrebbe orsi e serpenti;

Ferma il tuo corso e tutto in te raccolto,
 Condensa i liquor tuoi caldi ed ardenti,
 Per non portar tanta ricchezza al mare.¹³

The basic situation, that of the lover either watching or imagining his lady beside a stream, is identical, as is the central feature of the poems, the lover's address to the stream. However, nothing else is common, apart from the Spanish poet's clear acknowledgement of the source of his inspiration by the direct use of the translated fifth line of the Italian poem as his first. In Tasso's poem the lady washes her face in the stream, while in Góngora's she merely looks into it¹⁴. The narrator in the Spanish poem does not experience the "torment" of love, although he acknowledges his passion. The most striking difference, however, occurs in the endings of the two sonnets¹⁵. In the Tasso the lover requests the water to cease all movement *per non portar tanta ricchezza al mare*; in Góngora's poem the wish is that the water continue its tranquil movement unchanged: *vete como te vas*. This mere surface distinction between the poems reflects far more subtle differences in the structure and meaning of them. If Tasso's poem is rather fragmentary in construction, and perhaps somewhat adolescent in its linking of extreme emotion with an

impossible desire to change the processes of a natural force, Góngora's combines with delicate amatory courtesy a recognition of the possibly transient nature of love and beauty, as well as, more widely, the need for man to face the problems of mutability.

The pivotal line of the Spanish poem, the lover's address to the river *vete como te vas*, far from imitating the Italian can be seen as an almost deliberate rejection of Tasso's *Ferma il tuo corso* and its associated ideas. In the last line of Góngora's poem, alluding to the sea-god Neptune, the lord of the sea is visualized as the power to which the stream is journeying and in whom it will lose its identity. This reference, and its mood, inevitably recalls the image used by Jorge Manrique and recurrent throughout Spanish poetry, of the life of man moving inexorably towards the sea of death. In Manrique no god, either Christian or pagan, is associated with this sea image, even though the *Coplas* as a whole are almost equally Stoic and Christian in inspiration. The appearance of Neptune, lord of the sea, in the last line of Góngora's sonnet, however, is entirely appropriate to the pagan pastoral world evoked in the *Sonetos Amorosos* as a whole and this work in particular. The function of this reference within the sonnet will become clear in the following paragraphs¹⁶.

In contrast to the Tasso, where the poet hopes that the already disturbed water may miraculously cease its movement, *per non portar tanta ricchezza al mare*, Góngora's poem accepts the eventual extinction of the river in the sea, with all that this implies. The request that the lover addresses to the river is that it should continue as calmly as it moves now, with no turbulence: *vete como te vas*. In this way, he

apparently believes, her undistorted image may continue to appear on the face of the tranquil water as it moves to the sea. Many problems, however, are associated with this. On a naturalistic level, the girl's reflection can only remain in the place where *she* is, while it is the water that moves past. Movement in space must belong to the latter, while *she* remains still. But another kind of movement is present in the poem, as has already been suggested: movement in time. Both lover and girl are subject to time, and within *its* movement her loveliness will inevitably fade. To these problems one must add the appearance of a third party in the poem, the god of love himself, who brings the image of the girl before the lover's eyes in colours and beauty sufficient to incite his passion.

The phrase *mientras en ti se mira* can hardly be seen as implying that the man's love is actively awakened only by his being able to see the girl's beauty reflected in the stream. It is rather the presence of Love and his creative power that causes him to respond to her. The beauty of the slow-moving river is clearly identified as a life-giving force in nature:

dulce arroyuelo de corriente plata,
cuya agua entre la yerba se dilata

But the love experienced by the narrator, and possibly reciprocated by the girl, is also life-giving in a more general sense. The girl may in reality be gazing into the water in which her face is reflected, or Cupid's representation of her beauty may actually be the poet's recreation of it in his own imagination. If the latter is implied, the naturalistic difficulty referred to above is easily resolved. In the

real world the nature of a stream will often make it turbulent, and the processes of ageing will inevitably affect all beauty, but in art other considerations may come into play. In either case, the peace associated with the present tranquil flow of the water can preserve her image intact within the lover's mind.

The nature of the processes of time will lead all things to extinction, both in Nature itself and in man. In the context of the poem, this must mean the disappearance of the stream in the sea, and the lives and love of the two protagonists in eventual death. But if the slow-paced last line recognizes the inevitability of this, the almost child-like opening of the final tercet shows the lover tenderly wishing that his mistress' beauty at least could be preserved as long as life itself. In reality, the processes of Nature will reduce her physical beauty to mere memory. In poetic terms, on the level of the lover's feelings for her, it is possible that the miracle of Love's art will preserve that beauty (for his eyes only) intact. Though he knows that the river, her image, and its beauty will all eventually disappear into the arms of Neptune, his plea to the river - and therefore, we now see, to both Love and Time - is that this should not happen *confusamente*, distorting in his mind her present perfection:

vete como te vas; ...

no es bien que confusamente acoja
tanta belleza en su profundo seno
el gran señor del húmedo tridente.

At the most, therefore, it may be said that Góngora's poem takes an initial phrase and a situation in Tasso as its starting-point. It moves, in fact, from a courteous reminiscence of the Italian poet to

a quite new set of inter-related themes, in which the subtle blending of images and emotion is already that of a mature poet.

The striking sonnet *Ya besando unas manos cristalinas*, (60) was no doubt inspired by Góngora's reading of Classical literature. The lover's complaint that the dawn is bringing to an end his night of pleasure is found throughout literature, and no doubt the universality of the experience makes the subject a natural one for amatory poetry. Góngora's particular source, however, is undoubtedly Ovid's *Amores* (1, 13), where a resigned and apparently not too downcast lover addresses the dawn in almost philosophical terms as he recalls his interrupted pleasure. Góngora would have known other versions of the theme, notably its treatment at length by Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso*, but it is likely that the irony of the final lines in Ovid's poem:

iurgia finieram, scires audisse: rubebat,
nec tamen adsueto tardius orta dies.¹⁷

commended itself particularly to the young poet. In contrast to Ovid's comparatively lengthy poem, however, Góngora's choice of the concise sonnet form gives a particularly cutting edge to the fierce emotions expressed by the lover¹⁸.

In several of the early sonnets Góngora uses both the opening quatrains as introductory clauses to a main statement, the latter being placed at the fulcrum of the poem, the first line of the first tercet. Perhaps the best-known example of this occurs in the sonnet *Mientras por competir con tu cabello* (149), also written in 1582. Góngora most probably learnt the effectiveness of this device from Garcilaso de la Vega's *En tanto que de rosa y azucena*, where the two quatrains lead to

the forceful imperative *coged* ...¹⁹ In the sonnet *Ya besando unas manos cristalinas*, however, the dramatic emphasis given to this moment in the poem is greater still, due to the unexpected appearance of an imperfect tense after a series of introductory present participles: *Ya besando ... , ya anudándome ... , ya quebrando ... , ya cogiendo ...* The repeated use of *ya* together with a series of active verbs creates a sense of dramatic urgency entirely appropriate to the overt eroticism of the opening quatrains and the sonnet's subsequent mood of utter exasperation.

Throughout the opening eight lines the lover recounts the pleasures of his experience with evident delight. The lady's beauty is depicted via the specific parts of her body that her lover caresses, and the phrase *que Amor sacó entre el oro de sus minas*, which among different lines might go unremarked, suggests within such an erotic context the very extremes of passion. The entire octave is dominated by verbs describing the passionate activity of the lover, and the shock of *estaba* at the opening of line 9, followed by a dramatic pause, is almost theatrical. Its function is both to puncture the reader's increasing sense of positive expectation, as it were, on the lover's behalf; and, by stilling the active verb sequence, to reduce an apparently dramatic present verbal structure to a narrative past, and a consequent loss of dramatic immediacy. This point in the poem also opens into a new dimension, as the lover's attention shifts from intense concentration on his mistress to an exasperated awareness of an intruder upon their idyll. The sun, to whom in fact the poem is addressed, is here personified, and its actions in interrupting those of the lover match the latter's in

intensity: *hiriéndome; mató; acabó*. The verbs, all associated with battle and conquest, ironically suggest the appearance of a greater and more potent rival, against whom the lover can only rail in vain. The sun's "envy" is of course of the lover's good fortune, a wish to see for itself the beauties of the lady already described by the lover. Powerless to fight against the inevitable sunrise, the lover has to content himself with cursing its appearance in the ironic final tercet. Using the example of Phaeton, he wishes violent death on the sun by a similar thunderbolt, thus matching the "death" inflicted on his love-making by the sun's rays. The game of words, of course, is perfectly rendered in the Spanish. Just as Phaeton was punished by Zeus for recklessly driving the stolen chariot of the sun, by being destroyed by a thunderbolt from heaven, so the lover - scornfully wondering if heaven has retained such power (*ya* appears again here) - calls down *rayos* upon the source of the rays that disturb him:

Si el cielo ya no es menos poderoso,
 porque no den los tuyos más enojos,
 rayos, como a tu hijo, te den muerte.

The pun on *rayos* is only one of several reasons for the effectiveness of these last lines. The lover's boldness in challenging heaven itself is matched by the daring implicit in the terms of his curse - if the source of light should itself disappear, the world is condemned to everlasting night. The fact that a man can contemplate such an occurrence for the sake of pursuing uninterrupted pleasure with his mistress adds a tinge of erotic madness to the effrontery of his curse. The lover, seeing light as the death of love, seeks to kill that light to bring love again alive. To this end anything may be

risked, as the terms of the curse imply.

There remains a further paradox to explore. As has been seen, the lover longs for an extinction of light to enable the pleasure of love-making to continue. The sun's light 'wounds' his eyes, therefore, but in normal circumstances the eyes can only function if aided by light. Looking again at the octave with this in mind, it is striking to note the visual quality of the descriptions given by the lover of his lady: *manos cristalinas, un blanco y liso cuello, perlas finas, purpúreas rosas*. To see all these he needs light, yet light is cursed for intruding upon him. This apparent paradox is resolved if one considers again the phrase *hiriéndome los ojos* in conjunction with what has gone before. The fact that the light falls directly on his eyes suggests a sleeping man, rather than an active lover. We now realise, in fact, that the light is not falling upon two people in a real bed, in a darkened room, but is simply breaking into the lover's imaginative consciousness. The suddenness of the ending of the experience (*mató; acabó*), which in normal circumstances would hardly be so abrupt, is perfectly understandable if it is seen as a sudden waking from sleep. The sonnet is thus revealed as the recall of an exasperated waking from a dream of love, and an unreasoning though understandable longing to find sleep again in order to be reunited with one's mistress²⁰.

There are several other fine sonnets in this early group, notably *Verdes hermanas del audaz mozuelo* (65), in which the myths of Daphne, Phaeton and Icarus are ingeniously combined, and *¡Oh niebla del estado más sereno* (63), an impassioned sonnet on jealousy. Few of these have been subject to detailed analyses, although several commentators

have tackled at length the fascinatingly ironic *La dulce boca que a gustar convida* (70)²¹.

It is perhaps clear from the analyses already made in this chapter that I consider the classifications under which Góngora's sonnets have traditionally been grouped to be at best a rough and ready guide. More is to be said below on this subject, but there can be no doubt that the presence in the majority of the sonnets of several inter-locking themes makes straightforward classification both difficult and, in the last resort, undesirable.

An early sonnet which is an excellent example of varied themes within an *Amoroso* context is *No destrozada nave en roca dura* (71), where elements that suggest *Morales* or even *Burlescos* as the appropriate group are easy to discern. As in the sonnet *Ni en este monte, este aire, ni este río* (66), written the previous year, *No destrozada nave* contains recognizable references to the four elements in its opening octave, although it is done with more subtlety in the later poem. Water, air and earth are cited in sequence through references to *nave/playa*, *pajarillo* and *prado/verdura*, leaving fire to be equated with the passion of love, which duly appears at the opening of the first tercet.

The structure of the poem clearly suggest the isolation of one of the four elements, fire/love, which the reader has had to discover within the images offered us by the poet. The remaining three elements all appear in lines 1 - 6 and prepare for a series of three-fold references which occur throughout the poem. The others are: the *nave/pajarillo/ninfa* group, subjects of the phrases suggesting the three elements; the

girl's attributes of *condición airada*, *rubias trenzas* and *vista bella*; and finally the reference in the last line to *dura roca*, *red de oro*, *alegre prado*. As in several sonnets of this period, most notably *Mientras por competir con tu cabello* (149)²², the poet's game with numbers is an invitation to the reader to use this means of penetrating part of the meaning of the poem. At this stage in an approach to the sonnet, therefore, the fourth element of fire/love has been isolated, and it remains to be seen where the particular significance of this may lie.

Returning to the octave, it is clear that within each reference Góngora wishes to depict a situation of relief following fear of destruction. The ship thankfully reaches the shore after being partially wrecked on a rock; a bird escapes from a net to find sanctuary in a wood; a girl flees from a poisonous snake found in a green meadow. In each case the danger might have been mortal, and in each the relief from fear is total:

No destrozada nave en roca dura
 tocó la playa más arrepentida,
 ni pajarillo de la red tendida
 voló más temeroso a la espesura;

bella ninfa la planta mal segura
 no tan alborotada ni afligida
 hurtó de verde prado, que escondida
 víbora regalaba en su verdura,

These simple pictures are parallels which the lover draws to his own situation. Even though he has praised and served his lady, she has angrily rejected him. Like the girl and the bird in his examples, he flees in fear from danger, in this case his lady's anger and beauty,

and his own passions, *con pie ya desatado* (the bird had been momentarily caught; the young girl had almost trodden on the snake).

Thus far the poem works satisfactorily, if a trifle mechanically. The aspects which render it fascinating are allied, first, to the *bella ninfa* reference and secondly to the fourth "missing" element in the series noted above. The image of the snake in the grass, found first in Virgil (*latet anguis in herba*), is a commonplace in Renaissance poetry in general, and love poetry in particular, Góngora uses it on many occasions in these early poems, and always with this connotation. It recalls, of course, the myth of Eden in which Eve's temptation of Adam follows her own temptation by the serpent, implying the inter-related themes of love and morality which the pictorial and literary symbol of the snake in the garden has always represented. Góngora uses the image in particular to suggest the power of love to strike unexpectedly, as in *La dulce boca que a gustar convida* (70), and its attendant dangers of emotional and moral entanglement. The reference in the poem that makes this clear is dependent upon the reader's awareness that in the lover's own complaint against his *enemiga* he is in fact identifying her as the fleeing girl in the meadow (*bella ninfa/ninfa crüel*). The lady from whom the lover flees and the girl terrified of the snake stand revealed as one and the same, with the attendant irony that it is the mutual fear of the poison of love and its death-like effect that drives the two so firmly apart.

There remains another aspect of the poem to explore, the 'art' that the lover has used in his composition of the situation in which he finds himself. *En vano celebrada* is a particularly striking phrase, implying

as it does that the lover's praise of his mistress (*bella ninfa*) has been composed and uttered in vain. If this is so, he has been an artist himself as well as a lover; in fact, a poet. In this role he was able to bring her within the artistic confines of a sentimental world which also included those images of nature he chose to set about her. His flight from the danger of love will take place with the greater security in that he will relinquish, together with love, the entire world he had created around his mistress and their emotions and which the sonnet, as it stands before the reader, makes manifest. In the final lines of the poem the lover takes leave of his *ninfa cruel* in the most emphatic way possible to him, by returning her image to the artificial world he had created for them both to move in. Hence the force of the address to the three first-named elements: *quedao con ella*. She had become for him the very dangers each of these represented: *dura roca (airada)*, *red de oro (rubias trenzas)*, *alegre prado (vista bella)*, but she was first and foremost the missing fourth element of love and fire that threatened to consume him. All the elements were united in her in his mind; his mind can now return her to the safety of those same elements. His flight from chains to freedom is accomplished the more completely because it has become an abandonment of art for life²³.

* * * * *

As far as the accepted groupings are concerned, Góngora returns to the *soneto amoroso* after a gap of nine years, in 1594. From this point on the production of sonnets in this vein is far less than before, with

only the years 1609 and 1620 seeing the composition of more than two such pieces, and many years remaining blank. This has seemed significant to certain commentators, and it would indeed be easy to conclude that the comparatively large number of sonnets of 1582 - 85 represents a group that thematically and stylistically could be conveniently classified as immature apprentice works. As has been shown, this view is hardly tenable. The matter is complicated further by the fact that the remaining *Sonetos Amorosos*, from whatever year, share with those already considered remarkable similarities of theme, style and language. It would clearly be critically more convenient to observe an older poet renouncing the modes of his youth as he moved through middle age, as this pattern is frequently sought out by critics making particular assumptions about the psychology of an ageing artist²⁴. In another context, Dámaso Alonso long ago disproved the long-held myth of there existing two Góngoras, a quite different artist having appeared after about 1610. He showed clearly that the features of Góngora's style considered unique to the *Soledades* and *Poliéfemo*, above all, could in fact be seen to exist, even if sometimes in embryo form, from the earliest poems onwards²⁵. A reading of the *Sonetos Amorosos* in their entirety, in fact, leads to a conclusion that is closely related to Dámaso's, and which will hold good for those groups of sonnets still to be considered; namely, that Góngora found at an early poetic age the language and style appropriate to particular modes of the sonnet, and that these were to remain essentially the same, in some cases for as much as forty years.

Of the remaining sonnets in this group, several are worthy of detailed

comment and analysis, particularly the dramatic *Cosas, Celalba m^{ra}, he visto extrañas* (82), the sonnet to the Duque de Feria (90) and the delightful homage poems *Si Amor entre las plumas de su nido* (88) and *Prisi6n del nacar era articulado* (95), of 1620. As late as this, it is clear, G6ngora was quite content to compose a poem consisting entirely of an elegant and subtly worked tribute by a lover to his lady and her beauty. There is no justification for presuming that it must have been composed on behalf of someone else, as Jammes suggests, simply because the poet was already fifty-nine years old, and in difficult circumstances²⁶.

One mysterious and beautiful sonnet bears the superscription *De un caminante enfermo que se enamor6 donde fue hospedado* (80). Although this has not been the subject of detailed critical analysis, as far as I am aware, various critics, following Artigas, have purported to see in it an account of a real incident in the poet's life²⁷. It is regularly found in anthologies, and was also the inspiration for a highly poetic page of one of the chapters of Azorin's *Castilla*²⁸. Although it has been asserted that G6ngora's sonnets show no examples of direct borrowing from other authors after 1585, the central ideas and mood of this work are steeped in reminiscences of sonnets by Garcilaso de la Vega. The earlier poet's sonnets No VI, *Por 6speros caminos he llegado*, and XVIII, *Pensando que el camino iba derecho*, for example, make interesting comparisons with G6ngora's work, even though the dense thematic content of *Descaminado, enfermo, peregrino* is not found in the earlier works.

The particular set of circumstances described in the fourteen lines of

this sonnet are easy to grasp and represent a familiar human situation, that of the disappointed lover finding himself again assailed by love. The subject of the poem, barely recovered from one unhappy experience, finds himself embroiled in another and powerless to resist. The fiction of the poem, however, is a narrative form and describes a wanderer seeking shelter in the darkness of the night. The finely balanced opening line draws much of its interest from the ambiguous grammatical forms, and only by the end of the quatrain has Góngora made clear that *peregrino* must in fact be the subject of the main verbs. But as it, like *enfermo*, is also an adjectival form, the line still conveys a sense of emptiness entirely appropriate to the meaning of the remainder of the poem. The wanderer, having stepped aside from a marked road, *descaminado*, unable to tread confidently, *pie incierto*, can move towards no clear goal, *pasos sin tino*. He is surrounded by a wasteland and moves in darkness. In such circumstances, his natural instinct for survival leads him to cry out:

Descaminado, enfermo, peregrino,
 en tenebrosa noche, con pie incierto
 la confusión pisando del desierto,
 voces en vano dio, pasos sin tino.

Hearing the bark of a dog in the distance he moves towards what he knows must be some form of life in the vicinity. The narrative of the poem moves swiftly on at this point, briefly summarizing the wanderer's hospitable reception in a *pastoral albergue mal cubierto*, that also remains uncharacterized and impersonal. The last line of the second quatrain suggests a detail of the "story" that may also be seen to prepare in ironic terms for what is still to come:

Pagará el hospedaje con la vida;

But if the poem is now revealed as, on the one hand, a powerfully concise reworking of the myth of the fearsome *serranillas* who lured travellers to their huts to destroy them, it is also an allegory of man's own folly in recklessly pursuing love. The "illness" suffered by the wanderer is still grave, yet instead of waiting for total recovery, he has decided to set out again on his journey, in a desert place and by night. He has been able to follow no clear path, and has no set goal. Small wonder, then, that he is grateful for the first shelter that he can find. The amatory parallel to each of these stages hardly needs elucidation²⁹.

If we are to look beyond the fiction of the poem as another "traveller's tale" and take seriously its own claim to be an allegory of the dangers of love, the *camino* sought by the wanderer is a wish to find certainty in his life. His weakness has been caused by the disastrous effects of love, but his pressing aim is the finding of love again. It is this irony, reminding us of man's foolish unwillingness to profit from his experiences, that lies at the heart of the sonnet's thematic structure. With the appearance of bright sunlight his understanding too at last becomes clear, as he realises exactly what will happen to him: *Pagará el hospedaje con la vida*. In the narrative fiction, the traveller will die; in the amatory parallel, the lover's life is again enslaved. It would indeed have been better to have continued in a world of uncertainty that was nevertheless freedom: *más le valiera errar en la montaña*. Now that is too late.

The sonnet is thus far an intensely dramatic poem that has captured the

reader's imagination and involvement on various levels associated with its fiction. Everything in the first thirteen lines, however, is both in the past tense and in the third person. Góngora has, in fact, saved the most dramatic meaning of his poem to the last, for in the final line the wanderer, the narrator and the poet himself stand revealed as one and the same person:

más le valiera errar en la montaña,
que morir de la suerte que yo muero.

