

# S K E N È

**Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies**

---

**10:1 2024**

Memory and Performance.  
Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

Edited by Francesca Bortoletti, Giovanna Di Martino,  
and Eugenio Refini

# SKENÈ Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies

---

*Founded by Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliuzzi, and Alessandro Serpierti*

<i>Executive Editor</i>	Guido Avezzù.
<i>General Editors</i>	Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliuzzi.
<i>Editorial Board</i>	Chiara Battisti, Simona Brunetti, Camilla Caporicci, Sidia Fiorato, Sotera Fornaro, Massimo Fusillo, Felice Gambin, Alessandro Grilli, Chiara Lombardi, Lorenzo Mancini, Stefania Onesti, Nicola Pasqualicchio, Antonietta Provenza, Susan Payne, Cristiano Ragni, Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, Alessandra Squeo, Emanuel Stelzer, Savina Stevanato, Martina Treu, Gherardo Ugolini, Antonio Ziosi.
<i>Managing Editors</i>	Valentina Adami, Emanuel Stelzer.
<i>Assistant Managing Editors</i>	Marco Duranti, Roberta Zanoni.
<i>Editorial Staff</i>	Chiara Battisti, Petra Bjelica, Francesco Dall'Olio, Serena Demichelis, Carina Fernandes, Sidia Fiorato, Carla Suthren.
<i>Typesetting</i>	Elena Festa, Cristiano Ragni.
<i>Advisory Board</i>	Anna Maria Belardinelli, Anton Bierl, Enoch Brater, Jean-Christophe Cavallin, Richard Allen Cave, Rosy Colombo, Claudia Corti, Marco De Marinis, Tobias Döring, Pavel Drábek, Paul Edmondson, Keir Douglas Elam, Ewan Fernie, Patrick Finglass, Enrico Giaccherini, Mark Griffith, Daniela Guardamagna, Stephen Halliwell, Robert Henke, Pierre Judet de la Combe, Eric Nicholson, Guido Paduano, Franco Perrelli, Didier Plassard, Donna Shalev, Susanne Wofford.

Copyright © 2024 S K E N È.  
The Journal is a CC-BY 4.0 publication  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)  
SKENÈ Theatre and Drama Studies  
<https://skenejournal.skeneproject.it>  
[info@skeneproject.it](mailto:info@skeneproject.it)

Edizioni ETS  
Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa  
[info@edizioniets.com](mailto:info@edizioniets.com)  
[www.edizioniets.com](http://www.edizioniets.com)

Distribuzione  
Messaggerie Libri SPA  
Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)

Promozione  
PDE PROMOZIONE SRL  
via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna  
ISBN: 9788-8467-6968-8  
ISBN (pdf): 9788-8467-6969-5  
ISSN 2421-4353

## Contents

### Memory and Performance. Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

Edited by Francesca Bortoletti, Giovanna Di Martino, and Eugenio Refini

FRANCESCA BORTOLETTI, GIOVANNA DI MARTINO, EUGENIO REFINI – <i>Preface</i>	5
FRANCESCA BORTOLETTI, EUGENIO REFINI – <i>Introduction.</i> <i>Ephemeral Renaissance. Myth and Drama in Renaissance Festivals and Performing Rituals</i>	9
DANIELA SACCO – <i>The Performativity of the Classical According to Warburg: Pathosformeln and Memory in Renaissance Festivals</i>	27
CLAUDIO PASSERA – <i>The Glory of Rome Comes Back to Life. Real and Ephemeral Triumphal Arches for a Renaissance Wedding. Rimini 1475</i>	45
SERGIO COSTOLA – <i>Lucrezia Borgia’s Triumphal Chariot: Notes on Performance Documentation</i>	61
RAIMONDO GUARINO – <i>Nympha loci: Gardens, Statues and Poetry in Early Renaissance Rome</i>	81
JAN BAŽANT – <i>Pompa in Honorem Ferdinandi, 1558</i>	97
BENEDETTA COLASANTI – <i>A Rediscovery of Antiquity. Traces of Ancient Mechanics in the Staging of the Opening Performance of the Farnese Theatre in Parma (1628)</i>	115
EDMUND THOMAS – <i>Bernini’s Two Theatres and the Trauma of Classical Reception</i>	131
MARIA CZEPIEL – <i>“Como la luz de la fe te falte”: the Privileging of the Christian over the Pagan in Calderón’s El divino Orfeo (1634)</i>	147
BORJA FRANCO LLOPIS, IVÁN REGA CASTRO – <i>Representations of the Battle of the Giants: an Early Modern Anti-Islamic Allegory Deployed by the Hispanic Monarchy</i>	167

### Special Section

CARLA SUTHREN – Malika Bastin-Hammou, Giovanna Di Martino, Cécile Dudouyt, and Lucy C. M. M. Jackson (eds), <i>Translating Ancient Greek Drama in Early Modern Europe: Theory and Practice (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Centuries)</i> . Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023. ISBN 9783110718652, pp. x + 344.	189
FRANCESCA COPPOLA – Edoardo Pérez Rasilla. <i>El Teatro Español de Madrid. La Historia (1583-2023)</i> . Madrid: Cátedra, 2023. ISBN 9788437646633, pp. 488.	197

- ROBERTA MULLINI – Francesco Marroni. *George Bernard Shaw. Commediografo e saltimbanco*. Lanciano: Carabba, 2023. ISBN 9788863447156, pp. 215 207
- BEATRICE BERSELLI – Benjamin Wihstutz, Daniele Vecchiato, and Mirjam Kreuser (eds), *#CoronaTheater. Der Wandel der performativen Künste in der Pandemie*. Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2022. ISBN 9783957494351, pp. 210. 215
- SHIN'ICHI MURATA - STEFANO ALOE, *An Appointment with Japanese Noh Theatre in Verona and Milan* 231

MARIA CZEPIEL\*

## “Como la luz de la fe te falte”: the Privileging of the Christian over the Pagan in Calderón’s *El divino Orfeo* (1634)

