

**‘¡Oh, qué gentil caridad!’: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*,
The Life of Homer, and the Classical Origins of the Picaresque Novel**

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*What a fate father Zeus made me prey to when he fostered me, an
infant on my modest mother’s knees...*

(Homer, Epigram 4 in *(Pseudo-)Herodotus on Homer’s Origins,
Date, and Life*)

Have respect for one in need of house and hospitality...

(Homer, Epigram 1 in *(Pseudo-)Herodotus on Homer’s Origins,
Date, and Life*)

To speak of the “classical origins” of the picaresque novel will certainly conjure longstanding notions of this literary genre’s debt to such works as Lucian’s dialogues and *True History*, Plautus’ comedies, as well as Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*. Certain characteristics of these works also shared by various picaresque novels – a ribald wit, portraiture of the “seamier side” of life, episodic format, and wandering protagonists – have elicited a lengthy critical investigation into questions of influence and imitation.¹ In *Classicismo e “novela picaresca,”* the most comprehensive treatment of the topic to date, Guido Mancini Giancarlo emphasizes the influence of Latin writers such as Martial and Seneca on the genre’s conceptual rather than formal properties.² While Giancarlo emphasizes the Latin legacy, others reach back to the Greek classics. Arturo Marasso, for example, has linked the original picaresque novel, *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), to Homer’s *Odyssey* via a 1550 Spanish translation of the epic poem, such that the character Lázaro becomes a “parody” of Ulysses.³ More recent investigations have produced compelling insights into the connection between lesser-known ancient biographies and the advent of the picaresque. Elvira Gangutia and Rodríguez Adrados have asserted a determining role for the *Life of Aesop* in the

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¹ Given that *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) is widely considered to be the “original” picaresque novel, most of the following studies tend to trace the genre’s classical influences up to this seminal text. In reference to Apuleius see Bataillon (1931, 3), Molino, Lázaro Carreter (1978, 33-36), and Vilanova. Marasso, in addition to exploring *Lazarillo’s* origins in the *Metamorphoses* (169) and *True History* (169), also notes influence of Martial (157), Virgil (158), Horace (159, 165, and 170), Tacitus (161), Plautus (164), Juvenal (165), and Homer (166).

² “[L]a picaresca si volge spontaneamente ai modelli latini e [. . .] prende dei testi classici più lo spirito, il concetto, che il mero contenuto episodico” (10).

³ “¿Quién es Lázaro sino una parodia del errante Ulises a quien acecha, Neptuno implacable, el hambre?” (166).

genesis of *Lazarillo de Tormes*.⁴ While the *Life of Aesop* could very well have played a role in the creation of *Lazarillo*, there exists yet another classical biography which might have exercised an even more decisive influence on that book. I refer to the *Vita Homeri* (*Life of Homer*) by Pseudo-Herodotus.

Widely disseminated in Latin translation in sixteenth-century Europe, this *Vita* has primarily been the subject of philological studies in the original Greek and, beyond Rodríguez Adrados' brief treatment of the topic, has yet to be rigorously analyzed vis-à-vis early modern narrative fiction.⁵ Such an analysis is certainly warranted given that this text could be of substantial importance to understanding what is at stake – both formally and conceptually – in *Lazarillo de Tormes*. At the level of form one observes in *Lazarillo* a fairly systematic imitation of the *Vita Homeri* such that the two works reveal a common narrative architecture (e.g. both texts show the respective protagonists Lázaro and Homer leave home for a wandering existence as beggars and both encounter a number of stock characters who become responsible for their material well being, to name a few of the structural parallels to be studied in greater depth below). Among these parallels one also notes more detailed biographical similarities linking the two characters (e.g. both are born near and named after rivers, both are raised by single mothers in a student milieu) which will permit us to also assert a meaningful, but limited connection between Lázaro and Homer at the level of character. This premise that *Lazarillo* invokes the *Vita Homeri* at the level of form and character will serve as a foundation upon which we can then construct an interpretation of what *Lazarillo*'s author was hoping to achieve in guiding his readers to recall the Pseudo-Herodotean text. For my part, the textual evidence has led me to view the *Vita* as carrying out a much more transcendent function than “source material.” That is, *Lazarillo*'s direct invocation of that text becomes a means to juxtapose pagan civilization (depicted in the *Vita Homeri*) and sixteenth-century European Christian civilization (depicted in *Lazarillo de Tormes*) with the effect of ironically portraying the utter lack of charity in Lázaro's Christian world in light of the unwavering charity shown Homer during his wanderings as a beggar in ancient Greece. In other words, *Lazarillo*, beyond an anticlerical satire, can be interpreted for its jarring intertextual imagery depicting a “world turned upside down” in which pagan Greeks are now seen to more faithfully adhere than Christians themselves to the Christian theological virtue of charity. This notion of a pagan-versus-Christian rhetorico-theoretical construct finds firm support in the writings of Erasmus (ca.1466-

⁴ Gangutia states that “*Las Vidas de Esopo* [. . .] nos muestran una obra que debió de tener una influencia gigantesca a través de la Edad Media hasta la novela cervantina y picaresca. Pues ¿qué es Esopo, como los *Asnos* de Luciano y Apuleyo, sino un criado de muchos amos, al igual del *Lazarillo*?” (173). Rodríguez Adrados believes this work to be the primary narrative model for the picaresque (1979b, 349).

⁵ Rodríguez Adrados gives only passing mention to the Pseudo-Herodotean *Vita* in his assessment of the classical origins of the novel (1979a). Very different than the perspective offered in this essay, Adrados elsewhere describes the *Vita* as the story of “a weak man who triumphs with his ingenuity and has powers surpassing those of common men” (1999, 1.270).

1536) and his Spanish disciples Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) and Alfonso de Valdés (ca.1490-1532) whose own criticisms of Christendom's moral laxity make extensive use of this same construct. The notion that *Lazarillo's* author would make deliberate use of an ancient text as a backdrop against which to foreground Christianity's moral shortcomings would certainly not have failed to resonate with a sixteenth-century reading public versed in the writings of Erasmus, Vives, or Valdés.

Before undertaking a comparative analysis of *Lazarillo* and the *Vita*, I would like set forth more specific parameters for this essay. The main objective here is to bring to light important formal similarities between the *Vita Homeri* by Pseudo-Herodotus and *Lazarillo* and examine how such similarities might determine the way we read and theorize this particular picaresque novel. Thus, the first limitation of this study is that it does not seek to offer a detailed comparison of the many, many sixteenth-century texts containing biographical data on Homer. After having read several of these texts it has become abundantly clear to me that the Homeric biographical source likely to have exercised the most meaningful influence on *Lazarillo* is that of Pseudo-Herodotus. The reasons for this are 1) this particular text appears to have been the most widely available Homeric *Vita* in sixteenth-century Europe; 2) it is the longest and most comprehensive of all Homeric *Vitae*; and 3) the Pseudo-Herodotean *Vita* differs from other Homeric biographical sources in that it includes key episodes in Homer's life (e.g. his wandering existence as a beggar) and key themes (e.g. poverty, hunger, and charity) that have obvious resonance with *Lazarillo*. That being said, while the *Vita Homeri* is the primary intertextual vehicle driving *Lazarillo's* critique of Christian charity, there are other sixteenth-century sources of Homeric biographical data that will be brought into the discussion and which, together with the *Vita*, generate a spectrum of associations that could further inform one's reading of *Lazarillo* (e.g. sixteenth-century literary references humorously associating Homer with wine and others referring to the poet as a *pregonero*). Beyond this, I in no way want to suggest that *Lazarillo* and the *Vita* are identical. To be sure, they have many differences, as one might imagine. One of their main differences is that *Lazarillo* is narrated in the first person and the *Vita* in third person.⁶ The narrative complexities associated with the first-person point of view is an important part of *Lazarillo* as attested to by a sizeable bibliography headlined by Francisco Rico, George Shipley, and others.⁷ Yet, I feel safe in saying that this dissimilarity does not preempt the *Vita*

⁶ However, Pseudo-Herodotus interweaves Homer's epigrams with the biographical text with the effect that Homer is heard to speak in the first person from time to time.

⁷ Lázaro's development as a character is substantially more complex than that of Homer. This is primarily a function of the text's first person perspective, as Lázaro narrates his own life story with a view to the events surrounding the *caso*. That is, Lázaro, in providing a solicited account of the unseemly triangular relationship between him, his wife, and the Archpriest of San Salvador, reveals a certain psychological complexity that might affect the way we perceive the protagonist and his portrayal of his life experiences. As Francisco Rico states regarding *Lazarillo*, "[l]a primera persona [. . .] se presta a problematizar la realidad, a devolverle la incertidumbre con que el hombre la afronta, humanizándola" (2000, 44). Shipley has coined the term "recontextualization" to describe the process

from having exercised a strategic influence on the concept and composition of *Lazarillo*. As one might expect, there are many other differences between the texts a discussion of which is certainly beyond the scope of this paper and probably beyond any reader's patience or curiosity. Therefore, my aim is not a comprehensive line-by-line comparison of the texts to take inventory of all of their similarities and differences. Rather I simply want to shed light on a variety of striking parallels that seem to indicate a close relationship existing between the two texts.