The sudden revelation of total personal involvement by the composer of the poem is occasionally used by Góngora to good effect, for example at the end of *Cosas, Celalba mía, he visto extrañas*, but nowhere else does it have the dramatic power which this last line, with its totally unexpected emphatic present tense, conveys. Our subsequent readings of the poem, of course, will inevitably involve this previous knowledge of its outcome, but so perfectly is the work constructed and so intense is its mood that the shock of this last line maintains the same power to move the reader as on the first occasion that we encounter the poem.

As in *No destrozada nave*, Góngora is here using literary fictions to draw fascinating patterns within the relationship of art and life. A final detail in the sonnet under discussion can be illustrative of this. The beauty that assails the infirm traveller after his night's rest is described as *entre armiños escondida*, and the resonances of this are many. The mountaingirl may indeed be half-hidden in furs; she has also concealed the truth of her murderous nature from the traveller. But *armiños* are to be found, ironically, not only amongst

country people, but also at court, adorning the dress of ladies of society. Just as the Duque de Feria is warned of the danger of love for Catalina de Acuña (90) by being shown a vision of her as a siren luring ships and men to their doom on the rocks, so here too the poet may perhaps be concealing beneath an elaborate extended metaphor a further allegory of the world of the court and its society.

The wandering lover has been able to rest during the night, although he has not yet recovered fully from his illness. Just as it would be dangerous for a sick person to travel abroad so soon after being confined to a place of rest, so the sudden brightness of the sun tells him, if proof were needed, that he is still too weak to travel. This new *sol*, however, is a particular danger to him, because it is in reality the beauty of the lady to whom he is fatally attracted. This beauty, emerging either literally from the *armiños* that she wears, or enhanced by the radiance of her nobility and chastity, dazzles the wretched lover so completely that he is quite powerless to resist her: *salteó al no bien sano pasajero*. Even though traditionally the *serranas* the young man might have met amongst real mountains could well have menaced him, now this young courtier - or poet - is at the total mercy of the all-conquering beauty of a high-born lady of the Court, who tempts and lures him with her chaste loveliness. She too will have no mercy on him, as lover, once she recognises the full extent of her power over him (*soñolienta beldad*). The *peregrino*, then, has found *hospedaje*, but to no avail; the compassion and kindness offered him concealed greater dangers than those which he had recently survived; and if he attempts to follow the *camino* that is beckoning him now, it will be to return again to the darkness from which he has tried to escape.

51 One sonnet in which not only court society but the relationships within are of critical importance is *En el cristal de tu divina mano* (91) from 1609. The final tercet of this contains two apparently redundant phrases, remarkable in a work otherwise so tightly constructed. In the last line Góngora repeats the idea *manos de cristal* which was present in line one, and in the penultimate line the rhythm is broken by successive commas, the last two of which enclose what would appear to be an unnecessary comment: *bien nacido*. It was already clear from phrases such as *divina mano*, *mirar sereno* and *serafín* that the Claudia to whom the sonnet is addressed is of noble birth; the epithets of the last two lines would therefore seem merely to repeat the obvious.

The emphasis thus given to the lady's exalted position contrasts particularly with the portrait we are shown of the despairing lover, tortured and enchained by a love which is not returned. The repeated reference to *manos de cristal* and the crucial position of the *bien nacido* phrase, however, should perhaps also be taken to indicate that not only is the lover inferior to the lady because his love is not returned; he may also be socially inferior. Were this to be so, the possibility that his love could ever be returned hardly exists. This suggested reading of one of the areas of meaning in the sonnet will be seen to help resolve the difficulties of the final tercet of the work, in particular the phrase *por yerro*.

The structure of the sonnet exactly parallels the three-fold action of the lover's conquest by the lady's beauty. He is struck down by love while performing a simple act of gallantry; he kisses her hand, and is

poisoned; looks up at her eyes, and is stricken by the shafts from them; steps back a pace, and finds his feet in chains. The first moment of love is described in the opening quatrain, the second in the following one, and the third in the first tercet. The sonnet is thus not only a commentary on and description of an experience, but also a recreation in art of the nature and form of the experience itself. Having been rendered powerless, the lover recognizes his state of slavery and the impossibility of release, unless Claudia herself should permit it. His plea that she should do so is contained in the final tercet.

In the opening lines of the sonnet Love hides a *dulcísimo veneno* in the whiteness of the lady's hand. This *néctar ardiente* is poison to the mortal lover, although she herself, as goddess, is immune to its effect (*divina mano/serafín*). This association of Claudia with divinity is, of course, deliberate. As well as being the obvious tribute to her supreme beauty, it places her on the same level as Cupid himself. This association, which recalls the same innocent alliance that is described in *Angélica y Medoro*, is developed further in the second quatrain. The glances from Claudia's eyes are Cupid's gold-tipped arrows, which induce helpless love in the recipient, though the fact that it is a *mirar sereno*, as well as being an ironic reference to the blind eyes of the god, would seem to indicate her innocence in what is taking place.

The idea of flight from the object of adoration, and its futility, is present throughout the poem and first expressed at the end of the first quatrain: *templar con la ausencia pensé en vano*. He recognizes

that to attempt to flee from poison that has been drunk, from a dart in one's breast, or from chains on one's feet, is impossible. The opposite, in fact, takes place to the wished-for sense of release - the greater the absence from the source of his imprisonment, the greater his anguish:

que cuanto más ausente dél, más peno,
de sus golpes el pecho menos sano.

The initial blow of the shaft in his heart is now multiplied, as though to become grief-laden heart-beats.

The step back which the lover now takes, figuratively as before her beauty and rank, as well as literally, is to him an exile. Yet he is already chained, both as a prisoner incapable of escape and as a slave who in fact has no wish to. To move from her presence is to be attended by wretchedness: *lloro al ruido de un eslabón y otro mi destierro*; to move away at all is to become even more lost: *más desviado, pero más perdido*. The idea which links this tercet to the final lines of the sonnet is the image of the iron fetters which bind the feet of the lover - *un eslabón y otro*. How can they be broken, to enable him to regain his liberty?

His only hope for release, it would seem, lies in an appeal to his jailor. Yet, ironically, she is unaware of the very imprisonment she has subjected him to. He must therefore make her aware of the situation and hope for her mercy. He asks when she will *por yerro* release him, and calls her *serafín*. To explain that the nature of a seraph, by the ardour of its adoration, makes it capable of burning

even through iron fetters, is to resolve only part of the problem of the final tercet. There remain the phrases referred to earlier, *manos de cristal* and *bien nacido*, and the pun on *yerro*.

The lover's anguish is occasioned by his feeling a passion which is not, and perhaps can never be, returned, a *dulcísimo veneno*. This would of course be relieved if Claudia *did* respond to him in the same way, for she would then become, like the lover, a prisoner with legs fettered by iron. It would be through this *yerro* (*hierro*) of her imprisonment that both would attain the freedom of reciprocated love. This, however, as the poem has made clear, is most unlikely. A lady of rank would not be expected to lower herself by returning the love of a social inferior - making the mistake (*yerro*) of reducing herself (*serafín/bien nacido*) to the point where she too would become a slave. No, his only hope is that Claudia herself may diminish in his eyes, betraying his ideal of grace and beauty. That day must therefore be his only hope of release, the day on which she may make the one mistake (*yerro*) that will free his soul from the chains that bind it.

Even though Ciplijauskaitė expresses apparent disappointment at finding this work to be

Soneto muy petrarquista aún, con las imágenes
de las cadenas de amor y el arpón.

(p 149)

the sonnet is a fine example of Góngora's ability to make new and valid use of both classical mythology and the amatory conventions that he had established for himself in the earlier *Sonetos Amorosos*, basing

those upon both the lessons learnt from Garcilaso de la Vega and the Italian poets, and his own craft and human understanding. The theme of love will be examined again in the Góngora sonnets, in fact, in the next Chapter, where compositions in the *Heroico* form are seen to have the same thematic complexities as the fine works analysed in detail here.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

- 1 "The Renaissance poet, despairing of improving on the great classical poets whom he revered, took them as his model, to be imitated where possible, to be borrowed from when necessary. This did not mean slavish imitation of the classical models, however: Renaissance practice was more like variations on a ground. To the canon of models to be imitated modern poets were added as they acquired the status of classics. Petrarch is one of the most noteworthy examples. Garcilaso acquired this status within the sixteenth century."
R O Jones, *Poems of Góngora*, Cambridge, 1966, p 6.

Salcedo Coronel corroborates this view of Garcilaso's position. The latter's "autoridad, aunque moderno, en mi estimación es igual a la mayor de los mejores Poetas de la antigüedad." Op cit, p 322
- 2 Ciplijauskaitė's reason for removing these sonnets from the *Amorosos* would seem to be that the fictions of the poems do not include the narrator as protagonist; the poet and the lover are clearly distinguished. I can see no justification for this implied "definition" of the significance of the title *Amoroso*, and moreover Ciplijauskaitė is not even consistent: sonnets 73 and 79, for example, could be transferred with similar justification to the *Dedicatorios* group.
- 3 See, *inter alia*, the Introductions to Arthur Terry's *An Anthology of Spanish Poetry 1500 - 1700*, Parts I and II, Pergamon, 1965 and 1968; the same writer's "The Continuity of Renaissance Criticism: Poetic Theory in Spain between 1535 and 1650, *BHS*, XXXI (1954), pp 27 - 36; E Orozco Díaz's *El Barroco y la estética clásica renacentista*, in *Manierismo y Barroco*, Madrid, 1975, pp 33 - 40.
- 4 A A Parker has pointed out the direct influence of these ideas of Jammes in the book on Góngora, already cited, by D W and V R Foster. *Polyphemus and Galatea: A Study in the Interpretation of a Baroque Poem*, Edinburgh, 1977, pp 101 - 2.
- 5 J P W Crawford, "Italian Sources of Góngora's Poetry", *Romanic Review*, XX (1929), pp 122 - 130.
- 6 Jammes, op cit, p 369, seems to contradict himself in a note on Crawford's article: "J P W Crawford insiste à juste titre sur l'originalité de Góngora dans chacune de ces imitations..."
- 7 The Fosters, however, point out that *not enough* attention has been paid to these works: "... a general failure on the part of

the critics to examine the sonnets in any fashion other than cursorily within general contexts." Op cit, p 62.

- 8 Crawford comments briefly on fifteen Góngora sonnets and their supposed Italian "originals". In eight of these he rejects any direct borrowing by the Spanish poet, and in three more the matter is left open to question. Four sonnets are therefore left, in which Góngora is said to have included little that was his own. One of these, however, is *La dulce boca que a gustar convida* (70), which recent critics such as Nathan Gross maintain is fundamentally original. (See below, Note 21)
- 9 "Robert Jammes may well be just in arguing that, from a purely thematic point of view, Góngora's courtly poetry (*sic*) is essentially unoriginal and that his importance must rest on the iconoclastic *Weltanschauung* of those satirical and other works that reject a prevalent social and aesthetic value system." Op cit, p 94.
- 10 Garcilaso had recently acquired formal status as a classic in Spain, with the publication of commentaries on his works by Francisco Sánchez, el Brocense (1574) and Fernando de Herrera (1580). There can be little doubt that his work was also very popular with young poets such as Góngora in the later years of the century. Many may well have resembled Cervantes' *Licenciado Vidriera* with "un Garcilaso sin comento, que en las faltriqueras llevaba". *Novelas Ejemplares* II, Clásicos Castellanos, Madrid, 1962, p 20.
- 11 See Leonard Forster's *The Icy Fire*, Cambridge, 1969, in particular the first chapter *The Petrarchan Manner*, pp 1 - 60.
- 12 See below, Chapter IV, pp 122-125.
- 13 The text is quoted by Brockhaus, op cit, p 22.
- 14 As Brockhaus rather pedantically points out: "die schöne Geliebte mit dem Angesicht aus Schnee und Scharlach wäscht sich nicht in dem Bach, sondern spiegelt sich nur, sonst würde ja auch gar kein Bild entstehen können." Op cit, p 22.
- 15 Ciplijauskaitė, following Crawford, notes this but does not elaborate (p 114).
- 16 As A A Parker has shown, in his recent edition of *Polyphemus and Galatea*, this probable echo of Manrique occurs elsewhere in Góngora's poetry (op cit, pp 77 - 8). It is also curious to note that although Salcedo Coronel refers us to many uses of *riendas/caballos* and the power of waves in other poets, Góngora's striking introduction of the figure of Neptune in the last line passes entirely without comment (op cit, p 380).
- 17 Ovid: *Amores*, I, 13, lines 47 - 8, ed Barsby, Oxford 1973, p 146.

- 18 For English-speaking readers, the immediate parallel that the Góngora calls to mind is John Donne's *The Sunne Rising*. This is a much more elaborate poem than Góngora's and remains quite close to the Ovid in a surprising number of details. The brevity and tone of Góngora's sonnet distinguishes it almost completely from its English counterpart.
- 19 See below, Chapter IV, pp 122-125.
- 20 Jammes reaches the same conclusion, without showing in detail how Góngora forces us to read the poem in this way (op cit, pp 359 - 360).
- 21 The sonnet has been dealt with at length by Rossi: "Rileggendo un sonetto del Góngora (e uno del Tasso)", *RFE*, XLIV, 1961, pp 425 - 433; Nathan Gross: "Invention in an Imitated Sonnet by Góngora", *MLN*, LXXVII, 1962, pp 182 - 6; by the Fosters, op cit, pp 72 - 80; and by Katherine Kaiper Phillips: "Structuralism and some Sonnets by Góngora", *Romantic Review* 65 (1974), pp 294 - 307. None of these critics does full justice to the webs of irony present in the poem.
- 22 See below, Chapter IV, pp 127-131.
- 23 Garcilaso de la Vega's First and Third Eclogues deal, on the most elaborate scale, with this relationship of life and art. See Arthur Terry's introduction to the Garcilaso poems in his *Anthology of Spanish Poetry*, op cit, vol I, p 43.
- 24 The chronology of Cervantes' *Novelas Ejemplares*, for example, has been the subject of much speculation based on sentimental assumptions. See Ruth El Saffar's *From Ritual to Romance*, Chapter I, Baltimore, 1974.
- 25 *La lengua poética de Góngora*, Madrid, 1950; *Poesía española*, Madrid, 1950 and several later editions; *Góngora y el Polifemo*, etc.
- 26 Jammes, op cit, p 317.
- 27 Among them, R O Jones: *Poems of Góngora*, op cit, p 151, and Damáso Alonso: *Góngora y el Polifemo*, II, pp 149 - 150.
- 28 The passage in question occurs in the chapter *Lo fatal*. Azorín: *Obras Selectas*, Madrid, 1969, p 457.
- 29 See B W Wardropper: "Góngora and the "Serranilla"", *MLN*, vol 77, 1962, pp 178 - 181. He writes that the sonnet did indeed "emerge from a personal experience ...; but at the same time it depends on the poet's association of this life experience with a literary tradition". Later in the article, however, scholarly caution deserts Wardropper as he builds upon this beginning: "Góngora, falling sick on a trip that led him across the mountain ranges,

and nursed back to health by a lovely lady ... writes a sonnet
to commemorate his feelings."

Chapter III

SONETOS HEROICOS; SONETOS BURLESCOS Y SATIRICOS

SONETOS HEROICOS; SONETOS BURLESCOS Y SATIRICOS

The sonnets covered by this third Chapter are the largest in number of all the works in this form by Góngora. Accepting the Ciplijauskaitė edition as a starting point, there are over fifty *Sonetos Heroicos* (or *Dedicatorios*) and many more than this number of *Sonetos Burlescos y Satíricos*, if we include the majority of the *Sonetos Atribuidos* which, it is acknowledged, fall almost entirely within the latter categories. I believe, nevertheless, that it is sensible to bring together these two large and multifaceted groups within the confines of a single Chapter, since each heading demonstrates the general nature of Góngora's approach to his subjects; and those subjects are, by and large, the same within the two groups. It is the poet's change of stance towards his material which commands our particular attention here.

Whereas it has been seen that the majority of the *Sonetos Amorosos* date from his early years, while the *Morales* and *Finebres* tend on the whole to be very late works, the two groups to be considered in this Chapter centre on the middle years of approximately 1603 to 1620. In each case there are works as early as the mid-1580s and as late as the poet's very last years, but the majority are composed in that central period of Góngora's life when personal contacts were many, hopes of preferment at the hand of some noble or nobles ran high, and the literary world itself was coming to recognise in the Córdoba poet one of Spain's most controversial artists. In view of this, it is not surprising to find many of the sonnets in these groups directed to

powerful members of the ruling class, or to eminent members of the Church. Many more deal with the virtues or vices of the literary work of contemporaries, with a further small group composed upon the allied arts of painting and sculpture. As all his poetry, and indeed his letters, make plain, Góngora was preoccupied throughout his life by the quality of his and man's surroundings, whether in the city or the country. It is no surprise, therefore, to find sonnets written in praise of the countryside or his native city, while many others pour scorn on the court cities of Madrid and Valladolid. In one group of sonnets the tone is positive, and even flattering; in the other it ranges from irony through personal criticism to violent invective. As will be seen from what follows, the varied quality of Góngora's achievement in these sonnets entirely parallels the range of theme and tone that is found in them. In this way they form the greatest possible contrast to the *Sonetos Amorosos* considered in Chapter II and with the unmistakably personal sonnets of the final years.

Of the fifty-two sonnets appearing under her title of *Sonetos Dedicatorios*, those that have been assigned by Biruté Cipliauskaitė to this group instead of to the original Chacón classification are listed in the Introduction, pp 6 - 7. In one case at least, that of *Generoso esplendor, sino luciente* (37), the transference from the *Amoroso* grouping is quite unjustified, as my analysis below will incidentally make clear. The particularly poignant sonnet addressed to Olivares, in 1623, *En la capilla estoy, y condenado* (50) is considered with the other highly personal sonnets of that year in Chapter IV below, pp 137-154.

The first six *Sonetos Heroicos* appear between the years 1584 and 1589, and range in theme from a homage poem to Góngora's native city of Córdoba through acknowledgements of the work of two contemporary poets to an extolling of the martial exploits of the Marqués de Santa Cruz. The isolated sonnet to Cristóbal de Mora, *Arbol de cuyos ramos fortunados* is composed in 1593, but between 1603 and 1620 there are no less than thirty-eight sonnets (Nos 8 - 45). Within these, as within the entire grouping of *Heroicos*, those dedicated to great figures of state are the overwhelming majority. No less than eight (Nos 11 - 18) are dedicated to the Marqués de Ayamonte, who was both a personal friend of Góngora and from whom he anticipated advancement¹. Other figures that the poet hoped to flatter by dedicating sonnets to them directly include the Conde de Lemus (10, 22, 39), Juan de Acuña, *Presidente* of Castile (29), the Conde de Villamediana, fellow-poet and protector (38, 48, 129 (*Burlesco*) and 148 (*Fúnebre*)), and, of course, Olivares himself, (50, and possibly obliquely in 164). Apart from the remarkable sonnet to Olivares, which is analysed in Chapter IV below, however, these *Heroicos* are not amongst Góngora's most interesting or impressive pieces. Sonnets such as Nos 16, 17 and 18 dedicated to Ayamonte verge on the perfunctory in both technique and general sentiment, and it is only where the subject can be seen to involve the poet fully - such as female beauty in *Clarísimo Marqués, dos veces claro* (11), or the opposition between court and countryside in *Volvió al mar Alción, volvió a las redes* (14) - that the reader too is fully engaged. As in the consideration above of the *Amorosos*, in fact, it is the presence of a variety of different and inter-related themes and tones which gives to certain of the *Sonetos Heroicos* their particular interest and

quality. When such themes are absent, as in a considerable number of the poems in this section, one has the sense that Góngora is merely paying an elegant, elaborate but essentially empty compliment to his noble dedicatee. As we know from his letters, the need to approach the great (or his friends) for favour or support was deeply repugnant to him², and in spite of it being the expected behaviour of a court poet of the day, there can be little doubt that Góngora would have undertaken the task of formal flattery with scant enthusiasm.

One sonnet addressed to an outstanding man of the poet's time is *No en bronce, que caducan, mortal mano* (4). The subject of the poem is Alvaro Bazán, Marqués de Santa Cruz, and as in the majority of such sonnets he is addressed directly by the poet. Whereas certain of the figures to whom Góngora later composed sonnets were comparatively undistinguished in all but rank and social importance, Santa Cruz was an outstanding soldier. He had fought with success against the English and the Turks, had taken part in the occupation of Portugal, and was in charge of the fitting out of the Armada expedition against England in 1588. He died in this year, before the ships set sail³. It is possible that the sonnet was composed in 1588, on his death, or even later, but the tone of the piece and in particular its final lines, suggest rather a poem praising the Marqués while he was still alive. The sonnet is a remarkable drawing-together of themes within the basic format of a eulogy.

The first eight lines speak of the impossibility of adequately recording the extent and importance of the soldier's achievements for his country. Amongst its many famous warriors, Santa Cruz is destined

to occupy a place of supremacy: *que ya entre gloriosos capitanes/eres deidad armada, Marte humano*. He, the mortal man, has transcended what can normally be expected of a warrior to such an extent that he may fittingly occupy a place among the immortals. In specific terms, he stands beside the God of War in a pagan heaven, while paradoxically fighting on behalf of the Christian God on earth: not just a *Marte humano*, but a *católico Sol*. The mortal hand of the sculptor, indeed, will work in vain to preserve his deeds in suitable form. The effort involved will be pointless, says Góngora: *mortal mano ... esculpirá tus hechos ... no en bronce ... sino en vano*. It is noticeable that the conquered banners proudly displayed by Santa Cruz are those of the infidel, the heretic, and a sister Catholic country brought beneath Spanish sovereignty for the greater good. The epithet *católico Sol de los Bazanes* can be seen, by line eight, to have this particular significance.