Abstract

The seventeenth century saw the rise in Spain of *autos sacramentales*, allegorical plays performed on the feast of Corpus Christi. The most important writer of this genre was Calderón de la Barca, and among his *autos* is a group of ten plays whose dramatic action is based on Classical mythology. In these plays, Calderón draws on an age-old tradition of allegorisation in order to assimilate pagan fable to the Christian story of Redemption. I begin this study by discussing how contemporary mythographers dealt with the delicate balance of synthesising the pagan and Christian narratives while affirming the truth of the latter, as well as Calderón’s own defence of the allegorical use of fable. I go on to exemplify how Calderón synthesises pagan and Christian elements while emphasising the validity of the Christian narrative in a specific play, *El divino Orfeo* (1634). Calderón principally exploits the myth of Orpheus, although he also draws on the Ovidian Creation myth, the myth of Proserpina, and the descent of Aeneas to the Underworld. I also discuss the use of a further myth which has not been noticed by scholars, namely that of Phaethon, which Calderón exploits in his depiction of the Devil. However, I demonstrate that Calderón privileges the Christian narrative by constantly naming biblical and patristic authorities, while never referring to Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. Furthermore, I will show how Calderón suppresses or elides certain elements of the Classical fable to make it more compatible with the Christian account of Redemption.

KEYWORDS: Calderón; *El divino Orfeo*; *auto sacramental*; mythology; syncretism

Besides his comic and serious plays, the Spanish playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca is famous for having perfected the form of the *auto sacramental*. This was a one-act play performed during the feast of Corpus Christi, which used allegory to tell the story of Christ’s redemption of Man and presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Among Calderón’s *autos sacramentales* is a group of ten, written over the course of some fifty years, whose dramatic action is based on Classical mythology.<sup>1</sup> In these plays, Calderón draws on

<sup>1</sup> These are *El divino Jasón*, *El divino Orfeo I*, *Psiquis y Cupido I*, *Los encantos de la culpa*, *El laberinto del mundo*, *El sacro Pernaso*, *El divino Orfeo II*, *Psiquis y Cupido II*, *El verdadero Dios Pan*, and *Andrómeda y Perseo*. For an overview, see Martín Acosta 1969;

\* University of Oxford - maria.czepiel@lincoln.ox.ac.uk

an age-old tradition of allegorisation in order to assimilate pagan fable to the Christian story of Redemption, or rather, to expose the 'true' Christian meaning which the playwright frequently insists is already present and merely needs to be teased out. However, in order to prove that the Christian interpretation is correct, it is necessary to privilege it over the pagan one.

I will begin this study by discussing how contemporary mythographers dealt with the delicate balance of synthesising the pagan and Christian narratives while affirming the truth of the latter, as well as Calderón's own defence of the allegorical use of fable. I will go on to exemplify how Calderón synthesises pagan and Christian elements while emphasising the validity of the Christian narrative in a specific play, *El divino Orfeo* (1634). While the play is mainly based on the myth of Orpheus, critics have noticed the presence of various other myths, such as the Ovidian Creation myth, the abduction of Proserpina and the descent of Aeneas to the Underworld. I will discuss the use of a further myth which has not been noticed by scholars, namely that of Phaethon, which Calderón exploits in his depiction of the Devil. However, as we shall see, Calderón privileges the Christian narrative by constantly referring to biblical and patristic authorities while never citing Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. Finally, I will show how Calderón suppresses or elides certain elements of the Classical fable to make it more compatible with the Christian account of Redemption.

## 1. Allegories of Classical Myth in the Spanish Golden Age

The use of allegory to find Christian values in pagan letters began centuries before Calderón with the Church Fathers.<sup>2</sup> Although Ovid's stories of divine misdemeanours initially made his work more difficult to interpret in this light, by the fourteenth century works such as the *Ovide moralisé* and Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus* began to appear, vindicating the possibility of finding edifying messages in even the most seemingly frivolous Classical myths. In Golden Age Spain the issue continued to be contentious: on the one hand, some intellectuals felt that there was no benefit to be found in the *fingimientos* (fictions) of pagan poets, and that they were particularly inappropriate for Christian interpretations (Green 1970, 113-23; Páramo Pomareda 1957, 58-9). However, there was also a prominent current of allegorising interpretations. This tendency manifested itself with the publication of Pérez de Moya's *Philosophia secreta* (1585), in which the author's descriptions of each personage and episode is followed by a triple *declaración* (explanation)

however, for up-to-date scholarship, including revised dating, see individual editions in the *Autos Sacramentales Completos* series.

<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see Sez nec 1953.

which interprets the story on historical, physical and moral planes. At the start of his work, Pérez de Moya argues that Classical authors used fable as a way to transmit virtue and morals:

. . . porque toda fábula se funda en un razonamiento de cosas fingidas y aparentes, inventadas por los poetas y sabios, para que debajo de una honesta recreación de apacibles cuentos . . . inducir a los lectores a muchas veces leer y saber su escondida moralidad y provechosa doctrina. (Pérez de Moya 1599, 1v)

[. . . because all fables are based on a description of false and feigned things, invented by poets and sages, so that beneath the honest recreation of pleasant stories . . . it will induce readers often to read them and come to know their hidden morality and profitable doctrine.]

This work was followed in 1620 by the appearance of Baltasar de Vitoria's *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, which offers us an illuminating insight into Calderón's use of allegory in the mythological *autos*. Like Pérez de Moya before him, Vitoria explains in his first chapter that the Gentiles used fable to transmit moral truths compatible with Christianity:

Sabida cosa es, que los filósofos, y poetas antiguos, fueron los teólogos de la antigua gentilidad, como lo afirma Lactancio Firmiano, San Agustín, y San Ambrosio, y así los más de los poetas procuraron aprovecharse de los libros del sapientísimo Moisés, y de los demás que tocaban a la sagrada Escritura. (Vitoria 1620, 1.1)

[It is well known that the ancient philosophers and poets were the theologians of ancient gentility, as Lactantius Firmianus, St Augustine, and St Ambrose affirm, and so the majority of poets sought to make use of the books of wisest Moses, and others related to Scripture.]

