

## Love and the Empire in *Os Lusíadas*

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Metida tenho a mão na consciência,  
E não falo senão verdades puras  
Que me ensinou a viva experiência.  
—Luís Vaz de Camões

**Abstract.** Throughout the centuries, *Os Lusíadas* by Camões has been read as a Neoplatonic and Platonic text that follows the basic precepts of the *dolce stil nuovo*. Yet there is an inherent contradiction in this reading, for firstly, it disregards Camões great genius in reinventing the style, and secondly, it does not account for the total sexual contact between the Portuguese sailors and the nymphs on the *Ilha dos Amores*. Furthermore, it does not contextualize Camões within the historical, social, and personal framework that must have played an important part in the composition of the poem. The article's main argument is that Camões composes *Os Lusíadas* considering the dire need that Portugal has for an heir. Hence, it was necessary for the poet to downplay the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions that influenced the *dolce stil nuovo*, in order to incite King Sebastian to seek a sexual encounter that will produce an heir.

European maritime explorations, the colonization of distant lands, and the encounter with unknown people greatly influence the notion of knowledge and writing in sixteenth-century Portugal: indeed, the sailors that encoun-

tered distant lands and people were forced to rely on their own experience to describe and catalog what they saw. Hundreds of years of scholasticism, and a strict adherence to ancient sources of knowledge, preceded the drastic change marked by the maritime explorations. As Donald Pease states, "Instead of returning to their culture's ancient books for allegorical prefigurations, many New World explorers described what they discovered by making up words of their own (or borrowing terms from the natives)" (105). To experience the world with one's own senses, hence, becomes cornerstone of the enrichment of the self, the language, and the greater community. The poet of this period presents his own experience as the protagonist in a writing exemplifying a vision that will both certify and unveil the truth of the world. This is not to say that the personal experience of the poet will override the entire gamut of poetic tradition, for the poet will maintain a close bond with the ancient sources. Yet the poet will, nevertheless, use the ancient sources within a distinctively personal interpretation. Hence, for the sixteenth century, truth is guaranteed in the elaboration of a philosophical argument that is based on personal experience.

In a world where experience is highly valued, the senses are paramount to the acquisition of personal experience, and of the five senses, sight is privileged above all. It is within this framework that we position Luís Vaz de Camões and his epic poem *Os Lusíadas*. Camões, as a soldier with many personal experiences in foreign lands to his name, and as a man who had experienced love with women, will urge King Sebastian to "see" the body of women as the key to Portugal's future. This essential message in *Os Lusíadas* is fundamental to the continuation of the kingdom, for if King Sebastian is able to appropriately decipher the message that a woman's body contains, he will be incited to experience a sexual pleasure that will produce an heir to the throne. Camões places King Sebastian within a symbolic system of social values that must be upheld. Mainly, the king must understand, and implement, the most basic social contract: a man must choose a woman as his mate and reproduce. King Sebastian must conform to the natural law of masculine sexuality upheld by patriarchy. Love within the Portuguese empire is a social and civic responsibility, one that will grant a man a highly prestigious social standing and a vision that will lead him to the acquisition of a knowledge that transcends his own time and space.

In writing *Os Lusíadas*, Camões is conscious of the danger the kingdom faces. Without an heir from King Sebastian, the next Portuguese heirs to the

House of Aviz are Queen Catalina and Cardinal Enrique, grandmother and great uncle to the King. As Queen Catalina is no longer of child-bearing age, it is obvious that Cardinal Enrique could not legitimately produce an heir within the laws of the Catholic Church. It is outside of Portugal where the danger lies, for King Phillip II of Spain has a legitimate direct claim to the Portuguese throne as the brother to Juana—King Sebastian's mother (Oliveira Marques 307). Hence, in light of this situation, more than an epic, *Os Lusíadas* is a *sententia* that attempts to teach King Sebastian how Portugal's history is inherently related to the "good" love between a man and a woman.