If the terms of the opening lines seem to suggest a tribute to a dead hero, this impression is rectified by the tercets. The vision of an Atlantic filled with Santa Cruz's sails and a Mediterranean made white by his oars suggests both the universality of his power and also the strong conviction that this power is destined to maintain its sway. This is enhanced by the firm future tenses used or implied by Góngora; *esculpirá/serán/logre/sean*. If the soldier's victories are to be of lasting importance - justifying again his description as a *deidad humana* - then it is right that they should be commemorated in a form that is resistant to the effects of time. Even bronze will perish, and what it records be erased. The remaining lines of the sonnet resolve the question that has been asked in the two quatrains, using

the apparent paradoxes suggested there to achieve an intellectually satisfying resolution of the ideas.

The normal means of preserving the deeds of heroes for posterity would not be appropriate for Santa Cruz, the poet asserts. Rather than to an artist's skill in bronze or paint, Góngora turns to the scenes of his hero's triumphs to immortalize him. The first tercet makes clear that the poet believes that the very oceans upon which Santa Cruz fought will sufficiently preserve his fame, synonymous as they are, in this instance, with eternity:

El un mar de tus velas coronado,
de tus remos el otro encanecido,
tablas serán de cosas tan extrañas.

The seas, however, cannot retain their names and significance without the power of time. The *pincel* of the ages, unlike that of the sculptor or painter, will not tire in the faithful reproduction of what Santa Cruz's life has signified. Because of his valour and also his dedication of it to the Faith, his deeds will become the very soul of time, *alma del tiempo*, hence avoiding that oblivion into which the lives of even the mightiest can sink.

De la inmortalidad el no cansado
pincel las logre, y sean tus hazañas
alma del tiempo, espada del olvido.

The union of the two ideas of *alma* and *espada* is particularly deft here, as they also represent the essential features of the man that the poem has set out to praise and, in *its* own way, immortalize⁴. The effectiveness of these last lines confirms one's impression of *No en bronce*,

que caducan as one of the best of this group of sonnets, in spite of its early date. It is interesting to compare a similar work of thirty-six years later, *A este que admiramos en luciente* (44), which is far less convincing as a whole, with particularly perfunctory final lines.

There are seven *Sonetos Heroicos* dedicated to bishops or archbishops, Nos 3, 20, 21, 25, 28 and 34, together with IV from the *Sonetos Atribuidos*, *Huésped sacro, señor, no peregrino*, which Salcedo Coronel included in his own annotated edition of Góngora on apparently quite reasonable grounds⁵. Although it has been asserted, notably by Jammes and the Fosters, that Góngora's religious poetry is of little consequence, almost all these sonnets are interesting works that reflect both the poet's esteem for many of his dedicatees (together, of course, with a desire to flatter) and his willingness to use reference and image from outside Christian culture for his poetic purposes. Pagan gods are invoked in, for example, *Deste más que la nieve blanco toro* (3), and *Este a Pomona, cuando ya no sea* (21), while the Granadine field of *Consagróse el seráfico Mendoza* (25) is filled with nymphs and fauns. A sonnet that is similarly linked with pagan mythology, though maintaining a deeply Christian attitude throughout, is *Sacro pastor de pueblos* (20), the complexity of which has been well demonstrated by A A Parker⁶.

The fine poem included by Salcedo Coronel is dedicated to Jerónimo Manrique, Bishop of Salamanca. The latter had become bishop-elect of Córdoba in 1593, and Góngora was sent by the Chapter of his native city to render its homage to the new Bishop. During his stay in what

had been his own university city, Góngora became gravely ill, and was carefully tended in the Bishop's palace. References to this illness are made directly in this sonnet, and in *Muerto me lloró el Tormes en su orilla* (102), while the poetic possibilities of an illness/amatory despair equation perhaps encouraged the composition of the *Descaminado, enfermo, peregrino* sonnet analysed above⁷.

In contrast to the majority of the sonnets examined in this study, *Huésped sacro, señor, no peregrino* impresses at once by its directness of utterance and unambiguous personal tone. The poet was clearly grateful for the care that had been shown him, and the poem was no doubt intended as a sincere expression of thanks. Indeed, the fact that it appeared in the somewhat unusual form that Salcedo Coronel describes perhaps suggests that Góngora paid it no further thought once the point of its composition was lost, the Bishop himself dying shortly after the poet's visit. If it was intended as such an expression of gratitude, the death of its dedicatee might well have occasioned the putting to one side of a piece that Góngora had no wish to circulate generally.

The Bishop's palace may have been a goal for many a *peregrino*, Góngora himself included. On this occasion, however, his mission was a formal and religious one, and heaven itself lightened the tedium of his journey to Salamanca:

Huésped sacro, señor, no peregrino,
llegué a vuestro palacio. El cielo sabe
cuánto el deseo hizo más suave
la fatiga del áspero camino.

The second quatrain equates one "arrival" with the arrival of man at the moment of death, so serious was the illness the poet suffered. The combination of the religious significance of the journey, and the poetic parallel of journey to a goal with progress through life towards one's end, causes the poet to consider that the end of life may well lead to eternal death were it not for the mercy of God. If the Christian can expect *piEDAD* from God at the end of his journey, the poet gratefully acknowledges a similar generosity from God's minister on earth, at the end of a more ordinary journey that nevertheless might well have assumed a final significance. A return to health, and even perhaps a clearer awareness of the need to be prepared for the eventual end of all one's journeys, is suggested in the opening phrase of the tercets:

Conseguí la salud por la piadosa
grandeza vuestra.

The poet is saved from death at an early age, and is grateful. He thanks the Bishop in a simply-worded but subtle final sentence. Even though much older, may he too be spared the dangers of illness, to enjoy the beauty of Andalucía:

Libre destos daños
piséis del Betis la ribera umbrosa,

But death to one such as the Bishop, of course, would be neither as untimely nor as fearful as it would have been for the young poet. The opening of the last tercet pays Manrique the graceful compliment of anticipation of his elevation to the rank of Cardinal⁸, but continues

with a vision of this *viejo alegre de la vida santa* happily seeing his final years pass swiftly, secure in the protection of the Holy Spirit⁹. The minimal *piedad* offered Góngora in his hour of need can be confidently seen as an analogue of the mercy that the Bishop may soon expect at the hands of God Himself:

en púrpura teñidos vuestros paños,
concedaos Dios, en senectud dichosa,
en blancas plumas ver volar los años.

Almost all Góngora's sonnets on the cities of Spain are burlesque or satirical, and as such are considered in the second half of this Chapter. The "Court" cities of Madrid and Valladolid, in particular, are treated with scorn and derision, and as well as passing the most unfavourable judgement possible on them as cities, it is the life that they support and represent that particularly arouses Góngora's hostility. In general, those sonnets that represent a positive view of man's environment are those that deliberately place him within an idealized or Arcadian nature, rather than within surroundings of his own devising. There are, however, two exceptions to this, although *Ni lo no sufre márgenes, ni muros* (23) offers only limited appreciation of Madrid, together with some direct criticism of its inhabitants. The other sonnet, to the poet's own city of Córdoba, is totally different to all others. *¡Oh excelso muro, oh torres coronadas!* (2) is perhaps the poet's most well-known short poem, and is an almost indispensable anthology piece. The unusual nature of its central theme and attitudes is barely remarked upon, however, by the critics. It is assumed that the piece is a direct and heartfelt expression of homage by the poet to his native city, and critical attention has been

almost entirely directed to its linguistic patterns and rhetorical devices. Dámaso Alonso has analysed with minute care the system of balances and movements established in the opening eight lines, and their recapitulation in the final tercet¹⁰. R O Jones and Arthur Terry see the most serious of references in these final lines, believing that Góngora is associating himself directly with the sufferings of the exiled Jews in Babylon, unable to return to Jerusalem¹¹. Ciplijauskaité suggests that this is the first sonnet to express deep personal feeling, and one would certainly feel inclined to agree that the sonnet should be taken at face value if one listens to the noble setting of the words made by the composer Manuel de Falla in 1927.

In the face of these views of the sonnet, I should like first to stress again how strange a work this would be among the Góngora sonnets, were its contents and meaning to be entirely as implied by the majority of the critics. Only rarely does the poet leave an impression that is quite without ambiguity, yet this is the apparent effect of the sonnet to Córdoba. I believe the key to its meaning lies in the first tercet, an area of the sonnet which has received scant attention, as far as I am aware. It is assumed that this is a reference to the beauties of Granada, by which the poet is at present surrounded, before he returns to Córdoba. All the critics concur, I believe, with Ciplijauskaité: *Escrito mientras estaba en Granada*¹², and interpret the remainder of the poem in this light. I would contend that the sense of the first tercet does not at all suggest this:

Si entre *aquellas* ruinas y despojos
 que enriquece Genil y Dauro baña
 tu memoria no *fue* alimento mío,

(my italics)

The words I have italicized clearly imply that, rather than being in Granada as far as the fiction of composing the poem is concerned, the poet is now in fact at a distance from the city, both in space and time. He sees the splendours of Granada from afar, in his memory; and this memory itself implies that the experiences took place in the past, not the present. There is a further problem at the start of the final tercet, however, for *merezcán* does imply that the poet has not yet returned to his native city. After *aquellas* and *fue* one might have expected *merecían*. We would seem to have the suggestion, therefore, of a poet suspended between the memory of one city and return to the other.

A further element in the first tercet which has not been remarked upon, but is perhaps more obvious, is the terms by which the comparisons between Granada and Córdoba are made. All but two lines of the sonnet, in fact, are devoted to the glories of Córdoba, listed at length in the octave and recapitulated in their exact order in the final two lines. Opposing these, so to speak, are the two lines devoted to Granada:

... *aquellas* ruinas y despojas
 que enriquece Genil y Dauro baña

The associations that Granada has for the reader generally have perhaps blinded many critics to what Góngora is in fact offering us here on its behalf: *ruinas y despojos*. No more is said of the city

than this, and yet this is placed in the scales opposite the detailed glories of Córdoba, with an implication that the poet feels his allegiance to his native city to be less than secure. There would really appear to be no contest at all, especially since we are informed that Córdoba's nobility and beauty is destined to last for ever: *siempre gloriosa patria mía*; while Granada's glory (unspecified) has already passed away. Again, the little streams of the Dauro and Genil could not for a moment be compared to the Guadalquivir, whose name itself epitomizes its supremacy. The very lack of balance established by Góngora in his comparisons, therefore, makes it difficult to accept the sonnet at face value. The answer to its riddle must lie, of course, within the same words that have been subjected to so much commentary, but bearing in mind the paradox of an apparently "insignificant" Granada will perhaps help towards a new reading of the poem.

Ciplijauskaitė reproduces in her notes, on page 48, Salcedo Coronel's assertion that line four of the sonnet contains an allusion to one of the two rivers of Granada, the Dauro. This would distinguish it both from its twin river, the Genil, and also from the Guadalquivir itself. It is difficult, however, to see what point there would be for Góngora to make one solitary reference to Granada in his octave, (and an oblique one too) when the remaining seven and a half lines are devoted to his native city. As has already been noted, it seems that only two lines of the fourteen turn aside from Córdoba to consider its rival.

The phrase referred to by Salcedo, however, is puzzling in that it

suggests an irony that is apparently otherwise absent from the poem: *arenas nobles, ya que no doradas*. No doubt this *is* a reference to another river, since the poet is at pains two lines further on to underline the natural golden splendour of his city: *dora el día*. But if it is not Granada that is referred to, what other clues are there to the second city's identity? I believe the answer to this, and the key to the poem, lie in Góngora's strange use of the verb *privilegiar* in line six, and what will emerge as a second irony in line eight.

I have already suggested that the strange tenses of the first tercet imply that the poet is neither in Granada nor in Córdoba as he composes this homage to his native city. Of the principal cities of Spain with which Góngora was associated, Madrid and Valladolid only aroused his scorn, as the *Sonetos Satíricos* give eloquent testimony. A city that did not do this, however, and could easily compete in dignity of historical and cultural significance with either Córdoba or Granada was the imperial city of Toledo, until comparatively recently the political and still the religious capital of Spain. Its river, the Tagus, was famed for bearing gold, and its swords (and warriors, such as Garcilaso de la Vega) were universally renowned. However, although Córdoba might envy Toledo its *espadas*, in spite of sons such as the Gran Capitán, it would be more than a match for its rival as far as men of letters were concerned, from Roman times to Góngora's own. If I am right in this suggestion, lines four and eight are delightfully ironic, and line six would signify that even though Toledo might enjoy the *privilegios* associated with the

importance of its imperial and ecclesiastical position, Córdoba for its part would always maintain the privileges of an Andalusian climate, (*cielo* now being seen to contain a double-edged irony, of course). The octave would thus contain direct comparisons between the poet's remembered city of Córdoba and his immediate surroundings in Toledo. There still remains the entire question of Granada, however, and its relationship in the poet's mind with his present experiences in Castile.

Reference was made earlier to the absence of obvious praise for the beauty of Granada: only *rüinas y despojos/que enriquece Genil y Dauro baña*. But rather than this being taken to be all that the poet was aware of on his visit to the city, we should undoubtedly read the lines as being all that he was *willing* to bring to poetic mind again when faced with a comparison between the two cities of Andalusia. In a *romance* of the following year, 1586, Góngora fills in the detail of his real response to Granada in such a way as almost to gloss the sonnet under consideration. The *romance* is *Ilustre Ciudad famosa*, and contains the following lines:

Ciudad (a pesar de el tiempo)
tan populosa y tan grande,
que de tus rüinas solas
se honraran otras ciudades;

The long poem ends as follows:

En tu seno ya me tienes
con un deseo insaciable
de que alimenten mis ojos
tus muchas curiosidades,
dignas de que por gozallas,
no solo se desamparen

las comarcas del Betis,
 más las riberas del Ganges,

Granada is, Góngora asserts:

... al fin la mayor de cuantas
 hoy con el tiempo combaten,
 y que mira en cuanto alumbra
 el rubio amator de Dafne. 13

There can hardly be room for doubt about the intensity of this admiration. By these terms even the beauties of Córdoba, as described by one of her sons, must take second place. I believe we can now draw together the various threads of the poem's structure of allusion and irony, and attempt an overall statement as to its meaning.

In 1585, Góngora leaves his native city of Córdoba to journey first to Granada, and subsequently to Toledo. Chacón is the authority for this, as Robert Jammes acknowledges¹⁴. Aware of the qualities of his native city, the young poet compares and contrasts the grandeur of Toledo with it, finding his loyalty unassailed by his experiences. In his mind, however, there remains the haunting beauty of Granada, rivalling both the other cities in splendour and exercising a fascination for him that draws his mind constantly away from the native city to which he is shortly to return. There is even perhaps an echo in the depths of this poem of the Arab tradition of personifying cities as beautiful women, cities between which the poet - as lover - is hard put to choose. His formal allegiance must be to Córdoba, but he is tempted to offer his heart to the rival. The sonnet thus becomes a serious, though smiling, attempt at revitalising

his affection for his native city by the recital of her beauties, and the denigration - *rūinas y despojos* - of those of her competitor. In this way, the ironic structure of the sonnet and the deep feeling contained within it are just as moving for the reader as was the accepted, but in my view one-dimensional, interpretation of the piece as a formal homage to Córdoba. If my version of it is correct, there can be no place in its overall meaning for the intensely religious seriousness of a possible Psalm reference in the final lines, as has been suggested by R O Jones and Arthur Terry¹⁵.

To conclude the first part of this Chapter I shall examine two more of the *Sonetos Heroicos*, both of them dedicated to members of the aristocracy. In each, however, the central theme of the sonnet is not eulogy but love. It is interesting to note not only that Góngora was able to treat this subject again, and with evident involvement, in his last years, but also that these poems utilize once more the language and style of the *Amoroso* sonnets of the 1580s¹⁶. The two sonnets are *Generoso esplendor, sino luciente* (37) of 1616, and *Undosa tumba da al farol del día* (52) of 1624.

The sonnet to don Luis de Ulloa, an aristocratic young poet of the time, is built upon punning allusions to the fact that he was from Toro, in Castile. The first quatrain makes conventional play with this, as Góngora eulogizes a fellow-poet as one of the glories of Spain:

Generoso esplendor, sino luciente,
no sólo es ya de cuanto el Duero baña
Toro, más del Zodíaco de España,
y gloria vos de su murada frente.

Ulloa, we are to understand, is not only a shining light in his native province of Zamora, but also stands out amongst the chief poets of his time, a bright star - and hope for the future (*sino luciente*) - within the artistic constellations of the age. As he is young and strong the association with *toro* is doubly appropriate, and it is the implications of this identification that Góngora wittily explores in the remainder of the sonnet.

Salcedo Coronel supplies the information that Ulloa was in fact passing through Córdoba in flight from an unhappy love affair, when Góngora composed this poem to him¹⁷. The second quatrain expresses surprise at the young man's retreat from the confrontation with his lady, and proceeds to remind him that the wound he carries cannot be healed with absence:

¿Quién, pues, región os hizo diferente
 pisar amante? Mal la fuga engaña
 mortal saeta, dura en la montaña
 y en las ondas más dura de la fuente:

The central image of the poem is now that of the hunt, in which a wounded deer seeks refuge, first in the hills and then in a stream, from both the pain of the arrow that has pierced it and from the pursuing huntsmen. Góngora invites the young poet to learn from this image: *os lo diga/corcillo atravesado*. He cannot escape the effects of love's shafts by flight from the cause of love. More than this, however, the older man can be seen to be chiding the younger for his lack of courage, as well as lack of understanding. Were he likened in the poem's images to the deer alone, his ignorance could perhaps be understood; in fact, however, he has been transformed from his original

stature as *toro* to a timid and frightened *corcillo*. And Góngora underlines his meaning at the opening of the final tercet: this *corcillo* is fleeing, not from real and dangerous huntsmen, but from a *bella ninfa*.

The pattern of the images already established now works effectively towards the resolution of the sonnet's ideas. Góngora urges the young man to return to the scene of his wounding, courageously to face his danger:

Restituya
sus trofeos el pie a vuestra enemiga.

He can show his quality as a man by returning voluntarily to the hunter, he himself being the *trofeo*. This would be courage enough. But his lineage and name, Góngora urges, should suggest to him actions of greater nobility still. If one may fairly expect a deer to flee from its pursuers, the bull, on the other hand, is a symbol of courage and masculinity even when wounded and harried in the ring. Ulloa's flight has already been shown up as pointless. If he carries the barbs of love in him, he must continue to confront the enemy that is pursuing him, as the bull must face his adversary within the confines of the ring. The *murada frente* of Spain, referred to in the opening quatrain, now implies this very battleground, in addition to the connotations of national geography that it carried at the beginning. Within this arena, then, Góngora the onlooker expects his *toro* to act nobly, even though mortally wounded. An *espíritu gentil*, whether of animal or of man, will come to meet the very thrust that may finally dispatch it. To the last, the bull will follow his

tormentor; Ulloa should do no less:

espíritu gentil, no sólo siga,
mas bese en el arpón la mano suya.

The lance that pierces him will be in the hand that he bends in homage to kiss, on his return. That touch may finally destroy him, but his death will be worthy of his name.

There is another implication in these final lines, however, which Ulloa as a poet would immediately have understood, and which might have been seen by him as a partial alleviation of the scarcely veiled criticism of his cowardice that the sonnet contains. It was in the form of a bull that Zeus pursued and won Europa, and in particular it was his mildness that both calmed her fears and persuaded her to ride on his back. In the ultimately ironic lines of Góngora's poem, therefore, lies the promise that with careful courtesy Ulloa may master the woman who had captivated him, and eventually enjoy the same good fortune as the god.

One of the last sonnets to be composed by Góngora is the final piece in Ciplijauskaitė's group of *Heroicos (Dedicatorios)*, *Undosa tumba da al farol del día* (52). Dating from 1624, or possibly the year before¹⁸, it forms the strongest possible contrast with the intensely sombre sonnets of 1623 and the possibly authentic *satíricos* of the following year. Whereas in all of these it is impossible to mistake the poet's direct personal involvement, the sonnet to be discussed here is as objective an artistic creation as it is possible to imagine. In it Góngora not only brings together aspects of many styles of sonnet

discussed in this study, but relates images and myths from varying cultures with dazzling mastery.

The occasion of the sonnet's composition is well-known. The Prince of Wales and future King Charles I of England had travelled secretly to Spain in March 1623, in order to see and court the young Princess María, in the hope of making her his bride. Five and a half months later he returned to England disappointed. The youthfully romantic nature of the young prince's journey attracted much attention, and although many in Spain were opposed in principle to the idea of the princess marrying a non-Catholic, Góngora, it would appear, was not among them¹⁹. As will be seen, the sonnet refers implicitly to the daring of the prince in coming to Spain uninvited, but the central ideas of the poem concern the beauty of María, the union of crowns through the fire of love, and the possible conversion of Charles (and hence, England itself) to the true faith²⁰.

The sonnet at first impresses upon the reader a series of total opposites. In the first quatrain alone we are offered dusk and dawn, East and West, *tumba* and *cuna*; as well as past, present and future tenses (*dió, da, admirará*). A further pairing of elements, water and sky (*undosa tumba, farol/Sol*) leads to an implied presence of the remaining elements, earth and fire, in the later parts of the sonnet; though one must add that other associations of *tumba* and *sol* in fact suggest the presence of all four within the first quatrain itself. The other opposites implied by the actual subjects of the poem are, of course, England and Spain, Protestant and Catholic, man and woman. And María too is given dual significance; a princess of the House of

Austria, (*esplendor agosto*), she is also associated directly with the goddess of love. As her age approaches its maturity, like the sun moving to its zenith, so that same movement parallels the birth and appearance of Venus from the waves. If María is associated with the sea in this symbolic way, however, Charles is linked with it much more directly, in that it made possible his journey to Spain. With this much already established, Góngora proceeds in the second quatrain to a description of the prince himself and his daring.

