
The *Amadís* Phenomenon

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IN A RECENT AWARD-WINNING article in this journal Frederick de Armas (2017) made a convincing case that William Shakespeare knew the *Amadís de Gaula* and used it as a source for *The Tempest*.¹ As part of his argument, he discussed the diffusion and popularity of Montalvo's romance and its continuations and sequels throughout Europe and especially England. De Armas's article is a valuable reminder to Hispanic scholars that the *Amadís* saga was much more than a Spanish phenomenon of the sixteenth century. My purpose in this essay is to chronicle, as best I can, the full extent of the *Amadís* phenomenon in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe.² It is a story with no parallel in the history of fiction and, as such, merits much more attention that it has received.³

AMADÍS in Spain

A new movement in the history of fiction came into being when Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo revised and modernized a medieval version of an old three-book romance of chivalry dating to the late thirteenth century. In his revision, Montalvo seems to have made increasing modifications as he went along, with the fourth and final book apparently all new (Avalle-Arce 101-32). Montalvo's version, titled *Los*

1 De Armas and Alfredo Baras Escolá were co-winners of the 2017 Luis Andrés Murillo Best Article of the Year award made annually by the editorial Board of *Cervantes*.

2 Probably the first serious attempt to assess the overall extent of the popularity and diffusion of *Amadís de Gaula* and its continuations was that of Henry Thomas (1912). It is too bad that his pioneering work has been mostly ignored by subsequent scholars.

3 According to John J. O'Connor, romances of chivalry were exceeded only by devotional literature, "in popularity and in bulk" (3).

cuatro libros del virtuoso caballero Amadís de Gaula, was probably published in the final decade of the fifteenth century after the conquest of Granada in 1492, perhaps around 1496, but this likely first edition is lost, and the earliest surviving print edition is that of 1508.⁴ Montalvo followed his original work with a sequel, which he called book 5 of the series, *Las sergas de Esplandián* (1510), the story of Amadís's son, who went on to even greater glory than his father. *Amadís* inspired one of the most important vogues in prose fiction in the history of literature, the *libros de caballerías*, or romances of chivalry. These romances are often considered to have made up a minor and relatively unimportant escapist literary vogue that lasted only through the sixteenth century. For many even today, they are mentioned only as a point of departure for Cervantes's *Don Quijote*.⁵ But in fact, romances of chivalry in the Spanish tradition were avidly read throughout Europe well into the seventeenth century, and the most important and most influential was Montalvo's original *Amadís de Gaula*.

Montalvo's *Amadís* is divided into four books with 133 chapters; it is about 496,500 words long (an average of 124,125 words for each of the four books). Length is one of the defining characteristics of the *libros de caballerías*, as these books were much longer than most medieval romances or other kinds of fiction published in the Renaissance. *Esplandián* is about 155,600 words in length. In the wake of *Amadís*, subsequent romances of chivalry are just as long or longer. In fact, they are generally much longer than virtually all the medieval chivalric romances, which were also widely read throughout Spain and the rest of Europe.⁶ The average length of some two-dozen typical *libros de*

4 We know of 19 editions of *Amadís* published between 1508 and 1596, but there probably were others in the late-fifteenth-century. In addition, there may well have been more in the sixteenth century of which we have no record. Andrew Pettegree estimates that more than 99% of all books printed in the sixteenth century no longer exist (*The Book* 334).

5 As Wendell P. Smith has commented in his introduction to a special edition of *La corónica* dedicated to *Amadís*, "it is time we examine *Amadís de Gaula* on its own merits. For far too long, critics have used and abused *Amadís* as a punching bag with which to illustrate Cervantes's stroke of genius in ridding the earth of a defective literary genre" (177).

6 There were more than thirty of these traditional, and usually relatively brief, romances—often referred to in Spanish as *historias* (or *narraciones*) *caballerescas breves*—published in well over 300 editions throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century in Spain. No other

caballerías is about 269,600 words.⁷ They are the first very long fictions of the print era, and in this are quite distinct from the majority of fictions in other genres. In fact, no other Spanish romance or novel published before 1700 is longer than 200,000 words, except for the combined length of a few later novels published in multiple volumes: Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599 and 1604: 232,600 words), Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1615: 365,800), and Baltasar Gracián's *El Criticón* (1651, 1653, and 1657: 215,900). No other genre of fiction published anywhere in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth consists of books as consistently long as the Spanish romances of chivalry—until the French heroic romances of the 1630s-1660s, which were published serially in multiple volumes and tend to run to over a million words in length and in at least one case surpasses two million words.

Following Montalvo's introductory works about Amadís and his son, other writers took up their pens to continue the series. In Spain the Amadís cycle reached a total of twelve volumes. Table 1 outlines the books in the cycle.

The original *Amadís* was never published in four separate volumes (as they would be later in French, German, and Dutch translations) but always and only as a single book. This means that there were actually ten books published in the cycle, not twelve as indicated above. Confusingly, two separate works have the same title, *Lisuarte de Grecia*. The complicated numbering of the three volumes (in four books) of *Florisel de Niquea* by Feliciano de Silva, with the subtitles in the second and third volumes, creates further confusion. And finally, since Silva's last romance, called the second part of the eleventh book in the series, was published after Luján's supposedly twelfth book, the dating be-

genre of fiction was more popular than these beloved old tales. For assessments of this medieval genre so popular in the Renaissance, see Baranda; Infantes; Viña Liste; Marín Pina and Baranda; Rodríguez Velasco; Baranda and Infantes; and Lobato.

7 These word lengths have been calculated by multiplying 1) the average number of words per line times 2) the number of lines per page times 3) the number of pages. Sometimes the calculations were more than a bit tricky, but the figures cited here are, I believe, generally quite accurate.

Table 1: The Official *Amadís* Cycle

	Date	Author	Title
1	1508	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Amadís de Gaula Book I</i>
2	1508	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Amadís de Gaula Book II</i>
3	1508	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Amadís de Gaula Book III</i>
4	1508	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Amadís de Gaula Book IV</i>
5	1510	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Las Sergas de Esplandián</i>
6	1510	R. Páez de Ribera	<i>Florisando</i>
7	1514	F. de Silva	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
8	1526	J. Díaz	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
9	1530	F. de Silva	<i>Amadís de Grecia</i>
10	1532	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea I-II</i>
11.1	1535	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea III: Rogel de Grecia I</i>
11.2	1551	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea IV: Rogel de Grecia II</i>
12	1546	P. de Luján	<i>Silves de la Selva</i>

comes unclear and misleading. It would be simpler and, in many ways, more accurate to consider the *Amadís* cycle as a series of ten works of fiction, ten books published individually, in the proper chronological order. Table 2 shows what this series would look like. As logical as this second, ten-volume, version might be, it will probably not win acceptance, as the traditional concept of the *Amadís* cycle consisting of twelve volumes is a universal convention and that is not likely to change. It is, however, a more accurate reflection of the publication history of these romances.

Overall, the books in the *Amadís* cycle were published a total of 63 times in Spanish between 1508 and 1596. None of them was published in the seventeenth century; by the end of the sixteenth the popularity of these stories had run its course in Spain. The entire vogue of the romances of chivalry in Spain petered out about this time. After 1596, only one new romance was published, *Policisne de Boecia* in 1602, and there was a total of only four new editions of previously published romances between 1598 and 1623. Such was not the case, however, in the rest of Europe.