King Sebastian's personality would have worried Camões. According to Mary Elizabeth Brooks, the king was educated under the strict supervision of the Jesuit Luis Gonçalves, and professed a strong religious conviction to become a soldier of Christ (9). Furthermore, António de Oliveira Marques and Brooks, as well as many other prominent historians, agree that King Sebastian had a volatile temperament, a selfish personality and a total lack of discipline (Brooks 9; Oliveira Marques 312). Additionally, King Sebastian exemplified an almost fanatical dedication to hunting and military training. Yet, what might have seemed most disturbing to Camões was his total lack of interest in women. Various historians, along with Camões's first critic Manuel Faria e Sousa, mention his complete disinterest in women. Oliveira Marques states: "He abhorred the prospect of marriage" (307). The King's lack of interest in women, coupled with an obsessive personality encouraged by ill-informed counselors, must have been factors Camões considered when writing *Os Lusíadas*.

*Os Lusíadas*, therefore, is born out of an attempt to prolong the independence of the only kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula to successfully defer the power of Castille. More than a celebration of past Portuguese military conquests and heroic feats, or the simple application of what has been read as Platonic and Neo-Platonic theories, *Os Lusíadas* exalts the sexual attraction the prototypical Portuguese male should feel toward the body of women. It is this sexual attraction that a man feels toward a woman that guarantees the biological continuity of Sebastian's progeny, and by metonymy, Portugal's survival. It is here, therefore, that we begin our textual analysis of the poem's most important cantos, IX and X. Within these two cantos, the entire weight of past, present, and future Portuguese history rests, for the great sacrifices endured by the sailors will be rewarded with the physical pleasures Venus orchestrates. Venus, indeed, as the maximum symbol of feminine sexuality,

will be coined as the ultimate solution against any perils from Fortuna. Thus, Camões presents the body of woman as the guarantor for the history and genealogy of the Portuguese royalty and kingdom.

Very few critics have presented Venus as a driving force behind the message of *Os Lusíadas*. Indeed, Camonian criticism of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries was concentrated in reconstructing Camões's biography, or in finding the "muse" that inspired Camões's writing. Diogo de Couto, Severim de Faria, Faria e Sousa, the Visconde Juromenha, Wilhelm Storck, and Theófilo Braga all conclude their studies with a name of a woman that might have served as the inspiration for Camões. Within this group, Storck and Braga, two of the most renowned nineteenth century scholars that shape Camonian criticism in the 20th century, start to read Camões exclusively through the prism of the Italian Renaissance and the basic precepts of the *dolce stil nuovo*. Based on this parameter, since Dante had been inspired by Beatrice and Petrarch had been inspired by Laura, these critics sought to find the specific name of the poet's lady-muse. This orientation in Camonian scholarship will continue throughout a major part of the twentieth century, without considering the inherent contradiction that lies in juxtaposing Platonism and Neoplatonism with *Os Lusíadas*.<sup>1</sup>

Two important stages in the history of literary criticism of the poem complement our present endeavor: The publication of *Lírica de Camões* in 1932 by José Maria Rodrigues and Afonso Lopes Vieira, and the more recent studies by Jorge de Sena and Helder Macedo. As we stated earlier, most of the early critics established a parameter that marked Camonian studies by reading the poem through the precepts of the Italian *dolce stil nuovo*, and by trying to compare and approximate Camões' figure to Petrarch's. Thus, the entire poetic corpus of the poet was reduced to a mere "romantic" exercise, or imitation of Petrarch. Yet Rodrigues and Vieira are the first to shun the precepts of the *dolce stil nuovo*, and introduce the concept of *sentido da realidade*. With this bold new way of reading Camões, the poem's sensual and sexual tones are directly associated with a physical relationship of the poet with a woman. This new filter for reading Camões is central to our present argument, for it was instrumental in the revision of hundreds of years of Camonian Platonic and Neoplatonic literary history. Consequently, this *sentido da realidade* resonates with the period's quest for a knowledge that is derived exclusively from experience.

The Platonic and Neoplatonic thought that had dominated Camonian

criticism did not permit a poetry focused on the enjoyment of the senses, or sexual pleasure. With Rodrigues and Vieira's work, though, a new interpretative field is established with the concept of *sentido da realidade*. Although this bold form of reading Camões still has the main objective of finding the woman who inspired Camões in his writing, what is cardinal to this study is the first association of the poetry's sensuality and sexuality to a concise amorous relationship with a woman. *Os Lusíadas*, therefore, is not relegated to a mere mental exercise of a poet, but upheld as a concrete experience that influenced the vision of the poem's contents. Hence, *sentido da realidade* contradicts Platonic and Neoplatonic thought, the main sources of influence of the *dolce stil nuovo*, in that Dante and Petrarch never touched their "muses," since both Beatrice and Laura are observed from afar and always remain physically untouchable.