The association of Charles with an eagle begins here, and gathers significance as we move through the poem. As well as indicating the ease with which the prince and his companion crossed alien frontiers, the identification with the traditional symbol of kingship is entirely appropriate. At the moment, as Prince of Wales, he is an *ave real*, (the word *águila* does not appear until the last line of the poem, with its expression of hopes for the future). The royal bird that hovers over England and beneath English stars has now come, says Góngora, to the fiercer light of Spain to approach the Sun described in the opening quatrain. The courage of this is suggested in both the reference to the brightness of the Sun (*tanta lumbre*) and in the Icarus parallel that the same line makes apparent:

a tanta lumbre vista y pluma fía

On one exact level, this image reminds us that Charles undertook his journey to see the princess without his father's permission, just as Icarus ignored Daedalus' warning; on another, it is a reference to the eagle's famed power of matching its eyes against the brightness

of the sun without flinching. As John Turner has shown, Icarus is often a symbol of man's pride and foolishness in Golden Age writing²¹. In Charles' case, however, the implication is that though an ordinary man might show such audacity at his peril, a prince (*ave real*) can soar to these heights unpunished. He has been driven, after all, not by greed or ambition, but by love.

In the succeeding tercets, Góngora brings together pagan myth and Christian significance in his treatment of the lovers and their possible future. There is no contradiction here, only harmony:

Bebiendo rayos en tan dulce esfera,
querrá el Amor, querrá el cielo,...

The love that the young people may feel is, after all, to be sanctified, and through its power the love of God also makes itself manifest:

entre castos afectos verdadera
divina luz su ánimo inflamando,

The steps by which Góngora moves his images towards these meanings are fascinating to observe. The "heaven" that María already inhabits in Charles' eyes is that of love, Garcilaso's *tercera rueda*²². She is the star (*luminoso objeto*) that he is drawn to and guided by. If and when the two become one, and she loses one identity to assume another, the *true* light of heaven will illuminate them both. This light subsumes the other in its divine intensity, and just as the original light of beauty inflamed the prince with love for a woman, so this greater light, the poet suggests, may inflame his soul to an

awareness of the true faith and of God:

cuando
 el luminoso objeto sea consorte,
 entre castos afectos verdadera
 divina luz su ánimo inflamando,
 Fénix renazca a Dios, si águila al Norte.

Were this to happen, not only would the *ave real* have become an *águila*, and the English *águila* have wedded the Hapsburg. The *águila* would have attained salvation and immortality through espousal of the Catholic faith, and be revered as the bird of miracle, the *Fénix*. The total opposites of the early part of the poem are now made one in the poet's vision, while the supreme element of fire has become the unifying factor between earth and heaven itself²³.

* * * * *

If Robert Jammes and Biruté Ciplijauskaité, to name an important contemporary critic and an editor of Góngora, find little to admire in either the *Amoroso* or *Heroico* groups of sonnets, the *Burlesco* and *Satírico* groups arouse considerable enthusiasm. As the editor of the recent edition of the sonnets puts it²⁴:

El grupo de los satíricos y burlescos es el más complejo y mucho más vivo ... Su estructura es extremadamente interesante: incorporando la vena popular e incluso un vocabulario más que vulgar, no renuncian a la metáfora, se apoyan en el concepto, y el producto es casi siempre un juego sumamente gracioso, colmado de ambivalencias y de equívocos.

A little further on she adds:

Estos sonetos son los más difíciles de descifrar, puesto que todos surgen en una ocasión particular y aluden a acontecimientos concretos, pero no siempre conocidos. La burla se une frecuentemente a la sátira, y juntas muestran una imagen muy viva de la sociedad que le va amargando la vida al poeta.

It is, of course, possible to find several fine sonnets in the *Burlescos y Satíricos* section of the Ciplijauskaité edition, together with others from the *Atributbles* group. I would, however, dispute that these are representative of the majority. Góngora's skill at employing vulgar speech, colloquial expressions and even lively dialogue within the classical sonnet form is remarkable, and study of such elements is in itself a source of pleasure. To be entirely satisfactory as a work of art, however, the sonnet needs subtleties of structure and meaning to engage our careful attention, and frequently the sonnets of these groups are noticeably lacking in such qualities. The reasons for this are unwittingly suggested by Ciplijauskaité herself in the passages quoted above. The "complexity" of the sonnets referred to, and the consequent "difficulty" for the reader, arises principally from the special circumstances in which the works were created. Many seem to have been composed in order to criticise or mock acquaintances of the poet and his friends, who would of course have known the exact nature of the circumstances or characteristics alluded to in the sonnet. In addition, although many of the poems criticize the society of the poet's time, and particularly the life of the court and its attendant nobility, little is left for the reader to speculate upon once the particular attitude adopted by the poet has been made manifest. Too much is often made to

depend upon vulgar puns which, once clarified in the mind, cease to have a continuous creative function in our subsequent reading. One senses that the poet realized that many such sonnets would have, above all, direct contemporary relevance for his readers, in a way in which the sonnets written within other overall styles did not. The latter are thus fundamentally more serious as works of art, no matter how "serious" the satire or criticism contained within the former group, in that the ideas they place before the reader are not bound by the particular conditions of the poet's life and society so much as by his thoughts and beliefs concerning the nature of love, death, art or experience. It is noticeable that, where commentaries on the *Burlescos y Satíricos* have been made, they are of necessity extremely detailed. But the detail is usually an elucidation of contemporary references in the poem, rather than an analysis of the complex meanings to be found there²⁵.

In common with other poets of the time, Góngora found the pretentiousness of the court particularly amusing. This was true of both court society itself, as in *Grandes, más que elefantes y que abadas* (99) and of those who sought entry to it, such as the young man abandoning the cloth for apparel of a different kind: *Soror don Juan, ¿ayer silicio y jerga?* (XXVII). Both of these sonnets are well structured and combine humour with serious comment. In the many sonnets on the court cities of Valladolid and Madrid, however, Góngora's main aim is to cause in his reader derisive laughter. Some of these are amusing at first reading, but as their effect often depends upon the recognition of puns found in words such as *ojos*, *particular*, *rabo*, *servir* and *vara*,

subsequent readings do not add to our enjoyment. Some of the poems on Valladolid, in particular, begin with strikingly ironic phrases, such as *¿Vos sois Valladolid? Vos sois el valle/de olor?* (107) and *Valladolid, de lágrimas sois valle* (108) but the remaining lines are disappointing. The latter poem, in particular, is occasionally praised for its clever punning on the names of courtiers in the second of the tercets, but apart from the *cortesano sucio* reference in line seven, the final lines have no real structural function in the sonnet.

Pretentiousness of another kind is also mocked in some of Góngora's *Burlesco* and *Satírico* sonnets. The extravagance of constructing an imposing edifice over a river that hardly deserved the name at various times of the year inspired the composition of more than one satirical piece. In the sonnet *Señora doña puente segoviana* (112) of 1609, Góngora builds a series of humorous allusions upon the device of relating the bridge and its dried-up river to a widow and her apparently deceased husband. Addressing the "lady" in the first verse, the poet comments upon the attractiveness of her appearance even though she has just been widowed: *estáis para viuda muy galana*. The widow has clearly been weeping, as the marks of water having run down over her cheeks are still visible. The lady's *ojos* have ceased to pass water and now produce only sand, and the pun on *ojos* here includes by implication the symbolizing of her eyebrows by the arches of the bridge. The river was in any case such a poor "husband" for her, the poet asserts, that she can now be thankfully rid of him: *si es por el río, muy enhorabuena*.

The river has apparently died, in fact, from a constriction of the bladder: *De estangurria murió*. Doctors, however, are still treating the patient, and there is hope that it may yet recover. If it is a paroxysm caused by the heat of summer, then there is the possibility that winter may bring it to life again. The final lines of the sonnet contain further puns of a similar nature to those at the beginning, as well as being a clear indictment of the average skill and knowledge of the doctors of Góngora's time. December will see the doctors prescribe an iron tonic (*orines*) for the patient, to bring it back to health; but this medicine will be no more effective or long-lasting than would be the urine of the animals that these gentlemen ride. The river will flow once more, perhaps, but thinly and fitfully. The *estangurria* will recur the following year, and Doña Puente Segoviana will don her widow's weeds again.

The second quatrain contains a different series of ideas, all with associated puns. The river is important not only to the "widow", the bridge, but also to those who make use of it, the washer-women. Their need for it is of course vital, and without it they are grief-stricken too: *no hay castellana / lavandera que no llore de pena*. The vegetation along the river's banks also goes into mourning, donning the black cloak of elm-trees as a funeral garb, *loba luterana*. The entire sonnet thus depends for its effect upon a sequence of amusing puns, but it must be admitted that those of the second quatrain have no real relationship with the remainder.

In the first half of this Chapter reference was made to several sonnets

praising heroism. It is perhaps to be expected that the subject could also be seen in a very different light, and the idea of the courageous warrior is burlesqued most effectively in - *¡A la Mamora, militares cruces!* (122) and *Llegué, señora tía, a la Mamora* (123), both of 1614. The poems refer to the expedition mounted by Spain against the coast of North Africa in that year, and rather than offer serious *Heroico* sonnets to the enterprise, Góngora explores the humorous possibilities of, on the one hand, "overheard" conversations among the soldiery (122), and on the other a letter home to an "aunt" by a young conscript relating his experiences. In both, the reader's preliminary expectation of heroic generalizations is punctured by the inclusion of absurdly insignificant detail. In 122 the pretensions of the nobility are mocked:

Sed capitanes en latín ahora
los que en romance ha tanto que sois duces.

while in 123 it is the common soldier who comments upon the scene around him:

otro soldado,
gastador vigilante, con su pico
biscocho labra.

Apart from a multitude of Moors in the distance, this Juanico has seen no real action at all. His companions think only of eating, drinking or sleeping, and their appetite for the coming battle is little enough. The entire sense of bathos is underlined by the sonnet's ending, when, like some latterday tourist, the young soldier signs off this rather perfunctory "postcard" to his aunt: *De la Mamora. Hoy miércoles. Juanico.*

As Chapter II has shown, Góngora was inspired by the theme of love throughout his career, and in the major poems, of course, it is one of the subjects to fire his imagination most strikingly. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the concept of love cheapened or mocked should have inspired sonnets of quite savage destructiveness. One of the first of the *Burlescos* deals with the subject of an unfaithful wife, *Por niñear, un picarillo tierno* (98), and many of the *Sonetos Atribuíbles* concern dubious relationships that the poet wished to criticize. In 1617, or possibly before, Góngora wrote two sonnets on a notorious courtesan, Isabel de la Paz. The language of both is strikingly outspoken, and the second contains several allusions to homosexual practices. This is sonnet XXV, *¿Las no piadosas martas ya te pones*. The previous work, *De humildes padres hija, en pobres paños / envuelta* (XXIX) is an apparently ironic warning to all who read it of the dangers of associating with the woman concerned. Paradoxically, however, it paints an initial picture of uncorrupted innocence:

De humildes padres hija, en pobres paños
 envuelta, se crió para criada
 de la más que bellísima Hurtada,
 do aprendió su provecho y nuestros daños.

Only the reference to *nuestros daños* in the final line alters our initial impression that the person we are to read about is as saintly as her name would seem to imply. The second quatrain, however, leaves the reader in no doubt. Her sexual appetites are suggested in the first, singularly unpleasant, line: *De pajes fue orinal, y de picaños*; and the same sense of indulged and degraded sex informs the next stage of the narrative:

un caballero de la verde espada
la puso casa, y la sirvió dos años.²⁶

Isabel de la Paz, the sonnet relates, associated with the highest and lowest in the land, always exploiting her position with them:

Tulló a un Duque, y a cuatro mercadantes
más pobres los dejaron que el Decreto
sus ojos dulces, sus desdenes agros.

The sonnet directly addresses the reader in its last lines, with an apparently clear warning. We have been told a *vida y milagros*, as the opening quatrain had suggested. And just as the shrine of a saint might be the goal of many, so this woman is sought out by the foolish in all classes of society. The poet takes his leave of us, hoping that he has offered his readers some helpful advice:

Sea mi soneto
báculo a ciegos, Norte a navegantes.

At least, the automatic assumption that we make is that this is what Góngora intends to convey. The earlier parts of the poem could surely lead to no other conclusion. In fact, however, the sonnet is appallingly open-ended. The reader will make up his mind about the *vida y milagros* he has just heard about, and will take what action he thinks fit. No doubt the poet intends him to find his way *away* from the woman he has described. But the *báculo* of the sonnet could equally well be used by the *ciegos* to seek her out. All the imagined *navegantes* may now in fact alter course in her direction! The shocked reader has suddenly become aware of the poet regarding him with a sardonic smile, waiting to see in which direction his steps will turn.

At a comparatively early stage in his career, Góngora took up a hostile attitude to the two most outstanding poets amongst his contemporaries, Lope de Vega and Quevedo. In the first case, Lope was to show evidence in his own poetry of the admiration he felt for Góngora's achievement, even if this was hidden at times under a cloak of invective, and after the death of the Cordoban poet in 1627 his rival was to dedicate a moving sonnet to him, *Despierta, ¡oh Betis!, la dormida plata* ²⁷. In the relationship with Quevedo, however, hostility was not only implacable and mutual during Góngora's lifetime. Hatred of his rival was to continue even after the older poet's death, to judge from the attitude Quevedo adopts in his later years ²⁸. Each of the poets referred to wrote poems attacking Góngora on both artistic and personal grounds, and the latter replied in kind. The violent and often scurrilous abuse heaped by one upon another caused much comment at the time, and the poetry that preserves these antipathies still has the power to cause shock and distress to admirers of the three artists concerned. There is little doubt that Quevedo's pieces attacking Góngora win the palm for shrillness of invective, even though the older man gave his worst in return. The numerous sonnets composed by Góngora and Quevedo against one another have often been printed and commented upon, and I do not propose to discuss them further here. However, a comparatively early sonnet by Góngora, attacking Lope de Vega, is of interest in that it contains that variety of theme and tone to which this study frequently draws attention.

Lope had published his long poem *La Dragontea* in 1598. Góngora was already an avowed enemy, and a sonnet of the same year purports to inform the gentleman who had sent him a copy of Lope's poem what he

thinks of it. *Señor, aquel Dragón de inglés veneno* (VII) juxtaposes the dramatic nature of Lope's subject matter with what Góngora states to be his rival's limited skill. We are faced not with a dangerous snake in the grass, but with a poisonous dragon in a meadow! Its thunder, however, is muted, says the critic. In fact, he is not at all afraid to place the "Dragon" inside his coat, as there is no sting here to endanger him. The fertile land of this Vega has produced a poor beast indeed. Changing his mode of attack, Góngora refers to Lope's presence on one of the ships of the Armada. Here too, however, the poetry is seen to fail, just as that great enterprise did: *Soberbias velas alza: mal navega*.

The conclusion to the poem not only criticizes Lope's plainness of style but also, unusually, offers a personal commitment to aspire to greater achievements than a rival. If Lope's style can fittingly be described as a *musa castellana*, with its connotations of monotony, the *andaluz* Góngora will invoke Apollo himself as inspiration for the creation of a world of beauty that will outshine his contemporary's endeavours with ease. There is a possible recognition here of his own failings, (*rompe mis ocios*), but the appeal to one "world" to enable Góngora to record adequately the beauties of another stresses the ultimate importance and seriousness of his self-appointed task. Lope's *potro gallardo* has neither character nor discipline. But its very inadequacy is a spur to Andalusian pride. He may thus appeal to the artist's god for help in his poetic calling:

¡Oh planeta gentil, del mundo Apeles,
rompe mis ocios, porque el mundo vea
que el Betis sabe usar de tus pinceles! 29

This sonnet is a comparatively rare example of a poem in the *Burlesco* and *Satirico* groups that offers the reader more than a single theme and tone. Our attention is often engaged by Góngora's technical skill in bringing together a classic poetic form and apparently unsuitable registers of language, such as colloquial speech. It is also true that we are made clearly aware of the man behind the poet's mask in many of these sonnets. The final impression that is left by a reading of the *Burlesco* and *Satirico* pieces, however, is that by their very nature, ironically implying or stating a specific critical attitude to their subjects, they perforce give a single rather than multiple impression. The reader has little to speculate on or to pursue, once initial difficulties of comprehension are overcome. In spite of Ciplijauskaitė's assertions to the contrary, therefore, I cannot accept that even the best works in these sections are able to stand comparison with the finest of the *Sonetos Amorosos* examined in Chapter II, or with the great *Fúnebres* and *Morales* sonnets of Góngora's later years³⁰.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

- 1 Jammes gives considerable detail about Góngora's relations with Ayamonte. Op cit, pp 276-7.
- 2 See the *Epistolario* in Millé, op cit, pp 893-1069. The letters to Francisco del Corral and Cristóbal de Heredia in the early 1620s deal particularly with the problems of debts, ill-health and hoped-for benefits.
- 3 "El Marqués de Santa Cruz, en vísperas de la salida de la Invencible, tenía pendiente de su valor y fortuna a la nación entera." M Artigas, *Don Luis de Góngora y Argote*, Madrid, 1925, p 260.
- 4 It will be apparent from this analysis that I cannot agree with Ciplijauskaitė that the sonnet may in fact be dedicated to a portrait of Santa Cruz (p 50).
- 5 Ciplijauskaitė reproduces Salcedo Coronel's introduction to the work in detail on p 250.
- 6 A A Parker, "Ambiguity in a Góngora Sonnet", in *Homenaje a J A van Praag*, Amsterdam, 1956, pp 89-96.
- 7 See Chapter II, pp 40-44.
- 8 A similar compliment is expressed in sonnet 28, *¡Oh de alto valor, de virtud rara*. In that case, the Bishop of Pamplona is seen as ascending from the position of Cardinal to that of Pope:

del pellico a la púrpura ascendiente,
subiréis de la mitra a la tiara.
- 9 Alemany y Selfa and Brockhaus see in this image a reference to the supposition that the Bishop had white hair. My suggestion of its significance makes more sense of the assertion that the years in Andalucía will pass serenely for Manrique.
- 10 D Alonso, *Estudios y ensayos gongorinos*, Madrid, 1955, pp 192-200.
- 11 R O Jones, op cit, p 4. Arthur Terry, *Anthology...* II, p 208.
- 12 Op cit, p 48.
- 13 Millé, op cit, pp 80-85.
- 14 Jammes, op cit, p 149.
- 15 The text of the verses referred to is as follows:

Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra
 aliena? Si oblitus fuero tui, Jerusalem,
 oblivioni detur dextera mea.
 Adhaereat lingua mea faucibus meis, si non
 meminero tui: Si non proposuero Jerusalem,
 in principio laetitiae meae.

Psalm 137, vv 4-6

If such an allusion had been present in Góngora's mind, the irony for a poet of the *dextera mea* and *lingua mea* ideas would surely have directed the poem's structure along different lines. In any case, the overwhelming grief expressed by the psalmist is quite foreign to the tone of the sonnet.

- 16 "There is no intrinsic difference between his first and his later manner, his theory and method being much the same in both cases, but there is a steady effort towards intensification, accumulation, and perfection of artifice." E J Gates, *The Metaphors of Luis de Góngora*, Philadelphia, 1933, p 183.
- 17 Salcedo Coronel, op cit, p 141.
- 18 Jammes, op cit, p 326, note 46.
- 19 Ibid, p 326.
- 20 Although his commentary says little about the complexity of the poem, Salcedo Coronel's noble Castilian is worthy of record in its own right:
- "Escribió Don Luis este soneto en ocasión que el Serenísimo Carlos Príncipe de Gales, hoy Rey de Inglaterra y Escocia, vino a España a ver la Católica y Serenísima Infante Doña María... deseando (enamorado, no menos de su virtud, que de su belleza) ilustrar su Corona con perla tan preciosa en legítimo matrimonio." Op cit, p 465.
- 21 J H Turner, *The Myth of Icarus in Spanish Lyrics of the Golden Age*, Tamesis, London, 1978.
- 22 Garcilaso de la Vega, *Egloga I*, ll 394 f. *Poesías castellanas completas*, ed. E L Rivers, Madrid, 1969, p 113.
- 23 The majestic themes of this sonnet and its structural perfection make one despair that as influential a critic as F J Warnke can distinguish poets such as Góngora by the "triviality of their subject matter (and) the implicit disillusionment of their approach to it." *Versions of Baroque*, Yale, 1972, p 37.
- 24 Op cit, pp 27-28.
- 25 See, for example, those in Dámaso Alonso's *Góngora y el Polifemo*.

- 26 Brockhaus sees only a reminder of Amadís de Gaul here, and a possible reference to someone associated with the Inquisition (op cit, pp 173-4). The crudely erotic meaning of the lines is surely quite obvious.
- 27 The relations between Góngora and Lope de Vega have been studied at length by Emilio Orozco Díaz. *Lope y Góngora frente a frente*, Madrid, 1973.
- 28 See, for example, the *Epitafio*, *Este que, en negra tumba, rodeado*, which most critics assume to have been written after Góngora's death. Francisco de Quevedo, *Obras Completas I*, ed. J M Blecua, Barcelona, 1973 (3rd edition), p 1179.
- 29 "... acaba con una insolente, exultante, afirmación de sí mismo, seguro de alcanzar, si sale de su habitual apatía, un triunfo más preclaro." F Lázaro Carreter, *Estilo barroco y personalidad creadora*, Madrid, 1974, p 140.
- 30 Although he discusses the sonnets only briefly in his substantial article, Alberto Sánchez's views of the function of humour in Góngora's poetry tend to substantiate my opinion that there is less to be found in these groups than elsewhere among the sonnets. "Aspectos de lo cómico en la poesía de Góngora", *RFE*, XLIV, 1961, pp 95-138.