Homer's biography was made available to sixteenth-century Europeans through a variety of sources. Spain in particular is home to several Homeric biographical texts knowledge of which is even reflected in the writings of sixteenth-century intellectuals, such as Sebastián de Covarrubias (1539-1613) who was at the very least familiar with one or both Homeric *Vitae* authored by Pseudo-Plutarch.⁸ Pilar Saquero Suárez Somonte and Tomás González Rolán have published Pier Candido Decembrio's (1392-1497) *Life of Homer* in the original Latin along with a fifteenth-century Spanish translation by Pedro González de Mendoza (1428-95), son of the poet Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458).⁹ Rosa Navarro Durán (2004, 46-47) has observed that *Las CCC [trezientas] del famosísimo poeta Juan de Mena con glosa* by Hernán Núñez (Sevilla, 1499) includes a biographical note on Homer containing a key detail: Homer was born by a river whose name was then given to the poet by his mother, a detail which Navarro logically associates with the circumstances of Lázaro's own birth and name.¹⁰ Held in El Escorial Library are the two *Vitae Scorialenses*, mere sketches in Greek and bound with various copies of the *Iliad*. Of the various *Vitae* in existence, that of Pseudo-Herodotus is the most novel-esque in structure and the most comprehensive in biographical detail.¹¹ Martin West believes that the Pseudo-Herodotean *Vita* "was probably written sometime between about 50 and 150 A.D." and "is written in an imitation of Herodotus' dialect and style. There is no possibility of its being a genuine work of Herodotus" (300-01). Various titles of *De Genere Vitaque Homeri Libellus (Little Book on the Life and Origin of Homer)* or

by which Lázaro repackages his life story and "urges the readers of his Prologue to look away in the direction he is indicating [. . .] away from the here and now in which detractors are pointing to his villainy" (185). In short, Rico observes, *Lazarillo* "consiste fundamentalmente en la construcción del protagonista, en la caracterización de un individuo" (64). Homer, for his part, does not bear Lázaro's confessional burden nor is he ever able to reveal a more complex interior life, as it is Pseudo-Herodotus who narrates the *Vita*.

⁸ Covarrubias' entry for "Homero" tells of the poet originally being named "Melesígenes" "por haberle parido [su madre] a las riberas del río Melete;" and also, "[r]efiere Plutarco, en la vida de Homero, haberse llamado su madre Criteis, al cual concibió de un hermano suyo" (642). On Pseudo-Plutarch see West 305-06.

⁹ This *Vita*, unlike the cohesive narrative of Pseudo-Herodotus, contains an assortment of Homeric biographical data culled from a variety of ancient sources.

¹⁰ Julian Weiss and Antonio Cortijo Ocaña have edited an electronic edition of Núñez's text.

¹¹ Lefkowitz and West have translated the Pseudo-Herodotean biography from Greek into English. West offers an additional nine Roman and early Byzantine era Homeric biographies (including the two *Vitae Scorialenses* mentioned above) in opposing-page Greek-to-English translations.

simply *Vita Homeri*, the Pseudo-Herodotean biography appears to have been the most widely disseminated Homeric biography in sixteenth-century Europe owing to Conrad Heresbach's Latin translation, which is found published in a number of Latin editions of Herodotus' *Histories* as well as with the Homeric epics (see figures A and B).¹² In preparing this essay, I have consulted Heresbach's translation published in Paris (1528), Cologne (1534 and 1537), and Lyon (1542), all of which are held in Spanish libraries and among which there is no variation in content.¹³ While the *Vita* was published throughout the sixteenth century and beyond, I have deliberately chosen pre-1554 editions, given that the earliest known edition of *Lazarillo* was published in that year.¹⁴ The fact that this particular *Vita* appears to have been widely disseminated in Spain is of relevance to the argument that *Lazarillo* intertextually engages the *Vita* and, in doing so, shows its author to have assumed the sixteenth-century reading public's familiarity with the Pseudo-Herodotean biography.

On the macro-level, there is no mistaking the narrative architecture common to *Lazarillo* and the *Vita*, as both biographical texts depict the life struggles of two men born into difficult familial and socio-economic circumstances who then set out in a world where their material existence is precarious and for the most part entrusted to a series of strangers, before going on to enjoy some form of success (a modicum of wealth in the case of Lázaro, and fame as a poet in the case of Homer). To flesh out this narrative framework, we can begin with a closer scrutiny of Lázaro's and Homer's early years, prior to their leaving the family home to begin a wandering existence. While some intertextual correspondences are more specific and others more general, taken together they show the common vision of the two texts in depicting the origins and upbringing of the two protagonists. The *Vita* generally recalls *Lazarillo* from the start of the first

¹² Chair of Greek at Freiburg, Conrad Heresbach (1496-1576) was also a close friend of Erasmus, whom he described as follows: "I must indeed confess that that man [. . .] wrote purely and fully on many matters of the greatest usefulness and importance of our religion and age" (qtd. in Mansfield 15).

¹³ The aforementioned editions can be found in the following libraries, respectively: Biblioteca Pública de Soria, Biblioteca Pública de Maó, Biblioteca Episcopal del Seminari de Barcelona, and Biblioteca Nacional de España. Copies of these same editions can be found in a number of Spain's libraries. The earliest Heresbach translation of the *Vita Homeri* of which I know (Cologne, 1526) was published with Herodotus' *Histories*. The University of Washington has one copy.

¹⁴ The unknown date of publication of the first edition of *Lazarillo* has fueled a lengthy critical debate, a full treatment of which is beyond the scope of this paper; for a summary see Ricapito 15-24. I follow Francisco Márquez Villanueva's pragmatic approach to the problem; the *princeps* could not have been published long before 1554, as there would certainly have been some record of its reception (1957, 266).



FIG. A. Herodotus' *Histories* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicorn, 1537) including *Little Book on the Life and Origin of Homer* here attributed to Herodotus, held in the Biblioteca Episcopal del Seminari de Barcelona

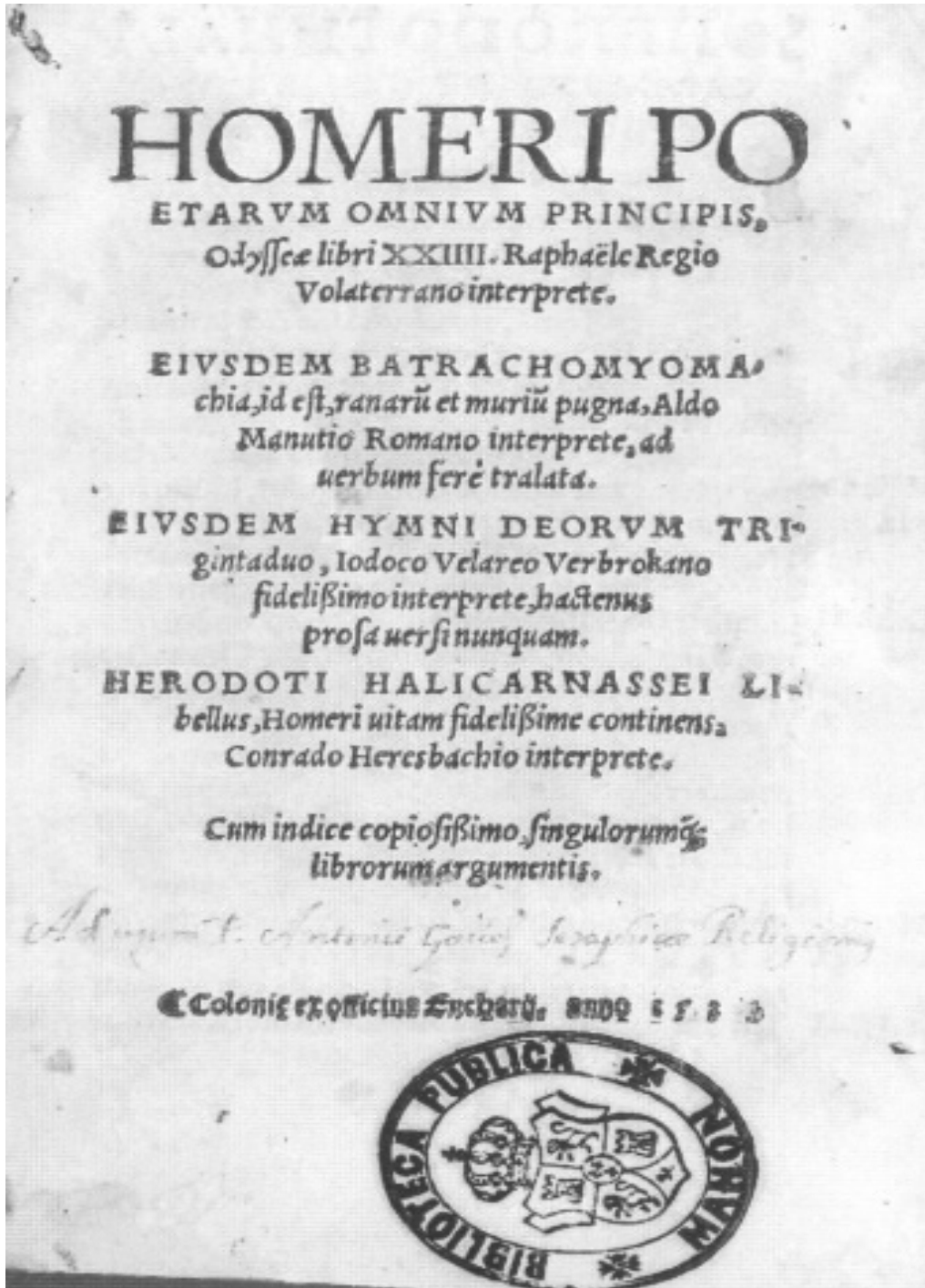


FIG. B. Homer's *Odyssey* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicorn, 1534) including the *Battle of Mice and Frogs*, the *Hymns*, and *Little Book on the Life of Homer* here attributed to Herodotus, held in the Biblioteca Pública de Maó

tratado, with its review of Homer's genealogy and geographical origin. Like Lázaro, Homer is of humble origins, as shown here in the lineage of "Cretheis," his mother. The *Vita* tells how the recently founded city of Aeolian Cyme received every kind of Hellenic people including "Melanopus, son of Ithagenes the son of Crethon, a man not of great but rather modest fortune."¹⁵ Next, "at Cyme he married a daughter of Omyres, who bore him a daughter, whom he named Cretheis."¹⁶ Lázaro begins his autobiography by describing himself as "Lázaro de Tormes, hijo de Tomé González y de Antona Pérez, naturales de Tejares, aldea de Salamanca" (12).¹⁷ The description of Homer's nuclear family, like that of Lázaro's, also includes details of a public family disgrace. Homer's mother became pregnant out of wedlock, thus resulting in a scolding by her now guardian, Cleonax: "Cleonax was upset and called Cretheis aside, scolding her for disgracing them in the eyes of their fellow citizens."¹⁸ In Lázaro's case it was his father's thievery, punishment, and ultimate disappearance that brought about a family "desastre" (14). This would be followed by the dissolution of Lázaro's second family as Zaide is arrested and gruesomely punished for theft, while Lázaro's mother receives "el acostumbrado centenario" (20). Subsequently, Lázaro's mother, "para quitarse de malas lenguas," relocates to the "mesón de la Solana" (20). In the wake of her own disgrace, Cretheis is brought by Cleonax to Smyrna where she begins to live with "Ismenias, a Boeotian and great friend" of Cleonax.¹⁹ It is what occurs next that so reminds one of *Lazarillo*. Cretheis, during a festival, "gave birth to Homer next to the Meles river" and "named the child Melesigenes, after the river by which he had been born."²⁰ For his part, as is well known, Lázaro states: "Mi nacimiento fue dentro del río Tormes, por la cual causa tomé el sobrenombre" (12). Pseudo-Herodotus' continued portraiture of the economic struggles of Homer's mother recalls *Lazarillo*: "For a while she stayed with Ismenias. But some time later she left Ismenias' house and proceeded to support the child and herself by manual labor, taking different jobs from here and there, and she did what she could to educate her son."²¹ Subsequent to the disappearance of her husband, Lázaro's mother "vínose a