The recent studies by Jorge de Sena and Helder Macedo constitute the second group of critics that have shaped the vision of this study. Both Sena and Macedo point to the importance of love in the poem. In their works, the critics present Camões as the poet-philosopher who seeks to harmonize the political chaos he perceives. Yet even more important to our study is their insistence of Camões's role as Sebastian's teacher with a main lesson: Love is the philosophy that brings order to the world.<sup>2</sup> As Macedo states: "Love, for Camões, is a first cause, an existential process and the ultimate purpose of human quest. Through love, appetite is transformed into reason and reason into knowledge" (3). Love is the lofty ideal through which a socially viable human sexuality develops, and through which biological reproduction takes place. Sena, on the other hand, explains how the majority of critics have read Camões's poetry as a collection of "poemas de amor finos" in which the courtly lover suffers from unrequited love. According to Sena, however, the critics do not have an explanation for the explicitly sexual tones found in the poem: "Some of the most sexually explicit passages of *The Lusíads*, and one or another of the minor pieces, have always shocked the prudish" (10). Furthermore, the undeniable influences of the *dolce stil nuovo* in the poem lead the critics to read Camões vis-à-vis Petrarch:

And, since Camões poses constantly as the lover in distress, disdained by his lady, separated from her by the great spaces of earth and time, it was quite easy [...] to view many of them as clever exercises in the Petrarchan tradition. (Sena 11)



Camonian thought, is therefore, specific to its own historical, social and personal framework, one that takes the most important literary influence of the period and transforms it to a unique expression that manifests a personal philosophical interpretation.

The use of the sun at the beginning of the poem, together with what the critics have pointed out is an insistence on the use of the verb “ver,” constitute the key to the last two cantos of the poem. Canto IX is the culmination of the image of Venus, for it is in this canto that the importance of woman as the re-producer of the male identity is fully constructed. Since Canto IX is the most extensive of the cantos, constituting twenty percent of the poem, Camões must have developed this particular canto for more than aesthetic reasons.

Camões’s great innovation is to have Venus organize a sexual encounter in the *Ilha dos Amores* between the sea nymphs and the returning Portuguese sailors. This encounter, a prize and reward for the tired sailors, exemplifies Rodrigues and Vieira’s *sentido da realidade*, Sena’s approach, and Macedo’s stance. It is clear that Camões does not advocate a Platonic or Neoplatonic vision of women, for through this scene the poet clearly states that women are the base of a symbolic social order that insures the life of the patriarchy: “(Women) yield to him their natural and social value as a locus of imprints, marks, and mirage of his activity” (Irigaray 177). Women within patriarchy are the *tabula rasa* that can be imprinted in order to prolong the social value of men. Hence, Venus will typify this when she prepares, and by synecdoche becomes, the earthly paradise that will be possessed and enjoyed by the sailors. This, before any other fundamental message that might be drawn from *Os Lusíadas*, is Camões’s central message.

Venus, as goddess of beauty, mother of love, mistress of the Graces and pleasures, protectress of marriage, promoter of harmony and fertility in the couple, and goddess of childbirth, is the main figure Sebastian has to correctly “see,” that is, interpret. Venus is the archetypal figure of women who not only supports patriarchy, but promotes and sustains it. Indeed, the sailors’ victories have been ensured, in large part, by the intercession of Venus before Zeus. Venus, effectively, uses her body’s sensuality to convince Zeus to protect the Portuguese ships from the perils of the sea and the wrath of Bacchus. It is through the power of Venus that the Portuguese have sailed safely to India, and it is through the power of Venus that the Portuguese will be rightly rewarded.