Chapter IV

SONETOS FUNEBRES; SONETOS MORALES, SACROS, VARIOS

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The *Sonetos Fúnebres* contain fewer pieces than any other of the sections of the Ciplijauskaitė edition, though *Morales* and *Sacros* are smaller still if considered separately. There are nineteen *Fúnebres* in all, eighteen of them appearing under the same title in Chacón, together with the last of the sonnets on the death of Rodrigo Calderón, *Al tronco descansaba de una encina* (148), which Chacón has under *Varios*. With these nineteen it is sensible to consider the impressive *Urnas plebeyas, túmulos reales* (157) of 1612, which is found under *Morales* in Chacón and *Sacros* in both Vicuña and Salcedo Coronel. Jammes believes it may have been composed as an appendage to the sonnets on the death of Queen Margarita, in 1611 or 1612¹, and whether this is true or not, it is undeniably one of Góngora's finest meditations on death. It is dealt with at the end of the *Fúnebres* section of this chapter.

Of these twenty works, two are from Góngora's earliest years, and may validly be compared with the first *Sonetos Amorosos* (130 and 131). There is then a twenty-year gap, until the two sonnets on the death of the Duquesa de Lerma, of 1603 (132 and 133). The years 1610 to 1616 see at least one *Sonetos Fúnebre* a year, with three in 1611 on the subject of the death of Queen Margarita. Finally, between 1620 and 1622 there are six more sonnets, three of them inspired by the death of the poet's protector and patron, Rodrigo Calderón.

As with the majority of the *Sonetos Morales* and *Sacros* considered in

the second half of this chapter, therefore, the *Sonetos Fúnebres* are almost entirely works dating from after 1610. Although this could be seen as mere chance, the events of both the poet's life and within Spain as a whole during these years lend themselves naturally to sombre treatment. It is no accident that the group of *Sonetos Fúnebres* ending in 1622 with those expressing deep personal feelings at the death of his patron should be followed by the fine series of 1623 which courageously face the problems of personal survival in an indifferent society. That there is a natural development from the later *Sonetos Fúnebres* to the chief *Sonetos Morales* will be clearly shown in the following pages.

The funeral sonnet, by its very nature, was at times the expected means whereby the court poet of any standing or aspiration would pay tribute to the passing of great figures of state, whether these were a Spanish King or Queen, a powerful noble, or a foreign monarch. In certain cases it was clearly expected that the poets resident at the court would contribute to a collection of such occasional pieces, and there is little doubt that several of Góngora's *Sonetos Fúnebres* were composed in this way. It is interesting to note, however, that the poet's degree of personal involvement in or commitment to a given subject could by no means always be predicted. The sonnet on the death of King Philip III (144) is notably perfunctory, whereas that on the death of the French King Henry IV - almost certainly produced for an 'academy'² - is one of Góngora's most powerful compositions in this form.(134)

Funeral verse does not figure largely in Góngora's overall poetic output; nowhere near as much as in Quevedo's, for example. Apart from

the sonnets there exist only one *Octava* (Millé 397) on the death of Queen Margarita; three *Canciones* (M 400, 405, 410) on the Conde de Lemus, Garcilaso de la Vega, and King Philip III; one *Silva* (M 404) on the Duque de Medina Sidonia; three *Décimas* (M 151, 156, 189) on Queen Margarita (two) and Rodrigo Calderón; one *Madrigal* (M 403) on the deaths of the three daughters of the Duque de Feria; and one *Romance* (M 40) on Doña Luisa de Cardona. Many of these pieces are written upon the same subjects as those of the *Sonetos Fúnebres*, and it is noticeable that all but the last of these date from after 1610.

Within the general conventions of language appropriate to the subject of death, the *Sonetos Fúnebres* show great variety of tone and style. The two earliest share the conventions of the language of the Petrarchan love sonnets which primarily occupied the poet at this period, and both are strongly reminiscent of Garcilaso de la Vega, especially no. 131. The restrained and delicate tone adopted here reappears in the 1610 sonnet on the death of Doña Guiomar de Sã (135) and again, eleven years later, in the sonnet on the death of another, this time unknown, Portuguese lady (147). The reappearance of certain styles from the early love poems in those written as late as the 1620s, as discussed in Chapter II, is paralleled in these funeral sonnets. The influence of the style of Garcilaso de la Vega is again especially noticeable in 141, the 1615 sonnet on the deaths of the three daughters of the Duque de Feria, and the following lines show clearly that to see Góngora "outgrowing" the language of Garcilaso and the pastoral tradition by 1600 is quite false:

Al culto padre no con voz piadosa,
 mas con gemido alterno y dulce lloro,
 armoniosas lágrimas al coro
 de las aves oyó la selva umbrosa.

The deliberate use of phrases taken from Garcilaso - in this case, from the *Egloga I* - underlines the fact that Góngora felt this type of language entirely suitable to such a subject at any stage of his career. In the sonnets mentioned so far, girls or minor ladies of the court are the subjects. The two pieces on the death of the Duquesa de Lerma (132 and 133) and the three on Queen Margarita (136-138) are notable, however, for an altogether different approach. As befitted important ladies of state, the sonnets are on a far grander scale and contain themes other than the purely elegiac. Also written in powerfully rhetorical language are the sonnets on El Greco and King Henry IV of France, the latter in particular showing unusual personal involvement on the part of the poet. This particular characteristic is also notable in the poem to Antonio de las Infantas (139) on the death of his betrothed, and also, of course, in the three sonnets on the death of Rodrigo Calderón (145, 146 and 148). The powerful 1612 sonnet *Urnas plebeyas, tímulo reales*, referred to at the beginning of this Chapter, may reasonably be seen as the very finest of the poet's funeral sonnets in noble style, and the natural link between these and the *Sonetos Morales* of his last years.

Of the twenty sonnets to be considered in this section, eleven were inspired by the deaths of women. Five of these are dedicated to the Duquesa de Lerma and Queen Margarita, the remaining seven to persons of less significance politically. It is in these seven sonnets, in

particular, that the elegiac theme is linked with a lament for the passing of beauty, especially the beauty of youth:

... las demás ninfas doloridas
se muestran, de su tierno fin sentidas
130 (1582)

llora el Betis, no lejos de su fuente,
en poca tierra ya mucha hermosura:
tiernos rayos en una piedra dura
de un sol antes caduco que luciente.
139 (1613)

prendas sin pluma a ruiseñor canoro
degolló mudas sierpe venenosa.
141 (1615)

The fact that none of these poems was written for a great lady of state, and that all share a unity of tone and secondary theme, gives a clear indication of how closely Góngora inter-identified the phenomena of femininity, youthfulness and beauty, and the menacing of all three by untimely death. Góngora's use of Petrarchan pastoral conventions and stylised linguistic forms have led to his being accused of cold impersonality in his love poetry, as was seen above in Chapter II, and it is to be expected that similar criticism might be voiced of certain of these poems. As was observed earlier, however, the appearance of stylistic traits in later sonnets when the subject matter is similar to that treated in earlier years underlines the fact that in areas where the poet felt idealization to be entirely legitimate - human love, female beauty, the natural world, early death - highly "artificial" language was in fact the perfect form of expression. The poet's first concern was with the achievement of a satisfactory and accomplished work of art, and this might or might

not entail his own personal involvement. In either case the appropriate elegiac tone could be made effective and memorable, as the following contrasted examples make clear:

Al culto padre no con voz piadosa,
mas con gemido alterno y dulce lloro,
armoniosas lágrimas al coro
de las aves oyó la selva umbrosa.

(141)

¡Cuán triste sobrar el púrpuro se mira
casta Venus llorar su cuarta gracia,
si lágrimas las perlas son que vierte!

¡Oh Antonio, oh tú del músico de Tracia
prudente imitador! Tu dulce lira
sus privilegios rompa hoy a la muerte.

(139)

In the sonnets on the death of personages greater than these, however, both the personal note and the idealization of subject and language are for the most part missing. Instead, the poems use more obvious rhetorical devices, as befits the subjects, and frequently we are made aware of a multiplicity of theme within the sonnet's general structure. This feature in particular makes comparison between works composed upon the same subject of special interest.

SONNETS 132 AND 133

The two poems on the death of the Duquesa de Lerma are strongly contrasted. In the first, the poet himself narrates and comments upon the imagined scene as the tomb is closed over the body. The second, a total contrast, is expressed as though from the mouth of the Duquesa herself, commenting upon the significance of her death and expressing her hope of heaven. Jammes has noted that the

sonnets were almost certainly written as part of the funeral 'pompas' organised in 1603 upon the Duquesa's death - the year, incidentally, of Góngora's first journey to the court at Valladolid - and numerous other poets composed pieces for the occasion³.

No. 131 begins with a fine rhetorical flourish, contrasted antitheses, and an invitation to the reader, as onlooker, to understand the significance of the scene before him:

¡Ayer deidad humana, hoy poca tierra;
aras ayer, hoy tûmulo, oh mortales!

The simple contrast of *ayer* and *hoy* is seen to signify the difference between *deidad humana* and *poca tierra*, between *aras* and *tûmulo*. The irony of the ambiguous phrase *deidad humana* is explained immediately: the position and power enjoyed by the Duquesa made her virtually an object of adoration, so that those who sought her favour and protection approached her as though to an altar. This symbolic *deidad*, however, was merely illusion, as the present moment testifies. The Duquesa was as mortal as all others; the place she occupied is now a bier, and her mock-divinity has turned to dust. The plumes of the mighty, like the feathers of even the royal eagle, are eventually to become of no significance at all:

Plumas, aunque de águilas reales,
plumas son; quien lo ignora, mucho yerra.

The emphasis placed upon the concept of mortality in the first quatrain is maintained throughout the sonnet. In line seven there are two references to it, the corruption of the body in death is implied in the eighth line and stated clearly in the tenth, and the whole

sonnet ends with two significant references to *tierra*. As well as reminding the reader of both his origins and his inevitable end, the emphasis on *tierra* at the sonnet's close is in ironic contrast to the implied power of an *águila real* to soar above it, if only for a time. There is, moreover, a third implication in the reference to *tierra*. The fragile *bajel* of human life will founder in the depths of the ocean, if it does not attain the security of the shore, and yet the earth itself can be no protection from eventual destruction, as galleon and skiff, duchess and poet, must all return to it in death.

The poet has clearly established in the first quatrain and final tercet what must be in reality a commonplace for any intelligent reader, namely, that even the greatest of human beings are subject to Nature's laws and will eventually come to dust. Even though we may swiftly enclose the body in a tomb, our minds should remain aware of what is in fact taking place within its confines:

la razón abra lo que el mármol cierra.

In the Duquesa's case, as of the mighty in general, the acceptance that they were somehow other than merely human during their lives (*deidad humana*) is ironically paralleled after death by the temporary preservation of their bodies by artificial means. This is the point of Góngora's reference to *aromas orientales* in the second quatrain. As he indicates, had spices not been applied to the body of the Duquesa, we would be immediately aware of the mortality of this mortal:

a no estar entre aromas orientales,
mortales señas dieran de mortales;

It has already been seen that the idea of the Duquesa as a *deidad* cannot have any serious foundation in normal terms. One area of the sonnet that has not yet been considered, however, is the first tercet, and here alternative ways of considering death are placed before the reader. The Duquesa in life was to other mortals as an *águila real*. This in itself, of course, says nothing concerning her fate beyond death, except in so far as fame might preserve the memory of her. But in the first tercet change from life to death is given a quite different significance by the introduction of the image of the Phoenix. From the ashes of this mythical bird's funeral pyre there rose, according to Herodotus and Pliny, a new young phoenix. This miraculous rebirth cannot be paralleled in human terms, except - for the Christian - by the grace of God. If human, like all other life, is destined to perish in dust, God's mercy nevertheless promises an eventual resurrection to eternal life for those whose faith and conduct in their lives have been based upon a true awareness of both their own nature and of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. Elsewhere in the sonnets, Góngora makes these connotations of the Phoenix symbol entirely clear, as in 138 below. In the sonnet under discussion, the apparently pessimistic nature of the surrounding lines makes the positive Christian significance of the first tercet less obvious. But just as the overwhelming human significance of death can darken the mind's remembrance of God's promise, so here Góngora draws back from an ultimately negative *memento mori* to offer the wise reader a symbol of the way to eternal

life. The Duquesa's *sepulcro* has become the Phoenix's funeral pyre, and from it there can spring a soul new-born to eternal life. This is of significance not only to her, however, but also to the poet and his reader. The deaths of *all* men should be a reminder to others of both the nature of life itself and the possibilities that exist for the soul thereafter. With not only knowledge, but also *self-knowledge*, the wise man will draw the necessary lessons from these experiences.

I cannot agree entirely with Robert Jammes that this sonnet clearly is "une méditation, très chrétienne de ton..."⁴, in that it contains so obvious a struggle between faith and innate pessimism. It is also strange that he should find its maturity rather disconcerting. This work is not alone in its juxtaposition of attitudes that are hard to reconcile, as the analyses of other sonnets will show. In many ways it can be said to anticipate clearly the great sonnets of 1623.

The second sonnet, *Lilio siempre real, nasci en Medina* (133)

"correspond mieux au tempérament de l'auteur", according to Jammes, although this does not apparently make it for him particularly praiseworthy. In fact it is a less interesting piece than the first, being both more conventional in ideas and containing several slightly forced references. This sonnet is concerned with a more direct expression of the Christian ideas seen in the depths of 132. The Duquesa's body, seen in terms of a flower, is enclosed within the tomb, while her soul - the flower's fragrance - wafts heavenwards:

Lo caduco esta urna peregrina,
oh peregrino, con majestad sella;
lo fragante, entre una y otra estrella
vista no fabulosa determina.

In spite of incidental felicities of phrase, however, the weak opening lines and details such as the forced play on *peregrino* give the sonnet as a whole a lack of conviction and an air of conventionality which are in marked contrast to 132. That the 'incorruptibility' of the Duquesa's body referred to in the poem was known to be the exact reversal of the truth lends weight to the impression that it is this that is the really perfunctory composition of the two. 132, *pace* Jammes, is far more likely to have been the "fruit d'une initiative personnelle", and one may suspect that 133 may have been requested by an 'academy' not a little disconcerted by the uncompromising honesty of Góngora's original submission.

SONNETS 136, 137 and 138

These three sonnets on the death of Philip III's Queen Margarita were most probably written in 1611, the year of her death, although Chacón dates them one year later. An *Octava* and two *Décimas* were also composed upon the same event, as were two burlesque sonnets (118 and 119). Even more than the poems on the Duquesa de Lerma's death, and like the poem on El Greco, the three sonnets to Margarita take as principal subject the monument raised by Córdoba to honour the Queen. The particular significance that the funeral urn has for the observant and thoughtful man - even more than the death of the body itself - can be seen in the superb opening lines of 138:

Máquina funeral, que desta vida
nos decís la mudanza, estando queda;

As R O Jones points out⁵, the order of composition of these three

sonnets cannot be determined, though in contrast to the Duquesa de Lerma poems, there is value in comparing the contents of each with care. The contemplation of the 'túmulo' is the basic starting-point for each, and it becomes in turn symbols of the shell in which Margarita (the pearl) was born, the ship of state in full sail which she controlled, a magnificent but ultimately hopeless expression of man's grandeur, a lighthouse to those at sea, and a spire looking heavenwards to the source of the Queen's salvation.

That the usual order of printing is in fact the most sensible can be seen from the almost introductory nature of the first quatrain of 136:

A la que España toda humilde estrado
y su horizonte fue dosel apenas,
el Betis esta urna en sus arenas
majestuosamente ha levantado.

The magnificence of the Queen's position in life, with Spain as her throne and the world her canopy, is paralleled in death by the splendour of the catafalque. As with all monarchs, the demands of her position and its possible dangers were a constant preoccupation, and in that dangerous sea many others had come to grief:

¡Oh peligroso, oh lisonjero estado,
golfo de escollos, playa de sirenas!
Trofeos son del agua mil entenas,
que aun rompidas no sé si han recordado.

By implication, Góngora admits the Queen to have been successful in this aspect of her life. Now, dead before her time, she awaits the last judgement, her life and death a reminder again to the wise of the inevitable end of all things, and of the need to prepare oneself

well through life *for* one's death. There is a fine irony in the stress laid by the poet on the majesty of the Queen's position in life. From her birth as a princess of the House of Bavaria, and subsequently throughout her short reign as Queen, she had been greeted by trumpets. Now, in death, she awaits the most significant of all, that of the Last Judgement.

Sonnet 137, criticized by Jones as "one of Góngora's most impenetrable poems", is an extremely fine composition in which the poet achieves the development and interaction of themes lacking in 136. The rich decorations on the *túmulo* are vividly described, as is its innate grandeur, surrounded by blazing candles and pointing towards heaven, symbolically, with the soul of the dead Queen, yet as with all human striving, they disappear on the wind:

Pompa eres de dolor, seña no vana
de nuestra vanidad. Dígallo el viento
que ya de aromas, ya de luces, tanto

humo te debe.

If it is seen as an expression of human grandeur, therefore, the catafalque is but vanity, as were the worldly glories of the Queen herself. Many, the sonnet implies, will see only the *pavón* of ambition and ostentation here. But those with clearer vision, while noting that the majesty of the *túmulo* is a fitting seal for a *perla católica*, will nevertheless be aware that its reaching up to the stars is done in grief, not triumph, and that far from being empty ostentation, it is indeed a symbol of the ultimate end of even the greatest on earth. A beautifully succinct line expresses this perfectly:

Pompa eres *de dolor*, seña *no vana*
de nuestra vanidad.

(my italics)

Earlier in the sonnet, the *túmulo* is described in the following terms:

... obscura el vuelo, y con razón doliente,
de la perla católica que sellas
a besar te levantas las estrellas,
melancólica aguja, si luciente.

The true destiny of the construction is unclear, its majesty is clouded by melancholy and by grief-laden reason; its rise towards the stars is questioning, not triumphant. And the sense of *desengaño* which all must feel who contemplate it causes the proud peacock eyes of ambition to dissolve in tears of wisdom and mourning:

¡Ay, ambición humana,
prudente pavón hoy con ojos ciento,
si al desengaño se los das, y al llanto!

As R O Jones has shown⁶, the third sonnet of the series is extremely beautiful, its themes closely related, the organisation of its metaphors impeccable. The catafalque is a lesson to all who contemplate it, in spite of its magnificence, in the essential nature of human life - mutability:

Máquina funeral, que desta vida
nos decís la mudanza, estando queda;

In addition to this, however, it is the pyre from which the phoenix of Margarita's soul will rise to heaven. Here at last the latent theme of salvation is made clear, after the tentative hints in the

earlier sonnets. The contrast between the clear significance of the phoenix symbol here and its function in the first Duquesa de Lerma sonnet is very marked:

pira, no de aromática arboleda,
si a más gloriosa Fénix construida;

References first seen in the other two sonnets reappear here in definitive form, in particular those of the ship upon the sea (136) and the burning candles (137). The stars Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda and Jupiter, were famed as guides to mariners, bringing them safe home. But in the journey from life to death, and towards eternal life again, a guide is needed more certain than they. The only possible guide for Margarita, *la perla católica*, is that *otra mejor Leda*, the Virgin Mary. The candle flames raised to her illumine both earth and heaven, stilling Fortune's wheel and her angry sea of the perils that beset human life, and so guiding the Christian soul towards heaven. Even so, within the circle of light thus raised lies the central fact of Margarita's bodily death:

obscura concha de una Margarita

Again, Góngora uses an image first appearing in 136, but this time its implications are fully integrated with the other themes of the sonnet. Within the darkness of her shell, or tomb, the pearl lies like the phoenix awaiting resurrection through the certainty of its manifest virtues - the Christian love and faith it demonstrated in life:

... rubí en caridad, en fe diamante,

If these two priceless virtues are present, they also imply the vital existence of the third, that of hope which, like the *farol*, illumines man's life and thinking. As the lighthouse both warns of perils and lights the way into harbour, so can hope, united with love and faith, be the means by which human life is governed and directed. The perils of the rocks and the darkness are still there (*entre escollos naufragante*) and the brilliance of Margarita's example can be lost if reason does not comprehend its significance. *Nos dectis* - onlookers, or reader, are invited directly by the poet to share in the contemplation of the *máquina funeral*, but also to relate the thoughts caused thereby to their own eventual end⁷.

SONNETS 145, 146, 148

The only other occasion on which Góngora dedicated three sonnets to the same subject was the death of his protector and patron, Rodrigo Calderón, in 1621. As in the sonnets already studied, these make a fascinating comparison, particularly in the variety of theme they contain. The first, 145, depicts Calderón's ambition and his subsequent fall from grace, while the last lines are a recognition of how easily a like fate might befall others. 146 is a total contrast, depicting the glory of Calderón's posthumous fame, a fame gained entirely by the valorous and Christian nature of his death⁸. 148, written in the following year of 1622, summarizes the poet's sense of loss in the death of his friends and bewilderment at the total change in his fortunes, and ends, like 145, with a vision of a future beset by dangers and disappointments. This last poem in particular paves the way for the series of highly personal sonnets inspired by

his poverty-stricken and almost friendless state in the following years.

Góngora's reaction to his patron's fall from power and subsequent death can be seen clearly in the correspondence of these years⁹. There is no doubt that he was deeply affected personally, as well as by the loss of a valuable protector, from whom much might have been expected. The sonnets themselves are openly personal in tone, though in 145 this is only made explicit in the last lines. Held in reserve in this way, the expression of direct personal involvement is extremely effective, the art of the poem lying partly in the device of suggesting that emotion has so overcome his reserve that it breaks through the confines of the formal expression of regret normally found in the funeral sonnet:

Risueño con él, tanto como falso,
el tiempo, cuatro lustros en la risa,
el cuchillo quizá envainaba agudo,

Del sitio después al cadahalso
precipitado, ¡oh cuánto nos avisa!
¡oh cuánta trompa es su ejemplo mudo!

148, covering essentially the same ground of Calderón's fall and execution within the first quatrain, continues with moving references to the death of the Conde de Villamediana (second quatrain) and that of the Conde de Lemus (first tercet). As Dámaso Alonso has pointed out, the poet's three friends are each symbolized by a particular tree: Calderón, the oak, sacred to Jupiter; Villamediana, the laurel, sacred to Apollo, and indicating his parallel calling as a poet; and the Conde de Lemus, the olive, sacred to Minerva, goddess of wisdom.

