

Anthony Munday's *Palmerin d'Oliva*: Representing sexual threat in the Near East*



El *Palmerin d'Oliva* de Anthony Munday: La amenaza sexual representada en oriente próximo

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how Anthony Munday's *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588), Part II, portrays the threat of Muslims in the Near East. Munday's source is the French *L'Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive* (1546), which Jean Maugin had translated from the anonymous Spanish chivalric romance *Palmerin de Olívia* (1511). I focus on the way that the description of the Muslim menace changes in the course of translation. I argue that both the French and English translators manipulate medieval and early modern sexual stereotypes used to describe Muslim culture in order to heighten the sense of Islamic aggression and the holiness of Christianity as a counter to its threat. Munday's translation, in particular, represents the ambivalent views that his contemporary England held about Islam and the Near East, and also highlights the sanctity of Christian chastity and marriage, which are issues that he also develops in Part I of the *Palmerin d'Oliva*.

KEYWORDS: Anthony Munday; translation; Near East; sexual threat; Christian chastity; religious stereotype.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora cómo el *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588), Parte II, de Anthony Munday retrata a los musulmanes en el Oriente Próximo. La fuente de Munday es el texto francés *L'Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive* (1546) que Jean Maugin tradujo del anónimo libro de caballería español *Palmerin de Olívia* (1511). Analizo cómo la descripción de la amenaza musulmana cambia a lo largo de la traducción. Sostengo que tanto el traductor francés como el inglés manipulan estereotipos sexuales medievales y de la Edad Moderna Temprana usados en la representación de la cultura musulmana para darle énfasis a la sensación de agresión islámica y a la cualidad sagrada del cristianismo para contrarrestar esta amenaza. La traducción de Munday, en particular, representa las visiones ambivalentes que su Inglaterra contemporánea sostenía con respecto al Islam y al Oriente Próximo, y también destaca la santidad de la castidad cristiana y del matrimonio, que son aspectos que él también desarrolla en la Parte I del *Palmerin d'Oliva*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Anthony Munday; traducción; Oriente Próximo; amenaza sexual; castidad cristiana; estereotipo religioso.

This article analyses how Anthony Munday portrays the sense of threat that the Muslims in the Near East represent in Part II of his *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588).¹ Munday's source, which he follows very

* Research for this article was conducted as part of a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (ref. FFI2015-70101-P), whose financial support is herewith gratefully acknowledged.

¹ Munday's representation of Muslim culture and the Near East in his *Palmerin d'Oliva* invites investigation because to date there has not been any detailed analysis of these

closely, is the French *L'Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive* (1546), which Jean Maugin had translated from the anonymous Spanish chivalric romance *Palmerín de Olivia* (1511). My article focuses on the way that the description of the Muslim threat changes in the course of translation from the Spanish original into French and English. The Spanish author describes Palmerin's relations with these foreign cultures as generally friendly, even though the text consistently presents the hero as a foreigner who wants to get back to his homeland. The French translator, however, heightens the sense of hostility between the Christian and Muslim worlds while at the same time translating literally the magnificence of the foreign kingdoms. Munday, on the other hand, translates literally most of Maugin's description of antagonism between faiths, and its stress on the hero's Christian identity. I argue that both French and English translators manipulate medieval and early modern sexual stereotypes used to describe Muslim culture in order to heighten the sense of Islamic aggression, and the purity and holiness of Christianity as a counter to its threat. By following Maugin, Munday represents the ambivalent views that his contemporary England held about Islam and the Near East, and also highlights the sanctity of Christian chastity and marriage,² which are issues that he also develops in Part I of *Palmerin d'Oliva*. The East and the stereotypes associated with it,

issues except for Giuseppe Galigani's brief comments on Munday's translation of the word "cross" for the French term "croissant," which describes the birthmark on Palmerin's cheek. Galigani (1966, III, 263–65) suggests that Munday's substitution of a cross for a crescent moon replaces a Muslim sign with a Christian one but the author does not go beyond the substitution of the symbol, nor does he dwell on the translator's views of Islam.