To Camões, the world that knows not the body of Venus, is a world devoid of noble ideals, vision, and community. Indeed, the attack on the rebellious world that disdains Venus, where “ninguém ama o que deve, / Senão o que sòmente mal deseja,” is an attack on the “mal regida gente” (IX, 29). Consequently, Canto IX begins with the story of Acteon, a mythological figure that spurns the body of women in preference to the passion he feels for hunting. The parallel between Acteon and King Sebastian is undeniable, and the fierce onslaught by Cupid’s army that ensues can be interpreted as Camões’s desire to impose discipline on the King.<sup>3</sup> It is this rebellious world that Cupid, on Venus’s petition, must subdue. Indeed, hunting makes Acteon a desocialized being, “tão austero,” while its ultimate effect is the blinding of the mind and reason: “De cego na alegria bruta, insana” (IX, 26). The hunt for the wild forms does not lead to a greater knowledge, nor does their possession lead to a fruitful life. Subsequently, Acteon’s obsession in the wrong type of hunting, the hunt for the “ugly” beast, leads to a disastrous conclusion: “por seguir um feio animal fero”; Acteon dies a horrific death at the mercy of his own hunting dogs (IX, 26). It is the example of this death, one that leaves no presence in the world, that frames the beginning of the Canto IX. Self-indulgence does not lead to the discovery of the “bela forma humana,” but to the destruction of both reason and body.

The hunt for wild beasts that leads Acteon to his death is displaced and surpassed by the hunt for nymphs that the sailors fulfill. This hunt for nymphs, instead of causing austerity in the sailors, converts them into semi-gods that, while delighting in the body of women, are symbolically eternalized by their coupling and marriage to mythical beings. Hence, the nymphs, more than mere loci that testify to the sailor’s masculinity, will be the vehicles through which the Portuguese defy an anonymous death.

The Island exemplifies a total symbiosis between the body of woman and Nature, for all the natural elements on the Island typify female characteristics. And it is here where sight, the most important of senses, is fully charged. The description of the Island begins with stunning images of trees overflowing with perfect virginal fragrant fruit, a direct simile to the body of women: “os formosos limões ali cheirando, / Estão virgíneas têtas imitando” (IX, 56). It is in this earthly paradise where Cloris, goddess of flowers, competes with Pomona, goddess of fruit, while songbirds fly and resonate with joy. This is Camões great invention, the archetypal *locus amoenus* that will serve as the background to an orgiastic sexual encounter that will celebrate the experience

gained from the senses of the body.

Once all has been orchestrated, the “fortes mancebos” land on the Island with the intention of hunting wild beasts. On the Island, the initial vision of the nymphs is unclear to the sailors, and the sailors confuse the nymphs with beasts that possess fine wool and silk, “lã fina e seda” (IX, 68). Nevertheless, these sailors are able to appropriately judge and see that these “cores” are “humanas rosas” (IX, 68). Therefore, the initial hunt for wild animals, is quickly replaced with the hunt for nymphs —the accepted and appropriate “beast.” Woman, as the only possible means through which the power of Fortune can be resisted, is represented as the island that must be taken and hunted, enjoyed and exalted. Indeed, the first fruits that women bear are the symbolic social stability and continuity they provide men. In the words of Lionardo, “Vencerás da fortuna a força dura” (IX, 79). What is most impressive is the description of the sexual act between nymphs and sailors, a truly unique event in the poetry of the sixteenth century:

Oh! Que famintos beijos na floresta,  
 E que mimoso chôro que soava!  
 Que afagos tam suaves, que ira honesta,  
 Que em risinhos alegres se tornava!  
 O que mais passam na manhã e na sesta,  
 Que Vénus com prazeres inflamava,  
 Melhor é experimentá-lo que julgá-lo;  
 Mas julgue-o quem não pode experimentá-lo. (IX, 83)

This explicit description of the sexual act transforms the paradise into a celebration of the pleasures of the body. Yet, this stanza does not describe the sexual act gratuitously, for it ends with a challenge to the reader: It is better to experience it than to judge it, but may he judge it, who cannot experience it. Clearly, these verses are directly written for the main reader of the poem, the King. On the other hand, the insistence on the verb “julgar,” to judge, combined with the visually charged scene, are meant to provoke the reader’s imagination and behavior. This scene establishes a strict social norm that demarcates the proper behavior of the masculine social subject that must learn how to read and interpret the value of women correctly. The poem is meant to incite the King to imitate not only the great models of Portuguese history, and the great feats of these sailors, but the sexual love they all personify with regard to women.