In contrast to 145, however, there is a moving personal tone throughout this sonnet, from the simplicity of the opening picture of the poet resting against a tree, to the fearful anticipation of what fate may also be preparing for him, expressed without reserve in the final lines:

¿A qué más desengaños me reserva,
a qué escarmientos me vincula el hado?

The dread of so uncertain a future is conveyed the more powerfully in that the three trees beneath which he had sheltered had appeared to have the strength of the very gods to whom they were sacred. If *these* could fall so easily, what protection could a mere poet hope for?

Sonnet 146 stands rather apart from the other two and has certain points in common with the last of the Queen Margarita sonnets, not least in its strong Christian tone. A fallen hero, Calderón is visualized upon a symbolic pyre built of fragrant wood, like that of the phoenix. No stone or tomb was in fact raised to the Marqués, but Góngora is here not describing an actual scene as he did for the Queen's funeral; the pyre referred to is built within the poet's own imagination. The life enjoyed by Calderón had been the subject of great attention, admiration and envy, and the bird most appropriate to symbolise this is the peacock. As in the second of the Queen Margarita sonnets, the bird's tail-feathers are full of the 'eyes' of envy and ambition. But from the death of this creature, symbol of the disgraced and ruined noble, there rises through a courageous and Christian death the phoenix of a soul which merits salvation both

in God's eyes and in the memory of men.

Góngora uses the same transformation of the symbol of eyes as in 137; the eyes of envy have now become filled with genuine tears at the nobility of the Marqués's death. The poet, as one of the onlookers at this tragedy, rather than as a friend personally involved, expresses what amounts to a general prayer for Calderón's soul:

Muere en quietud dichosa, y consolada
a la región asciende esclarecida...

The red flames of the phoenix's funeral pyre are paralleled in the blood of the executed noble, and with this release from an inglorious present, the memory of his essential character and dignity can return, enhanced by the Christian fortitude shown in death:

Purificó el cuchillo, en vez de llama
tu ser primero, y gloriosamente
de su vertida sangre renacido,

Reborn to fame through the shedding of his own blood, he becomes in a certain sense his own salvation, though of course also dependent on the blood of Christ for his eternal rest. The poet shows that in spite of the fame of his original high birth and ambitious life, it is the nature of his death which will ensure that his name lives for ever, both in earthly and in heavenly terms:

alas vistiendo, no de vulgar fama,
de cristiano valor sí, de fe ardiente,
más deberá a su tumba que a su nido.

If the sonnet as a whole has deliberately contrasted Calderón's life with his nobler death, the last line places everything in more lasting

perspective. In human terms this death may be seen as atonement for the previous life, but the image of the phoenix and its attendant Christian significance suggest that both life and death will in this case be subsumed in a resurrection to God and to eternal Fame¹⁰.

Góngora's sonnet on the death of the painter El Greco has been commented upon on several occasions, notably in the recent book on the poet by D W and V R Foster. Here it is subject to elaborate analysis, although much of the commentary consists of supposing linguistic problems to be more ambiguous than they really are, and offering alternative readings to explain these subtleties. There is also a complete misunderstanding of the phrase *Yace el Griego* at the opening of the tercets. The Fosters brush this aside as some sort of aberration, but an awareness of its function in the poem is fundamental to its overall meaning¹¹.

Written in the year of the painter's death, 1614, the sonnet (140) is a grave and moving tribute to his talent. Whereas Góngora was frequently scornful of the art of contemporary and often rival poets, the skills of the painter apparently touched a particularly sensitive nerve, to judge both from this sonnet and from the fine work composed a few years later to an unknown Flemish artist for whom the poet was sitting (45). In this latter sonnet, the comparison of the brevity of life with the possibly 'eternal' life promised by the preservation of his image on the canvas is particularly moving. Even though such ideas are seriously considered, however, the eventual mood that the poem leaves us with is one of deep pessimism¹²:

Los siglos que en sus hojas cuenta un roble,
 árbol los cuenta sordo, tronco ciego;
 quien más ve, quien más oye, menos dura.

In the sonnet of 1614 the poet meditates similarly on the relationship between art and life, though here it is El Greco's life and fame that encourage his speculation. The work begins with the poet graciously indicating the tomb and its inscription to a passing *peregrino*. By the end of the octave, in fact, this traveller is urged on his way again: *Venérale, y prosigue tu camino*. The respect due to the outstanding artist is expressed with fitting rhetoric, wood and canvas having taken the very breath of life from his hands. This commentary for the benefit of the traveller, however, is soon revealed as something more than hyperbole. Left alone, the poet muses on what El Greco, and by implication any artist, leaves behind at their death. In this special case, Góngora believes, the relationship between our perceptions of the natural world and the artist's recreation of it may have been altered fundamentally as a result of El Greco's achievement. *Heredó Naturaleza arte*: man's awareness of Nature is now conditioned by the understanding of it inherent in the painter's art; *y el Arte, estudio*: from this moment on, artists will begin from those discoveries made by the Greek and embodied in his work; thus both Life and Art, for those who, like Góngora, are concerned with such matters, must henceforth appear in altered forms. All colours are deepened and brightened in El Greco's paints, all effects are enhanced. These ideas now begin to throw new meaning back over the apparently conventional praise in the opening eight lines.

If Góngora's later observations are to be taken seriously, we are in the presence of something almost miraculous when we become aware of El Greco's work: *espíritu a leño, vida a lino* indeed. The normal limits upon man's understanding having been broken, our debt to the artist that makes this possible is immense. We shall not only venerate his tomb, the place to which his earthly remains are consigned. More appropriately still, the fame we accord him after death will exactly parallel that miracle of the gift of life that he brought to inanimate things and to our own unilluminated eyes¹³.

The title of the sonnet is *Inscripción para el sepulcro de Dominico Greco*, which suggests the formal lettering upon a tomb. But in the body of the poem, Góngora alters the painter's name - as he was known in Spain - to its literal and correct but essentially ordinary significance in Castilian, *el griego*. The poem's meaning is summarized in this detail. The painter is dead, his life on earth at an end, and the *man* (*el griego*) has now ceased to exist. But the life of the painter, as far as art and fame are concerned, has only just begun. This name, *El Greco*, will not be confined here together with his mortal remains, but will assume the same immortality that he himself bestowed upon observed and recreated Nature.

In 1610 the assassination of the French King Henry IV caused great comment in Spain, partly because of the act in itself and also because of the esteem in which the King was generally held. A number of Spanish poets were inspired to compose verses on the occasion, amongst them Lope de Vega and Quevedo. Góngora's sonnet

is one of the finest of these (134).

The King's fame as warrior and victor is amply celebrated in the two quatrains:

el que rompió escuadrones y dio al llano
 más sangre que agua Orión humedecido:
 glorioso francés esclarecido,
 conducidor de ejércitos...

These lines convey a sense of invincibility against which the narration of the assassin's action stands out all the more dramatically. The King was struck down, not by one of the nobles that surrounded him, but by a commoner who nevertheless broke easily through the royal guards. The first tercet stresses how simply such a crime can be committed, no matter how great the precautions against it may be:

Una temeridad astas desprecia,
 una traición cuidados mil engaña,
 que muros rompe en un caballo Grecia.

One of the principal themes of the sonnet, therefore, is the illusory nature of man's belief that he can keep himself from harm. The King is defended by a number of guards, both real and metaphorical. Both his years and his sacred kingship should be revered; and around him stand the soldiers with weapons to protect him.

These defences are interesting to examine in more detail. The King's person should be inviolable because of the nature of his office. In the case of France this is symbolized in the royal coat of arms, lilies upon a blue ground. The normal whiteness of lilies is here

replaced by gold, by virtue of association with the golden crown worn by the King. Upon his white hair, therefore, is the symbol of kingship bearing the lilies of France, and surrounding him are the royal guard, three dukes of the kingdom, and a further guard of soldiers. The traditional religious and mystical associations of the number three add to the sense in which these defences surrounding the King seem to be impossible to breach. But even as all this illustrates the power by which the King is defended, Góngora's first tercet reiterates three times how easily all human defences can be pierced. It is noticeable that the comment upon all defences being able to be overcome is couched in quite impersonal terms, *temeridad* and *traición* preceding that most famous example of treachery in history, the Greek conquest of Troy by means of the wooden horse. The lessons of history and of our own experience of life, Góngora implies, teach the same lesson: one piece of cunning, one single act of treachery, one wooden horse, one knife - any of these can be sufficient to bring the mightiest down.

If up to this point in the poem its tone has been comparatively objective, though formally regretful, the final tercet shows Góngora drawing important conclusions for his own country from what has taken place in France. No matter how powerful Spain may remain or become, (the reference *Belona de dos mundos* implies a grandeur far exceeding even Henry's achievements), she will always be at risk, both from without and within. The poet wishes Spain to defend herself and her princes with the utmost care, remaining strong enough to cause fear in any potential enemy, whether another nation or an individual criminal. The penultimate line, *¡oh España... fiel te precia*, can be

seen as an imperative of the greatest urgency, while the last, *armada tema la nación extraña*¹⁴, addresses a direct warning to France. If Spain can maintain faith in her ideals, foreign nations may well fear her. In itself, even so, however, *fidelidad* will not be enough; it is always necessary to maintain an armed vigil. It will perhaps be in such a union of principle and warlike strength that a tragedy such as that which has befallen France can be avoided, even though the nature of human life must mean that kings and nations will remain at risk from chance and desperate men.

As in the last two sonnets to be examined in this Chapter, 162 and 163, Góngora creates an implied dramatic dialogue as the structural basis for the expression of his ideas in *Urnas plebeyas, tñmulos reales* (157). The device has the particular function of suggesting that part of his rational self remains unwilling to face an unpleasant truth or truths. In 162 and 163 it is the fleeting nature of time and its implications for the human soul as it approaches old age. In 157, however, the effort that must be made is for the mind to ponder seriously the terrors of death and hell. Twice in the poem Góngora addresses his thoughts as *memorias mías*, as though to stress the fact that it is from the experiences of life and subsequent reflection upon them that the knowledge must come to cope with his visions of hell and their implications.

The contemplation of both the funeral urns of the mighty and the humblest graves of the poor yield the same thought: the dance of death has passed this way, but no distinction has been made:

Urnas plebeyas, túmulos reales
 penetrad sin temor, memorias mías,
 por donde ya el verdugo de los días
 con igual pie dio pasos desiguales.

Penetrad here suggests the loathing with which the human mind approaches the realities of death, and once within the tomb or grave in his imagination, the poet forces himself to reach out and touch the ashes with his hands:

Revolved tantas señas de mortales,
 desnudos huesos y cenizas frías,

In the opening quatrains it is the death and corruption of the body that has been faced. Unpleasant though these realities are, however, they pale before the significance of what follows. The body dies and swiftly turns to dust, as the poet has reminded us, but the soul faces either eternal torment or rejoicing in its life beyond death. If man is to avoid the descent into hell, with all that this implies, his rational mind must direct his memory to thoughts not only of the facts of corporeal death but to visions of what the souls of the damned suffer in hell. In the 'tomb' of hell, of course, are to be found not just bones and ashes but active and agonized life. The sins and errors (*yerro*s) of their lives have become set for all eternity as chains (*hierro*s) of prisoners unable ever to see God and condemned to curses and lamentation. The poet, and through him the reader, knows that whereas the unpleasant details of the death of the body are an accurate and inevitable prediction of the future for all men, the scene in hell is not man's only hope. If it is by *yerro*s in life that eternal *hierro*s are put on, man is nevertheless free to try to avoid such a fate. His *memorias*, together with

the rational mind with which he is free to examine and control the activities of his mortal life, can combine to help him in the efforts he will have to make to avoid a descent into the abyss. If his mind has the power to make an imaginative journey there, as the poem illustrates, he may in fact draw sufficient from the experience to attempt to save his own soul. With the faculties that man possesses, it is within his power to choose to act in life in what is to be his own eternal interest. The poem makes clear that a generalized fear of death and hell may not be sufficient; only the fullest imaginative experience of them both can be the spur to the soul's greater awareness of its ultimate responsibilities. Victory and freedom over death and hell can be won, such is the irony of man's existence, by a true understanding of their nature. God's gift to man of the faculties by which to grasp this is as much an indication of his goodness and mercy as was the gift of Christ as sacrifice for man's sins:

con la muerte libraros de la muerte,
y el infierno vencer con el infierno.

The entirely personal nature of this sonnet links it closely to those of the last years, in which the techniques are occasionally similar. I cannot agree with Robert Jammes that it is possibly an echo of the Queen Margarita sonnets. In theme, structure and attitudes, the closest parallels to 157 are the two famous sonnets dealt with at the close of this Chapter, *En este occidental, en este, oh Licio* (162) and *Menos sollicito veloz saeta* (163).

* * * * *

The remaining sonnets unquestionably by Góngora are those included by Chacón under the separate headings *Morales*, *Sacros* and *Varios*. As the first two groups together comprise only eight pieces, the larger grouping by Ciplijauskaitė makes practical sense, although this is now clearly the most heterogeneous collection of all.

Ciplijauskaitė includes twenty sonnets in this group, numbers 149-167, transferring from its usual place among the *Sonetos Amorosos* number 153, *Hermosas damas, si la pasión ciega*. The original *Morales* group is as follows:

	CH	CIP
<i>Urnas plebeyas, tímulo reales</i>	I-51	157
<i>Mariposa, no sólo no cobarde</i>	I-52	161
<i>En este occidental, en este, oh Licio</i>	1-53	162
<i>Menos solicitó veloz saeta</i>	1-54	163

and the *Sacros*:

<i>Si ociosa no, asistió Naturaleza</i>	1-1	158
<i>Pender de un leño, traspasado el pecho</i>	1-2	152
<i>Este monte de cruces coronado</i>	1-3	151
<i>En tenebrosa noche, en mar airado</i>	1-4	156

The remaining sonnets in this section, *Varios*, range in time from 1582 to the last known sonnets unquestionably by Góngora, but there is wide divergence in the pieces included under this heading by Chacón and Ciplijauskaitė¹⁵. As has already been stated, Millé's chronological numbering of the sonnets and omission of the original Chacón headings is the best arrangement for the general reader, and indeed for the student of Góngora who does not wish to specialize in the sonnets.

Just as the majority of the *Sonetos Amorosos* belong to the early

years, so the largest proportion of this last Ciplijauskaitė group, as of the *Sonetos Fúnebres*, dates from well after 1600. That Góngora should have turned ever more frequently to sombre themes in his later years is perfectly understandable, given both his own personal problems and disappointments, and the difficulties Spain found herself in in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. The former are brought vividly to life in the series of sonnets, 161-167, all written in the year 1623. A number of early pieces, however, deserve careful examination before the latter are approached.

SONNETS 149 and 150

Mientras por competir con tu cabello (149) is one of Góngora's best-known works, an indispensable anthology piece, and the subject of regular comparison with the equally famous sonnet by Garcilaso de la Vega, *En tanto que de rosa y azucena*. General references to the similarity of theme and treatment are to be found in all the standard histories of literature, and more detailed treatment of the two works and of their supposed Italian and Classical origins has also become common¹⁶. Few critics, on the other hand, have taken the same interest in *Ilustre y hermosísima María* (150), written at about the same time and even more patently an imitation of Garcilaso, since it begins with a line from the latter's *Egloga III*. Salcedo Coronel here gives a lead which few have followed, by dealing first with *Ilustre y hermosísima María* and only then with *Mientras por competir con tu cabello*, implying, correctly in my view, that the greater similarity to Garcilaso lies in the first-mentioned sonnet¹⁷.

For all its fame, and the appreciation accorded it, however, *Mientras por competir con tu cabello* has inspired distinctly varied comments from its critics, and even in Carballo Picazo's exhaustive study it may be observed that several important aspects of the piece are ignored.

Unlike the majority of the sonnets included in this final section, 149 and 150 are amongst Góngora's earliest known compositions, written in his early twenties. The young poet's acceptance of the ideal and challenge of *imitatio* is evidenced throughout all his early work, and particularly in these pieces. In treating the classical theme of *carpe diem*, Góngora was not only taking one of the most familiar concepts in literature as his starting point, but also challenging comparison with several well-known Renaissance poets, among them Bernardo and Torcuato Tasso, and also of course the Spaniard who by now (1582) was also a classic, Garcilaso de la Vega¹⁸. By dealing with this theme, therefore, Góngora elected both to show his knowledge of ancient and modern classics, and to try his skill before a public that was likely to be at least as knowledgeable as he of the antecedents of his work. In both sonnets the influence, or 'appearance', of Garcilaso's *En tanto que de rosa y azucena* is a vital feature, but the use to which the relationship is put is strikingly different in the two cases. To show this in detail will involve a slight digression, to present an analysis of Garcilaso's sonnet in its own terms, before I turn to Góngora's versions of the same theme.

Garcilaso's sonnet 23¹⁹ brings together in memorable form some of the

best-known features of Renaissance love poetry. The human form and its particular beauty in the features and character of a young girl are presented throughout in parallel to the movement of the seasons of the year and their attendant weather. The girl herself is a recognizable Renaissance ideal, with white skin, golden hair and rose-pink complexion. She is, moreover, someone who is presented sympathetically, full of the natural alertness and attractiveness of youth (*mirar ardiente, alegre primavera*), but who is able at the same time to inspire in the poet esteem and respect (*mirar... honesto, enciende el corazón y lo refrena*). His invitation to her to enjoy her youth and its attendant pleasures is therefore couched in a warm and sympathetic tone, and the reminders of old age to come are expressed with consideration and regret²⁰.

The structure of the sonnet is extremely clear, two quatrains which begin *En tanto* and *y en tanto*, the pivotal verb *coged* and its attendant ideas being found at the opening of the tercets. The first sentence of the sonnet concludes at the end of the first of these, and the final three lines summarize the inevitability of time's action. This structure is underlined by the use of tenses, present indicative or imperative in lines 1 - 10, a present subjunctive in line 11, and future indicatives in the remaining lines. The sense of the inevitability of future time's destruction of the present is thus intensified by the use of tense changes in the otherwise deliberately anti-climactic final tercet. And the reasoned and carefully controlled ending serves further to emphasize the central point of the poem: *coged de vuestra alegre primavera / el dulce fruto*. Throughout the sonnet the poet's choice of images in

nature with which to compare the girl's features enhances both her beauty and the sense of pleasantness of character. Her face, *rosa y azucena*, her hair, *que en la vena del oro se escogió*, and her neck, *hermoso, blanco, enhiesto*; but it is in her eyes that this is all seen most clearly, in a *mirar ardiente* that is nevertheless *honesto*. This both excites the heart of the poet and holds it in respectful check: *enciende el corazón y lo refrena*. This is a variant of the familiar Petrarchan convention of antithesis, referred to in Chapter II, where love and its cares are traditionally expressed through opposing images. At this point in the poem a contrast has been established between the mood expressed by the girl and the effect it evokes in the man. Garcilaso's individual use of the tradition is carried further as the sonnet develops, in particular as the sense of paradox appears from the end of the quatrains onwards.

The springtime of the girl's life will in time become the era of full maturity, and ultimately of old age. This most obvious of thoughts is expressed through conventional images taken from nature: *primavera - invierno, rosa - (rosa marchita), cabello de oro - cumbre de nieve, viento que mueve, esparce y desordena - tiempo airado*. Within each separate progression, the girl's life or nature's cycle, lies the power of time to effect change. This is its timeless and changeless function over all things. But whereas its power in nature also effects renewal, by the circular movement of the seasons, in man its power has subtler implications. This is now the girl's *alegre primavera*, and within it the soft breath of the wind plays gently with her hair - a pleasant enough image in itself. But the end of

the poem reveals the wind in a totally different guise, as the icy destroyer associated with winter and old age. As a mere living organism, the movement from youth to old age is natural and unavoidable for the girl. Her *awareness* of this, and its implications, however, can be heightened by the poet's words.

The paradoxes referred to above begin in the first line of the tercets: *coged de vuestra alegre primavera / el dulce fruto*. It is commonplace to remark upon the pleasures of youth, but here the girl is urged to gather the *fruit* of this age within her own springtime. In nature's cycle the fertility of spring becomes full fruit only in autumn. In human terms, the fruit thus referred to may be children, the mature wisdom of old age, the passing of illusion and thoughtless innocence: *todo lo mudará la edad ligera*. These changes will take place in any case, just as they do in nature, but the poet urges her to understand what she will inevitably experience. In this way she will live with a constant awareness of both time's effects upon her, as upon all things, and a truer vision of what makes her human.

In the lesser known of Góngora's two sonnets, the poet begins by an immediate acknowledgement of his debt to Garcilaso. The first line, which incidentally seems to have fascinated him²¹, is taken from the opening of Garcilaso's *Egloga III*. As the poem proceeds it follows exactly the series of parallels established by the earlier poet: face/complexion; eyes; hair. For Garcilaso's *rosa y azucena* we now have *la rosada aurora*; for the *mirar ardiente*, *Febo en los ojos*; and *con vuelo presto el viento mueve* becomes *mueve el viento*

la hebra voladora. The girl's golden hair is similarly paralleled: *que en la vena del oro se escogió* changes in the Góngora to *que la Arabia en sus venas atesora*. An even closer comparison is established in the respective lines dealing with the effect of old age upon the girl's hair:

antes que el tiempo airado
cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre (Garcilaso)

antes que lo que hoy es rubio tesoro
venza a la blanca nieve su blancura (Góngora)

However, where Garcilaso makes the weight of his sonnet fall on the first line of the tercets, after the introductory two quatrains, Góngora delays the imperative until the very last line of his work, prefacing it with two more subordinate clauses beginning *antes que*. The younger poet thus sacrifices the balance of Garcilaso's form, with its deliberately anti-climactic last tercet, for the dramatic point of making the whole sonnet a single sentence, with the main verb left until the very beginning of the last line.