¹⁵ "Melanopus Ithagene Crithonis filio genitus, homo fortunae non perinde amplae, attame[n] expeditae" (Pseudo-Herodotus 1542, 673-74). All citations of the *Vita* refer to this edition, unless otherwise noted. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁶ "[Melanopus] Homyretis Cumani filiam duxit uxore[m], procreatq[ue] e legitimo toro foemineam prole[m], cui nomen indidit Critheidi" (674).

¹⁷ All citations unless otherwise noted refer to Rico's edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

¹⁸ "Cleonax [. . .] commotus [. . .] Critheida seorsum ad se accersitam acerbe obiurgavit, commemorans commissi apud populares suos infamiam" (674).

¹⁹ "Cleonax [. . .] Critheida obrusit Ismeniae Boeotio [. . .] in primis sibi amico" (674).

²⁰ "Critheis [. . .] iuxta fluvium Melitem [. . .] Homerum peperit [. . .] nominatq[ue] eundem Melesigenem, a fluvio [. . .] ad quem editus esset" (674). For the remainder of the essay I will continue use the name Homer and never Melesigenes when referring to the poet, even though the latter appears in various quotations from the *Vita*.

²¹ "Etiam num apud Ismeniam se Critheis continebat : a[d] quo postea digressa, manuaria industria se filiumq[ue] alebat, aliunde alia sumens opera : unde filium quoq[ue] quantum potuit, honestis disciplinis erudit" (674).

vivir a la ciudad y alquiló una casilla, y metióse a guisar de comer a ciertos estudiantes, y lavaba la ropa a ciertos mozos de caballos del Comendador de la Magdalena” (15). Cretheis then meets “Phemius, who gave boys instruction in reading, writing, and poetry.”²² He “hired Cretheis to process wool that he got from the boys as payment for their schooling.”²³ Phemius “proposed to Cretheis that she live with him,” an offer which she accepted; this recalls Lázaro’s mother who, along with Lázaro, began to live with Zaide.²⁴

In sum, these two texts, while different, reveal that their opening episodes share a common vision. Each begins with a description of the protagonists’ genealogy, neither of which is illustrious. The genealogical descriptions give rise to a portrait of each family that tends to focus on socio-economic and other difficulties. In each case there is a family disgrace (Lázaro’s father caught for theft, followed by Zaide’s and the mother’s arrest and punishment; Homer’s mother pregnant out of wedlock). This disgrace precipitates the mothers’ displacement. Both mothers also give birth to a son next to a river whose name becomes that of the protagonist. The two mothers raise their sons in absence of the biological father and enter into new relationships with men who assume the role of father figure for their respective sons. These early years in the protagonists’ lives also include the obvious parallel of both single mothers having to engage in manual labor, specifically within a student milieu.²⁵

Subsequent to this depiction of the early years in the protagonists’ lives, both men then leave home and proceed to travel widely and enter into contact with a variety of stock characters (clergymen, a bailiff, a cobbler, potters, etc.) who have little or no character development. Lázaro, as is well known, serves nine *amos* during the story. The pretense shared by most of them is that they are beneficent and that to be in their service is edifying. Yet, Lázaro and the reader are quickly made aware that these masters are corrupt and abusive, their influence on their servants pernicious.²⁶ Homer,

²² “Phemius, qui iuventuti illic literas musicenq[ue] tradebat” (674-75).

²³ “Criteidem conduxit, quae lanam illi exercebat, quam a discipulis mercedem acceperat” (675).

²⁴ “Phemius eam verbis ad coniugiu[m] sollicitaret” (675).

²⁵ *Lazarillo* (excluding the prologue) and the *Vita* begin and end in the same fashion, from a review of the family genealogy to the mention of a historical event meant to orient the reader to the chronology of the narration’s content. At the narrative’s conclusion, Lázaro mentions the royal *cortes* held in Toledo in 1525 or possibly 1538-39: “Esto fue el mesmo año que nuestro vitorioso Emperador en esta insigne ciudad de Toledo entró y tuvo en ella Cortes” (135; the “cortes” mentioned here have given rise to a critical debate as to which ones the author is referring, those of 1525 or of 1538-39; for a summary of the debate see Ricapito [15-24]). Pseudo-Herodotus also begins with a genealogical review and rounds out the biography with a summary of historic dates whose purpose is to fix the exact year of Homer’s birth, in this case “one hundred and sixty-eight years after the Trojan War” (“Nam a Troiano bello claruit. Homerus annis ce[n]tum sexaginta octo” [691]).

²⁶ While a complete analysis of Lázaro’s masters is very much beyond the scope of this paper, it will be useful to give a brief description of each for purposes of comparing them to Homer’s much more charitable benefactors. Lázaro’s mother first entrusts him to the *ciego* from whom the boy learns the art of begging (21-22). While the blind man is stingy with food and physically abuses Lázaro (32-33) Lázaro admits to having been better off with him than with his second master, the cleric of Maqueda,

if he never specifically serves a “master,” is represented as being completely dependent on the generosity of a series of benefactors who provide him, for example, with a paying job, donated food or shelter, or with alms at those times when Homer is reduced to begging. Homer first leaves home when engaged by Mentos a merchant who offers to pay Homer “a wage and all other expenses” to accompany him at sea.²⁷ When Homer develops an eye ailment, Mentos leaves him with his friend “Mentor,” “entreating him to take care of Melesigenes.”²⁸ Mentor, unlike Lázaro’s masters, is compassionate, for he “tended Melesigenes assiduously, as he had considerable means as well as the greatest reputation for justice and hospitality among the Ithacans.”²⁹ Homer, now a beggar singing for alms in public, is welcomed by “Tychios” a “cobbler” who “after having continuously heard [Homer’s] verses, was moved by pity and he decided that the poor blind man ought to be welcomed in and he ordered [Homer] to join him in partaking of what [food] was at hand”³⁰ In Pitys Homer meets “Glaucus” a “goatherd,” who “took Homer and led him to his hut, made up the fire, and prepared a meal, and putting the food by him invited his guest to eat.”³¹ In Samos Homer encounters a group of “potters [who] called him over [. . .] to sing for them, promising to give him some of their pottery and whatever else they had.”³² Also in Samos Homer is warmly welcomed by some clansmen: “[Homer] went in and reclined and ate with the others, by whom he was honored and admired, and there he prepared

who is miserly in the extreme (47). The cleric’s neglect of Lázaro leaves him constantly weak from hunger (51). Next, Lázaro enters into the service of a squire who is so impoverished that Lázaro is forced to continue begging, now for the both of them (71-110). Subsequently, Lázaro briefly serves a friar of the Order of Mercy, who is suggested to be of dubious morality (110-11). Lázaro’s next master, a seller of indulgences, is not specifically abusive of Lázaro, but is represented as swindling his fellow Christians (112-25). Then comes a painter of tambourines, who figures little in the action (125). Lázaro then obtains his first paid job selling water for a chaplain (125-27). He next serves a stint with a constable, but leaves the post because it is too dangerous (127-28). Finally, Lázaro ascends to the post of *pregonero* (128-29) shortly after which he enters into the service of the Archpriest of San Salvador, for whom Lázaro also sells wine (130-35). Almost without exception, Lázaro’s masters are either morally corrupt, physically abusive, or simply neglectful of Lázaro’s physical and spiritual wellbeing. This is especially true of the ecclesiastical characters. Lázaro’s struggle to merely subsist – which usually sees him begging – accounts for approximately three-quarters of the novel, that is, from the first *tratado* up to and including the third.

²⁷ Mentos] Melesigenem persuasit, ut [. . .] secu[m] navigaret, accepturum [et] mercedem, [et] quae ad profectorem essent necessaria” (675).

²⁸ “multis precibus adigens [Mentorem], quo Melesigenis curam haberet” (676).

²⁹ “[Mentor] Melesigenem sedulo curavit, vir nimirum facultatibus pollens : quiq[ue] ob egregiam aequitatem hospitalitatemq[ue] inter caeteros Ithacenses maxime praedicaretur” (676).

³⁰ “Coriario nomen erat Tychio, cui co[n]tinuo auditis versibus visum est hominem recipiendum commiseratione nimirum motus, cum videret oculis tam misere multatum, iussit praesentibus secum frui” (677).

³¹ “Excipiens igitur Homerum ad suum deduxit tugurium, incensoq[ue] igne coenam instruxit : qua apposita iussit coenare secum hospitem” (683).