Canto X describes the fruits of an appropriate hunt. It is only after the sexual encounter that Camões mentions “honra,” honor. The pleasure that Tethys and the nymphs represent, along with the promise of fame and children, constitute the initial drive that gives value to life. Male honor is expressly based on the feminine body, since patriarchy demands the possession of the substances that can prolong the masculine image—women and land. As Luce Irigaray states: “[woman’s] value-invested form amounts to what man inscribes in and on its matter: that is, her body” (187). The inability of King Sebastian to possess a female body immediately positions him outside of the value-driven system he heads, one that is based on the female body. This is due to the fact that it is only through the sexual act with a woman that a man can solidify his identity. Thus, when the sailors prove themselves as worthy lovers, they witness their own fame exalted in song: “Altos varões que estão por vir ao mundo” (X, 7).

Yet sex provides the sailors with much more than a secured and respected social standing. The lovemaking scene is a necessary preparation to the acquisition of a much grander vision and knowledge. The knowledge gained from the physical encounter serves as the main key to the vision Tethys allows Vasco da Gama to access. Tethys leads da Gama to the summit of the highest point of the Island, where a great “fábrica se erguia” (IX, 87). Sex has made da Gama and his sailors worthy of ascending the mountain. This mountain, as Stephen Reckert writes, is a space par excellence that equates to knowledge, since it is the nexus between heaven and earth. The ascension to the top of the mountain, as Reckert states, “representa a unidade primordial, o Paraíso perdido (e por conquistar) onde crescia a Árvore cujo fruto, símbolo de *gnosis*, acabou por transformar-se, graças a uma intuição certa como ingénua, em símbolo de *eros*” (191-92). Love and knowledge are fused to port a new form of seeing destiny and the future. It is the sexual encounter that will lead da Gama to the incredible knowledge that the *máquina do mundo* contains—a machine with the power to represent all times and spaces, past, present and future, that belong to Portugal. Such a vision defies both time and space, a vision provided only through the possession of the body of women. This knowledge that the *máquina do mundo* provides “é sem princípio e meta limitada” (X, 80). It is, ultimately, Camões’s philosophical treatise on the entire reason for the universe, the possessor of the fifth essence, the Good.

It is here that the prophetic vision of Portugal’s victories, future cities, and lands that will withstand the passing of time, is revealed. These are the future

feats that are interconnected by a past genealogy of dynasties that have safeguarded the continuation of the House of Aviz; indeed, what the reader witnesses in Cantos I-VIII. The sexual domination of the nymphs by the Portuguese make the latter worthy of a prize that is much grander than the physical, “Sapiência Suprema” (X, 80). This knowledge and information are based on the personal experience gained from the sexual act between a man and a woman. With the *máquina* the past and future are revealed, and the only missing link is the present.

Thus, women as the virtues and prizes are much more than physical enjoyment for Camões, for it is the initial physical knowledge, this *sentido da realidade*, that promises the deferral of the male figure. Venus is exalted to a mythic level within a frame of social responsibility and service to the empire, and the collective behavior of the Portuguese sailors in the *Ilha dos Amores* is presented as *the* model of masculinity, and the *only* option for King Sebastian. With the possession of the female body, the male’s reproduction of his image defies death through the procreation of a son. This son, therefore, will be the testimony for self and others, and will assure a new generation of self-identity for the male seed (Irigaray, 1974, 27). This essentially economic pleasure is used by Camões as the manifestation of the male power that provides the medicine, or *phármakon*, necessary to cure King Sebastian of his disinterest in women.

The Cantos IX and X are meant to incite the king to take action. Hence, the series of imperatives that begin the poem are also reflected in its closing. While at the initial point of the poem Camões urges the King to “see” clearly, “Ponde no chão: vereis um novo exemplo / De amor dos pátrios feitos valerosos, / Em versos divulgado numerosos,” the ending of the poem urges the King to appropriately evaluate its contents: “Olhai que sois (e vêde as outras gentes) / Senhor só de vassalos excelentes” (I, 9; X, 146). Sight, the primary sense that opens *Os Lusíadas*, is also the sense to conclude. In addition, the ending strongly urges the King to compare the high quality of the kingdom’s people to that of those in other kingdoms. It is this last challenge that Camões poses before the king, one that would socially bind him to follow and uphold the law of his people.