Here he seems to go even further than Pérez de Moya by listing Christian authorities extensively to support his claim and even alleging that the Ancients themselves used biblical texts.

Like the writers of the aforementioned mythographical works, Calderón often explains that pagan myth can be a vehicle for Christian values, while simultaneously emphasising the primacy of the Christian interpretation. Often, he makes his characters express surprise that mythological themes are being used: for example, in *El sacro Pernaso*, when Faith appears dressed as a Sibyl, Judaism asks: "¿De cuándo acá vistió traje / la Fe de Sibila?" (Calderón 2006, 171-2; Since when did Faith wear a Sibyl's clothes here?). Likewise, in the *loa* (short introductory play) to *El verdadero dios Pan*, Poetry asks: "en el festín / que sacra historia ha dispuesto, / ¿de qué la Fábula puede / servir?" (Calderón 2005, 103-6; in the banquet which sacred history has

prepared, how can Fable be of use?). These expressions of incredulity are always followed by an explanation of the idea that pagan cultures were exposed to the truths of Christianity, but without the guidance of true faith were unable to interpret them correctly: for example, in *El sacro Pernaso* Calderón has Faith say,

. . . porque, como  
 la luz de la fe te falte,  
 a quien nunca viste, oyendo  
 los prodigios singulares  
 de sus misterios, fingiste  
 fabulosas vanidades  
 a quien los atribuyeses.  
 (218-24)

[. . . because, since you lack the light of faith, which you never saw, hearing the wondrous prodigies of its mysteries, you invented fictitious fancies to whom you could attribute them.]

He also uses the imagery of light in the *loa* to *El verdadero dios Pan*, where the character Poetry says that although the gentiles had heard of Christian truths, “como las oían ciegos, / sin lumbre de fe, a sus falsos / dioses las atribuyeron” (313-15; since they hear them blindly, without the light of faith, they attributed them to their false gods).

A particularly important text to our understanding of Calderón’s vision of his role as writer of *autos* is the *loa* to *El laberinto del mundo*, where he writes:

. . . y queriendo  
 que el Pueblo sepa, que no  
 hay fábula sin misterio,  
 si alegórica a la Luz  
 desto se mira, un ingenio,  
 bien que humilde, ha pretendido  
 dar esta noticia al Pueblo.  
 (Calderón 1956, 1558)

[. . . and since he wanted the people to know that there is no fable without mystery, if interpreted allegorically in the light of it, this author of humble talent has aimed to make this known to the people.]

Thus, Calderón sees his role less as a creative one, and rather as an interpretative one: as Kurtz puts it, “Especially noteworthy is his express denial . . . that he was the actual author of the mythological *autos*; rather, he



presents himself as the editor or transmitter of their truths" (1988, 266). She goes on to point out that, for Calderón, the only guarantee of 'interpreting' these myths correctly is interpreting them according to the true light of faith, which is the "warranty of perfected understanding and the foundation of valid interpretation" (266). Significantly, Calderón illustrates how Christian teaching should be used as the guide to interpretation of pagan fable by quoting a Christian authority just a few lines before, where he cites St Paul as the source for his ideas on allegory (Calderón 1956, 1558; "Dígalo el texto de Pablo", Let the text of St Paul tell it). As we shall see, Calderón puts these ideas into practice in *El divino Orfeo*, where he skilfully assimilates the Classical and Christian narratives while simultaneously privileging the latter through explicit references to biblical and patristic authorities.

## 2. Orpheus-Christ as Musician

The myth of Orpheus is well known from Ovid and Virgil (Ov. *Met.* 10.1-85, 11.1-84, Virg. *Georg.* 4.453-527); in fact, Calderón used it as the inspiration for two separate *autos*, the one from 1634 under discussion, and one from 1663.<sup>3</sup> The myth has three main points of intersection with the story of Christ's Redemption of Man: firstly, that of the hero's musical abilities; secondly, Orpheus' descent to the Underworld; and finally, the pastoral element of the myth.

The most frequent way in which Calderón assimilates the stories of Orpheus and Christ in *El divino Orfeo* is through their associations with music. Throughout the play, Calderón draws on various Christian ideas of God as musician; however, in every case, he refers explicitly to a biblical or patristic authority, but omits Classical ones. For example, during Eurídice's eulogy of Orfeo in 143-218, Calderón refers to Clement of Alexandria's description of God as choirmaster:

... cuando diga  
San Clemente Alejandrino,  
viendo que entiendes la cifra  
de la música del orbe,  
que eres maestro de capilla  
(158-62)

[... as St Clement of Alexandria says, seeing that you understand the figure of the music of the sphere, that you are the choirmaster.]

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed history of Christian interpretation of the Orpheus myth, see Duarte 1997, 73-91, and the "Introducción" to *El Divino Orfeo* (Duarte, 1999).

This idea is similar to Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean ideas, such as the idea that celestial bodies move in perfect proportions, resulting in the music of the spheres. Indeed, in 167-8, Calderón writes “Verso y poema es del cielo / con acordada armonía” (it is a heavenly verse and poem / with tempered harmony). However, the playwright privileges the Christian authorities behind the idea of universal proportion rather than Classical ones, and instead of citing a classical source such as Plato, refers to Wisdom 11.20 (170-3; “la eterna Sabiduría / lo entiende así, cuando dice / que con número y medida / todo fue criado”, Wisdom understands it thus when it says that everything was created with number and measure) and to Chrysostom (173-4; “como / Crisóstomo nos explica”, as Chrysostom explains).

Another Christian idea to which Calderón refers in this passage is the assimilation of the harp of King David to Christ. Once again, Calderón points explicitly to his Christian sources:

El instrumento templado  
eres tú y su melodía  
te ha de aplicar Agustino  
cuando sobre un rey salmista,  
con Ambrosio y Genebrardo,  
te llaman salterio y cítara.  
(175-80)

[You are this tempered instrument, and Augustine will apply its melody to you when, with Ambrose and Genebrard, writing about the psalmist-king, they call you psalter and cithara.]