³² “figuli [. . .] compellatu[m] iusserunt eum canere, pollicentes cu[m] tegulas, tum alia qualia ea cunq[ue] essent quae haberent, se illi daturus” (687).

his bed for the night.”³³ These are some of the portraits of Homer as a beggar or suppliant within a narrative that repeatedly mentions food, the protagonist’s periodic lack of it, and his constant movement sometimes driven by the search for stabler sustenance.³⁴

Homer, like Lázaro, at times lives as a beggar, wanders over a wide geography, and engages a number of characters who in varying degree all become responsible for his material well being. In this way, poverty, hunger, and charity figure as central topics in both texts, but receive a drastically different treatment in each. Obviously, in the case of Lázaro, his interactions with his masters are often marked by cruelty and neglect, what with his *amos* physically abusing him, when not denying him basic sustenance. When juxtaposed, Lázaro’s masters appear as grotesque distortions of Homer’s much more compassionate and generous benefactors. Being Christians, Lázaro’s masters – especially the clergymen – would be expected to treat a suppliant such as Lázaro in accordance with the Christian virtue of charity, “the principle teaching of our faith,” Alfonso de Valdés reminds us.³⁵ Instead, what we have is a series of characters who neglect and mistreat the suppliant, ignoring the Christian mandate to charitably succor him with both material and spiritual support. In contrast, Homer is most always observed to be treated kindly and charitably. With this we begin to understand to what purpose *Lazarillo* deliberately invites its readers to recall the *Vita. Lazarillo*’s invocation of the Pseudo-Herodotean text effectively sets before the reader two disparate images of charity – one an inversion of the other – an interpretation of which leads to one inevitable conclusion: the Christian world now appears turned upside down, as pagans themselves are seen as exemplars of Christian charity, while Christians in *Lazarillo* are depicted as not only abandoning charity but as militating against it, what with their often violent treatment of the vulnerable Lázaro.³⁶ Such irony would not have escaped Juan Luis Vives who, after citing

³³ “Ingressus autem reclinatusq[ue] cum caeteris epulo fruebatur, in magno honore admirationeq[ue] ab accumbentibus habitus, ibidemq[ue] ea nocte cubile sibi paravit” (687).

³⁴ “[W]ith few resources and barely enough food, [Homer] decided to go to Cyme to see if he could do any better” (“egestate postea adactus, cum vix alimenta haberet, statuit in animo Cuma[m] ad feliciorum successum reverti” [677]). Perhaps more so than in Lázaro’s case, Homer never ceases to wander throughout the *Vita*, which is structured as a rapid succession of encounters between Homer and members of the public. Etruria and Iberia (676), Ithaca (676), Colophon (676), Neon Teichos (677), Cyme (677), Phocaea (679), Erythraea (681), Pitys (682), Chios (684), Samos (686), and Ios (689) are all visited by Homer. Lázaro’s wanderings are characterized by a site specificity reminiscent of the *Vita*. Tejares (12), Salamanca (22), Almorox (36), Escalona (38), Torrijos and Maqueda (46), and Toledo (71) all figure as places visited by Lázaro or as places where he was reared.

³⁵ Valdés refers to charity as “el principal conocimiento de nuestra fe” (*Diálogo de las cosas ocurridas en Roma* 24). Charity will be discussed in detail below.

³⁶ There is another important point to be made concerning this idea that Lázaro’s masters are “inversions” of Homer’s benefactors. Lázaro’s life story primarily consists of his economic hardships and the cruelty he suffers at the hands of his masters. Lázaro, for example, describes his second master, the cleric of Maqueda, in terms of his “gran mezquindad,” how “el lacerado mentía falsamente,” and how the hypocrite “comía como lobo” after singing the virtues of abstemiousness (52). Curiously, we

Socrates as a model of charity, states: “Avergüencense los cristianos de la vida y las obras de un gentil!”³⁷

Up to now in this essay I have used the term “charity” in relation to Lázaro’s interactions with his masters, as well as Homer’s interactions with his benefactors. Obviously, the Christian concept of charity did not exist in Homeric times when there existed a closely related principle called hospitality; as we saw above, “hospitalitas” (*hospitality*; Gr. ξενία) was the term used by Pseudo-Herodotus in describing Mentor’s tending to an ailing Homer. What Pseudo-Herodotus is showing us in the *Vita* is a vision of Greek society in which all faithfully adhere to the law of hospitality. A contemporary definition of this term as the “[c]ordial and generous reception of or disposition toward guests” reflects the Greek concept but falls short of communicating the absolute social and religious importance of this law for ancient Greeks (*The American Heritage College Dictionary* 670). Bolchazy, after citing the praise of hospitality by Homer, Solon, Euripides, Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle, points to “inscriptional evidence” that “the law of hospitality is the most important law” in ancient Greek culture.³⁸ The importance attached to this principle is evidenced in the fact that Zeus himself was considered the protector of beggars and travelers; as Homer states in book 6 of the *Odyssey*, “for all strangers and beggars are from Zeus” (Homer 1925, 99). In this way, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* relates Zeus’ status as “Father” to “a moral notion, the maintenance of customary laws; and these, e.g. the

find that, according to Pseudo-Herodotus, Homer’s poetry includes a significant autobiographical component. The *Vita* describes how when “[Homer] turned to his poetry, he expressed his gratitude” to the various people who had treated him so compassionately throughout his life (“hic poesi manum admolitus, gratiam habuit” [684]). Homer did so by allegedly creating characters based on these friends and acquaintances. For example, he repays Mentor “for having taken care of him when his eyes were ailing in Ithaca” (“laborantem ex oculis sustinuerit in Ithaca” [684]) by “making him a comrade of Odysseus’ and writing that when Odysseus sailed to Troy he entrusted his household to Mentor, as he was the worthiest and most honored of the Ithacans” (“Ulyssis fingit socium, cuius fidei Ulysses Troiam navigans, domum familiamque concrediderit, tanquam Ithacensium praestantissimo atque aequissimo” [685]). Homer likewise “gave thanks to his teacher Phemius for his education and upbringing in the *Odyssey*” (“Phemio praeceptor, simul [et] eruditionis [et] nutritionis gratiam in Odyssea retulit” [685]). The sailor Mentos and the cobbler Tychios are also commemorated in Homer’s poetry (685). This knowledge of Homer’s alleged idealized literary treatment of his “masters” provides one more instance in which *Lazarillo*’s author appears to be drawing on information in the *Vita*, only to reconstitute it, inverting it in Lázaro’s autobiography, which offers unrelenting criticism of his *amos*’ moral shortcomings. Far from the literary idealizations of Homer’s benefactors, Lázaro’s masters are little more than grotesque caricatures.

³⁷ Here is a fuller version of the same quote: “Sócrates, que era gentil, pospuestos sus negocios particulares, y a pesar de la contradicción y la envidia de muchos, rodeaba toda la ciudad enseñando, exhortando, amonestando a todos y a cada uno, consagrado noche y día al noble y laborioso empeño de hacer mejores a sus conciudadanos. No quiero referir ahora las andanzas de los Apósteles y tantos trabajos como pasaron. Avergüencense los cristianos de la vida y las obras de un gentil!” (*Del socorro de los pobres* [I, 1373-74]). The idea exemplified by Socrates, as will be discussed below, is that the theological virtue of charity implies the spiritual and moral instruction of the less fortunate, beyond satisfaction of their material needs.

³⁸ Bolchazy 14-15. Also see Reece for a study of hospitality scenes in Homer.

respect for suppliants and guest-friends (Zeus Hikesios, Xenios), were always bound up with Zeus. This explains why Zeus was always the god of the courtyard and the household (Zeus Herkeios, Ktesios)” (*The Oxford Classical Dictionary* 1146) Consequently, as Blümner observes, “the widespread beautiful custom of hospitality which prevailed in ancient times, and made men regard every stranger as under the protection of Zeus, enabled them to find shelter” (Blümner 199). In the *Vita*, even the humblest of hosts – e.g. Glaucus the goatherd – offers Homer shelter, a warm fire, and food. In this way, the *Vita* can be seen as a sort of *exemplum* of the sacred practice of hospitality, in that people from all walks of life are shown to act generously and compassionately toward the impoverished and blind beggar, Homer.

In a practical sense, the image of the able helping the needy set forth in the *Vita* would have deeply resonated with any sixteenth-century Christian versed in the Old and New Testaments; in the latter Christ enjoins his followers to be hospitable and he himself becomes the archetypal suppliant.³⁹ Theoretically speaking, an understanding of hospitality as being a function of charity is explicit in Catholic theology: “Hospitality is a function of charity,” as both are linked by the duty to “love one’s neighbor as oneself” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia* VII, 154). Hospitality is directly

³⁹ Various passages in the Old Testament feature the patriarchs as models of hospitality, such as when Abraham receives Yahweh accompanied by “three men” in Genesis 18:2, 4-5: “[A]nd when [Abraham] saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground” and said “[l]et a little water [. . .] be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts” (this and all subsequent biblical quotations refer to *The Holy Bible* [Westminster Study Edition]). In the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah the two angels welcomed hospitably into the home of Lot protect him and his family while destroying the rest of the city (Genesis 19). In Mark 6:41-45 Jesus is seen as an example of hospitality when he divides the loaves and fishes to feed “five thousand men.” Jesus recommends hospitality in Luke 11:5-8: “And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.” In Matthew 25:35-44 Jesus becomes a representation of the guest or suppliant, stating, “[f]or I was ahungered and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” There is also 1 John 3:17: “He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?” All of these examples of hospitality, which, as will be explained below, are theologically understood to be acts of charity. Sixteenth-century Christians versed in the classics might have been acquainted with Ovid’s treatment of hospitality in the widely disseminated *Metamorphoses*. The story of Baucis and Philemon depicts Jupiter (or Zeus) and Mercury in disguise and on a mission to test the public’s willingness to welcome strangers into their homes (Ovid 200-04; bk. 8) Ultimately, Baucis and Philemon – who assiduously tend to and feed their guests – are rewarded for their hospitality and those who had shunned the gods are destroyed (thus recalling the two angel’s protection of Lot and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). I thank George M. Caywood, former president of the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, California, for his many insights into Biblical representations of hospitality and charity.