Table 2: The Actual Amadís Cycle

	Date	Author	Title
1	1508	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Amadís de Gaula</i>
2	1510	G. R. de Montalvo	<i>Las sergas de Esplandián</i>
3	1510	R. Páez de Ribera	<i>Florisando</i>
4	1514	F. de Silva	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
5	1526	J. Díaz	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
6	1530	F. de Silva	<i>Amadís de Grecia</i>
7	1532	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea I-II</i>
8	1535	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea III: Rogel de Grecia I</i>
9	1546	P. de Luján	<i>Silves de la Selva</i>
10	1551	F. de Silva	<i>Florisel de Niquea IV: Rogel de Grecia II</i>

AMADÍS in France

Nicolas de Herberay des Essarts was, apparently, commissioned by King François I of France to translate *Amadís de Gaula* to French.⁸ The king had read Montalvo's work in Spanish during his imprisonment in Spain following his defeat and capture at the battle of Pavia in 1525, and he had enjoyed it enormously. Herberay, who had already translated Diego de San Pedro's sentimental romance *Arnalte y Lucenda* (1539), accepted the task and created a work that is still today widely considered as the greatest model of French prose of the sixteenth century. His translation of book 1 of Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* was published in 1540; it was followed, one volume per year, by books 2-4, the *Esplandián* as book 5, and three volumes of sequels by Feliciano de Silva. Eventually, the series grew to an inflated 24 volumes with the addition of original sequels originally written in French, Italian, and German (see below). *Amadís de Gaule* was the first true bestseller, and a massive one at that, in French literature.

8 In his dedication of *Flores de Grèce*, an original sequel to *Las sergas de Esplandián*, Herberay "hinted that the enterprise of *Amadís* was directly encouraged by the King" (Petegree, "Translation" 116). This assertion is accepted by most scholars.

Table 3: The Spanish-Based French *Amadís* Cycle

	Date	Author	Trans. by	Orig. Title
1	1540	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula I</i>
2	1541	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula II</i>
3	1542	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula III</i>
4	1543	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula IV</i>
5	1544	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Esplandián</i>
6	1545	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
7	1546	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Grecia I</i>
8	1548	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Grecia II</i>
9	1551	F. de Silva	G. Boileau	<i>Florisel de Niquea I</i>
10	1552	F. de Silva	J. Gohory	<i>Florisel de Niquea II</i>
11	1554	F. de Silva	J. Gohory	<i>Rogel de Grecia I</i>
12	1555	F. de Silva	G. Aubert	<i>Rogel de Grecia II</i>
13	1571	P. de Luján	J. Gohory	<i>Silves de la Selva I</i>
14	1574	P. de Luján	A. Tyron	<i>Silves de la Selva II</i>
15	1577	P. de Luján	G. Chappuys	<i>Silves de la Selva III</i>

Table 3 is a chart of the Spanish core of the French cycle.⁹ The French series extends the Spanish cycle by separating the original four books by Montalvo into discrete volumes and eliminating the inferior works by Páez de Rivera and Díaz. At the same time, however, it breaks Silva's *Amadís de Grecia* into two volumes and Luján's *Silves* into three. The end result is a coherent fifteen-volume series composed by just three Spanish authors.

Herberay stated in his introduction to the first book that he was returning the work to its original language, for he had seen an old man-

9 Although much has been written about *Amadís* in France, and attempts have been made to describe the overall phenomenon, constructing a chart like this was not easy—until the publication of virtually the complete data by Stefano Neri (“Cuadro”), together with the works of Richard Cooper and Michel Bideaux. Although Neri presents such data that similar tables could be constructed for Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and England, these tables will not—largely for reasons of space—be constructed here. But much of the commentary below, and especially the numbers, about *Amadís* in those countries is drawn from the same sources.

uscript in the Picard language that had been the basis for the Spanish version; after all, *Amadis* was from *Gaule*. This is not only an obvious untruth, but it is a new twist on the tried and true technique of claiming an exotic textual origin for the work. Herberay's aim was to make the work less that of the rival Spanish and more genuinely French, and thus, by definition, a superior work.¹⁰ Stephen P. J. Rawles notes that "contemporary critical reaction was not far short of rapturous: Herberay was seen as the French Homer, claiming back from Spain an adulterated epic story, and restoring it to its lost French splendour" (94). Because neither Herberay nor his followers ever identified the names of the Spanish authors of the romances they translated and adapted, some French readers may never have realized that these popular works were originally written in another language. But, since Spanish was somewhat in vogue in France at the time, there were readers, and perhaps quite a few of them, in France who were reading the *Amadis* in Spanish.

Many French commentators and literary scholars, both in the Renaissance and in more modern times, have considered Herberay's supposedly improved version of *Amadis* superior to the more primitive Spanish original and a true masterpiece of French literature, an illustration of the grandeur of France.¹¹ Furthermore, the translators and publishers often strove to make it clear that the French versions are far superior to the originals:

The language of the original is defined as crude and full of *orties*, whilst Herberay's translation turns out to be "doux, orné, propre et riche." This combined reworking of the original language and

¹⁰ There was for a long time a debate about the origins of the original *Amadis*: Spanish, Portuguese, or French. The definitive study of this question is that of Grace Sara Williams; good, brief reviews of the matter can be found in Frank Pierce (38-42) and Juan Manuel Cacho Bleuca (57-81). The Portuguese claim has been argued most strenuously. The strongest case for a French origin, the one made by A. K. Jameson, is based on speculation, wishful thinking, and a generally dismissive and disdainful view of Spain. By now, however, the matter is considered settled: the original *Amadis* was first written in Spanish.

¹¹ "El personaje de Amadis y el texto que lo presente como figura heroica son ante todo un pretexto para enaltecer la Francia de Francisco I a través de todo el peso simbólico de la mítica Galia" (Botero García 30). See also Alan Freer on the role of *Amadis* in French patriotic myth-making in the sixteenth century.

contents is held to make the French versions of these romances so vastly superior to the originals as to leave the Spanish and the Italian authors flabbergasted, thus confirming the consoling jingoistic view that France surpasses Spain in all things, notably in “bien parler” and in “bien faire.” (Cooper 179)

Superior to the Spanish it is not, but it is perhaps the best, and certainly the most popular, work of fiction in French Renaissance literature. The success of the *Amadis* series was astounding, as the works that comprise it were read far more often than, for example, the works of Rabelais and Marguerite de Navarre. In fact, there may have been more print copies of the 61 editions of Montalvo's books 1-4 alone than there were of the works of those two major French writers together. If one adds in the total number of editions of all the volumes in the entire series, there were probably more copies of the many *Amadis*es than all original fictions in France in the sixteenth century combined.¹²

One of the reasons for the overwhelming and unexpected success of the *Amadis* translation was that it looked to the French reading public like something new (Chatelain). From the beginning, the volumes of the series were not printed in the traditional format with old style Gothic typeface in two columns, as they were in Spain and as were previous chivalric fictions in France, but with modern Roman type, in a single column, and with elegant illustrations.¹³ They were beautiful books, with a sharp, new look, designed to catch and hold the reader's attention—and that they did. But what is even more noteworthy is that *Amadis* made an enormous impact on the French publishing

12 The popularity of *Amadis* continued into the seventeenth century and extended beyond literature. The opera *Amadis* by Jean-Baptiste Lully, with libretto by Philippe Quinault, was first performed in 1684. It is the first opera on a chivalric, rather than a mythological, theme. Three more operas on the *Amadis* theme were written later by Handel, J. C. Bach, and Massenet.