Later in the play, when Orfeo discovers the loss of Eurídice, Amor promises him an “instrumento” (1091) to help him descend to the Underworld to regain her. Here, Calderón is once again exploiting a Christian music-related conceit whereby the lyre represents Christ’s death or the Cross itself (Duarte 1999, 59-63). The equation of lyre and Cross is explained in Amor’s presentation to Orfeo of the harp decorated with a cross:

El instrumento que ves  
...  
por aquesta parte es Cruz  
y ataúd por esta es,  
...  
porque la Cruz y ataúd  
tienen tan alta virtud  
que su música amorosa  
podrá librar a tu esposa

de prisión y esclavitud.  
(1139-43)

[The instrument which you see . . . is a Cross on one side, and a tomb on the other . . . because the Cross and the tomb have such great virtue, that their amorous music will be able to free your wife from prison and slavery.]

A more specific identification of the lyre of David and the Cross occurs in 1092-4: “arpa con que lanzará / David demonios y ya / libre Saúl de tormento” (the harp with which David / will drive out demons and / free Saul from torment). Once again, Calderón reinforces his reliance on patristic authority via a reference to Saint Isidore’s commentary on the Book of Kings:

Esta arpa dulce y clara,  
el instrumento es sonoro  
con trastes y cuerdas de oro  
que dé números y leyes:  
hable el libro de los Reyes,  
dígalo San Isidoro.  
(1128-33)

[This sweet and clear-sounding harp is that sonorous instrument with strings and frets of gold which gives numbers and laws; let the book of Kings tell of it, and let Saint Isidore speak of it.]

As these examples demonstrate, the references to authority are explicitly flagged by a verb of saying such as *decir*.

Calderón also draws on the Classical Orpheus’ status as musician. In particular, he draws on the trope of Orpheus’ ability to control nature with his music such as by moving rocks or enchanting birds and wild animals when Aristeo, the figure representing the Devil, tries to convince Eurídice to change her affections:

¿qué te sirve que a su voz  
estos peñascos se muden,  
estos aires se embaracen,  
estos pájaros le escuchen,  
estos cristales se paren  
y aquestos brutos se junten . . . ?  
(783-8)

[What use is it to you that at his voice, these rocks move, these breezes are stopped in their tracks, these birds listen to him, these crystal waters stop flowing, and these brutes gather . . . ?]

However, although we recognise the allusion to the Classical myth, Calderón does not refer to a source such as Virgil or Ovid, even though in his Christianised portrayal of Christ as musician he explicitly points to the Bible and the Church Fathers.

One final way in which Calderón draws on ideas about music is by assimilating Orfeo's singing to God's creative power. At the very opening of the play, he draws on the idea of God's performative voice in Genesis: "Pues mi voz en el principio / el cielo y la tierra cría" (29-30, 35-6; Since my voice in the beginning creates heaven and earth). The idea of God as creator-musician is reinforced through form, since Orfeo's lines during the Creation sequence are probably all sung (Duarte 1999, 46). The biblical authority for this episode is referred to explicitly through quotations in Latin ("factum est ita", 80, cf. Gen. 1:7-30; "fiat", 82, cf. Gen. 1:3, 1:6).

While Orpheus was not considered a creating deity, there is a Classical parallel for the story of Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.1-88. Indeed, elsewhere Calderón uses the Ovidian myth to demonstrate how Christian truth can be extracted from Classical letters with the right interpretation. In *El sacro Pernaso* (1659), to prove that the pagans had some idea of divine truth but misinterpreted it, Faith asks Judaism and Gentility to read corresponding passages from Scripture and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The first example is that of the Creation episodes at the beginning of both texts (Calderón 2006, 258; "en sus principios", at the beginning), whose similarities are underlined when Faith states that "hebreo y latino frase / convienen simbolizadas / fábulas y realidades" (Calderón 2006, 258-261; the Hebrew and Latin account bring together symbolised fables and realities). In *El divino Orfeo*, Calderón refers to both the pagan and Christian versions of the story of Creation during Aristeo's opening speech, when the audience is told that before Creation the world:

... una masa está de modo  
sin ley, sin forma, ni uso,  
...  
y ... los poetas  
caos le dirán y nada los profetas.  
(20-4)

[... is a mass without law, form, or use, ... and ... the poets will call it chaos, and the prophets, nothing.]

"Nada" (nothing) refers to Genesis 1:2, whereas the references to an orderless mass and chaos described by poets evokes the state of the world before Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "quem dixere Chaos: rudis indigestaque moles" (Ov. *Met.* 1.3; which they called Chaos: a formless and confused mass). While here Calderón does use a verb of saying ("dirán") of both cases,

no specific authors are named, which on the surface seems to place the pagan and biblical accounts on an equal footing. Nonetheless, Lennon points out that the anaphora of “nada” in the following lines subtly reinforces the correctness of the account in Genesis over that of the Classical account (2016, 74), once again privileging the biblical version.

### 3. Orpheus-Christ's Descent to the Underworld

The second main point of intersection between the Orpheus story and the story of Redemption is that of the descent to the Underworld, used as an allegory of Christ's death on the Cross. The Christian narrative is made explicit in 1280ff. with the reaction of Nature to the death of Christ. In the stage direction to 1280, Calderón specifies a *terremoto* (earthquake), referring to the earthquake which occurred at Christ's death in Matthew 27:51-3. The reference to the eclipse in the following lines (1281, “Parasismo de luz”, paroxysm of light; 1287, “bandolera del sol ha parecido”, [night] has seemed a bandit stealing the sun; 1311, “Morir el sol”, the sun's death) refers to that reported in Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44, and is common in Calderón's *autos*. There is also a reference to Dionysius the Areopagite's comment that “o expira cielo y tierra o algún fuerte / Dios pasa por el río de la Muerte” (1317-18; either heaven and earth are passing away, or some great / God is passing through the river of death). Although here Calderón does not refer explicitly to the authority behind this account, he does so in the *auto El socorro general*, where the reference is once again signalled by the verb “dijo”:

sin haberme persuadido  
a que el general eclipse  
fuese por el homicidio,  
aunque viendo sus efectos,  
aquel gran varón Dionisio  
filósofo de Areópago  
desde allá diz que lo dijo.  
(Calderón 2001, 318-24)

[. . . without persuading me that the great eclipse was because of a murder. Although they say that, seeing its effects, the great Dionysius, philosopher of Areopagite, said it was so.]