linked to charity in writings from the era in which *Lazarillo* was written. As a sub-entry to the term “hospital,” Covarrubias defines “hospitalidad” as “la buena obra de hospedar,” defining the latter term as “recibir en casa huéspedes, forasteros y peregrinos. *Una de las obras de caridad* de que se nos ha de hacer cargo el día de juicio, si no nos hemos compadecido del pobre peregrino y albergádole” (648, my emphasis). If, on the one hand, charity involves receiving “huéspedes, forasteros y peregrinos” into one’s home, then it also involves other acts of compassion for the less fortunate whom Christians are duty-bound to succor; one of Covarrubias’ definitions of “caridad” is as follows: “También se toma vulgarmente caridad por la limosna que se hace al pobre, a la cual nos mueve el amor y la compasión del prójimo”(273). While the ancient Greek might have feared the vengeance of Zeus for a breach of hospitality, Christians faced a more horrific fate for failure to exercise charity, eternal damnation. The fact that Covarrubias refers to one’s charitable works being tallied on the “día de juicio” reflects Saint Paul’s explicit assertion that all of one’s good works in life rest on charity without which salvation is impossible. Erasmus, paraphrasing Saint Paul (1 Corinthians 13:1-13) gives a more complete definition of charity in the *Enchiridion* (1503):

¿Sabes qué llama sant Pablo charidad? Edificar al próximo con buena vida y exemplo, con obras de charidad y con palabras de santa dotrina; tener a todos por miembros de un mesmo cuerpo; pensar que todos somos una mesma cosa en Jesu Christo [...]. [R]emediar los males y daños agenos como los tuyos propios; corregir con mansedumbre al que yerra; enseñar al que no sabe; levantar y aliviar al que está abatido; consolar al desfavorecido; ayudar al que trabaja; socorrer al necesitado.⁴⁰

Whatever the theory underlying the practice, there is little doubt that the compassionate treatment of the needy depicted in the *Vita* would have eluded a sixteenth-century Christian reader’s ability to connect those images of Greek hospitality with his own understanding of the Christian concepts of hospitality and charity, or more simply, with his own ideas of basic human compassion. And it is safe to say that most if not all of Lázaro’s masters fail to observe any part of the principle of charity as the term was understood in the sixteenth century. To be sure, the ironic fact that those committing the most heinous breaches of charity were representatives of the Catholic church was a concern very much on the minds of Spanish activist-thinkers of the era, including, obviously enough, the author of *Lazarillo*.

In his classic study on “La actitud espiritual del *Lazarillo*” (1968) Francisco Márquez Villanueva identifies in *Lazarillo* the theme of an “inversión universal de valores” characteristic of many reformist writings (86). In this regard, *Lazarillo*

⁴⁰ Erasmus 276-77. This and all subsequent citations of the *Enchiridion* refer to the sixteenth-century Spanish translation by Alonso Fernández de Madrid (1475-1559) entitled *El Enquiridion o manual del caballero cristiano*.

reflects the works of Erasmus and others who criticize prince and ecclesiastic alike for their roles in enabling moral decay at all levels of society, a society which they are entrusted to protect but which now appears “turned upside down” as all that is foul is now taken for good and viceversa (Márquez Villanueva 1968, 83-84). Within this overarching theme we can then frame another of Márquez Villanueva’s astute observations, which is that “[l]a más honda preocupación religiosa del *Lazarillo de Tormes* se centra en torno a un complejo obsesivo con la virtud teologal de la caridad” (110). The critic then goes on to enumerate *Lazarillo*’s various references to the public’s lack of charity: The citizens of Toledo are described as “rica, aunque no muy limosnera (35); the niggardly cleric of Maqueda “tenía poca caridad” (49); coming up empty handed after begging in Toledo, Lázaro states that “la caridad se subió al cielo” (72); again in reference to Toledo, Lázaro laments, “en este pueblo no había caridad” (87). Finally, it is suggested that the peasants are deluded in their belief that being “cristianos viejos” will save their souls “sin hacer obras de caridad.”⁴¹ Synthesizing Márquez Villanueva’s two ideas, we can safely affirm that the Christian world depicted in *Lazarillo* is indeed a world of “inverted values” first and foremost because Christianity’s most fundamental virtue of charity is no longer practiced by most Christians, who are now seen to treat the needy with scorn and violence. To this, we could now append the idea that the inversion of the Christian world effected in *Lazarillo* is all the more dramatic in the intertextual sense that the Christians depicted as un-charitable (in essence, as un-Christian) also claim the dubious distinction of miserably failing to measure up to a model of moral virtue set forth by “mere pagans” who, in the *Vita Homeri*, become exemplars of Christian charity *avant la lettre*.

While *Lazarillo*’s author dramatized Catholic Christendom’s abandonment of charity (one might say he emblemized it in this image of a clergyman starving a child) some of his contemporaries did so more directly and more vehemently. I refer to Juan Luis Vives and Alfonso de Valdés, some of whose writings include extensive meditations on charity; *Del socorro de los pobres (De subventionem pauperum, 1525)* by Juan Luis Vives is a lengthy exposition on the history and nature of charity followed by poverty policy proposals for governments. As we approach the topic of charity in their works I would like to state that, as has been the case up to now in this essay, the ensuing discussion will only deal with charity in its rhetorical and theological dimensions, not in its socio-political dimension as the centerpiece of the lengthy and well-documented sixteenth-century debate on poverty policy featuring, among others, Domingo de Soto (1494-1560) and Juan de Robles (or de Medina)

⁴¹ *Lazarillo de Tormes* 123-24, n. 42. There are, however, a few fleeting instances when Lázaro is succored by charitable individuals. After Lázaro is cudged by the cleric of Maqueda a healer and some neighbors provide him aid (70). Also, the *mujercillas* living near Lázaro and the squire provide him with food at times –“me daban alguna cosilla” (93). A woman in a tripe shop once gives Lázaro a cow’s hoof and “otras pocas tripas cocidas” (87).

(1492-1572).⁴² That is, I will only be dealing with charity as it manifests itself in the texts under examination, as a doctrinal concept, in its quality as the “most important” of the theological virtues.

If Covarrubias and Erasmus (via Saint Paul) provided us above with a definition of charity as understood by sixteenth-century Christians, then the writings of both Vives and Valdés make a point of highlighting Christianity’s failure to live out that principle. And, if it has been argued that *Lazarillo*’s author systematically guides the reader to mentally juxtapose pagan and Christian examples of charity via an intertextual reading of the *Vita*, then the fact that Vives and Valdés (each, incidentally, believed to have authored *Lazarillo*)⁴³ make extensive use of this same pagan-versus-Christian moral juxtaposition would appear to lend credence to this thesis. Vives, different than Valdés with his more trenchant style, mostly follows a more moderate and didactic approach to exposing the lack of Christian charity and exhorting Christians to be more charitable.⁴⁴ This makes perfect sense in light of the fact that Vives wrote *Del socorro de los pobres* in an earnest attempt to instruct individuals and governments in how to more humanely assist the poor and alleviate poverty. Valdés’ two dialogues, on the other hand, had a much different function. For beyond being motivated by an Erasmian reformist agenda on par with Vives, he had a more immediate political motive in denouncing Christianity’s lack of charity, which he does rather caustically at times. In repeatedly trumpeting the papacy’s own numerous breaches of charity Valdés worked toward his goal of undermining papal authority and bolstering that of Charles V, for whom Valdés served as secretary.⁴⁵ For to question the church’s charity (this being the fundamental theological virtue) is to directly question its very legitimacy, something we see Valdés doing overtly. When the character Mercury laments that after having traveled all of Christendom he “vi[o] apenas una centella de

⁴² For a fuller discussion of poverty and public assistance in early modern Spain see Villanueva (1968, 120-27), Redondo, Herrero (1979), and Martz.

⁴³ While I don’t believe the findings of this essay move us closer to solving the mystery of *Lazarillo*’s authorship, I do believe that the vehemence which with Alfonso de Valdés denounces the church’s breaches of charity in his two dialogs (to be discussed below) deeply resonates with *Lazarillo*’s own incisive critique that similarly makes clerics into emblems of uncharitability (see Ruffinatto [26-34] for an overview of the critical debate on the book’s authorship). Of late, Vives and especially Valdés have figured prominently in this debate, with Francisco Calero (2006) championing Vives in opposition to Navarro Durán’s (2003) long support of Valdés.

⁴⁴ Vives, for example, criticizes how a Christian will travel the seas in search of fortune, while the mere giving of alms becomes for him a Herculean task: “Peregrinamos por mares y por tierras por un logro ruin [...] y por el amor del prójimo, el ademán de abrir la mano es un trabajo de Hércules” (*Del Socorro* [I, 1370]). And when charity can be found, it happens only grudgingly: “Si alguien dió una moneda a un pordiosero, piensa que le dió su sangre, no un poco de metal” (*Del Socorro* [I, 1371]).

⁴⁵ Valdés’ reformist program is inseparable from his political agenda in support of Charles V and against Pope Clement VII (1478-1534). While Clement did ally himself with Charles in the Battle of Pavia (Feb. 24, 1525) the following year saw him plotting with King Francis I of France in opposition to the Holy Roman Emperor. This alliance led to the sack of Rome and imprisonment of Clement in May 1527 by imperial soldiers, which Valdés explains as an act of divine justice in *Las cosas ocurridas en Roma*.

caridad” one grasps that all of society is implicated in Valdés’ criticisms and all of society falls short of its fundamental moral obligations as Christians.⁴⁶ Yet, it is clear that Valdés lays most of the blame at the doorstep of the Vatican which sets a negative example of charity both for its clergy and for all of society.⁴⁷ Deploring the Vatican’s interventions in politics and war, Valdés sees irony in the fact that the faithful donate to the church only to see those funds used for wars that could harm or kill them: “¡Doite yo dineros para que me defiendas, y tú alquilas con ellos gente para matarme, robarme y destruirme!” (*Roma* 23). This leads the character Lactancio to sarcastically exclaim, “¡Oh qué gentil caridad!”⁴⁸ After all, “[d]onde ay guerra, ¿cómo puede aver caridad?” (*Roma* 24). Ultimately, this breach of charity leads Valdés to directly question the authority of the pope: “Pues el que [caridad] no tiene, ¿cómo será cristiano? E si no [es] cristiano, ¿cómo [será] Vicario de Jesu Cristo?” (*Roma* 24). Finally, Valdés justifies the sack of Rome by imperial soldiers and subsequent pillaging of fifteen million ducados by declaring that this expropriation of funds will preempt future sins by denying the church a financial means to indulge in its vices as well as by removing its negative example of charity: “Que Roma no tornasse a tomar los vicios que tenía, ni en ella reinasse más tan poca caridad y amor y temor de Dios” (*Roma* 99).