13 For an interesting discussion of these illustrations, together with the Spanish and French traditions of tapestries based on *Amadis*, see Pinet. For a more general and thorough assessment of the early editions of Herberay's early work, with valuable comments on the role of the printers of these works, see Rawles, who suggests that it was the intention of those involved in the production of the works to elevate “the visual qualities of a vernacular text to those expected from the great humanist works of the period” (93).

industry in general. Before 1540 medieval romances that had appeared well over 300 times in the old format (Gothic type, double columns, quarto size)—*Fierabras*, *Les quatre fils Aymon*, *Perceforest*, and others—were reduced to little more than a trickle. *Amadis*, along with other Spanish romances of chivalry in translation completely dominated the field.¹⁴ The publication of *Amadis* in 1540 marks a powerful turning point in French literature and publication history.¹⁵ Just as in Spain, humanists and other moralists railed against the French *Amadis*. At the forefront of these critics was Jacques Amyot who, in his preface to his brilliant translation of Heliodorus's *Ethiopian History* (1547), criticized *Amadis* for its failure to maintain the high moral standards and elegance of classical romances.¹⁶ But, just as in Spain, the popularity of the works was hardly affected by this sort of elitist and intellectual carping.

Herberay elaborated on the original work, extending descriptions, adding commentary, creating a mannered and rhetorical prose style, and increasing the erotic element. In comparison, Montalvo's version is more compact and sober. *Amadis* became the universally praised model of elegant French style in the mid- and late-sixteenth century. Even today this opinion is common: In his introduction to a recent modern edition of the romance Yves Giraud comments that "*Amadis* en effet peut être considéré comme un monument de la langue française, l'un des textes qui inaugurent la grande prose littéraire modern" (18-19).

E. B. Place studied Herberay's translation, especially some of the passages praised by French critics for their stylistic excellence and showed that they are close and accurate versions of Montalvo's prose.

14 According to Marian Rothstein ("Printing," 141-45), the old medieval romances completely disappeared and were not published again for decades. The data in Cooper, however, suggests a radical diminution of publication of these romances but not their disappearance (205-38).

15 Some later editions were printed in smaller and cheaper octavo format, designed to appeal to a wider audience than the aristocracy (Rawles 102).

16 In proposing the work he himself translated as superior to the far more popular *Amadis*, Amyot may be guilty of no small bit of jealousy and self-promotion. For a commentary on Amyot's critique, see Fumaroli, who notes that by 1587 elitist scholars in France were claiming that the vogue of *Amadis* had passed, and it is true that the greatest period of popularity of the series had faded (28), but books in the series and from other Spanish romances of chivalry were published and read well into the seventeenth century.

Place's conclusion: "sin duda alguna, el buen regidor español Rodríguez de Montalvo de la pequeña ciudad de Medina del Campo dió, en pleno Renacimiento, lecciones de urbanidad a la real corte de Francia" (169). Spanish was a mature language by the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century as evidenced in the stylistic excellence and sophistication, not only of *Amadís de Gaula*, but also of Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor* (1492) and Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499). French and English reached a comparable degree of sophistication later in the sixteenth or even in the seventeenth century (Germany later still).¹⁷ Between the elegant and refined style and the elegant and refined conduct of the characters, the *Amadís* became the most significant example of a courtesy manual in elegant and refined France.

The work's popularity was increased with the publication of a book titled *Thresor des livres d'Amadis de Gaule* (1559), a collection of passages from the first twelve books, the romances by Montalvo and Silva, that were intended to show readers how to think, speak, and act. The *Thresor* was expanded and revised three times (1571, 1574, 1586), with more than two-dozen editions, before the final edition appeared in 1606 (Behnaïm).¹⁸ The French language was enriched with vocabulary coined from the *Thresor*, words like *amadiser*, *amadigaulisant*, and *amadigauliser*.¹⁹ At the height of the French Renaissance it became a goal to speak in imitation of "la douceur et saveur de la langue d'Amadis et d'Oriane" (Huchon 190). The 24-volume set of romances, plus the

17 For English, see Randall (26-27); for French, see Tilley (1: 30-35). It is really quite amazing that Tilley first writes that the influence of Spanish literature "did not begin to make itself generally felt till nearly the close of the sixteenth century. In the reign of François I Spanish literature was not sufficiently mature to serve as a model to other nations" (49). Then, without seeming to realize that he is proving exactly the opposite of what he has just written, he goes on to comment (49-52) on no fewer than eight translations of Spanish works—by Montalvo, Guevara, Rojas, San Pedro, and Flores—in France by 1552, more than from any other language.

18 A version of the *Thresor* was published in English in 1567 as *Treasure of Amadis of Fraunce* and another in German as *Schatzkammer [...] aus den vier und zwentzig Büchern des Amadis von Frankreich* in 1596, with five subsequent editions. There was no such publication in either Spain or Italy.

19 On these neologisms, see Benhaïm (179-80); and Huchon (191).

popular *Thresor*,²⁰ made the *Amadis* saga far and away the prose fiction most read in the French Renaissance. French culture assimilated the characters from *Amadis* as did no other nation: a go-between was known as a *dariolette*;²¹ children were named for characters in the book, the books were read to prophesy the coming greatness of King Henri II, and so forth (Bideaux 66-73).

The best part of the series was complete by the end of the sixteenth century with the publication of two French romances placed within the Spanish works and six sequels translated from the Italian. But with the addition of three translations from German the genre was extended to the year 1615. Table 4 represents the entire Spanish-French-Italian-German story of the *Amadis de Gaula* family romance as it was known in France.

Following Herberay's stunning success with *Amadis*, six unrelated Spanish romances of chivalry were translated to French and published in 42 editions, further solidifying the genre as the most popular in France. It is clear that the *Amadis* phenomenon in France involved much more than just *Amadis de Gaula* and that the vogue for chivalric fiction was not just a matter of a few decades. Romances of chivalry from Spain were at the forefront of French fiction for at least the better part of a century. There were several French romances of chivalry written in imitation of the Spanish works. The most notable was Herberay's *Don Flores de Grèce* (1552); numbered 5A in table 4, an original sequel to *Esplandián* (with a total of eight editions) featuring Esplandián's son Flores. It was translated in 1664 to English but not to any other language. Nicolas de Montreux (1561-1608) wrote a final sequel to *Silves de la Selva*, the fourth part of that book, in 1577 (the only edition; it was never translated); it has been numbered 15A in table 4. The interesting hybrid *Alector* (1560) by Barthélémy Aneau, and *Gériléon d'Angleterre*

20 The *Thresor* was so popular that it spawned an imitation, a *Trésor des Histoires tragiques* (1581) with select passages from Belleforest's translations of Bandello (Pruvost 319). As a model of popular courtly behavior, the *Thresor* had more editions (seventeen) in France than thirteen, the combined total of Castiglione's *Cortegiano* and della Casa's *Galateo* (Avalle-Arce 59).

21 Darioleta, the maiden who served princess Helisena, arranged the nocturnal meetings between the princess and visiting King Perión, which led to the birth of Amadis.