The tension thus created in the structure is fundamental to the greater sense of drama with which the younger poet wishes to invest his sonnet. Although the parallels with nature, detailed above, are the same in outline as Garcilaso's, Góngora's use of mythological and astronomical imagery is allied to a much shorter time-span. *Febo en tus ojos* and *la rosada aurora* are eclipsed within a day or even less, in contrast to Garcilaso's full seasons. The sun's passage, in addition, is not merely to dusk, but to a full *noche obscura*, just as the *aurora* is overcome by *mortal nublado*. As in the Garcilaso, the poet wishes us to maintain an awareness of what

happens in nature, in order to compare and contrast the changes occurring in man. And just as the earlier poet implied renewal in nature, so the reader of the Góngora knows that the loss of each dawn and day into subsequent darkness is only a prelude to yet another sunrise. For the girl and her beauty, however, there can be no such resurrection in human terms, and as the entire sonnet is devoted to this aspect of her life rather than to the possible and positive attainment inherent in a truer understanding of her own nature, the mature 'fruit' of Garcilaso's poem is nowhere present. The tension in Góngora's poem is therefore the greater, and the *carpe diem* theme finally emerges as a simple, and virtually sterile

goza, goza el color, la luz, el oro.

Those aspects of life which symbolized for Garcilaso both a joyous *primavera* and a greater sense of awareness of the nature of human life, become in Góngora's poem ends in themselves, beauties and pleasures which will fade within the symbolic span of a single day. Góngora has chosen to portray elements in nature not as illustrations of a generalized concept of age or season, but rather as wholly beautiful and transient realities in themselves. Allied with this is the insistence that all will shortly be completely destroyed. Of Garcilaso's mature 'fruit' of both old age itself and the understanding of life even in youth, there is no suggestion.

The maintenance of a distinction of elements prized for themselves alone, already present in *Ilustre y Hermosísima María*, is taken much further in *Mientras por competir con tu cabello*. This now becomes a

major structural feature of the sonnet, through which an alternative approach to the subject is subtly suggested. In external form this sonnet follows the Garcilaso even more closely, consisting as it does of two quatrains each beginning *mientras* and the following imperative placed, as in the model, at the start of the first tercet. This imperative, *goza*, is the same verb as in 150, but its effect in the new context is quite different. The sequence is also given greater intensity by the insertion of further *mientras* clauses in lines 3 and 7, adding to those in lines 1 and 4. In fact, the comparisons established between the features of this girl's beauty and absolutes in the poet's mind are at once more extended and dramatic, more 'Baroque'²², than those in either the Garcilaso or the first Góngora sonnet. This girl's golden hair outshines the most brilliant object that can be imagined, burnished gold reflecting the sun itself:

Mientras por competir con tu cabello,²³
oro bruñido al sol relumbra en vano

her white skin is more beautiful than the lily:

mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano
mira tu blanca frente el lilio bello

and her neck more perfect than cristal:

y mientras triunfa con desdén lozano
del luciente cristal tu gentil cuello.

A further feature is added, not present in either the Garcilaso or 150, her lips:

mientras a cada labio, por cogello,
siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano

The girl's outstanding beauty is thus emphatically established by reference to a series of absolutes outside herself: *sol*, *lilio*, *clavel*, *cristal*, all of which she is said to surpass. But more interesting than the mere objects selected for comparison here is the girl's relationship to them, and now a tone is seen to have entered the sonnet quite unlike anything in the other two:

Mientras por *competir*...
... relumbra *en vano*
mientras *con menosprecio*...
mientras *triunfa con desdén*...

The girl, in fact, is seen to be triumphing disdainfully over the glories of nature, secure in the knowledge and awareness of her own superiority. There is a tension created between object (girl) and comparisons (nature) that is totally different to the situation in the other two sonnets, where the man / nature parallel is much more harmonious. This dramatic tension must be examined closely if the sonnet is to be fully understood. The nature of the initial points of comparison and the implied rivalry within which they exist suggest that this girl is a character far removed from the sympathetic and idealized beauty depicted in the other sonnets. When the poet invites *this* girl to enjoy her youth, he does so by clear reference to her individual features, *cuello*, *cabello*, *labio*, *frente*, not by a generalized reference to that time of her life, as in Garcilaso, or its manifestation in ideal terms - *el color*, *la luz*, *el oro* - as in 150.

This enumeration of points of beauty is the start of an almost mathematical fixation with numbers, balance and division in the remainder of the poem. The four features, *cuello, cabello, labio, frente*, and their absolute parallels (and rivals) in this her *edad dorada, oro, lilio, clavel, cristal luciente*, will of course decline and lose their value in time. Góngora shows this strikingly, not only in what he asserts, but also in a double reduction - quantity as well as quality - of her present beauty. Four becomes only two, high quality becomes inferior. Thus *oro* and *cristal* become *plata*; *clavel* and *lilio*, even more ironically, *viola troncada*. The dramatic effect of this, with its arithmetic and logical inevitability, is startling. But this is not all. Where Garcilaso's sonnet had taken the girl's mind on only to consider maturity and old age, the first Góngora poem has already prepared for that further stage explored in *Mientras por competir con tu cabello*, arrival at death itself. To underline this dramatic point, two - *plata, viola troncada* - is expanded outwards again to *four*:

tierra, humo, polvo, sombra

to which is added a final, utterly conclusive, *nada*.

This sonnet therefore contains an element completely missing in the Garcilaso poem, an insistence that the girl addressed confront the thought not only of age but of final extinction as well. Everyone writing on the sonnet has pointed this out²⁴. What has not been observed, however, is that the very mathematical ordering of the final lines forces us to look at the overall meaning of the poem in a new light. We have seen that the precious metals *oro* and *cristal*

have become *tierra* and *polvo*, after passing through the intermediate stage of *plata*; and that *lilio* and *clavel* have similarly passed through *viola troncada* to become *humo* and *sombra*. These symbols of the girl's beauty are referred to collectively in the penultimate line, as *ello*. The other idea present in the same phrase, therefore, the pronoun *tú*, is likewise given its final form in the fifth noun of the last line, the 'missing' antecedent for *nada*. With or without her ephemeral beauty, Góngora declares, the girl herself - including her very soul - will ultimately cease to exist²⁵.

The intensity of this ending, and its drama, is unmistakable. But the features of the poem enumerated here suggest a depth of emotion caused by something more than "a personal cry of horror at the thought of ceasing to exist"²⁶. The girl's disdainful hostility to nature and her wish to triumph over it, allied to the sense that she delights in receiving every kind of attention, suggests that her character is decidedly unpleasant. Her beauty is undeniable, but her pleasure in it and in the power it exerts over others is intolerable. The poet must perforce recognise the control over him that her charms at present exert, but just as she relies solely on them to induce admiration, so he may take fierce and legitimate satisfaction in enumerating the ultimate ends of those features by which she holds him and the world in thrall.

The poem is, I believe, far from being an exercise on the *carpe diem* theme, let alone an *exhortación al amor*, as Millé calls it²⁷. Like certain of the *Sonetos Amorosos* examined in Chapter II, it is one of those early works that reveal the same imagination and tight

intellectual control that distinguish Góngora's finest work in all forms.

Góngora essayed religious poetry on comparatively few occasions. He himself gives an amusing account of his supposed lack of 'theology', and therefore of his reluctance to attempt these subjects, in his reply to the censure of his bishop at Córdoba²⁸. For whatever reason, it is clear that only rarely was he inspired to attempt religious poetry, and sometimes indeed did so only when required to take part in competitions. There is nevertheless no reason to believe that Góngora did not wholeheartedly accept the Catholic faith. A reading of his letters, his will, and the handful of religious poems that he left makes his sincerity in these matters perfectly clear. As a poet, however, his approach to traditional subjects such as the birth of Christ was conditioned as much by the challenge of the theme as a test of artistic skill as by its significance in religious terms. This is doubtless why many, from Padre Pineda to Robert Jammes, have found his religious verse either disconcerting or deplorable. In fact, Góngora's poems in this form, like the religious paintings of Velázquez, are a fascinating study both within each artist's work as a whole, and in comparison with the religious art of other poets and painters of the early seventeenth century in Spain²⁹.

Of the four or five *Sonetos Sacros*³⁰, two were written on *versos ajenos* as entries for poetry competitions (156 and 158). Another, of comparatively little interest, was written upon the finding of

sacred relics at Granada (151). Salcedo Coronel includes the impressive *Urnas plebeyas, t́mulo reales* (157) among the *Sacros*, but Chacón has it among the *Morales*, where it more properly belongs. In fact, Jammes would prefer to consider it as an appendage to the series of funeral sonnets on the death of Queen Margarita, as stated earlier.

The one remaining sonnet in this group, *Al nacimiento de Cristo, nuestro Señor* (152), from the year 1600, is an inspired piece and as memorable as the beautiful *letrilla* of 1621, *Caído se le ha un clavel* (Millé 194) on the same subject.

The poem's argument is set out in a straightforward manner in the two quatrains. To suffer and die on the Cross was indeed an heroic act, but to be born on earth at all was even more so. The vision of Christ on the Cross is memorably succinct and dramatic:

Pender de un leño, traspasado el pecho,
y de espinas clavadas ambas sienas...

and the poet acknowledges mankind's debt, that to such courage we would seem to owe our salvation to eternal life:

dar tus mortales penas en rehenes
de nuestra gloria, bien fue heroico hecho;

But the words *mortales penas* remind us not to be taken in by appearances. For a human being, to suffer and die for an unselfish cause is brave and admirable; but we should not fall into the trap of seeing God in only human terms, as though Christ were only man. The truly divine action is God's consenting to be born in human form at

all: *pero más fue nacer en tanto estrecho*. Christ is born not as a king, still less as a god, but in abject poverty. He comes not even to a human dwelling-place, but to an unsheltered animal stall. The shock of this realization is indicated by Góngora in two ways: by seeing in a weak and tiny child his *gran Dios mío*; and by the violent distortions of language used to describe the child's courage in maintaining life at all in the face of hostile nature:

del tiempo por haber la helada ofensa
vencida en flaca edad con pecho fuerte

But whether suffering cold as a child or wounds and death as a man, it is Christ as God-become-man that is the true miracle, the greatest illustration of the mercy and love of a Creator willing to intervene on earth to save His creation. Góngora sums up this truth, as he sees it, in concluding lines that are memorable for their disarming simplicity of expression:

... hay distancia más inmensa
de Dios a hombre, que de hombre a muerte.

The poem thus invites the reader to consider that the salvation of mankind is implicit in the *birth* of the Saviour, not only in his subsequent death on the Cross.

This poem, with its emphasis on Christ the man, was fiercely criticized by Padre Pineda³¹, on the grounds that the passion and death of the Saviour was of far greater import than his birth. Although he may have been reflecting in this the current post-Tridentine emphasis in doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Cross, his case is weakened by an obvious misunderstanding of Góngora's lines, turning the poet's

que más fue sudar sangre que haber frío on its head. Pineda implies that this means the child's resistance to the cold of winter was a feat greater than sweating blood (on the Cross), whereas of course the context of the poem clearly implies the opposite. In any case, poetry of this nature was extremely common in the early years of the century, for example the sonnets of Lope de Vega, where an emphasis on the humanity of Christ is a noticeable feature. Dámaso Alonso has printed the whole of Padre Pineda's censures in his edition of Vicuña, and specifically refutes the criticism mentioned here³², as does Don Cruickshank in a recent article³³.

THE SONNETS OF 1623

By the year 1623 Góngora's life had become darkened by misfortune, ill-health and extreme poverty. Two years earlier the succession to the throne of Philip IV had seen the overthrow and death of Lerma and several of his supporters, and among these were several patrons and friends of the poet. The new power in Spain was Olivares, and in spite of Góngora's natural hostility towards the executioner of his friend Rodrigo Calderón, he was soon forced to address requests for assistance to the Conde-Duque.

At the close of 1622 Góngora's debts were such that he was being threatened with eviction from his lodgings in Madrid, quite probably by his arch-enemy Quevedo. A letter written to Cristóbal de Heredia on the 20th December makes this clear³⁴:

... temo que me han de echar de la casa luego en pasando Reyes y sacarme prendas por el med...

That matters were not to improve in the following year, nor indeed in the remaining years of his life, is unmistakably clear from a reading both of the letters of the period and from the handful of outstanding sonnets composed in 1623. The poet's years in Madrid from 1617 to 1626, were in fact a most unhappy conclusion to his life and career. Thinking to obtain favours from the most powerful figures of the day, notably Lerma, Góngora saw not only his personal ambitions dashed after the initial success of obtaining a royal chaplaincy, but also the eclipse and subsequent death of several patrons and friends on whom he had pinned his hopes. Rodrigo Calderón, one of the most powerful of Lerma's followers, died on the scaffold in 1621, the Conde de Villamediana was assassinated in August the following year, and a third patron, the Conde de Lemus, died only two months later. Distasteful as it must have been to him, Góngora nevertheless began to address appeals to Olivares in the hope of obtaining his goodwill, and in spite of the poet's association with the discredited Lerma and his followers, it seemed for a time that he might well be favoured. The possibility of obtaining a pension from the Conde-Duque undoubtedly made Góngora decide to remain in Madrid, even though the cost of living there and providing an adequate standard of appearance was far greater than it would have been in Córdoba. In his own city, moreover, were several friends of influence and means who still continued to offer him support. For two more years he held on to some vestiges of hope, before his increasing debts forced him to abandon his house in Madrid. Under such pressure, together with those of disappointment and serious ill-health, he returned to his native city in the autumn

of 1626. A few months later, on the 23rd May 1627, Góngora died in a house in the Plaza de la Trinidad, a short walk from his birth-place in the Calle Tomás Conde³⁵.

If the dating of the Chacón manuscript is to be believed, Góngora composed only one other short and unimportant poem in 1623, the year of the sonnets. The mastery of the latter and their intensity of feeling suggests not only that Góngora took the greatest pains over them, but also that the classically strict sonnet form was the ideal means through which he could express the painful and conflicting emotions of these months of his life. Although two or three isolated works in sonnet form were composed later than 1623, it is reasonable to see in the pieces of this year the climax of his achievements in this area of poetry, a group of works in which inspiration and intellectual control are united in perfectly finished and memorable form.

The sonnets of this year are:

<i>En la capilla estoy, y condenado</i>	(50)
<i>Mariposa, no sólo no cobarde</i>	(161)
<i>Camina mi pensión con pie de plomo</i>	(164)
<i>De la Merced, Señores, despedido</i>	(165)
<i>Sople rabiosamente conjurado</i>	(166)
<i>Cuantos forjare más hierros el hado</i>	(167)
<i>En este occidental, en este, oh Licio</i>	(162)
<i>Menos solicitó veloz saeta</i>	(163)

The themes of these sonnets can be classified quite simply, in general terms, reflecting as they do the prevailing moods of the last three or four years in Madrid. A sonnet to Olivares (50), pleading for help and favour in the most serious terms, is balanced by an ironic and bitterly humorous comment on the anguish of

awaiting the outcome of such a petition (164). Ambition itself is mocked as futile in 161, but hope is still seen as possible through friendship (166) or through faith (167). A final departure from Madrid for his native city is anticipated and parodied in 165. Finally, there are two sonnets on time and age, 162 and 163, revealing elements of both Christian faith and Stoic resignation.

SONNET 50

Two years after his first interview with Olivares³⁶, Góngora's despair at not receiving the hoped-for benefaction resulted in this sonnet addressed to the Conde-Duque, and couched in the most dramatic terms. His need of money to take care of everyday wants is likened to the position of a city under siege. The result of such a tactic in warfare is that the inhabitants finally leave their stronghold in a desperate search for food, and Góngora here clearly implies that he is being forced to leave Madrid and the court because of his penury. Even though he holds a position of some significance at the court, that of *capellán real*, the favourable consideration to which he is theoretically entitled is not forthcoming. Indeed, the reference to his sphere of activity, the *capilla*, is ironically double-edged, if one thinks of its significance when left for the last time, as Góngora was proposing to leave Madrid. The criminal condemned to death spends his last night in the sanctuary, within the prison walls, and in the tautly constructed first quatrain of the sonnet the balanced images of besieged city and condemned prisoner merge in the suggestion of a fatal outcome, that of death at the hands of the enemy, or on the

scaffold. Leaving the court and Madrid may well be a necessity, but it is one which can lead to either a metaphorical or real death:

En la capilla estoy, y condenado
a partir sin remedio desta vida;
siento la causa aun más que la partida,
por hambre expulso como sitiado.

The sonnet now follows, on one level, what are virtually the stages of a legal process. A trial has already taken place, the prisoner is condemned and awaiting punishment. As the first quatrain has shown him on his last night in the condemned cell, so the second presents his 'honest confession', together with a wish that he may receive final absolution. The first tercet begins by picturing the judgement to come, in the form of the executioner's axe, but then turns to the one person powerful enough to be able to override the law and grant clemency, Olivares himself.

The prisoner confesses to his 'crime' in the following terms:

Culpa sin duda es ser desdichado;
mayor, de condición ser encogida.
De ellas me acuso...

A combination of personal reticence and ill-fortune, therefore, has led to him being condemned. The fact that it is only now, on the eve of execution, that he makes this 'confession', lends weight to the twice-repeated statement that he has never been one to assert himself. The suggestion is clearly that this prisoner maintained a proud and dignified silence during his trial. The irony of the following lines is many-faceted. The 'criminal' has confessed at last in order to obtain absolution before dying. But what he is

confessing to are not, of course, crimes at all. This fact, and the double-edged leave-taking, from cell and city, in one sense to avoid but in another to inevitably find death, make the sonnet's impact rather less pathetic and much more biting than it at first appears.

The first tercet foresees the moment of execution, and the poet asks that his fate be examined in the light of this perhaps final moment of his life. Does the combination of ill-fortune and his own humility really deserve such punishment? He has confessed to his 'crimes', he has been tried and condemned, and he has now made final absolution. Only the intervention of a king or a god would be able to save him in this extremity. But, the poem implies, the Conde-Duque is such a person, and in this suggestion flattery and irony are present in equal proportions.

The final lines reiterate, first, his avowal that he has not attempted to advance himself directly before; in other words, that he has not 'spoken' before to change his fate. Now that he has decided to do so, to 'confess' and to obtain absolution, he hopes that the very words he is using may speak on his behalf. But these words are, of course, lines of a poem, and it is as a poet that he has been ignored and neglected at court. The words are addressed to a 'judge', but this judge is also the patron who can save him by acknowledging his worth. And finally, if the criminal has no obvious family or friends to plead for a stay of execution, the tongue of the poet's own child - the sonnet - may perhaps be eloquent enough to move its recipient to an act of saving compassion:

Ya que el encogimiento ha sido mudo,
 los números, Señor, deste soneto
 lenguas sean y lágrimas no en vano.

As far as I am aware, no-one has discussed whether or not Góngora's poem was actually intended to be sent to Olivares. Although it contains obvious elements of flattery, the bitterness and irony which lie only just beneath the surface suggest that it may well have been written out of a sense of personal despair, to be read only by his circle of friends rather than by the Conde-Duque. As far as is known, Olivares' promise of benefaction remained unfulfilled³⁷, even though, greatest of ironies, the entire Chacón manuscript was to be dedicated to him after Góngora's death.

SONNET 164

That Góngora's humour had not deserted him entirely, even in the difficult months of 1623, can clearly be seen in the sonnet *Camina mi pensión con pie de plomo* (164). It forms an ironic contrast with the poem dealt with above, appealing to Olivares as a possible source of support. The tone throughout 164 is jocular, at least on the surface, and includes one or two fairly poor jokes. There is certainly a large element of irony in 50, of a seriousness that it is impossible to mistake; the irony in 164, however, appears only slowly as the game of lightweight humour gradually dissolves before the reader to reveal more serious implications in the work.

The sonnet begins with an amusing play of ideas on movement and lack of it. The promised *pensión* is coming to him at positively funereal

rate; his life is in fact ebbing faster than the means to support it is moving to prevent so unfortunate a happening. The hobbling *pensión*, with its leaden foot and step, is still outrun by the aged poet with one foot in the grave:

Camina mi pensión con pie de plomo,
el mío, como dicen, en la huesa;

A similarly absurd comic antithesis occurs in lines three and four. He awaits the *pensión*, only possible source of food, in the garden, with eyes shut in blind hopefulness, yet still in the brightest light of day in order to "see" it at its best should it ever appear:

a ojos yo cerrados, tenue o gruesa,
por dar más luz al mediodía la tomo.

The second quatrain reduces the rhetorical level even further; a garden shrub looking like a table can give a little consolation; misunderstandings of foreign words give similar false comfort:

Merced de la tijera a punto o lomo
nos conhorta aun de murtas una mesa;
ollai la mejor voz es portuguesa,
y la mejor ciudad de Francia, Como.

Only in the first tercet does the poet begin the arrest of what seems an accelerating decline into pointlessness. The boots worn to protect the feet from the mud of the streets (he is now too poor to afford a carriage) and the reference to the unlit hearth are a more serious indication of Góngora's situation in these years of disappointed hopes and fruitless journeys. If he will no longer put on boots and leave his home to search, in the mud of the court, for the deserved *pensión*,

he must resign himself to awaiting it beset by hunger. If it is to come at all, it will be to his own fireside, where he will continue in stoic expectation:

No más, no, borceguí; mi chimenea,
basten los años que ni aun breve raja
de encina la perfuma o de aceituno.

Góngora's preoccupation with a hoped-for *pensión* from the Conde-Duque makes it possible that this first tercet of the sonnet contains a humorous veiled reference to him. No wood, we are told, has warmed his hearth or scented it for many years, and to the common wood of the *encina* Góngora adds the *aceituno*, gathered of course from *olivares*!