In Valdés’ dialogues we find a number of examples in which characters deplore the lack of charity in the church, a breach of moral virtue which has materially and spiritually destructive consequences for society at large. *Lazarillo*, albeit in a different mode, sets before the reader a similar negative example of charity and also mimics Valdés’ sense of irony in recognizing the clergy to be the worst offenders. Beyond this, as we will see below, Valdés’ dialogues repeatedly denounce the church’s moral failures all within a framework that juxtaposes Christian and pagan (mainly Greco-

⁴⁶ *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* 13. From now on I will abbreviate this dialog as *Mercurio*, while the *Diálogo de las cosas ocurridas en Roma* will be abbreviated as *Roma*.

⁴⁷ The pope’s negative example of charity is not limited to Rome, but rather implicitly serves to corrupt the ecclesiastical hierarchy, finally affecting society at large. Lactancio states, “[d]el Papa me maravillo, que debería de ser espejo de todas las virtudes cristianas y dechado en quien todos nos havíamos de mirar [. . .] quiera hazer guerra por adquirir y mantener cosas que Jesu Christo mandó menospreciar” (*Roma* 24). Thus, if the pope has now become a negative example of virtue, then it is no surprise that lesser clergy would follow suit; Lactancio states to the Archdeacon that the clergy themselves act to suffocate charity: “Vosotros, con vuestro mal vivir, matáis el fuego de la caridad” (*Roma* 32). Finally, the negative moral example set by the pope and replicated by the clergy puts all of Christian civilization at risk: “Porque sois mucho más perniciosos a toda la república cristiana con vuestro mal exemplo” (*Roma* 33).

⁴⁸ *Roma* 23. As Joseph Ricapito pointed out (158, n. 51.) and as reaffirmed by Navarro Durán (2003, 185-86) in certain instances in Valdés’ dialogues one perceives punning on the word “gentil” which could mean “genteel,” “refined,” “tremendous,” or “great,” but also “gentile” or “pagan.” For example, when Charon asks the soul of a theologian – who admits to being better versed in Aristotle than the Bible – what theology is, the man responds “saber disputar pro y contra y determinar quisiones de theología” (*Mercurio* 125). Charon sarcastically responds: “¡Gentil theología era la tuya!,” which could be read as “What a refined theology yours was!” or “What a pagan theology yours was!” (*Mercurio* 126).

Roman) civilizations. As a preface to Valdés' own comparison of Christians and pagans, it would be useful to recall a text that clearly influenced him as a writer and as a Christian. I refer, once again, to Erasmus' *Enchiridion*. This treatise makes numerous references to pagan civilizations among which I discern at least four general types, each of which entails some form of association or comparison of pagan and Christian moral virtue. More often than not, these juxtapositions serve to elevate the cultural and moral status of pagans vis-à-vis Christians. The first is the general suggestion – inspired by Saints Basil, Augustine, and Jerome – that moral teachings in pagan texts can enrich a Christian's own beliefs: “También te digo que para esta [. . .] pelea cristiana [. . .] n[o] me parece muy mal que [. . .] [uno] [. . .] se ensaye y exercite en las letras de [. . .] poetas y filósofos gentiles” (132). Secondly, Erasmus often cites illustrious pagans, mainly philosophers, who provide examples of Christian-like virtue. For example, Epictetus, among other “filósofos gentiles” celebrated the “virtud del ánimo” and disdained “riquezas” (392). The third, which goes one step further than the second, is the idea that pagans are, in several cases, morally superior to Christians; after a lengthy censure of the Christian lack of virtue, Erasmus praises

la santidad de Foción, la pobreza de Fabricio [. . .] la magnanimidad de Camilo, la severidad de Bruto, la honestidad de Pitágoras, la continencia nunca vencida de Sócrates, la integridad de Catón, y otros mil hermosos dotes de virtudes que a cada passo se leen en las historias de los lacedemonios, de los persas, de los athenienses y de los romanos, que es harta vergüença y confusión para nosotros” (302).

The fourth comparison, in contrast to the previous three, entails a criticism of Christians who, in their un-Christian behavior, act as if they were “pagan.” Specifically referring to Christians' failure to go beyond “visible things” to realize that the “invisible” are what must guide their lives, Erasmus states that “por no sabe[r] [esta regla], o por tenerla en poco, muchos christianos, en lugar de ser devotos y santos, son supersticiosos y vanos, y si no es en el nombre de christianos, en lo demás poca diferencia ay dellos a gentiles” (231).

Clearly, a key feature of Erasman rhetoric is this sustained comparison of Christians and pagans, a comparison which, more often than not, serves to elevate the moral virtue of pagans, sometimes in sharp contrast to Christians. It happens that these self-same criticisms and comparisons abound in the writings of Valdés. Typical of Valdesian rhetoric is the following passage, in which Lactancio dialogues with the Archdeacon: “¿Por qué vivimos como si entre nosotros no hoviesse fe ni ley? Los filósofos y sabios antiguos, siendo gentiles, menospreciaron las riquezas, ¿y agora queréis vos aquel Vicario de Jesu Cristo haga guerra por lo que aquellos ciegos paganos no tenían en nada?” (*Roma* 25). Here, not only is the pope criticized for coveting wealth – wealth which even wise pagans disdained – but that he also goes so far as to wage war on Christians to maintain it, which, again, represents a breach of

charity. Valdés can only wonder what can be done when simple Christians will see pagan philosophers as more virtuous than Jesus' "Vicar" and, by extension, as more virtuous than Jesus himself: "¿Qué dirá la gente que de Jesu Cristo no sabe más de lo que vee en su Vicario, sino que mucho mejores fueron aquellos filósofos que por alcançar el verdadero bien, que ellos ponían en la virtud, menospreciaron las cosas mundanas, que no Jesu Cristo, pues veen que su Vicario anda hambreado y haziendo guerra por adquirir lo que aquéllos menospreciaron?" (*Roma* 25). One realizes that the Christian world truly has been turned upside down when the soul of a deceased Christian who had lived a morally exemplary life describes how, when on his deathbed, he was joined by a priest who would deliver his last rites. Had he not actually met the dying man, the priest states, he might have "taken [him] for a gentile or pagan" having heard of the man's strict adherence to Christian teachings, rather than following the less virtuous practices of the mainstream.⁴⁹ In Valdés' literary world, moral exemplarity poses such a sharp contrast to the prevailing lack of Christian devotion that the virtuous run the risk of being stigmatized, that is, "taken for a pagan." Finally, let us not forget that the *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* sees two figures from pagan mythology – Mercury and Charon – passing verbal judgment on Christian souls.

If Valdés seeks to underscore the lack of Christian moral virtue by invoking the superior moral example (ironically, a more Christian-like example) of the Ancients, then Vives employs the very same comparative framework in *Del socorro de los pobres*. One important distinction between Valdés and Vives is that the latter specifically cites pagans as exemplars of Christian charity. Above we observed one example of Vives "shaming" his fellow Christians who failed to achieve the model of charity offered by Socrates and he assumes the same admonishing tone in a preface to a lengthy quotation of Seneca's views on charity: "Oye a Séneca, sabio gentil, enseñando a los cristianos unas verdades que más convenía que él de los cristianos las aprendiera. Voy a transcribir el pasaje entero, para que cada uno de nosotros se avergüence de no ordenar su vida, ni siquiera inspirándola en preceptos un poco más sanos de los gentiles."⁵⁰ Also, "¿qué significa el que en una ciudad cristiana donde todos los días se lee el Evangelio [...] y en él el único mandamiento de la caridad se viva de manera tan distinta de cómo allí se perceptúa? No tengo reparo en afirmar que no aprobarían nuestra manera de vivir gentiles dotados de alguna cordura" (*Del Socorro* [I, 1373]). Even Aristotle figures in the gallery of pagan exemplars of charity, who goes so far as to give alms to a beggar considered by others as undeserving:

⁴⁹ "[Lo] tovierá por gentil o pagano, pues tan poco cazo hacía de lo que los otros tenían por principal" (*Mercurio* 139).

⁵⁰ *Del Socorro* [I, 1372]. Seneca is specifically treating the problem of those who resist being charitable for fear of the ingratitude of the recipient: "No ha de ser bastante razón para hacernos tardos en los beneficios el cuento sin cuento de los ingratos. Lo primero, porque [...] nosotros le acrecentamos; lo segundo porque ni aun a los dioses inmortales los hacen cejar en su pródiga beneficencia los mismos sacrílegos y los negligentes; siguen su condición natural y socorren a todos los seres, aun a aquellos mismos que desestiman sus dones."