Various Classical elements converge in the sequence of Orpheus' descent to the Underworld. Naturally, Calderón draws on aspects of the Classical myth such as the ability of Orpheus' music to move the infernal inhabitants to grant his request, which Ovid reports in *Met.* 10.46-7. This idea also appeared in contemporary mythological handbooks, such as Vitoria's *Teatro de los dioses*:

Allí llegando a las puertas del infierno, tañó con más suavidad, y más eficacia que nunca . . . Olvidados Plutón y Proserpina de su inexorable crueldad, dieron dispensación de sus inviolables leyes, remitiendo la ordinaria pena de sus afligidos condenados.

(Vitoria 1620, 570)

[There, arriving at the gates of hell, he played more sweetly and efficaciously than ever . . . Pluto and Proserpina, having forgotten their implacable cruelty, granted an exemption from their inviolable laws, dispensing with the usual punishment for the wretched condemned.]

In *El divino Orfeo*, Aqueronte allows Orfeo to cross the Styx since “Vencido me ha tu canto” (Your song has conquered me; 1220-1), and Aristeo returns Eurídice because “de tu canto / vencido estoy” (1377-8; I am conquered / by your song).

Calderón also alludes to the motif of the suspension of infernal punishments due to Orpheus’ playing. Virgil mentions Ixion’s wheel stopping in *Georg.* 4.484, and the motif is given even greater treatment in the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid writes that Tantalus stopped reaching for water, Ixion’s wheel stopped, vultures stopped plucking Tityus’ liver, the Danaides stopped trying to refill their jars and Sisyphus stopped pushing his rock (*Ov. Met.* 10.41-4). Calderón evokes this *topos* in 1087, “suspendiendo el dolor todo / del Cocito” (suspending all the grief of Cocytus); significantly, in Virgil’s *Georgics* the Underworld is called *Cocytus* in 4.479, just before the mention of the suspension of punishments. However, in none of the above cases does Calderón refer to Virgil or Ovid as authorities for the Orpheus story.

Orpheus-Christ’s descent to the Underworld also has parallels to Aeneas’ descent to the Underworld in Book Six of the *Aeneid*, as Lennon points out: for example, Amor’s exposition of the necessity of an “instrumento” (1091) to descend to the Underworld may point to the story of the golden bough which Aeneas had to retrieve to gain entry (Lennon 2016, 89-92). Aqueronte’s response to Orfeo’s desire to cross the Lethe despite the fact that he is still alive (1206-9; “si tienes / tanto poder que vivo hasta aquí vienes; . . . no has de vencerme”, if you have / such great power that you have come to this point alive; . . . you will not overcome me) also recalls Acheron’s “*corpora viva nefas Stygia vectare carina*” (*Virg. Aen.* 6.391; it is not lawful for me to carry live bodies on my Stygian boat). Calderón seems to have this text in mind since, in their accounts of the Orpheus myth, other Classical texts do not mention Orpheus’ first encounter with the ferryman of the Styx (Lennon 2016, 34). However, typically, Calderón does not allude explicitly to Aeneas or cite Virgil as an authority.

Another mythological allusion relating to the katabasis is signalled in 1267 where Aristeo reveals himself to be Pluto, the god of the Underworld

("Plutón me nombro", my name is Pluto). In combination with the fact that he kidnaps Eurídice in an attempt to make her his wife (1057-7; "el dios del infierno / dueño es suyo", the god of the Underworld is her master), this also evokes the myth of the abduction of Proserpina by the infernal king (Ov. *Met* 5.332-571). This myth is particularly pertinent to the story of the Fall, since Proserpina was condemned to live in the Underworld for six months of the year because she had eaten some pomegranate seeds while held hostage there, which provides a parallel for Eurydice-Eve's damnation through the eating of a fruit. Lennon points out that *apple* and *pomegranate* are etymologically linked through the Latin word *pomus* and that in Eurídice's description of the apples Calderón deliberately uses the word "pomas" (244), eschewing the more common *manzanas*, thus simultaneously alluding to the Fall and the Proserpina myth (Lennon 2016, 87). However, once again, Calderón makes no reference to Ovid in these passages.

#### 4. Orpheus-Christ as Shepherd

The third main point of intersection between the Orpheus fable and the narrative of the Redemption is the pastoral element. Christ was often symbolised by a shepherd on the basis of biblical texts such as Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd") and the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18. Once again, this Christian interpretation of the pastoral is supported by an allusion to a biblical authority. Here it is more difficult to pinpoint, but in line 146 ("pues dices / yo conozco ovejas mías", for you say / 'I know my sheep'), this is signalled by the word "dices" which, as we have seen, usually points to an authority. Here, "dices" refers to Christ's words in John 10:14 and so remits to his authority as transmitted by the Evangelists.

The play contains many *topoi* of the Classical pastoral. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the pastoral trope of pathetic fallacy; while highly conventionalised in the Renaissance pastoral, this device goes back to Theocritus and was perhaps most famously rendered by Virgil (for example, in Eclogue 5 where Nature mourns for Daphnis, and in Eclogue 10 where rocks and mountains weep in sympathy with Gallus' plight). These elements also appear in *El divino Orfeo*. Before the Fall, Nature is in harmony with the inhabitants of Paradise:

La voz de mi esposo oí  
de cuya dulce armonía  
la luna rayos esparce,  
el sol resplandores brilla,  
la tierra produce flores,  
pájaros el viento giran,

peces las espumas cortan,  
 los animales animan  
 (113-20).

[I heard the voice of my husband, at whose sweet harmony the moon scatters rays, the sun shines with great brightness, the earth produces flowers, birds make the wind move, fish swim through the foamy sea, and animals are animated.]