Ironically, of course, the only movement in the situation now - should the *pensión* never come - will be his own continuing and accelerating journey towards the grave. The last line, with its Lazarillo-like echoes, does not disguise the simple implication that he now has nothing to sustain life by (a state of affairs confirmed by letters of the same year). The comic second verse thus takes its place in a stylistic sequence which moves from wit through farce to ironic pathos³⁸.

¡Oh cuánto tarda lo que se desea!
Llegue; que no es pequeña la ventaja
del comer tarde al acostarse ayuno.

SONNETS 162 AND 163

It is appropriate to end this consideration of the works of 1623, and indeed the entire chapter devoted to Góngora's maturest works in

sonnet form, with two acknowledged masterpieces, *En este occidental, en este, oh Licio* (162) and *Menos sollicitó veloz saeta* (163). They are amongst the poet's best-known works in any form, and it is interesting to note that in addition to the year of composition, these two sonnets have the actual date and month of composition included with them in the Chacón manuscript, the 19th and 29th August respectively. This unusual detail possibly confirms Foulché-Delbosc's belief that the formulation of the Chacón manuscript took place in the last eight years of Góngora's life, for such precision in dating would suggest that the author entrusted the works to don Antonio very soon after finishing them. An alternative possibility, equally attractive for a view of the importance of these works, is that the author held them in sufficient esteem to wish to be himself reminded of their dates of composition, and that his setting down of these was naturally incorporated by Chacón into his compilation of the complete works.

Góngora's financial and emotional state at the time of writing the sonnets can be clearly seen in the following lines from a letter written to Cristóbal de Heredia only a month previously (11th July 1623)³⁹:

Ahora, señor, tomo la pluma por no tomar una
soga que acabe con todo y deje descansar a
Vuestra merced de mis pesadumbres.

The two sonnets, although written so close together, vary considerably in theme and attitude, the first containing an element of Christian stoicism, the latter stressing only the grim realisation of the

inexorability of time's driving of human life towards death. In both the poet addresses himself under the name Licio, but whereas in 162 the dialogue is a dramatisation of his vision of the eternal life of the soul escaping from the mortality of an aged body, in 163 he still struggles to convince himself of the very reality of the hastening movement towards death of his advancing years.

The superstition regarding the age of 63, a multiple of 7 and of particularly dire significance in Greek and Roman myth, is the starting point of the first sonnet. Having reached this period of his life, the poet affirms, all slight accidents are magnified alarmingly in his passage along any road:

En este occidental, en este, oh Licio,
climatérico lustro de tu vida,
todo mal afirmado pie es caída,
toda fácil caída es precipicio.

Although these lines refer most obviously to the uncertain steps of the aged, the more profound meaning of the quatrain centres on the symbol of the Fall and its significance for human life. Even a slight fall for someone of Góngora's years can assume an alarming significance, and the latter refers to both physical and spiritual life. At a stage when his physical powers are beginning to fade, it is vital that he should not lose faith in God's promise to man of eventual salvation. The phenomena that surround him do not help strengthen that faith, however. Faced with his own increasingly obvious mortality, man must nevertheless recognise that the ways of God are inscrutable, and that in spite of his urgent desire for reassurance, man's hopes of heaven cannot be answered in life. The serpent, however, can shed its years

with its skin, to man's frustration and despair:

La piel no sólo, sierpe venenosa,
mas con la piel los años se desnuda,
y el hombre, no. ¡Ciego discurso humano!

There are levels of irony here that illumine the remainder of the sonnet. On the simplest of these, it is tragically ironic that the lowest of creatures should be endowed with the one power desperately desired by the most intelligent. Far from being merely opposites, however, man and serpent are inextricably linked through the history of man's relationship with God, in that man's disobedience and desire for fruit of the tree of knowledge brought death into the world. And the means to that initial and catastrophic disobedience was, of course, the serpent. The poet may well reflect upon the ultimately ignorant blindness of the human mind: *¡Ciego discurso humano!*

Although the areas of the sonnet so far dealt with seem totally pessimistic in meaning, the final tercet offers a change of attitude and direction. So far all has been directed to the earth: the old man's frail step, the crumbling building, the snake's elusive movement. But in the final lines, Góngora raises his eyes to that heaven that promises man an answer to his mortality. Not with the power of his own erring mind, but with the positive emotion of faith, man may rise, phoenix-like, from his own ashes to eternal life. Other poems studied here have used the phoenix as symbol for this miracle. In this particular sonnet, however, it is out of the despairing observation of the serpent's apparent good fortune that man begins to understand the possibility of his own resurrection. Just as the snake may shed years with its skin, so man too may slough off his mortal covering, the body, enabling the

soul (*la leve*) to rise to the throne of God.

This sudden and positive change in the last lines of the sonnet is initially rather disconcerting for the reader. When so much that is pessimistic has already been expressed, this unexpected ending seems at first somewhat contrived and unconvincing. It is true that other sonnets, on the deaths of the Duquesa de Lerma and Queen Margarita in particular, have brought together apparently deep pessimism with the phoenix symbol of Christian resurrection. Here, however, an extreme point of juxtaposed ideas seems to have been reached, given that man's longing for eternal life can be almost mockingly symbolized for all by a snake. If the final, positive, lines are reconsidered, however, it becomes clearer that the solution offered by Góngora to his own questionings is at best tentative. Although the reference in the final tercet may indeed be to himself, it is cautiously expressed, in the third person, and within the confines of an exclamation that has more of hope in it than of certainty:

¡Oh aquel dichoso, que la ponderosa
porción depuesta en una piedra muda,
la leve da al zafiro soberano!

The sonnet can thus be seen to deal in certainties only when the obvious facts of man's mortality and ignorance are described. In the more tentative area of speculation regarding a longed-for eternal life, that man is seen as truly happy who can give up his mortal flesh secure in an unshakeable faith. The reader now suspects that in this comparatively impersonal conclusion, Góngora is in fact revealing himself as less than wholly certain that the end of the life of the body will bring the triumphant resurrection of the soul.

It is no surprise that the second sonnet of the two, *Menos solicitō veloz saeta* (163) offers, not a renewed expression of hope and faith, but a return to the theme of man's inability to grasp the significance of the passing of time. The sonnet is dramatically constructed, not only in its choice of metaphors for the human situation, but in the change from the impression of apparently objective wisdom at the start to subjective uncertainty in the tercets. The opening quatrains choose the most dramatic examples to illustrate the speed of human life racing towards death: an arrow flying to its mark, a Roman chariot hurtling towards the stone marking the end of its run. In spite of their impressive intensity, however, these images are strongly contrasted. The flight of the arrow is single and secret, while the racing chariot is witnessed by thousands, even though they are momentarily struck silent as the wheels of the chariots circle the stone. As these powerful images suggest, therefore, the ending of man's life should also be viewed in dramatic terms by the wise, in that we may suddenly be faced with drawing our last gasping breath as death strikes home unexpectedly. The poet expects the person of intelligence to recognise this. He who does not would seem to have lost his reason, seeing no significance in the inexorable passing of time. In each rising sun, which both signals a new day and marks a further inevitable step towards his extinction, such a man would see only an isolated phenomenon - a comet whose significance is not so much that of ill-omen but rather that it is a casual and unimportant recurrence at varying times. In the mind of the completely unthinking man, each rising and setting sun is ignored as though it had no cumulative significance whatsoever. The wise will not make this mistake:

Menos solicitó veloz saeta
destinada señal, que mordió aguda;
agonal carro por la arena muda
no coronó con más silencio meta

que presurosa corre, que secreta,
a su fin nuestra edad. A quien lo duda
(fiera que sea de razón desnuda)
cada sol repetido es un cometa.

The sense of wisdom and dignity in these lines is achieved partly by the use of images associated with the Classical world, and also through the tone of calmly objective certainty that the words convey. Again, however, Góngora surprises the reader of these late sonnets. At the opening of the tercets there is a sudden change; the seer has become a questioner, and the objective statements give way to argument and exhortation. From the dramatic events of a poetically recalled ancient world, we suddenly move to the present human drama of the poet's conflicting emotions as he endeavours to convince himself of the lessons that the poem has been illustrating. He draws yet again on the ancient world for a symbol of mutability:

Confiésalo Cartago, ¿y tú lo ignoras?

The image is brilliant in its simplicity and its almost absurd juxtaposition of the existence of an empire with one man's insignificant life. Just as the mightiest of empires will fall, so man must face the certain knowledge of his own limited moment of time on earth. All history teaches in essence the same simple lesson that man's rational mind will also consider and weigh carefully: nothing will survive, except time itself and its destructive power.

It seems, nevertheless, that Licio - the poet's own self - would rather pursue unreal *sombras* and *engaños* than face the truth. Ironically, of

course, the very fact that he can be aware that they *are sombras* and *engaños* suggests that the eventual return to sanity will not be long delayed. Were his refusal to face unpleasant truths to persist, however, the turning away from the light (*sol*) and reason could have dire consequences. The dangers of the darkness of *sombras* and *engaños* are that man *needs* the serious awareness the poem speaks of in order to live and shape his life in preparation for whatever is to follow it. For the Christian at least, there will be a Judgement. And that eventual judgement is already being anticipated by time's merciless activity in our lives, as our opportunities to order and instruct ourselves with reasoning minds and clarity of resolve grow less by the minute. As with several of the sonnets examined in this Chapter, Christian attitudes are hardly visible in this work, but Christian ideals and experience are essential to the resolution of the problems it presents. If the general tone of the opening quatrains is Stoic, the real dread expressed in the tercets that man will suddenly discover that time and opportunity has run out for him depends upon an ultimately religious belief in the need for life to be ordered and harmonised with Nature and God. It may be natural for man to push thoughts of final things aside if he can, and Góngora here recognises in himself how easy this is; but if it functions correctly, his reason will not let this lack of awareness destroy him. The sonnet demonstrates, in what amounts to a dramatized dialogue between human reason and human nature, that time may not only be the destroyer; it can also be the agonizing spur that may help man avoid the *eternal* death that a pursuit of *sombras* and *engaños* must inevitably lead to.

As a final reminder to both Licio and the reader, Góngora brings before

our minds accelerating images of destruction, in a terrifying vision of the power of time to lay waste all it touches⁴⁰:

Mal te perdonarán a ti las horas,
las horas que limando están los días,
los días que royendo están los años.

If man can but bring such images constantly to mind, the poet implies, he may then be encouraged to order his life and actions with sufficient care, and in the light of the faith he professes, to achieve at the very least a serene acceptance of his own mortality.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

- 1 Jammes, op cit, p 232.
- 2 Ibid, p 285, note 106.
- 3 Ibid, p 268.
- 4 Ibid, p 268.
- 5 R O Jones, op cit, p 13.
- 6 Ibid, p 14.
- 7 The sonnet is discussed in elaborate detail by the Fosters, op cit, pp 80 - 86. See also the comments by Arthur Terry, *Anthology* II, p xxxvii.
- 8 See the account of his death by Dámaso Alonso in *Góngora y el Polifemo* II, pp 184 - 6.
- 9 See the letter to Cristóbal de Heredia of the 2nd November 1621, Millé, op cit, pp 1003 - 5.
- 10 The close relationship between birth and death at the close of this piece is reminiscent of Quevedo's treatment of the brevity of life in such sonnets as "¡Ah de la vida!" ... *¿Nadie me responde?* The younger poet's pessimism is, of course, quite absent from Góngora's sonnet.
- 11 "Leaving aside the totally unexpected initial three-word sentence, "Here lies El Greco, (*sic*) which must settle at the bottom of any statistical listing of the poet's preferences in sentence length ..." Foster, op cit, p 91.
- 12 Maurice Molho briefly discusses this sonnet in *Europe*, Paris, May, 1977, pp 79 - 81.
- 13 In a very recent article, J F G Gornall discusses the first tercet of the sonnet in some detail, although the failure to consider its possible meanings within the total context leads to the omission of several obvious points. "Art and nature: Góngora's funerary sonnet for El Greco", *BHS*, LV (1978), pp 115 - 118.
- 14 Although the Vicuña volume has *teme*, Chacón and most modern editions read *armada tema*.
- 15 See Chapter I.

- 16 See in particular A Carballo Picazo, "El Soneto 'Mientras por competir con tu cabello'", *Rev de Fil Esp*, XLVII (1964) pp 379 - 398.
- 17 Salcedo Coronel, op cit, p 327.
- 18 El Brocense's annotated edition of Garcilaso came out in 1574, Herrera's in 1580.
- 19 In the E L Rivers edition. Garcilaso de la Vega: *Poesías castellanas completas*, Madrid, 1969.
- 20 The ending of the sonnet is criticized, I believe unconvincingly, by E F Stanton, "Garcilaso's Sonnet XXIII", *Hispanic Review* vol 40, (1972) No 2.
- 21 It is also used with completely different effect in the satirical sonnet *¿Son de Tolú, o son de Puertorrico* (114).
- 22 "El violento contraste barroco asoma ya en esta obra maestra juvenil." D Alonso, *Góngora y el Polifemo* II, p 134.
- 23 A variant reading, with *el sol* and different punctuation, is found in Salcedo Coronel. All modern editions prefer the quoted form. (See D Cruickshank, "Góngora: the Hoces Editions of 1654", *Transcriptions of Cambridge Bibliogr. Society*, vol V (1972) pp 179 - 89.)
- 24 Carballo Picazo, Dámaso Alonso, R O Jones, et al.
- 25 Joaquín de Entrambasaguas questions the normally accepted wording of the twelfth line of the sonnet, basing his suggestion of a more correct *¡oh viola troncada!* on a simple assertion that aesthetically this would be preferable, together with his belief that no Góngora text is reliable. His arguments are unconvincing. *Estudios y ensayos sobre Góngora y el Barroco*, Madrid 1975, pp 69 - 76.
- 26 R O Jones, op cit, p 17.
- 27 Millé, op cit, p 1136.
- 28 Ibid, pp 1204 - 6.
- 29 See the article by J Camacho Padilla, "La poesía religiosa de Góngora", *BRAC* VI (1927) No 18, pp 33 - 54.
- 30 See above, Chapter I.
- 31 Vicuña, ed Alonso, op cit, p XXXIII.
- 32 Ibid, pp XXXVII - XXXVIII.
- 33 See Note 23.

- 34 Millé, op cit, pp 1042 - 3.
- 35 The street was originally known as Calle de las Pavas, among other names. See Dámaso Alonso, *Góngora y el Polifemo I*, p 36.
- 36 13th April 1621. See Dámaso Alonso, *Góngora y el Polifemo I*, p 53.
- 37 Ibid, p 54.
- 38 It is probable that Luis Cernuda had this sonnet in mind when composing his own poem *Góngora*:
- "El andaluz envejecido que tiene gran razón para su orgullo,
El poeta cuya palabra lúcida es como diamante,
Harto de fatigar sus esperanzas por la corte
...
Vuelve al rincón nativo para morir tranquilo y silencioso."
- La realidad y el deseo*, Madrid, 1976, pp 198 - 200.
- 39 Millé, op cit, pp 1045 - 6.
- 40 Brockhaus sees these lines in a far less dramatic light. For him the passage in question "erweckt im Leser das Bild einer immerfort rinnenden Sanduhr." Op cit, p 128.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

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In the Introduction to this thesis it was stated that one of its intentions would be to examine representative sonnets of Góngora in an attempt to assess his overall achievement in this type of composition. I believe sufficient works of outstanding quality have been considered to suggest that there can be no doubting Góngora's entitlement to a position among the greatest Renaissance and Baroque masters of this poetic form. The nature of a study such as this makes it inevitable that a series of conclusions is placed before the reader, both within each separate Chapter, and indeed as part of the analyses of individual sonnets in themselves. Several points of particular interest have emerged, however, during the discussions of the works selected for study, and this short Chapter will recapitulate these in succinct form.

In many of the analyses that make up the bulk of this thesis I have been forced to disagree with other critics, several of them of considerable eminence. Although it has been necessary on occasions to point out details in the poems that have been either unremarked or misunderstood, a more prevalent criticism has to be of the general tendency to evaluate Góngora's sonnets by criteria other than literary ones. At one extreme this has led to unhelpful speculation on the possible biographical background to particular works (I do not include in this the sonnets of the last years, in which the painful personal basis of the poetry is well attested); while at the other it is affirmed that works that reveal only an intense

preoccupation with the formal problems of his art are necessarily inferior to those, such as the *Sonetos Satíricos*, that offer criticism of the society in which Góngora lived and worked. I would hope to have shown that it is the art of the sonnets themselves that must be the principal criterion for any objective evaluation of their significance.

Góngora's particular position within Golden Age poetry as a whole, together with the length of time during which he composed poetry, enable us to see that his sonnets occupy an artistic (though not chronological) middleground between Garcilaso de la Vega on the one hand and Quevedo on the other. Although aspects of Góngora's work in this form are echoed in other writers, and especially, of course, in later imitators of the poet, the entire corpus of his works in sonnet form presents a variety of theme and attitude and a sustained quality of achievement that is, I believe, unique. If the *Sonetos Amorosos* can be matched by those of Garcilaso, and the *Fúnebres* and *Morales* by Quevedo, neither these two poets, nor Herrera nor Lope de Vega, can offer the wide range of aesthetic experience that Góngora presents to us in this area of his work. It has been observed by several recent critics that don Luis's sonnets have received less attention than they merit, and if part of the aim of this thesis has been to respond to that implied request, it would also wish to draw attention to other areas of study that must be undertaken, if we are to have a better awareness of the scope of a great poet's achievement in a certain form. The influence of Petrarch in Spain has been well studied in general

terms¹, but Góngora's artistic relationship to Garcilaso de la Vega in particular demands exhaustive treatment, even though I am in no doubt of the former's fundamental independence and originality of style. In the case of Lope de Vega, although the complex relationship with Góngora has been fully documented², more might be said on specifically poetic links between the two. Similarly, Góngora's bitter personal feud with Quevedo has tended rather to divert attention away from the task of comparative work on the poetry of the two men, except for general studies associated with the problems of *culteranismo* and *conceptismo*³. In all these cases, useful starts could be made by comparing and contrasting the sonnets of each with those of the others.

As far as Góngora's sonnets themselves are concerned, there is a need to authenticate as far as possible the *Burlesco* and *Satírico* compositions still confined to the *Atributibles* compartment of his work. A new edition of Ciplijauskaitė's publication may perhaps attempt this, although it seems unlikely. It has not been part of the purpose of this thesis to offer concrete suggestions concerning the likely authenticity of any given sonnet, but general critical opinion would seem to indicate that work on perhaps a dozen sonnets would resolve the outstanding problems, enabling a clearer view of Góngora's overall achievement in the sonnet form to be obtained. Within his poetry as a whole, the sonnets could also be subject to more comparative scrutiny, as much work remains to be done in relating his cultivation of one poetic form with another. As has been shown, knowledge of poems from different

areas of his work can sometimes resolve problems in the one being examined.

Early in this study I drew attention to the limited usefulness of the accepted group headings for the sonnets, even though these may have had Góngora's own approval. The practice of defining broad areas of poetry in this way, for ease of reference, was confined neither to Góngora nor to Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it has been seen here how misleading or irrelevant such titles can be, when applied to complex works by a great poet. In the finest of the sonnets examined in this study, it is the many-sidedness of theme and mood that has been perhaps their most significant and memorable feature. Future editions of Góngora's poetry, or areas of it, should follow Millé's example and omit the original headings from each poetic form included in the publication, unless, of course, the Vicuña or Chacón headings are retained for a specific purpose.

I would hope in particular that this study might serve to encourage a proper appreciation of many of the outstanding works in sonnet form that have been examined in its pages, supplementing the small number of pieces that constantly appear in anthologies of poetry as representative of Góngora's work in this form. As was pointed out in the Introduction, it has only been possible to analyse a limited number of sonnets in this thesis. Other critics will certainly wish to examine works that have been ignored here, and will continue to offer new insights into and evaluations of those sonnets that I have endeavoured to understand.

The difficulties of many of Góngora's sonnets, as of other areas of his work, can be extremely daunting, as even that most erudite of commentators, García de Salcedo Coronel, candidly admitted⁴. Their complexity and beauty, however, can be a constant inspiration. In the first chapter of his book on the Sonnet, John Fuller writes: "... the sonnet encourages intelligence, precision and density of imagery"⁵. No-one enjoying the acquaintanceship of the sonnets of Luis de Góngora over a period of time could doubt that these qualities are to be found here in abundance. The sensitive reader will happily agree with Federico García Lorca's judgement:⁶

¿Qué es eso de oscuridad? Yo creo que peca de luminoso.

and with Jorge Guillén's assertion that his work contains the very basis upon which our appreciation of life itself is founded:⁷

Don Luis nos ofrece - nada más, nada menos - una visión hermosa de la Naturaleza... El asunto no puede ser más central, y Góngora lo establece según la tradición heredada por su época y por su país, sin deformaciones extravagantes de sensibilidad ni de gusto. Sus infinitos hallazgos nacen acordes a la visión más sana, más equilibrada de esa realidad que acepta y disfruta.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

- 1 See in particular Joseph G Fucilla, *Estudios sobre el petrarquismo en España*, Madrid, 1960.
- 2 E Orozco Díaz, *Lope y Góngora frente a frente*, Madrid, 1973.
- 3 -- Andrée Collard, *Nueva poesía. Conceptismo y culteranismo en la crítica española*, Madrid 1968.
- 4 In the introductory dedication of his *Segundo tomo de las obras de Don Luis de Góngora comentadas...*, he writes: "... después de haber naufragado diez años en el dudoso mar de las Obras de don Luis de Góngora, hallé digno templo en V.E. donde suspendiese mis votos."
- 5 John Fuller, *The Sonnet*, London, 1972, p 6.
- 6 "La imagen poética de don Luis de Góngora", *Obras completas*, (4th edition), Madrid, 1960, pp 66-88.
- 7 *Lenguaje poético: Góngora*, *Lenguaje y poesía* (2nd edition), Madrid, 1972, pp 31-71.

APPENDIX

LIST OF SONNETS ANALYSED

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