Table 4: The Complete French *Amadís* Cycle

	Date	Original	Author	Trans. by	Orig. Title
1	1540	Spanish	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula I</i>
2	1541	Spanish	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula II</i>
3	1542	Spanish	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula III</i>
4	1543	Spanish	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Gaula IV</i>
5	1544	Spanish	Montalvo	N. de Herberay	<i>Esplandián</i>
6	1545	Spanish	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Lisuarte de Grecia</i>
7	1546	Spanish	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Grecia I</i>
8	1548	Spanish	F. de Silva	N. de Herberay	<i>Amadís de Grecia II</i>
9	1551	Spanish	F. de Silva	G. Boileau	<i>Florisel de Niquea I</i>
5A	1552	French	N. de Herberay		<i>Flores de Grèce</i>
10	1552	Spanish	F. de Silva	J. Gohory	<i>Florisel de Niquea II</i>
11	1554	Spanish	F. de Silva	J. Gohory	<i>Rogel de Grecia I</i>
12	1555	Spanish	F. de Silva	G. Aubert	<i>Rogel de Grecia II</i>
13	1571	Spanish	P. de Luján	J. Gohory	<i>Silves de la Selva I</i>
14	1574	Spanish	P. de Luján	A. Tyron	<i>Silves de la Selva II</i>
15	1577	Spanish	P. de Luján	G. Chappuys	<i>Silves de la Selva III</i>
15A	1577	French	N. de Montreux		<i>Silves de la Selva IV</i>
16	1578	Italian	M. Roseo	G. Chappuys	<i>Sferamundi I</i>
17	1578	Italian	M. Roseo	G. Chappuys	<i>Sferamundi II</i>
18	1579	Italian	M. Roseo	G. Chappuys	<i>Sferamundi III</i>
19	1581	Italian	M. Roseo	J. Charlot	<i>Sferamundi IV</i>
20	1581	Italian	M. Roseo	G. Chappuys	<i>Sferamundi V</i>
21	1581	Italian	M. Roseo	G. Chappuys	<i>Sferamundi VI</i>
22	1615	German	Anon.	Anon.	<i>Safiraman</i>
23	1615	German	Anon.	Anon.	<i>Fulgoran I</i>
24	1615	German	Anon.	Anon.	<i>Fulgoran II</i>

(1572) by Estienne de Maisonneuve, not part of the *Amadis* series, were also translated to English. The anonymous *Gerard d'Euphrate* (1549) and Jean Maugin's *Nouveau Tristan* (1554) were not translated. Gilles Boileau de Bouillon—who had originally done a translation of book 9 in the *Amadis* series, the volume retouched by Claude Colet and published under his name—also published a short work titled *Sphere des deux mondes* (1555), supposedly the work of the shepherd Darniel, a character who originally appeared in Silva's *Amadis de Grecia* (Krause 338).

In the seventeenth century Gilbert Saulnier Du Verdier wrote what was intended to be the final, definitive, romance-of-chivalry-to-end-all-romances-of-chivalry: the seven-volume *Le Romant des romans, où on verra la suite & la conclusion de Don Belianis de Grece, du Chevalier du Soleil & des Amadis* (1627-29), bringing in both the *Espejo de caballeros* (*Caballero del Sol*, the first part of which was translated to French 1617) and the *Belianis de Grecia* (which had just been translated to French in 1625) along with *Amadis*. In 1629 Pierre de Marcassus published a condensed version of the French *L'Amadis de Gaule*. As late as 1694 Jean-François Regnard wrote a one-act comedy titled *La Naissance d'Amadis* (Bideaux 67).²²

AMADÍS in Italy

The Spanish romances of chivalry were in some ways even more popular in Italy than they were in Spain. Probably a large part of this popularity was due to the fact that, as Stefano Neri notes, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was the single greatest literary success in Italy, where it had some 155 editions in Italian in the sixteenth century: "A la enorme difusión de esta obra se debe, sin duda alguna, el mayor empuje para la fortuna de la literatura caballeresca en prosa y en verso en la Italia del Renacimiento" ("*Progetto*," 578).²³ To begin with, the *Amadis* series had a success in Italy comparable to that of France. *Amadis* 1-4 was first translated from the Spanish in a single volume in 1546 and went through eighteen editions. The remaining eight volumes in the Spanish cycle (except vol. 8, Juan Díaz's *Lisuarte*, and vol. 11.2 Silva's *Florisel* IV) were also translated between 1525 and 1551 and went through 78 editions, for a total of 96 by the year 1630.

But the Italian *Amadis* series consisted of much more than the original Spanish works. The industrious and prolific Mambrino Roseoda Fabriano, translator of several of the Spanish volumes, became the

22 Sylvia Roubaud provides a brief but good introduction to the Spanish romances of chivalry in France. Cooper's excellent essay and bibliography are also particularly valuable.

23 In addition to Ariosto's great work, the continuations, or *aggiunte*, of the *Orlando* and the publication of other works dealing with Carolingian material in Italy were part of the Italian chivalric craze in the sixteenth century.

major author of chivalric fiction in Italy.²⁴ First, he wrote a sequel to the “final” book of the Spanish *Amadís* series, the second part of Feliciano de Silva’s *Rogel de Grecia*, about Rogel’s son Esferamundi; he published his first *Sferamundi* romance in 1558. Roseo then wrote no fewer than five more volumes of the further adventures of Sferamundi and his descendants in 1559, 1563, and 1565. These six popular books were published a total of 43 times in Italy between 1558 and 1619. As we saw above, they were all also translated to French and became books 13-18 of the 24-book series in France.

In addition, Roseo wrote seven original *aggiunte* (inserted sequels) that fall between works in the Spanish series and these books were published 50 times between 1563 and 1630 (see below, table 5). In all, Mambrino Roseo wrote thirteen original “Spanish” romances of chivalry in the *Amadís* series plus seven in the *Palmerín* series in the decade 1558 to 1568.²⁵ Roseo’s *Amadís* romances alone were published 93 times in Italy and were translated to French to enrich that *Amadís* cycle and from French to German and Dutch (but never to Spanish). Thus Mambrino Roseo, author of an amazing total of twenty original romances, was the most productive author of Spanish-type *libros de caballerías* in the Renaissance. But he was unknown in Spain, where his work was never published, and in France and Germany, where his works were never published under his name. In Italy he was known as author and translator of non-chivalric works, but (with a single exception) he was not identified as the translator of chivalric romances. And he is not very well known today in Italy either.²⁶ Along with the *Amadís*

24 For the life and works of Mambrino Roseo, see Bognolo (“Vida”).

25 Overall, Roseo’s literary production was enormous: 23 translations and 24 original works; 32 of his 47 works were *libros de caballerías*, which represents some 74% of all Spanish romances of chivalry published in Italy (Neri, “Progetto” 580). He even made a beautiful *Albero della geneologia di Perione Rè di Gaula (padre del cavaliere Amadis di Guala)* that was published in 1637. It is only one sheet long, but it is complete and complicated, and it traces the royal line of Gaula through some eight generations; see the reproduction in Bognolo (“Los libros,” 338-39). Both Thomas (291) and Bideaux (55) have also drawn the Perión family tree.

26 In Alberto Mancini’s lengthy essay on Italian fiction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where dozens of Italian writers are identified and inflated figures for the publication of their works are provided, Roseo—arguably the most outstanding Italian writer of original fiction in the sixteenth century—is never mentioned. For more on the reception history of the Spanish romances of chivalry in Italy, see Neri (“Progetto”) and Bognolo (“Los libros”).

books, other Spanish romances of chivalry were popular in Italy. The four romances of the *Palmerín* series were all translated to Italian and had a total of 37 editions, as was *Leandro el Bel*, a sequel to *Leplemo*.