“Aristóteles, filósofo gentil [. . .] habiendo entregado a un bellaco que se la pidió una moneda, como le advirtiesen sus amigos y le reprendiesen por haber hecho bien a un indigno: *No me compadecí de él – respondió – sino de la naturaleza. ¡Cuánto mejor nos está a nosotros compadecernos del pobre por amor de Dios...!*” (*Del Socorro* [I, 1386). Therefore, if Vives’ explicit comparison of pagan and Christian charity deeply resonates with Erasmus and Valdés, then *Lazarillo* becomes an artistic literary manifestation of that same Erasmian outlook that examines Christian moral hypocrisy through a lens of irony in which pagans are seen as being more Christian than Christians themselves.⁵¹

In the first part of this essay we explored some of the formal parallels between *Lazarillo* and the *Vita*. This led to a lengthy discussion of charity and how Lázaro’s masters become negative examples of this virtue, inversions of Homer’s much more charitable benefactors. While we have said quite a bit about Lázaro’s masters, we have said relatively little about the boy who grows into a man in an uncharitable world. I share Bruce Wardropper’s opinion of a “trastorno de la moral en *Lazarillo*” that includes the protagonist’s own moral demise: “La moral de Lázaro [...] trastorna no sólo la virtud cristiana sino también la honra profana [...] y el libro [es] todo un ensayo por investigar las consecuencias sociales y personales de una moral pervertida” (444); “la novela nos enseña la corrupción moral de un muchacho fundamentalmente bueno” (447). And, by the novel’s end, Lázaro “aprende a ser hipócrita, a conformarse con la mentira del Arcipreste” (447). If anything, the novel shows us that this process of moral degeneration is set into motion and sustained by Lázaro’s environment, the uncharitable world in which he lives. That is, one aspect of charity that we have mentioned as being explicit in Erasmus’ (or Saint Paul’s) definition of charity is the obligation of a Christian to help the needy both materially and spiritually, “con buena vida y exemplo, con obras de charidad y con palabras de santa dotrina” and “enseñar al que no sabe; corregir con mansedumbre al que yerra.” The Christians of *Lazarillo* fail on all nearly all counts and, for example, the only thing the Archpriest does teach Lázaro is not virtuous: it is, as Wardropper observes, the ability to live as a hypocrite. Likewise, it is the Clérigo de Maqueda’s starving of Lázaro that directly causes him to obsess over food to the point that the boy has now learned to invert the concept of charity: he prays for the death of his fellow Christians so as to be able to partake of the bread served at their wakes (53). This starving boy would later become a man whose own self-absorption and moral abdication make him as grotesque – if not as heartless – a figure as his masters. According to Stephen Gilman, “[o]nly when Lázaro recounts his shame not just with candor but with [. . .] ironical satisfaction [. . .] is he fully degraded” (154). In short, this notion that Lázaro’s character can be interpreted as the morally degraded byproduct of a morally degraded society is, I believe, to the point. Moreover, this image of a morally degraded Lázaro is reinforced when examining certain aspects of his character which, when read against the greater Homeric

⁵¹ See Bataillon 1991 [1937] on Erasmus and Erasmianism in sixteenth-century Spain.

biographical corpus including the *Vita Homeri*, appear to indicate that his character was conceived as a travesty of Homer himself. As we will see, it could very well be that the lowly character Lázaro was wryly crafted with the lofty epic poet in mind.

As is well known, Lázaro claims to have been born in the Tormes river, thus causing him to later adopt the river's name as his own: "Mi nacimiento fue dentro del río Tormes, por la cual causa tomé el sobrenombre" (12). We have also noted how Pseudo-Herodotus describes Homer as having been born on the shores of the Meles river causing his mother to name him Melesigenes (a detail first connected to *Lazarillo* by Navarro Durán [2004, 46-47]). This simple coincidence is all the more meaningful in light of other parallels that suddenly come into view. If Lázaro's assuming the name "Tormes" seems to be a direct reference to Homer, then the name "Lazarillo" further substantiates that interpretation, given Homer's own representation as a beggar in the *Vita*. That is, if Lazarillo's surname is, on the one hand, associated with a river, then his given name, on the other hand, becomes a badge of his first "profession," mendicancy. As Javier Herrero perceptively observes in his etymological examination of the name "Lazarus" or "Lázaro," "[t]he name [. . .] itself seems to have had an extremely rich evocative power in the sixteenth century" (1979, 879). In reviewing various of the name's nuances ("leper," "beggar," "brought to the point of death by hunger") Herrero recognizes that its "several connotations combined to suggest the character's sense of misery, degradation, and powerlessness" (1979, 879). Consequently, if Lazarillo de Tormes' name is effectively a label identifying him as a half-starved beggar originating from the environs of the Tormes, then Homer is also known as having at one time born the name of a river from which he originated, as well as having lived a difficult life marked by poverty, begging, and hunger. In sum, it seems very likely that sixteenth-century readers familiar with the *Vita* would have sensed a wry reference to the epic poet in the character Lazarillo de Tormes, whose name alone conjures charicaturesque remembrances of Homer's own life story.

While the image of Homer as a blind beggar singing for alms might invite an immediate comparison with the character of the *ciego* in *Lazarillo*, it is undoubtedly Lázaro who has much more in common with the Greek poet, many examples of which we have already seen.⁵² The Lázaro-Homer connection is further substantiated when we study certain themes that in turn generate more interpersonal associations between the two protagonists. One such theme we have already touched upon is charity. Another is wine. Wine is referenced throughout *Lazarillo* and its thematic and structural importance has been the object of sustained critical study (see Tarr, Herrero 1978a and b, Michalski, Lida de Malkiel [353 and 353 n. 8]), and Navarro Durán (2003, 37 and 82]). As a young boy in the service of the *ciego*, Lázaro reveals his

⁵² The connection between Homer and the *ciego* is at best superficial, possibly conjuring imagistic associations with the *cantares de ciegos* tradition. The *ciego*, who figures only briefly in *Lazarillo*, is not the focus of biographical study, as are Lázaro and Homer. Also, the breadth of intertextual data linking Lázaro's life story to that of Homer's is clear evidence of this being the more meaningful connection.

thirst for wine, a thirst which is usually left unsated as his master keeps the jug closely guarded: “Yo, como estaba hecho al vino, moría por él” (31). A subsequent stratagem by Lázaro to bleed the wine jug of its contents is discovered by the *ciego* who delivers a crushing blow to his head with the jug. As he washes the boy’s wounds with wine, the *ciego* remarks: “¿Qué te parece, Lázaro? Lo que te enfermó te sana y da salud” (33). Yet, wine is not simply Lázaro’s beverage of choice. As C. P. Wagner pointed out long ago, it is the subject of a prophecy fulfilled regarding Lázaro’s rise to economic prosperity.⁵³ True to the *ciego*’s prophecy that he will be “fortunate with wine,” Lázaro eventually ascends to the post of crier of wines in Toledo: “Y es que tengo cargo de pregonar los vinos que en esta ciudad se venden” (129). Yet, if wine is what brings about Lázaro’s economic prosperity, then wine is also connected to his moral demise; it is the Archpriest who both gives him a job selling wine and maintains a sexual relationship with Lázaro’s wife, a humiliating arrangement that the morally flexible *pregonero* chooses to stoically accept.

It is obvious to any reader that Lázaro’s life story is in different ways connected with wine. While wine does not figure as a theme specifically in the *Vita*, it held a very close association to Homer as far as sixteenth-century readers were concerned. Juan Luis Vives, in his allegorical interpretation of Virgil’s eclogues, records a Horatian saying that Homer was an inebriate as inferred from his numerous praises of wine: “Por las alabanzas que hizo del vino, Homero es acusado de vinoso...”⁵⁴ This belief that Homer overindulged in wine appears to have been commonplace as evidenced in a 1633 comment by Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645): “A Homero [...] Escalígero y otros muchos le llaman caduco y borracho.”⁵⁵ It appears that Homer’s persistent extolling the virtues of wine in his two epics led to a running joke concerning the poet’s own imbibing.⁵⁶ This means that both Lázaro and Homer were for sixteenth-century readers intimately associated with wine, as it is Lázaro’s beverage of choice and the source of his livelihood, as well as a subject treated in Homer’s poetry, and subsequently, the subject of legends surrounding the bard’s drinking habits.

Wine, then, is associated both with the men and with their respective trades. This commonality gains more meaningful significance when we recognize that both men’s trades rely completely on the voice, one a crier of wines, the other an epic poet particularly known for “singing wine’s praises.” Here we must recall that being a *pregonero* involves Lázaro in other activities not associated with wine, such as crying

⁵³ Wagner states that it is this prophecy fulfilled that links the first and last *tratados* of the book, making the wine reference “the best sort of evidence of the artistic unity of the work” (qtd. in Tarr 405).

⁵⁴ *Interpretación alegórica de las Bucólicas de Virgilio* (1537), in Vives I, 921.

⁵⁵ *La cuna y la sepultura* (I, 1208). (One can easily infer that this belief in Homer’s love of the grape was based on the fact that wine is mentioned throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, often as the subject of praise: “And there stood casks of sweet wine and old, full of the unmixed drink divine” Homer 27; bk. 2.

⁵⁶ The Homeric epics were widely available in Latin and Spanish translation in sixteenth-century Spain; see Beardsley.

out “cosas perdidas” and “acompañar los que padecen persecuciones por justicia y declarar a voces sus delitos” (129). For these reasons, as Rico explains, *pregonero* was one of the most despised jobs one could hold at that time.⁵⁷ Consequently, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that Lázaro’s loathsome post as *pregonero* could have been conceived as a travesty of Homer’s nobler profession: the lowly Lázaro crying out wines and crimes in sixteenth-century Toledo is a far cry from Homer singing the virtues of wine in the epic poetry of ancient Greece. Lending credence to all of this is the fact that Homer himself was considered to be a *pregonero* as evidenced in a fifteenth-century Spanish translation of the *Life of Homer* by Pier Candido Decembrio (1392-1497).⁵⁸ The epitaph on Homer’s sarcophagus is translated from Decembrio’s Latin as follows: “Aquesta tierra tiene en si oculta e encubierta la sagrada cabeça e tiene en si a Homero pregonero del loor de los grandes señores” (342). We find Homer associated with *pregonero* once again in a work by Quevedo, which includes a metaphorical reference to Homer and his craft that makes use of the words *pregonero*, *pregonado*, and *pregonar*.⁵⁹

Therefore, in the sixteenth century *pregonero* could be associated with both the loathsome job of Lázaro as well as the lofty *métier* of the epic poet, specifically in this case the grandest of epic poets, Homer. These popular beliefs and literary references to Homer, *vino*, and *pregonero* in sixteenth-century Spain coupled with the reading public’s presumed knowledge of the *Vita*, just might shed more light on the idea of Lázaro himself being a degraded rendering of Homer. Along these same lines, if we have already observed that the name Lazarillo de Tormes conjures a caricaturesque image of Homer’s life story, then we can similarly say that Lázaro’s coveted title of “pregonero de vinos” would appear to be an equally caricaturesque label that directly invokes the sixteenth-century commonplace of Homer being a poet given to singing wine’s praises, or, for those with a wry sense of humor, a *pregonero de vinos*. Otherwise, if Homer was originally named after a river by his mother, then we might interpret Lázaro’s *deliberate and conspicuous* adoption of the name Tormes as a laughable attempt by a lowly *pregonero de vinos* to put himself and his vocalized profession on par with the renowned “pregonero del loor de los grandes señores.”