The great innovation of the poetic imagination of Camões succeeds in using the *dolce stil nuovo* as a point of departure that, combined with the great breakdown of physical, mental, and epistemological spaces, presents a bold reinvention of the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophies. It is the bustling character of the period, a period characterized by the supreme importance of

an eye-witness experience, that forges the unique vision Camões presents. In the poem, the order of the world is grounded on the bodies of Venus and her nymphs, an order that clearly demarcates the sexual identity of men, an identity substantiated in the possession of the female form. Therefore, the culmination of the epic points toward the essential and centralizing philosophy of the Canto IX: Love, as a social and civic value, is the vehicle necessary for the acquisition of total knowledge *on earth*. The insistence of Camões that King Sebastian experience the body of woman as a means of obtaining total knowledge and continuing a vision long-forged through the centuries, must be attributed to the special situation that afflicted the House of Aviz. It is this specific historical need that aided Camões in his vision, along with his specific valuable experience, that provided him the material with which he reinvented the *dolce stil nuovo*—the most influential literary current of the 16th century.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>We think of Platonism as emphasizing the feelings of love that are developed in the ascension from the material to the immaterial—an ascension through which the mind is impelled toward the search for love in the beautiful. This stance takes the beauty of material objects as a point of departure from which one ascends to the contemplation of the beauty of the human body, and ultimately to the understanding of the beauty of the good, ideas, knowledge, and absolute beauty. Most of the poets of the sixteenth century, and Camões was not an exception, were heavily influenced by this specific Platonic thought. Plato in the *Symposium* describes the ultimate goal of the ascent in the following manner: “[the] Beautiful itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality...” (59). The connection, therefore, is clear: The different stages of the material good serve to transport toward the spiritual good—the total understanding of beauty itself. This philosophical stance dictates the elimination of sexual love, since it is understood that the bodily pleasure of sex would distract the mind in its quest for knowledge. Sex, whether for pleasure or for reproduction, is here justified as the mere fulfillment of a biological need. The danger of sex lies in its power to trap the person in its physical pleasure. Hence, sexual love is too big a risk to be considered within the Platonic system.

Renaissance Neoplatonic thought, on the other hand, is heavily influenced by Plotinus and the Neoplatonists that emerged from the third to the fifth centuries. The image of woman has a central role with the Neoplatonists. The quest for beauty that stimulates the mind is focused on the specific beautiful form of beauty that is manifested in the body of a woman. It is from this specific manifestation of beauty that man will progress from the physical plane, on to the intellectual, to finally reach the spiritual. All the manifestations of beauty, as well as of goodness and truth, that are found in the world of the senses are due to an emanation—that is an irradiation—

that stems from the One or Absolute; the source of all being and goodness. The Neoplatonic lover is irresistibly drawn to the corporeal beauty of the beloved, but never in a sexual manner. The veneration of the beauty of the body is perceived as an important link that is interwoven with the fabric that maintains the spiritual beauty. At the same time, the Neoplatonist considers the beauty of the body as an essential step in the total contemplation of the Celestial Beauty of God. It is in this primary sense that Platonism and Neoplatonism heavily influence the courtly love tradition, which in turn will greatly impact the Italian *dolce stil nuovo*.

<sup>2</sup> There are many articles that insert *Os Lusíadas* within the same pedagogical framework as Virgil's *Aeneid*. See Cleonice Berardinelli, "Os excursos do Poeta n' *Os Lusíadas*," in *Occidente* 415 (Novembro, 1972), 246-258; Robert Clive Willis, "Os *Lusíadas* and its Neoclassical critics," in *Occidente* 415 (Novembro, 1972), 269-285; and Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira, "Conferência/Conference: Presenças da antiguidade clássica em *Os Lusíadas*," in *Revista de Letras*: Ser. Lit., vol. 25, 1985, 1-14. Some of the main studies that deal with the relationship between teacher and monarch include Allan H. Gibert, *Macchiavelli's Prince and its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book of Regimine Principum* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1938; reprinted New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968); and Lester Kruger Born, "The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Ideals," in *Speculum*, 3 (1928), 470-504.

<sup>3</sup> Countless critics, beginning with Faria e Sousa in the 17th century, have stressed the great similarities between Acteon and King Sebastian: "Se pone delante del Rey Don Sebastián, como un Bautista delante de Herodes a condenarle sus costumbres" (Faria e Sousa, 2, 54).

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