AMADÍS in Germany

Amadís came to Germany by way of the French series, rather than in direct translation from Spanish. Montalvo's first book of *Amadís* was translated from the French 1569, but with all references to the Catholic Church eliminated. By 1593 the entire French series, including the six Roseo sequels, had been translated, to bring the cycle in both languages to 21 volumes. With the addition of three anonymous original new volumes, the series was brought up to a total of 24; these new German romances were then translated to French in 1615 in order to complete that series also with 24 volumes. *Amadís* had an influence in Germany similar to what it had in France: it was considered a model of elegant language (remember that literary German developed later than in other European countries). The Frankfurt publisher of all these books, Sigmund Feyerabend, claimed that he made more money from *Amadís* than he did from the works of Martin Luther (Barber 12). The work's popularity continued throughout the eighteenth century, with a new abridged edition (an abridged and edited version of the original German version of the French version of the Spanish work!), Wieland's comic epic poem *Der Neue Amadís* (1771), and Goethe's exuberant praise of the story.²⁷ After this unprecedented publishing event, virtually all original romances written by German authors were written in the shadow of *Amadís* and show its influence (Wagener 97).

AMADÍS in the Netherlands

The first four books of *Amadís* were translated in four volumes directly from Spanish to Dutch beginning in 1546 and were published a total of 24 times through to the year 1619. The series was continued, by way of translation from French, through 21 volumes; the three late German sequels were not translated. Overall, these books enjoyed 67

27 On the romances of chivalry in Germany, see Genert.

editions by 1642. One reason for their popularity in the Netherlands was the enterprise of Martin Nuyts (under the name of Martín Nucio), who set up in Amsterdam a print shop that specialized in works in Spanish and virtually dominated the Spanish-language market in Holland. In fact, Nuyts may well have been the translator of *Amadís* 1-4, although the books were published anonymously. As we have seen in other cases, the fictions of chivalry provided the dominant kind of reading in Holland throughout the time period.²⁸

AMADÍS in Portugal

Few of the Spanish romances were translated to Portuguese, primarily because virtually every literate person in Portugal read Spanish. Only four romances in the *Amadís* series were translated to Portuguese, and they each had only one edition. But, as we saw in the case of Italy, the Portuguese authored several chivalric romances of their own. The best known of these was *Palmerín de Inglaterra* by Francisco de Moraes. It was long thought that this romance was published first in its Spanish translation, but it has recently been discovered that an edition in Portuguese was published in 1544 (probably in Paris) and then it had two more editions in the sixteenth century in Portugal (Vargas Díaz-Toledo). In Spanish it was published anonymously in two parts in 1547 and 1548 (the only editions). This sort of easy interchange between the two closest of Romance languages, where Spanish is dominant, is characteristic of sixteenth century, as major Portuguese writers such as Gil Vicente, Luis de Camões, Jorge de Montemayor, and others wrote some of their major works in Spanish (no important Spanish writer wrote anything of significance in Portuguese). Spanish romances of chivalry did not dominate Portuguese literature the way it did Italian, for the simple reason that virtually everything written in Spanish was read in that language in Portugal. Besides, from 1580 until 1640 Portugal was incorporated under the Spanish crown and officially formed part of Spain. Spanish literature was also Portuguese literature.²⁹

28 On the romances of chivalry in the Netherlands, see Groot.

29 Aurelio Vargas Díaz-Toledo provides an introduction to the Spanish romances of chivalry in Portugal.

AMADIS in England

In England, the chivalric vogue entered surprisingly late, beginning in 1567 with the translation/adaptation by Thomas Paynell of the original French *Thresor* as *The Treasure of Amadis of Fraunce*. It seems unlikely that such a collection of quotations from the French *Amadis* would be well received in England if the romance were not already being read there, either in the French version or in the original Spanish, by that time.³⁰ A decade later the first full translation of a Spanish chivalric romance was Margaret Tyler's rendition of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de caballerías*, under the title of *The First Part of the Mirrour of Princely deedes and Knighthood* (1578), made directly from Spanish and not from a French version.³¹ Publication of this popular romance went through nine installments, by different translators, up through 1601, with a total of fourteen editions.

It is not easy to understand just why the romances of chivalry were so popular in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England, a time when England and Spain considered each other bitter enemies. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the English often wanted to emulate the French. Except for the *Espejo* series, all the translations were from the French, cited the French title, or referred to the protagonist as Amadis of France. Many English readers probably never realized they were reading versions of works written originally in Spanish. Another factor may have been that the Elizabethan court largely styled itself as a chivalric enterprise. Or perhaps it was that original English fiction was in general of such low quality that anything foreign was received eager-

30 Ronald S. Crane notes that some Spanish romances of chivalry must have been known to some Englishmen, and that "*Amadis* in particular had readers in England many years before it was translated" (16).

31 Much has been made of Tyler's contribution to English literature. For example, "Tyler was the first Englishwoman to publish a prose romance. She was also the first woman to confront, in a Preface prefixed to her translation, male divisions of genre and gender" (Krontiris 21). But it should not be forgotten that in Spain Beatriz Bernal actually *wrote* (did not merely translate) an original romance of chivalry—*Cristalián de España* (1545)—a full three decades before Tyler's translation, and she too called attention to the fact that she was confident of her ability to compete on equal terms with male writers. The first women to write and publish original fiction in England, apparently, were Mary Wroth (*Urania*, 1621) and Margaret Cavendish (*The Blazing World*, 1666).

ly. At any rate, these romances, usually in translations of French translations of the Spanish originals, became quite popular and influential, imitated by a number of English writers. The second romance translated, from the French, in 1587, was *Palmerin of Englande* by Anthony Munday (1560?-1633), the most prolific English writer of his time. It was published twelve times by 1685; possibly the word *England* in the title contributed to its considerable success.

Somewhat surprisingly, the *Amadis* series received less attention in England than anywhere else in Europe. *The first book of Amadis of Gaule* was finally translated to English from the French in 1590 by Munday; it and the second book (1595) had a total of two editions each. Books 3-4 came out in 1618 and this volume was not republished.³² *Esplandián* was published in 1598 and again once in 1664. So there were only five of Montalvo's romances published, in seven editions. Much later, two books by Feliciano de Silva from the *Amadis* cycle were added: *Lusiarte de Grecia*, translated by Francis Kirkman in 1652, and *Amadis de Grecia*, by an unidentified translator, in 1693, bringing the number of *Amadis* romances published in England to a mere eleven. Only in England was Amadís de Gaula overshadowed by other Spanish chivalric heroes. Munday and other writers continued translating half a dozen other romances from French versions of Spanish originals, including Herberay's *Don Flores of Greece* in 1664. In total, the various Spanish romances, even though on a smaller scale than elsewhere, were published more than 73 times in translation.

The Spanish romances themselves may have had less direct effect in England than in other countries, but they were often imitated by English writers who wanted to cash in on the most popular vogue of fiction of the century. The best of these imitators were Richard Johnson and Emanuel Ford.³³ The six romances written by these two authors

32 Munday's translation is generally faithful to Herberay's French, but he does eliminate almost all references to the Catholic mass, the Virgin Mary, and so forth, and he reduces the eroticism of the French volumes (Pettegree "Translation," 121-22).