² Munday's treatment of the erotic material in his translation has been largely ignored by scholarship, since up to date there has not been any work on the subject apart from Mary Patchell's and Galigani's comments. In her study on the Palmerin series, Patchell dedicates one chapter to the theme of love, exploring how these romances follow or depart from medieval courtly love convention (1947, 53–71). She notes how the treatment of marriage as a romantic ideal is the greatest departure of these romances from the medieval courtly love tradition. However, she only alludes in passing to the characters' desire, and does not analyse the romances' attitude to sexuality. Galigani, on the other hand, dedicates a few sections to the translator's treatment of erotic material and argues that Munday edits and modifies the source to make Maugin's explicit sexual description more decent and suitable for his English readership. Even though Galigani notes some telling examples of the way that Munday changes the sense of the original and how he employs metaphors different from Maugin, he does not dwell on what the language might mean (1966, III, 281–88).

serve to draw attention to religious issues relevant to the English translator's context.

The anonymous *Palmerín de Olivia* was first published in 1511 following the model of Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (1508) and *Las Sergas de Esplandián* (1510), both of which began the early modern vogue for Spanish chivalric romance in Europe. Parallel to the success of the *Amadís* series *Palmerín de Olivia* (1511) gathered interest in its own right, going through a total of fourteen editions during the sixteenth century, with the last edition printed in 1580 (García Dini 1966, 5–20). There is no current agreement about the identity of the author but there are strong arguments for both male and female authorship, as María Carmen Marín Pina notes (2004, ix–x). It was followed, in Spain, by a second part, *Primaleón* (1512), and a third part, *Platir* (1533). The *Amadís* and *Palmerín* series soon reached a wide continental audience through translation, even inspiring foreign continuations, such as the Portuguese *Palmeirim de Inglaterra* (ca.1543) and the Italian *Flortir* (1554) (Marín Pina 2004, ix–xii).³

Jean Maugin's *L'Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive* was first published in Paris in 1546 by Jeanne de Marnef for Jean Longis, one of the three stationers who initiated the printing of the *Amadís* series. Like the Spanish version, it drew on the enormous success of the *Amadís* series, which in France became a publishing phenomenon made up of twenty-four books, which were translations from the Spanish, Italian and German texts.⁴ The series was so successful that each of these books was re-edited and reprinted several times.⁵ The books even became the material for a selection of excerpts known as *Le Thresor d'Amadis de Gaule* (1559), a manual for fine speaking and writing, also printed several times in numerous editions. The French *Palmerin*, if less popular than the *Amadís*, also proved fashionable. During the sixteenth century it was printed in nine more editions in

³ For quite a comprehensive record of scholarly work on the Spanish *Palmerín de Olivia* see the online database "Clarisel" (<<http://clarisel.unizar.es/>>).

⁴ Most scholars today agree on this total of twenty-four volumes, with the exception of Mireille Huchon who claims that the total number was twenty-five but does not give any evidence on that final book (2007, 1, n. 2).

⁵ For a list of editions of the first twenty-one books in the French *Amadís* series see Pettegree, Walsby, and Wilkinson (2007, I, 18–31).

France, with the last edition in that century appearing in 1593 (Pettegree, Walsby, and Wilkinson 2007, II, 463–64).

English-speaking audiences came late to Spanish chivalric romance. Their first encounter was through Thomas Paynell's *The Treasurie of Amadis of France* (ca. 1572), a translation of the French *Thresor*. Margaret Tyler followed Paynell with *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (ca. 1578), the first English translation of a full Spanish chivalric romance, Book I of the Spanish romance *Espejo de Príncipes y Caballeros* (1555) by Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra. Anthony Munday was responsible for all the English translations of Spanish chivalric romance,⁶ except for *Bellianis of Greece* (1598), translated by one L. A. (Thomas 1920, 256); the *Mirror* series, translated by Tyler, one R. P. (either Robert Parry or Park) (Boro 2014, 3), and one L. A.; and possibly *Amadis* Book V (1598).⁷

Anthony Munday's *Palmerin d'Oliva* was first printed by John Charlwood for William Wright in London in 1588. Munday divided the romance in two parts, which were edited separately, as he explains in his epistle to the reader:

[...] a Booke growing too bigge in quantitie, is profitable neither to the minde nor the pursse: for that men are now so wise, and the world so hard, as they loove not to buie *pleasure* at unreasonable *price*. And yet the first parte will entice them to have the second [...]
(Munday 1588, sig. *3^v) (my emphasis)

⁶ Munday translated *Palladine of England* (1588), *Palmendos* (1589), *The First Booke of Primaleon of Greece* (1595), *The Second Booke of Primaleon of Greece* (1596), *The Famous and Renowned Historie of Primaleon of Greece* (1619). He also translated the Portuguese chivalric romances *Palmerin of England, Parts I and II* (1596), and *Palmerin of England, Part III* (1602). For a list of all his translations see Braden, Cummins and Gillespie (2010, 533–34).