We are finally in position to take stock of and synthesize the foregoing data into a more coherent explanation of how and why *Lazarillo* systematically references the *Vita*. Our discussion of the concept of charity within ancient Greek and Christian belief systems, as well as within the reformist writings of Erasmus, Vives, and Valdés

⁵⁷ Citing the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, Rico states: “El de pregonero ‘es oficio muy vil y bajo.’” Among Rico’s other references to *pregonero* we find Bartolomé Villaba (*El peregrino curioso*, 1577) describing this profession as “el oficio más infame que hay” (1994, 129 [n. 12]).

⁵⁸ Edited in article form by Suárez Somonte & González Rolán.

⁵⁹ From *De Regno* by Dio Chrysostomus (ca. 40/ca. 112) Quevedo quotes a dialogue between Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great: “‘Pues si tanto admiras a Homero (dice Filipe a Alejandro), ¿por qué tienes en menos su virtud?’ Y respondió: ‘Porque en los juegos olímpicos de buena gana oíría el pregonero divulgando los echos con voz grande y clara, pero aun entonces más quisiera ser pregonado que pregonar a otros.’” (*España defendida y los tiempos de ahora* [I, 517]).

has afforded us a viable context for understanding the multifaceted process by which *Lazarillo de Tormes* engages the *Vita Homeri* at the level of form, character, and theme. *Lazarillo*'s formal composition serves to directly invoke the *Vita Homeri* and in doing so produces a clash between the visions of humanity depicted in each. *Lazarillo* sets before the reader a world devoid of charity, which reads as a complete inversion of Homer's world in which charity is the rule. The sense of the moral degradation of Christian society is refracted in the character of Lázaro himself, whose cuckoldry and despised profession as *pregonero* of wines and crimes make him a comically degraded rendering of the epic poet, "pregonero del loor de los grandes señores." Lázaro, in this way, becomes the grotesque byproduct of the Christian lack of charity, a Christian moral shortcoming denounced repeatedly by Erasmus, Vives, and Valdés and dramatized, thematized, and satirized by the author of *Lazarillo*. Moreover, we have seen how the sustained meditation on the Christian lack of virtue in the writings of Erasmus, Vives, and Valdés repeatedly juxtaposes Christian and pagan often for purposes of praising the moral virtue of the latter and criticizing the former. This same rhetorico-theoretical construct guides the critical thrust of *Lazarillo*, a book similarly conceived in the ironic realization that models of Christian moral virtue are more fruitfully sought among the Ancients rather than among Christians themselves. The *Vita Homeri*, with its example of Christian charity *avant la lettre*, offered the ideal moral and literary platform for one author's novel approach to denouncing Christendom's moral shortcomings and vividly portraying the unsavory consequences of these shortcomings. The result was nothing less than *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a literary *tour de force* in its ingenious refashioning of the *Life of Homer* in the service of a reformist critique of Catholic Christendom's abandonment of the virtue of charity.

The foregoing analysis also appears to have implications for our understanding of *Lazarillo* within the genealogy of the picaresque, specifically regarding its classical origins. While reminiscences of Horace, Martial, Apuleius and others are detectable throughout *Lazarillo*, no single classical text, I believe, can tell us as much about the conceptual and formal properties of this novel as can the *Vita Homeri* by Pseudo-Herodotus.⁶⁰ The *Vita*, however, does not play the passive role of "source" for *Lazarillo*, providing, for example, instructive quotes from the Ancients. Rather, *Lazarillo* appears to actively and creatively engage the *Vita* in form and content and in doing so engages its readers in a process of profound moral self-reflection. However, I am a twenty-first century reader looking back on texts that may or may not have generated for early modern readers the same series of intertextual associations described above. Aside from the examples presented here, might there exist other

⁶⁰ While I agree that *Lazarillo*'s first person perspective, roguish adventures, and episodic format owe a debt to the *Golden Ass* and a Spanish adaptation of the *Baldus* (see Lázaro Carreter 1971-72) one could add that *Lazarillo* has nothing of the fantastic that characterizes so much of the *Golden Ass*. The thematization of poverty, begging, and charity common to both *Lazarillo* and the *Vita* is not present in the *Golden Ass* nor the *Baldus*.

evidence from contemporaneous sources indicating a close relationship between *Lazarillo* and Homer's biography, thereby warranting a place for the greater Homeric biographical corpus in the genealogy of the picaresque? Recent scholarship has proposed a new reading of the name "Don Quixote de la Mancha" that links it to Homer's name as set forth in a text Cervantes knew well, the *Aethiopica* by Heliodorus; in devising such a name, Cervantes might have been humorously paying homage to *Lazarillo*'s own name reference to Homer (see Mayer). Years later, having recognized the *Life of Homer* in *Lazarillo*, might Nicolas Boileau, French poet and literary critic (1636-1711), have sought to outdo *Lazarillo* by writing his own picaresque novel based on the biography of an ancient philosopher?⁶¹ Whatever the case may be, it is once again Juan Luis Vives who provides us with what might be the most telling information regarding sixteenth-century readers' awareness of the Homeric biography's relationship to other classical works now commonly included in the genealogy of the picaresque.

In a dialogue entitled *La verdad embadurnada (Veritas fucata, 1522)* Vives offers a jocular treatment of a confrontation between Truth and Falsity, now allegorized into the characters "La Verdad" and "Lo Falso." The action arises from the two sides trying to set criteria on how Lo Falso might be united with La Verdad without compromising the unerring truth of Christianity. La Verdad sends Plato as envoy to Lo Falso, where the philosopher enters into heated debate with Homer. With the failure of this first mission, Lo Falso, the next day, decides to reciprocate La Verdad's goodwill by sending an envoy of his own. Homer is nominated to head the mission. The reluctant poet offers a litany of excuses why he should not participate: "En primer lugar, la de su ceguera; luego, la de su pobreza, a continuación la de su provecia edad, a seguida la de sus absorbentes ocupaciones en componer poemas y celebrar a los príncipes y por su pelea del día anterior, en la que poco faltó para que viniesen a las manos" (I, 887).⁶² Homer acquiesces and sets off "acompañado de Hesíodo y de dos lazarrillos, Luciano y Apuleyo" (I, 888). The two guides begin to converse: "Luciano dijo a Apuleyo que él en cierta ocasión, se había convertido en asno. Apuleyo oyó con regocijo esta donosa invención y rióse y contó a quien quiso oírle que él también se había convertido en asno" (I, 888-89).

This mission to La Verdad holds a deeper significance than its humorously anachronistic juxtaposition of four ancient writers of "high" and "low" styles. First, the fact that Lucian tells Apuleius of his transformation into an ass is a reference to his

⁶¹ "Boileau, it is said [. . .] had once a project of writing a Romance on the life of Diogenes the Cynic, 'de la plus parfaite *gueserie*' as he called it; and he fancied that he should have made it 'beaucoup plus plaisante que celle de Lazarille de Tormes,'" (*Bolaeana*, qtd. in Ticknor 1.551-52, n. 3). In any case, this example appears to show that Boileau did see some connection between *Lazarillo* and an ancient biographical text.

⁶² In addition to his "pobreza," this text also describes Homer's wandering lifestyle: "Que por ansia de saberes navegaste tantos mares, visitaste tantas ínsulas y abordaste tan remotísimas naciones" (I, 888).

work *Metamorphoses*.⁶³ Then, that Apuleius proceeds to invent a similar tale about his own transformation shows Vives' acknowledgement of Apuleius' literary debt to his Greek predecessor. How do Hesiod and Homer fit into all of this? Hesiod and Homer are linked to each other through the fictionalized poetic sparring of *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, which also includes biographical sketches of both. Beyond this, Hesiod, in the poem *Works and Days*, includes various autobiographical data that make it "the earliest statement by a Greek concerning his life."⁶⁴ In this way, Hesiod can also be linked to Lucian and Apuleius both of whose works mentioned above are pseudo-autobiographies. Then there is Homer, whose biography now appears to be of some importance to the genesis of the picaresque novel. In essence, what we have here in this mission to *La Verdad* is an emblem of the classical genealogy of the picaresque novel, what with Homer being guided along by two others of impeccable proto-picaresque credentials, Lucian and Apuleius (and, as if to complete the genealogy, the Spanish translation of Vives' Latin text above refers to Homer's two "guides" as "lazarillos"). From this premise – that Vives himself acknowledged the Homeric biography's central place among these texts of similar picaresque qualities – we might do well to revisit the question of how classical texts, such as the *Vita Homeri*, played a formative role in early modern narrative fiction and, therefore, a pivotal role in the advent of the modern novel.⁶⁵

⁶³ "It is probably correct to attribute to Lucian the *Metamorphoses* thought by Photius to be by Lucius of Patrae (which will make it the original both of Apuleius' *Golden Ass* in Latin and of the Greek epitome *Lucius or the ass* transmitted among Lucian's works)" (*The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* I, 679).

⁶⁴ Richard Harder, qtd. in Misch I, 75.

⁶⁵ Of particular interest in this regard is Dooty's *The True History of the Novel*, which articulates the continuity between the ancient and the modern novel.

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