33 Munday is also the author of *Zelauto: The Fountain of Fame* (1580), probably the first original English fiction that incorporates the chivalric in a substantial way. *Zelauto*, however, also combines pastoral and jestbook elements in a euphuistic style; its hybrid nature rules it out as simply a romance of chivalry.

were all published over a dozen times each between 1595 and 1633, while another six romances were published by other writers or anonymously during the same time period. If we combine the total impact of the Spanish romances in translation, the outright imitations by writers like Johnson and Ford, and the chivalric influence in romances by Sidney, Greene, and Lodge, it becomes clear that in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries chivalric fiction absolutely overwhelmed the fictions of all other original English prose writers combined.³⁴ By way of non-*Amadis* translations and original English works, the chivalric romance was the most popular and influential genre of fiction in England for decades, just as it had been earlier in Spain, France, and Italy.³⁵

Rather curiously, British scholars write frequently of how the romances of chivalry appealed primarily (almost exclusively, according to some) to the middle and lower classes,³⁶ while the upper classes preferred the more refined Greek romances, the euphuistic romances of John Lyly and his imitators, and, above all, the aristocratic *Arcadia* of Sidney. This is probably wrong. Certainly, in Spain and France, the romances of chivalry appealed to all classes, from the lowest to the members of the royal court. In England, Sidney, Spenser, and other aristocrats read *Amadis* and other chivalric romances and incorporated the chivalric massively into their work.³⁷ Further, as Mary Patchell has pointed out,

34 A good introduction to the Spanish romances of chivalry in England is that of Neri ("Los libros").

35 Some English scholars simply cannot understand the whole thing: "And they [the Spanish romances in translation] seem to have been beloved in economically advanced mercantile England just as they were in feudal, tradition-loving Spain: a baffling and challenging fact for the social historian of literature" (Schlauch 165-66). The simplistic contrast between "advanced" England and "feudal" Spain makes it even more difficult for scholars like Schlauch to comprehend how something like this might have come about. (Note that the Black Legend has carried over into twentieth-century literary scholarship.)

36 This sort of elitist and classist social and literary commentary has deep roots in England. For example: "*Amadis* and *Palmerin* were losing ground steadily, and their chances of attracting attention grew less every year. It was therefore certain that if they were to be translated at all, it was to be through the common people. The aristocracy had utterly ignored them" (Underhill 306).

37 Tina Krontiris estimates that fully a third of Sidney's great romance is drawn from *Amadis* (23). It is not clear how one measures things like this, but the influence of *Amadis*

Chivalry [...] experienced a rebirth under Elizabeth [...]. From 1581 to 1603, the year of her death, the Queen failed only four times to celebrate her Accession Day, November 17, with a tilt [...]. Just as Elizabeth's court was marked by chivalric observances, so was that of her successor, James I, who celebrated his accession by a splendid tournament and who spent lavish sums for knightly ceremonies. (12-13)

This certainly does not sound as though stories of chivalry were mere entertainment for the rabble while the more refined aristocrats preferred fictions on a higher level. The pageantry of chivalry was universal in Renaissance Europe, as examples of weddings and betrothals, victory celebrations, ascensions to the throne, and so forth, were frequently celebrated in imitation of both specific episodes from romances of chivalry and as chivalric events in general.³⁸

The Queen Elizabeth Question

In his *Cervantes* article, de Armas suggests that the reason for the late entry of *Amadís de Gaula* in translation into England "was due to Elizabeth's disregard for the romance since it would not serve as a vehicle to praise her and her kingdom" (16). This idea is based on the English understanding of an incident that took place in 1569 when Guerau de Espés, Spanish ambassador to England between 1568 and 1571, wrote two letters while under house arrest in 1569 to the Duke of Alba and Gerónimo de Curiel in Flanders.³⁹ This was in the immediate aftermath of an incident in which the English held and refused to re-

on *Arcadia* was surely very substantial. On the influence of *Amadís* on the *Arcadia*, see also O'Connor (183-201).

38 Chivalric celebrations were frequent in sixteenth-century Spain and Spanish possessions. R. O. Jones (56), for example, provides a description of elaborate two-day chivalric spectacle held by Carlos V and the future Felipe II in the town of Bins, in Flanders, in 1579. O'Connor summarizes chivalric celebrations in England and France in his opening chapter on the popularity of romances of chivalry (3-23). Alberto del Río Noguera has written a more general and comprehensive study of noble festivities based on romances of chivalry.

39 The Duke of Alba led Spanish military forces in the Netherlands, while Curiel was a representative of Spanish financial interests there.

lease some Spanish ships, loaded with treasure destined for the Spanish military forces in Flanders, that had been forced by bad weather to take refuge in English ports. Espés's letters were confiscated by the English, who interpreted them, especially the one Curiel, as an insult to Queen Elizabeth when she was supposedly referred to as "Amadís Oriana," which, according to art historian Roy Strong, "amounted to a slanderous charge of bisexuality" (253). Here is the opening of that letter:

Si hay oyere dezir que me han detenido no se marauille, porque en esta ysla ay aun de los encantamientos de Amadís, y vive Arcalaus; pero yo estoy sano y bueno, prisionero de la reyna Oriana, y pienso que sin auer menester ni Urganda ni Hurgar mucho, todo esto se acabará en comedia. (qtd. in Gayangos xvi)

There are three references here to characters from *Amadís*. First, Arcaláus, the evil enchanter and arch-enemy of Amadís de Gaula, clearly represents William Cecil, First Baron Burghley, the queen's chief advisor and confidant. In the late-sixteenth century, in the context of tension and political rivalry between Spain and England, when spies, betrayals, insults, and suspicions abounded, Espés was much disliked in England, and, at the same time, he personally disliked and professionally mistrusted Cecil. To equate Cecil with Arcaláus is indeed an insult, and an intended one, although perhaps made somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Second, Queen Elizabeth is called Oriana, and this is a totally different sort of allusion. For a Spaniard to equate the reigning monarch of another nation to Oriana is almost certainly an act of respect and admiration. In Spain, Oriana was a poetic name for Isabel de Valois, beloved third wife of King Felipe II, and, from Espés's point of view, especially in a private letter to someone who knew the literature and fame of the character, to call Elizabeth I of England Oriana was a high compliment (Avalle-Arce 61-62).⁴⁰ The third reference is

⁴⁰ In the letter to the Duke of Alba and in other documents written by Espés, he repeatedly refers to Elizabeth with terms such as *serenísima*. He made it clear that it was specifically Cecil whom he was criticizing and that he considered a high complement to compare Elizabeth to Oriana; see Timothy D. Crowley (918).

to Urganda la Desconocida, the benevolent shape-changing sorcerer who often comes to the rescue of Amadís. The idea here is that even if Espés is under surveillance, he will not need Urganda's help to get out of it. That sounds more like a light-hearted joke in the word play with the verb *burgar* (to meddle, to get involved)⁴¹ and, it seems to me, it makes quite obvious that he is not taking the matter too seriously.⁴² Furthermore, if in fact the queen took offense it would very likely have been because Espés was suggesting that Cecil, not Elizabeth, held power in England, that as the Enchanter Arcaláus he controlled Elizabeth/Oriana.

But what happened was that Cecil, and the Privy Council which he headed, took the contents of the letter out of context and interpreted it as an attack on Elizabeth, not ignoring the criticism directed at Cecil himself, but downplaying it while emphasizing the supposed slur on the queen.⁴³ The "Amadís-Oriana" reference that was taken by Strong to imply Elizabeth's bisexuality had its origin in William Camden's 1615 history of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, written in Latin.⁴⁴ As Timothy D. Crowley notes, Camden's Latin phrase referred to is *Amadis Oriana*, which means *Amadis's Oriana*, not *Amadis-Oriana* (909n64). In other words, the innocent concept of Oriana, beloved of Amadís, was interpreted as a sexual slur. It does seem to be the case that Camden considered that a comparison of Elizabeth with Oriana was intended as a criticism of the English queen, but there seems to be no justification whatsoever for the bisexuality reading.