However, after Eurydice-Eve's disobedience, Nature is inimical:

La tierra sepulturas  
 abre donde tropiece.  
 Los brutos, que solian  
 lisonjearme obediente,  
 garras y uñas afilan  
 para darme la muerte.  
 De mí los vientos huyen,  
 de mí las aves temen  
 y enturbian sus cristales  
 las cristalinas fuentes.  
 Todo se me rebela.  
 (1013-23)

[The earth opens tombs for me to fall. Brutes, which used to flatter me obediently, sharpen their claws and nails to kill me. The winds flee from me, birds fear me, and the crystalline springs muddy their crystal waters. Everything rebels against me.]

Other pastoral conventions include the motif of the lovesick shepherd carving words into the bark of trees. This trope has its roots in Virg. *Ecl.* 10.53-4, where Gallus declares that he will carve his *amores* (passionate love or its object) into the bark of the trees, and as the trees grow, so will the *amores*. Calderón exploits this in Aristeo's speech on first meeting Eurídice, where he says that, if he is allowed to kiss her hand, "haréis que victoria igual / con la pluma de un puñal / en las cortezas escriba / de estos troncos" (500-3; you will make it so that I will write of such a victory with a dagger for a pen, in the barks of these tree-trunks), and the inscription "con letra gótica y clara / crecer al paso se vea / del árbol" (507-11; will grow as a clear, Gothic letter along with the tree). The playwright blends this with the doctrine of original sin by saying that this carved letter will become "gigante, . . . una letra original . . . que el género humano lea" (512-14; giant . . . an original letter . . . for the human race to read).

Calderón also exploits another conventional action of shepherds in the pastoral genre, the offering of rustic gifts. Perhaps the most well-known



example of this motif occurs in Virgil's second eclogue, where Corydon demonstrates his attractiveness as a suitor by saying how rich he is in cattle, milk and sheep (Ecl. 2.20-2), and offers Alexis gifts of kids (40-2), flowers (45-50) and fruits and nuts (51-3).<sup>4</sup> In Aristeo's lengthy speech, he describes the "rústicos dones" (rustic gifts) of the shepherd Orfeo, which include "flores" (797; flowers), "espigas" (801; ears of grain), "pámpanos" (806; vine shoots) and "leche . . . desatada de las ubres / de sus ovejas" (811-13; milk . . . drawn from the udders of his shee), which remind us of Corydon's offers. He then rejects these gifts as "dones communes" (814; common gifts) and offers Eurídice more luxurious ones such as diamonds (819; "hijos del sol", sons of the sun), "perlas" (824; pearls), "coral" (827), "ámbar" (829; amber), "plata y oro" (833; silver and gold). However, in all of these cases, Calderón does not point us explicitly to the Classical pastoral.

Another *topos* Calderón makes use of is the *latet anguis* trope, from Virg. *Ecl.* 3.92-3. This appears at various points in the play. In 233-9 it is combined with a reference to the snake-bite of the Eurydice myth:

porque la tierra que pisa  
de ponzoñosas serpientes  
poblada está y ser podría  
que alguna disimulada  
entre hermosas clavellinas  
su cándido pie mordiese.  
(233-9)

[because the ground on which she treads is inhabited by poisonous serpents, and it could be that one hidden among some beautiful carnations bites her white foot.]

The trope also appears just before and after the Fall, modified to refer to the serpent in the Tree of Knowledge rather than the Virgilian serpent in the grass: "a su tronco torcida / he visto una serpiente" (947-8; I have seen a serpent twisted around its trunk); "La escondida serpiente, / Eurídice, soy yo" (980-1; I am the hidden serpent, Eurydice). However, once again, despite his sophisticated use of *latet anguis* trope, Calderón does not mention the Classical poet. Rather, he goes on to create a catalogue of patristic authorities for the trope of the Devil as serpent, as ever signalled by words like "dice":

soy el áspid que dice  
Nacianceno que muerde;  
yo soy el escorpión

<sup>4</sup> The motif is of course even older than this, being based on the song of Polyphemus in Theoc. *Id.* 11.

... ,  
 Jerónimo lo enseña,  
 ...  
 yo soy el basilisco  
 que con la vista hiere  
 como lo significa  
 Crisóstomo elocuente,  
 y, en fin, soy la culebra  
 ...  
 como Agustino siente.  
 (983-996)

[I am the asp which Nazianzen says bites; I am the scorpion . . . as Jerome shows; . . . I am the basilisk which wounds with its sight, as eloquent Chrysostom indicates; in sum, I am the snake . . . about which Augustine laments.]

This once again privileges the Christian authorities even where there is close imitation of the Classics.

## 5. The Devil as Phaethon

The biblical references in the aforementioned description of the Devil also demonstrate how Calderón privileges Christian sources, since in Aristeo's narration in 535ff. the Devil's prehistory is described in terms which recall the myth of Phaethon. This allusion has been thus far unidentified by critics, perhaps because, once again, it is not signalled explicitly. Phaethon was frequently allegorised as the Devil due to his rebellion against God and thus his sinful ambition; for example, Berchorius interprets Phaethon as Lucifer in the *Ovidius moralizatus* (Reynolds 1971, 160). Calderón draws on this tradition in the aforementioned comparisons between Scripture and the *Metamorphoses* in *El sacro Pernaso*. At one point, Judaism finds a passage on the War in Heaven in Isaiah:

En *Isaías* aquí  
 encuentro . . .  
 . . . la primera  
 lid entre el dragón y el ángel  
 cuando aspirando soberbio  
 al solio, en vez de sentarse  
 sobre el monte de la luz,  
 en el de las sombras yace.  
 (306-13)

[I find here in Isaiah . . . the first battle between the dragon and the angel when, arrogantly aspiring to the throne, instead of being seated on the mountain of light, he lies in that of shadows.]