⁷ Neither the 1598 nor the 1664 editions of the English Book V indicate the identity of the translator. Nonetheless, Hamilton attributes the 1598 edition to Munday, without any explanation, and does not include the 1664 edition, presumably because it is beyond the chronological scope of her study (2005, 96). *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* lists Munday as the translator of the 1598 edition but indicates that the 1664 edition is anonymous (Braden, Cummins and Gillespie 2010, 534; Hitchcock 2005, 406). The *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads* catalogue, on the other hand, cites the 1598 edition as anonymous, and does not include the 1664 one because it is beyond the chronological scope of the project. Helen Moore also presents both editions as anonymous but concedes the possibility that Munday might be the translator, since he translated books I to IV (2011, 118).

The English translator has been seen as a very crafty businessman, carefully advertising his texts in ways that will ensure an enthusiastic readership, and his commercial strategy is very clear in his epistle (Phillips 2006, 791–93). There, Munday depicts books as sources of “pleasure” but also as commodities, and cleverly combines the two aspects to advertise this first part of the romance and the second one that will soon follow. However, one must also consider the possibility that these commercial strategies were imposed on him by his stationers.

The Second Part of the honourable Historie of Palmerin d’Oliva, was apparently also first printed in 1588, as Jordi Sánchez-Martí speculates, although no copy of the first edition survives (2014, 193). Both parts went through three more editions each, which shows their success. Both 1588 editions of Parts I and II were dedicated to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as well as the 1616 and 1637 editions of Part II (Sánchez-Martí 2014, 206). Oxford had been the dedicatee of Munday’s romance *Zelauto* (1580), and Donna B. Hamilton sees these dedications as a sign of Munday’s Catholic sympathies (2005, 80). The other editions of *Palmerin d’Oliva*, Parts I and II, were dedicated to Francis Young of Brent-Pelham and his wife Susan (Sánchez-Martí 2014, 197; 206). Louise Wilson explains that Young was a merchant and that the different social status from his previous dedicatee is consistent with Munday’s search for patronage in non-aristocratic circles at that point in his career (2011, 126; 246, footnote 18).

Almost half of the action in the Spanish original is located in the East, because the hero, Palmerin, is heir to the throne of Constantinople. The hero’s travels take him to the lands of the Sultan of Babylon, the Emperor of Turkey and the Sultan of Persia. Palmerin has no interest in conquest or conversion, even though he is defined as a Christian hero (Marín Pina 2004, xxi). He first disguises himself as a “Moor” to ensure his survival in the court of the Sultan of Babylon, but later he is open about his Christian identity and is spared his life in the service of the Emperor of Turkey as a soldier, and then is later welcomed as a guest in the court of the Sultan of Persia. Marín Pina emphasises Palmerin’s generally tolerant attitude towards the Muslim community (2004, xx–xxiii). The worlds of Christianity and of Islam are brought together in the text, more through social interaction rather than through combat.

Even though the Spanish *Palmerín* describes conflict between Christians and Muslims, and many times depicts the latter through cultural stereotypes, Palmerín's experience in the Near East is generally one of peaceful coexistence between faiths, arguably a reflection of the centuries-long Christian-Muslim coexistence in the Iberian Peninsula (Redondo 1995, 51).

Maugin and Munday, however, portray an antagonism between Christians and Muslims apparently characteristic of early modern European misrepresentations of the Near East. Daniel J. Vitkus notes an overall demonization of Islam in Western Europe at the time, which he attributes, on the one hand, to a strong medieval foundation of polemical distortions about the Muslim "Other," and, on the other hand, a fear of the threat that Islam presented to Christianity. Vitkus draws attention to the persistence of inaccurate images of Islam, such as those represented in medieval romance and chivalric "legends" about clashes between Christian and Saracen knights. Added to this medieval legacy, Vitkus argues, early modern Europe's anxieties were also encouraged by Islamic wealth and power, and, in turn, this was related to an inferiority complex originated after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Even though there was great tension between Catholics and Protestants during this period, and some Protestants were glad of the conflict between Roman Catholics and Ottomans, much poetry, sermons and religious polemic urged an overall union of Christendom against the Turkish threat (Vitkus 1999, 207-13).