Strong's article has influenced virtually all Anglo-American writing on the subject, and it is accepted by many as gospel that the Spanish

41 In part one, chapter five of *Don Quijote* Cervantes makes the same comic wordplay between Urganda and the verb *burgar* (1.5:148).

42 Crowley, however, suggests the possibility of a much more serious reading: that Urganda could have represented Mary Stuart and alluded to either a Scottish conspiracy or a Spanish invasion (908-09).

43 The politics of the affair have been studied in detail by Crowley in a long and meticulously-researched and documented study of the controversy is essential to any understanding of the matter.

44 Camden's comments on the matter in his history was probably based largely based on the Privy Council's memorandum on the episode (909-10).

ambassador slandered the English queen. Josephine Waters Bennett, for example, discusses the fact that Elizabeth was born in Greenwich palace, called Placentia, and it was a favorite residence of hers. But it also had negative connotations, says Bennett, because nearby there is an old tower known as Mirefleur, *Miraflores* in Spanish, the castle where Oriana, daughter of King Lisuarte of England, lived—and where she had her first intimate relationship with Amadís (which led to the birth of their son Esplandián). So, Bennett concludes, “In view of the libels circulating about the Queen and the Earl of Leicester, the association of Greenwich with Mirefleur suggested unwelcome parallels. In fact, allusion to Oriana had been used to libel the queen” (31), another reference to Espés’s letter. In the post-Strong critical era in the study of English history, a misreading is turned into a general assumption informing and, indeed, providing almost the entire basis for the belief that Elizabeth was offended by things chivalric, especially when coming from Spain, and even more particularly when they involved the sinful adulterous Oriana. It is well known that Queen Elizabeth was obsessed with illicit sex in her court⁴⁵ so there is a possibility that what she knew of Oriana might have given her a negative impression, but her anger and retribution was most often directed at her maids of honor who committed the grievous sin of getting pregnant and/or married rather than maintaining their own virginity in the court of the Virgin Queen.

All this aside, I believe, thinking that the mere mention of the name of Oriana evoked the queen’s ire is a serious misreading of the cultural context of the time. After all, Oriana was an *English* princess, later queen, and so might have been looked upon in England with special pride. During the years 1554-1558 when Felipe II of Spain reigned with Mary I there were multiple allusions, always positive, to Oriana (Crowley 904). Further, Oriana was indeed married to Amadís before they began their sexual relationship. As Justina Ruiz de Conde has convincingly argued, there is some illicit sex in *Amadís de Gaula*, “pero no

⁴⁵ See, for example, Johanna Rickman’s long chapter on “Illicit Sex at the Court of the Virgin Queen” (27-68).

en los protagonistas” (183).⁴⁶ Oriana is not only beautiful, but at the same time she represents “la perfección moral e intelectual: es buena, es justa, es infalible” (190), and it is the latter qualities, more than her mere physical beauty, that make her so attractive to Amadís. Amadís and Oriana made secret vows, with God as their witness, to love and be faithful to each other for ever. It is a classic case of what is usually called *matrimonio clandestino*, frowned upon by the Church but recognized as legitimate until banned by the Council of Trent in 1564.⁴⁷ Their secret marriage in advance of their sexual relationship is legitimate and recognized; no one in the story itself and few, if any, sixteenth-century readers considered their relationship adulterous or scandalous. Amadís was the universally-admired paragon of chivalry and constancy; Oriana was the universally-admired paragon of beauty and morality. As Otis H. Green sums it up, “Oriana is perfection itself” (105).⁴⁸ Certainly, the Amadís-Oriana relationship is much more honorable and respectable

46 Ruiz de Conde’s book is the definitive study of clandestine marriage in the Spanish romances of chivalry. See especially chapter four on *Amadís* (173-227). Stacey Triplett, however, makes a subtle argument that the marriage between Amadís and Oriana does not really conform to the tradition of the secret, but legitimate, marriage (44-47). Rather, she writes, it is real “only in Oriana’s imagination,” but “the princess will affirm (or fabricate) its existence when it becomes politically necessary” (45). Still, sixteenth-Spanish readers did not doubt either the authenticity of the love between the two, their exemplary morality, or the legitimacy of their union.

47 Rothstein suggests that in France the original enthusiastic reception of *Amadís* began to subside in the 1560s as a result of the Council of Trent’s decree that clandestine marriages were no longer legitimate (“Clandestine” 875). Further, toward the end of the century, she argues, the romance was seen in a new light: “By the last quarter of the sixteenth century, although *Amadís* continued to be read, there is a change in the tenor of its reception. Where earlier it had been admired most of all for its linguistic virtuosity, later references tend to focus uncomfortably on its amorous adventures. It is almost as if these had changed, as if they had grown more scandalous over the years. And that, I believe, is just what happened” (878). If Rothstein is right, it could be that as criticism of *Amadís* in France became more strident, the same attitude might have carried over somewhat to England, where *Amadís* was a French, not a Spanish, enterprise. I suspect, however, that even though prissy French humanists and intellectuals may have become more vocal in their criticism, we should not forget that this group, was highly critical of romances of chivalry from the very beginning—just as had been the case in Spain. I think it is unlikely that these French critiques had anything to do with the work’s reception among English readers, including Queen Elizabeth.

48 Green here refers to Amadís’s statement that “Dios la señaló y apartó, así en fermosura como en todas las otras bondades que buena señora deve tener, de todas las que en este mundo son nascidas [...]” (Montalvo 2: 1355).

than, say, the Lancelot-Guinevere adulterous relationship in England's cherished stories of the world of King Arthur.

There are several other reasons to believe that comparisons between Elizabeth and Oriana would have been perceived in a positive way. It is not likely that the English queen was opposed to chivalric romance in general or to the Spanish *Amadís* in particular when we note that her court favorite and perhaps her lover, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, along with the Earl of Cumberland, announced in 1592 that early the next year, under the name of Amadis of Gaul, they would meet all challengers who would dispute the unmatched beauty of their own Oriana, Queen Elizabeth. Many Englishmen of the era read Spanish, and Montalvo's romance was probably fairly well-known in England in both Spanish and French translation well before Munday's translation. Cecil almost certainly had read the romance, as he had copies of the book, in Spanish, in his personal possession (Crowley 911-13). The French *Thresor* of 1559 was published in an English version in 1567 by Thomas Paynell as *Treasurie of Amadis of Fraunce*. It is highly unlikely that such a collection of sayings—in which Oriana is mentioned in positive terms over half a dozen times—from *Amadís* would resonate in a reading public that did not know the work. Recall, also, that in France it was a goal to speak the elegant language of *Amadís* and Oriana.

Perhaps the most obvious piece of evidence that Oriana was looked upon positively in the English court is the publication of a collection of madrigals by Thomas Morley, organist in the royal chapel, in 1601 in honor of the queen under the title of *Triumphes of Oriana*.⁴⁹ It consists of 25 madrigals by 23 composers and every song ends with these lines:

Thus sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana:
Long live fair Oriana

⁴⁹ See the prefatory comments to a modern edition of the *Triumphes* by Edmund H. Fellows and, especially, Thurston Dart. In his article, Strong put to rest two independent arguments: first that the *Triumphes*, although printed in 1601, was not published until 1603, after the death of Elizabeth and therefore referred to the new Queen Ann, wife of James I, and second that the delay took place because of the Queen's "aversion to the name Oriana" (252-53). The book was published in 1601 and, as argued here, the so-called dislike of the name Oriana has no basis in fact.