Gentility replies with the story of “Faetonte” (Phaethon), who “por querer, arrogante, / levantarse con el día, / al mar despeñado cae” (315-7; tumbles down into the sea for arrogantly wanting to rise with the sun). In the 1664 *El divino Orfeo*, the myth is explicitly referred to by the Príncipe de las Tinieblas or Prince of Shadows (the equivalent character to Aristeo): “¿Qué más Faetonte que yo, / que por gobernar la excelsa / carroza del Sol caí?” (726-8; Who is more of a Phaethon than me, I who fell for wanting to govern the sublime carriage of the Sun?). However, in the 1634 *El divino Orfeo*, Aristeo does not overtly call himself Phaethon, and only refers enigmatically to the mountains as “verdes faetontes” (308; green Phaethons) which reach up towards the sky earlier on in the play.

Later, when relating his story to Eurídice he follows the mythological account of Phaethon point-by-point, still without naming his fabled forebear. For example, he begins by insisting that he is a prince (539ff.; “soy . . . por alta naturaleza / príncipe alto e ilustre”, I am . . . by nature an eminent and illustrious prince), just as in the myth Phaethon insists that he is the Sun’s son. Aristeo then goes on to describe the palace of the Sun:

Sus muros son de diamante  
donde se tallan y esculpen  
crisólitos y topacios  
.  
.  
Sus torres y capiteles,  
gigantes de piedra, suben  
hasta perderse de vista.  
(583-93)

[Its walls are of diamond, in which chrysolite and topaz are carved and sculpted . . . Its towers and capitals, giants of stone, rise up until they are lost to view.]

With its emphasis on brightness and height, this cannot help but remind us of the palace of the Sun at the start of *Metamorphoses* 2:

Regia solis erat sublimibus alta columnis,  
clara micante auro flammisque imitante pyropo,  
cuius ebur nitidum fastigia summa tegebat,  
argenti bifores radiabant lumine valvae.  
(2.1-4)

[The palace of the sun was high up with its tall columns, bright with glittering gold and bronze which flashed like a flame; gleaming ivory adorned the top of its rooves, and the double-doors shone with the light of silver.]

Aristeo's subsequent account of the battle in Heaven also recalls Phaethon's struggle to control the chariot of the Sun. For example, the phrase "que humo exhalan, fuego escupen" (674; which exhale smoke, and spit out fire) recalls the description of the horses of the Sun, "ignemque vomentes" (*Ov. Met.* 2.119; "spewing out fire"). In 696ff. Aristeo narrates the chaos he caused in the sky:

...  
 no hay . . .  
 globo que no se trastorne,  
 ej que no se descoyunte,  
 planeta que no delire,  
 estrella que no caduque,  
 astro que no se desmaye,  
 y con la gran pesadumbre  
 los polos del mundo suenan,  
 los rumbos del cielo crujen.  
 (696-706)

[There is no . . . sphere which is not turned upside-down, no axis which is not dislocated, no planet which does not rave, no star which does not expire, no heavenly body which does not faint, and the poles of the world resound with great sorrow, and the courses of the heavens groan.]

This recalls the confusion Phaethon causes in the heavens when the colder northern constellations grow hot (*Ov. Met.* 2.171ff.) and, ultimately, the destruction brought about when the earth bursts into flame since the chariot of the Sun draws too near to it (2.201ff.). Like Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* (2.311ff.), God has "un rayo en su mano" (709; a bolt of lightning in his hand). In 727 Aristeo even refers explicitly to an escape on a "desbocado caballo" (runaway horse). The immediate purpose of this extended allusion, like the others detailed above, is to draw the mythological and biblical accounts closer. However, it also aids the audience's interpretation of Aristeo's discourse. Although he tells Eurídice that he escaped from Heaven, the Bible says Lucifer was thrown out (Isaiah 14:12). Since we are alerted to the story of Phaethon and its ending with Jupiter striking Phaethon out of the sky, in conjunction with the opening of the play where Aristeo "cae despeñado" (tumbles down), the audience can see through his mendaciousness. However, despite following the myth so closely, and despite the fact that Calderón cites patristic authorities minutely in his description of the Devil, there is no reference to Ovid in the entire episode.

## 6. Suppressed or Elided Elements of the Orpheus Myth

Finally, there are some elements of the Classical myth of Orpheus which do not sit well with the theological narrative. Here, the privileging of the Christian story of Redemption is most obvious; indeed, in some cases Calderón simply does not include problematic parts of the fable. One of these is reported by Ovid (*Met.* 10.78-85), who writes that Orpheus' fidelity to Eurydice made him reject women altogether after losing her for the second time, which Ovid presents as an *aetion* for homosexuality in Thrace. Of course, this element of the myth would be intolerable on the Golden Age Spanish stage in itself, never mind as a representation of Christ. It is also omitted by all the Golden Age authors who treated the myth, such as Garcilaso, Jáuregui and Lope (Cabañas 1948, 30). Orpheus' death at the hands of the Bacchantes (*Virg. Georg.* 4.520-2, *Ov. Met.* 11.1-43) is also omitted as it would have no place in the allegory where Christ's death has already been represented by the descent to the Underworld.

However, in other cases Calderón navigates problematic elements of the Orpheus myth through linguistic and literary ingenuity, rather than suppressing them altogether. For example, in the Classical myth of Orpheus, the hero looks back at Eurydice before they reach the upper world and thus loses her forever. Of course, the second loss of Eurydice does not map easily onto the story of Redemption, firstly, since it would suggest that humans have been condemned rather than saved, and secondly, since it places the blame for this condemnation on the Christ-figure. Critics have observed how, in order to counter this problem, Calderón explains it away using the double meaning of *volver el rostro*: "Frase con que se explica la atención o el cariño cuando se inclina hacia un sujeto para mirarle y al contrario desprecio o desvío cuando se aparta la vista del sujeto" (*Aut.*; "a phrase which signifies attention or affection when one turns towards a subject to look at it, and, on the other hand, disdain or contempt when one looks away from the subject"; see Duarte 1999, 63-4). Aristeo employs this double meaning when he warns Orfeo that every time Humanity sins, it risks going back to the Underworld:

. . . atended mortales,  
 que cada vez que perdiere  
 la gracia de que hoy se vale  
 y tú la vuelvas el rostro,  
 (porque el volverle . . .  
 es fuerza a quien te ofendiere)  
 ha de volver a mi cárcel.  
 (1382-8)

[. . . pay attention, mortals, for every time [Eurydice-Eve] loses the grace which today has saved her and you turn away your face from her (because it is necessary to turn away . . . from the one who offends you), she must return to my prison.]