In this period, printed matter provided Europe with much of its knowledge of the East. Matthew Dimmock notes that in the sixteenth century alone, three thousand five hundred texts dealing with the "turke" were published in northern Europe in a variety of languages (2005, 6). Vitkus notes the incredible rise of interest in learning about Islam and the pronounced increase of literature on the topic during the seventeenth century. He mentions the popularity of "true stories," such as captivity narratives, which told of the experiences of survival of Christian prisoners under Turks and "Moors," or tales about renegades who had willingly joined foreign pirates in North African ports (1999, 215-16). One such text was Bartholomej Georgijevic's *The offspring of the house of Ottomanno, and officers pertaining to the greate Turkes Court*, published in English translation ca. 1570, twenty-six years after the French version was printed in

1544. This work encouraged European fears of life under Islamic rule with its detailed description of abuse captive Christians suffered (Robinson 2007, 28).

At the same time, during the period which preceded the publication of *L'Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive* in 1546, constant diplomatic relations between France and Turkey encouraged the flow of French travellers, traders and missionaries, as well as the printing of texts about the Near East. Clarence Dana Rouillard presents a list of 291 pamphlets on Turkish affairs published in France between 1481 and 1660 as evidence of the curiosity provoked by the area (1938, 169–79). Michael Harrigan, on the other hand, draws attention to the fact that most of the seventeenth-century French travel narratives referring to the Near East focused on the Ottoman Empire because of commercial and diplomatic relations between the two territories (2008, 13; 20). Rouillard comments that a great amount of information about the Ottoman Empire that came through pamphlets and geographical literature, revealed a particular interest in the Ottoman military conquests around Europe. One of the most comprehensive descriptions of the Ottoman Empire was *La Genealogie du grand Turc à present regnant* (1519), a translation from the Italian text written by Teodoro Spandugino in the middle of the fifteenth century, an eyewitness account which went through several French editions. It is a very detailed description of the Turkish court, which became an authority and model for later published descriptions of the Ottoman court (Rouillard 1938, 169–79).

When Munday was working on his *Palmerin*, England enjoyed fewer commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire than did France. Robinson notes that in the same year that Munday published his romance *Zelauto* (1580), which deals in part with Christian/Muslim conflict, the “first Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty” was being negotiated in Istanbul, which would “lead to the establishment of the Levant Company” (2007, 29). Since commercial exchange was underdeveloped, many of the English texts dealing with these distant cultures were, as Dimmock demonstrates, either translations of foreign travel narratives, pamphlets dealing with military events, or polemical religious tracts, most of which had the Ottoman threat as their main concern (1999, 20–95). Robinson notes that many of these sermons and pamphlets expressed anxiety about the “effects of life under Islamic rule,” and he argues that Munday’s

Zelauto shows his awareness of these fears (2007, 28). Arguably he expresses them too in his *Palmerin*, as I will discuss below, and therefore reveals the influence of contemporary printed texts in his views of these foreign cultures.

Munday and Maugin emphasise Palmerin's Christian identity, and that of his friends, thus establishing a wider difference between them and the Muslim characters. One particularly interesting example is the way in which the translators use the Muslim threat of rape and Christian divine protection to represent this antagonism between faiths. On the one hand, the translators seem to be developing common early modern representations of Islamic society, which, as Vitkus argues, saw it as a location of "unbridled sensuality" (1999, 222–23). Maugin and Munday emphasize the sexual threat posed by Muslim characters, and in doing so, they might also be re-appropriating certain medieval stereotypes which Corinne J. Saunders identifies in the chronicles of the Crusades, where rape is depicted "as a mark of pagan evil" (2001, 142). The translators seem to be representing Christianity's ability to counter Muslim aggression by emphasising cultural stereotypes which connected the aggression to the religious identity of the attacker, and by drawing attention to the victims' devotion and the consequent divine intervention that saves them. Arguably, this also allows Munday to continue focusing on the issue of sexuality and religion that he develops in Part I of the *Palmerin d'Oliva*.