If the 67-year-old queen was being honored by a songbook that repeatedly referred to her as Oriana, it is difficult to see Oriana as a slur on her character. Elizabeth was known by a wide variety of poetic names, including Astrea, Belpheobe, Cynthia, Diana, Gloriana, Pandora—and Oriana. What is more, Oriana is contained within the most popular name of the queen: Gloriana: (Gl)Oriana.⁵⁰ Elizabeth probably heard herself called (Gl)Oriana almost every day. When James I succeeded Elizabeth in 1603, his wife, Ann of Denmark, was also called Oriana, as the honorific poetic name was passed on:

Long Live Oriana
To exceed (whom she succeeds),
Our late Diana. (cited in Avalle-Arce 62)

As Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce (62) observes, “Al parecer la ambivalencia *Oriana-Isabel-Ana* se mantuvo en la literatura y en la música del período.”⁵¹

Conclusion

By way of summary, table 5 consists of a chart showing the spread and distribution of *Amadís de Gaula*, with all its sequels and imitations.⁵² There was nothing in publishing history in the first two centuries of the age of print (at least with respect to prose fiction) evenly re-

⁵⁰ It was Edmund Spencer, in his *Faerie Queene*, who coined the name Gloriana, and it became by far the most popular name for the queen, most likely because it begins with the word *Glory*, a fitting name for the nation’s glorious monarch. Spencer, who certainly knew Jorge de Montemayor’s pastoral romance *La Diana* almost certainly knew *Amadís de Gaula* as well.

⁵¹ The argument that the *Triumphes* either did not refer to Elizabeth and/or that Oriana was not intended as a compliment has been made rather recently by Jeremy L. Smith, who misunderstands *Amadís*, writing that the marriage between Amadís and Oriana was “sudden and impulsive,” consummated “in a fit of passion” (515).

⁵² In order to construct this table, several sources have been drawn upon, but the most valuable have been the classic studies by Maximilian Pfeiffer and Hugues Vaganay; the very complete work by Hilkert Weddige; and especially Cooper; Bideaux; and Neri (“Cuadro”). The numbers may not all be exactly correct because there is occasional disagreement among the reputable modern scholars and bibliographers whose work has been consulted, but overall these figures seem to be very accurate.

Table 5: The Amadís Phenomenon

Date	Author	Title	S.	F.	I.	G.	D.	E.	P.	Total
1508	Montalvo	Amadís de Gaula I-IV	19		18					37
1510	Montalvo	Esplandián	10	18	14	5	6	2		55
1510	Páez de R.	Florisando	3		4					7
1514	Silva	Lisuarte de Grecia	10	17	11	4	4	1	1	48
1526	Díaz	Lisuarte de Grecia	1							1
1530	Silva	Amadís de Grecia	7		14				1	22
1532	Silva	Florisel de Niquea I-II	6		11		3		1	21
1535	Silva	Florisel de Niquea III	4	10	12	3	4			33
1540		<i>Amadís de Gaula I</i>		16		5	7	2		30
1541		<i>Amadís de Gaula II</i>		16		4	6	2		28
1542		<i>Amadís de Gaula III</i>		16		4	7			27
1543		<i>Amadís de Gaula IV</i>		13		4	5			22
1543		<i>Amadís de Gaula III-IV</i>						1		1
1546		<i>Amadís de Grecia I</i>		14		3	4			21
1546	Luján	Silves de la Selva	2		12					14
1548		<i>Amadís de Grecia II</i>		13		3	4			20
1551		<i>Florisel de Niquea I</i>		11		3				14
1551	Silva	Florisel de Niquea IV	2	11		3	3			19
1552	Herberay	Flores de Grèce		9				1		10
1552		<i>Florisel de Niquea II</i>		18		3				21
1558	Roseo	Sferamundi I		4	8	1	2			15
1560	Roseo	Sferamundi II		1	7	2	2			12
1563	Roseo	Aggiunta al Amadís			5					5
1563	Roseo	Sferamundi III		2	7	2	1			12
1563	Roseo	Sferamundi IV		2	7	1	1			11
1564	Roseo	Aggiunta al Splandiano			7					7
1564	Roseo	Aggiunta al Lisuarte ...			5					5
1564	Roseo	Aggiunta al A. de Grecia			12					12
1564	Roseo	Aggiunta al Florisello			7					7
1564	Roseo	Aggiunta al Rogello			9					9
1564	Roseo	Sferamundi V		3	7	1	1			12
1564	Roseo	Sferamundi VI		1	7	1	1			10
1566		<i>Florisel de Niquea I-II</i>							1	1
1568	Roseo	Aggiunta al Silves ...			5					5
1571		<i>Silves de la Selva I</i>		5		3	2			10
1574		<i>Silves de la Selva II</i>		6		2	2			10
1577		<i>Silves de la Selva III</i>		4		2	2			8
1577	Montreux	Silves de la Selva IV		1						1
1594	Anon.	Safiraman		1		1				2
1594	Anon.	Fulgoran I		1		1				2
1595	Anon.	Fulgoran II		1		1				2
		Total	64	214	189	62	67	8	4	609

Note: Titles in bold are original works; those not in bold are translations/adaptations.
S.=Spanish; F.=French; I.=Italian; G.=German; D.=Dutch; E.=English; P.=Portuguese

motely comparable to the *Amadís* family romance. The data are almost staggering: By 1700 there was a total 609 editions in a multi-language series begun in 1508. The 64 Spanish editions were matched by 67 editions in Dutch and 62 in German, but they were more than tripled by the 214 in French and 189 in Italian. England came late and was far less involved in this international phenomenon. It is clear that Spanish romances of chivalry, led by *Amadís*, were far more popular and influential outside of Spain than they were in their country of origin. *Amadís* was the single most read work of fiction in Europe between the invention of the printing press and the eighteenth century.⁵³ It is fair to say that, perhaps as much as Montalvo himself, Nicolas de Herberay should receive credit for making *Amadís de Gaula* the all-time fictional best seller of the age (Guillerm 22).

In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, *Amadís de Gaula* was far and away the most popular of all fictional knights-errant. Other European chivalric heroes—like the Spanish Cid, King Arthur of England,⁵⁴ Chrétien de Troyes's Yvain, or the German Siegfried—were, at least as far as print culture goes, relatively minor figures in comparison. By one estimate, Montalvo's original romance, the Spanish sequels, and the sequels in other languages were published 527 times (but 609 as counted here) and circulated in some 625,000-650,000 copies (Weddige 110-12). But the more realistic and accurate data presented here would place the total number of copies closer to 750,000 and perhaps as high as one million. And, of course, *Amadís de Gaula* has one more singular distinction: it was the primary book that drove Don Quixote mad and thus launched the publication of the greatest

53 There was even a partial translation of *Amadís* to Hebrew in 1541 (Ashkenazi, "El *Amadís*"). More recently, Assaf Ashkenazi ("Un nuevo" 391-92) proposes that it may have been published in the 1530s, which would make it the first translation of *Amadís* into any other language. There exists also a late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth manuscript translation of *Amadís* from German to Danish, but it was not published in print form (Richter and Glauser).

54 In England, Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* was published frequently until 1578, but disappeared in Elizabethan literature once the Spanish romances came to dominate the scene. Even so, it is only in England, where *Amadís de Gaula*, both Montalvo's original work and the numerous sequels, were published less frequently than anywhere else in Europe that Arthur may have maintained a fame comparable to that of *Amadís*.

and most influential novel of all time. There simply was nothing like the *Amadís* phenomenon in the early age of print, and there have been few publishing events like it since then.

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