In response, Orpheus-Christ leaves the sacrament of the Eucharist “para que no te pierdas / de vista” (1400-1; so that you will not be lost from view).

I would also argue that in his elision of the second loss of Eurydice Calderón exploits generic conventions. While plays like Lope’s tragedy *El marido más firme* did include the permanent loss of Eurydice, the audience’s expectation of the ending could be flexible depending on the genre of the work. In a parallel example, Buller points out that in Baroque Italian opera, it was common for the tragic ending to be omitted, and suggests that one of the reasons for this could be the close association of Orpheus with the myth of the pastoral and the predisposition of pastoral romance towards happy endings (Buller 1995, 78–9). As we have seen, Calderón emphasises the pastoral dimension of Orfeo, which creates a generic pull towards a happy ending.

Likewise, Orpheus’ curiosity, which results in his inability to refrain from looking back at Eurydice, is a crucial part of the story which had to be retained. In his study of the myth, Cabañas compares the Orpheus’ curiosity with that of various other mythological characters, such as the Classical Odysseus and the biblical Eve. He explains that Orpheus’ love and ill-fatedness justify his looking back, whereas the curiosity of other mythological characters is usually a symptom of overweening ambition. Nonetheless, he notes in passing that this negative kind of curiosity appears in the character of Euridice in *El divino Orfeo* (Cabañas 1948, 63-5). I would like to go a step further and argue that Calderón emphasises Euridice-Eve’s curiosity precisely in order to compensate for the fact that Orpheus’s curiosity has been lost in the process of allegorisation. This is achieved in particular by the repetition of “ciencia” (knowledge), which underlines Eurydice-Eve’s desire to obtain the knowledge contained within the forbidden fruit and therefore be like God (Genesis 3:5): “en copa y tronco tiene / la ciencia con que el cielo / supo obrarle” (950-3; in its crown and trunk it contains the science with which Heaven knew how to make it); “me dice que en sí / altas ciencias contiene” (969-970; it tells me that it contains profound sciences inside). In this way, Calderón maintains a crucial element of the Classical fable, while simultaneously privileging the Christian narrative, in which redemption has been achieved by a perfect saviour.

In conclusion, in *El divino Orfeo* (1634) Calderón masterfully synthesises pagan myth and Christian theological narrative, but always privileges the authority of the latter. We have seen how Orpheus is assimilated to Christ through the themes of music, katabasis and the pastoral; Eurydice

is assimilated to Proserpina; and the Devil is assimilated to Aristaeus and Pluto. I have also argued that the Devil is represented in terms which recall the story of Phaethon. However, in all these cases, Calderón refers explicitly to biblical and patristic authorities, but never to Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. The Christian narrative is also privileged through the suppression of certain elements such as Orpheus' homosexuality, and the elision of others through wordplay, manipulation of generic convention, and processes of transference. In short, Calderón both vindicates the value that is to be had in Classical letters and keeps within the bounds of orthodoxy by maintaining the superiority of Christian truth.

## Works Cited

- Buller, Jeffrey L. 1995. "Looking Backwards: Baroque Opera and the Ending of the Orpheus Myth". *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1 (3): 57-79
- Cabañas, Pablo. 1948. *El mito de Orfeo en la literatura española*. Madrid: CSIC.
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. 2015. *El laberinto del mundo*. Edited by Juan Manuel Escudero. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 2006. *El sacro Pernaso*, edited by Antonio Cortijo and Alberto Rodríguez Rípodas. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 2005. *El verdadero dios Pan*. Edited by Fausta Antonucci. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 2001. *El socorro general*. Edited by Ignacio Arellano. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 1999. *El divino Orfeo*. Edited by José Enrique Duarte. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 1956. *Autos sacramentales*. In *Obras completas*, vol.2, edited by Ángel Valbuena Prat. Madrid: Aguilar.
- Duarte, J. Enrique. 1999. "Introducción". In *El Divino Orfeo*, edited by José Enrique Duarte, 9-178. Kassel: Reichenberger.
- 1997. "El mito de Orfeo y su simbología cristológica en la tradición y en Calderón". In *Divinas y humanas letras. Doctrina y poesía en los autos sacramentales de Calderón*, edited by I. Arellano et al., 73-91. Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra.
- Green, Otis H. 1970. "Fingen Los Poetas – Notes on the Spanish Attitude toward Pagan Mythology". In Id., *The Literary Mind of Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, 113-23. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press.
- Kurtz, Barbara E. 1988. "'No Word without Mystery': Allegories of Sacred Truth in the *Autos Sacramentales* of Calderón de la Barca". *PMLA* 103 (3): 262-73.
- Lennon, Paul Joseph. 2016. "Sources, Syncretism, and Significance in Calderón's *El divino Orfeo* (c. 1634)". *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 68 (2): 71-97.
- Martín Acosta, Sister María Inés. 1969. *The Mythological Autos of Calderón de la Barca*. New York: PhD diss. Columbia University.
- Páramo Pomareda, Jorge. 1957. "Consideraciones sobre los 'autos mitológicos' de Calderón de la Barca". *Thesaurus* 12: 51-80.
- Pérez de Moya, Juan. 1599. *Philosophia secreta*. Zaragoza: Miguel Fortuño Sánchez.

- Reynolds, William Donald. 1971. *The "Ovidius Moralizatus" of Petrus Berchorius: An Introduction and Translation*. PhD diss. Champaign and Urbana: University of Illinois.
- Seznec, Jean. 1953. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*. Translated by Barbara F. Sessions. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Vitoria, Baltasar de. 1620-1623. *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, 2 vols. Salamanca: Antonia Ramírez.