At the end of Part I, Palmerin and his friends, Prince Trineus of Germany, Princess Agriola of England, and Palmerin's cousin, Ptolome of Macedonia, are sailing from England to Germany, where Trineus and Agriola will make official their clandestine marriage. However, their plans are delayed for they are taken prisoner by Olimael, captain of the Turkish army. Palmerin is the only one who avoids captivity. Trineus and Ptolome are taken on board one ship and Agriola on board another because Olimael has taken a fancy to her. While they are sailing towards the Turkish court, Munday, following Maugin, depicts Agriola's angry reaction to Olimael's advances and how she manages to repel the captain's first sexual assault:

[...] with angry [stomack] like a Lyon enraged, [she] caught him by the haire and the throat, saying. Thou *villaine Dogge*, thinkest thou I take any delight in thy company? How darest tho[u]

traitourlye thee[f]le lay hande on mee? And so roughly did she struggle with Olimael, as if his men had not assisted him, shee had *strangled* him: notwithstanding hee tooke all patiently, perswading himselfe, that by gentle speeches, smooth flatterings, and large promises, hee should in time win her to his pleasure. So came hee forth of the cabin, with his throat and face bravely painted with Agriolaes nayles [...].⁸ (Munday 1588, sigs. Z2^r-Z2^v) (my emphasis)

The three texts depict the scene in a very similar way. However, while the Spanish author has Agriola only scratch the Captain's face, the translators make the scene more dramatic by adding her intention of strangling him. Moreover, Olimael is identified in the French and English texts, but not in the Spanish, as a "traitourley thee[f]e" ("paillard infame" in French) and "villaine Dogge" ("trahistre mastin" in French), a term which is echoed by "hound" later in the text; a common image used by Europeans at the time to describe "Turks, Muslims, and Saracens," as Phillip John Usher explains (2010, 203). Agriola's strong response against the attack of an enemy of her faith recalls the actions of heroines of hagiographical narratives and other romance characters similar to them. Andrea Hopkins analyses the links between Saints' Lives and some romances from the Constance cycle, and notes how the protagonists in these narratives are strong and sometimes explicit in their defiance of their attackers. Hopkins describes the example of Florence, from the medieval romance *Le Bon Florence of Rome*, who breaks Sir Machary's teeth with a stone to repel his sexual attack (2010, 135), a portrayal which anticipates Agriola's reaction here. The Princess's actions in this scene, added to the divine intervention that saves her in the other attacks, help to present her, and her chastity, as symbolic of the Christian faith, as I shall discuss below. Eventually, Olimael runs out of patience and decides to attack her. The Spanish text is very straightforward about his intentions and gives little detail: "[...] vido que le aprovechava nada sus falagos [...] quisola forçar [...]" (Di Stefano, ed. 2004, 160) [(...) seeing that his praises were not beneficial (...) he wished to rape her (...)]. Maugin translates:

Cognoissant doncq' que ses blandices, feintes, paroles, offres, dons,
at autres douceurs propres à persuader ne luy pouvoient rien

⁸ Typography has been modernised in this and all further quotes from early modern editions in the cases of long s, sharp s, u/v, i/j, and ampersand. Contractions have also been expanded. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

servir, delibera user de main mise et aller par force: en sorte qu'après plusieurs propos, mist toutes peines de la forcer. (Maugin 1572, sig. O8^r)

[Knowing that his flatteries, tricks, words, offers, gifts, and other sweet gestures, suitable for persuasion, were not helpful, he decided to exercise dominance and proceed by force. On account of which, after many speeches, he put all effort into forcing her.]

Munday translates:

He seeing that fayre speeches, offers, gifts, and other inticements proper to perswasion, could not compasse the thing he desired, he grewe into *choler*, intending to gaine his pleasure perforce, so that after manie *threatnings*, with *rough violence* hee woulde needes ravish her. (Munday 1597, sig. A1^v) (my emphasis)

In keeping with his hyperbolic style, as Jane H. M. Taylor describes it (2014, 191), Maugin adds all kinds of details to depict Olimael's wooing. Munday follows closely but crucially adds the terms "choler," "threatnings," and "rough violence," which enhance the aggressiveness of the captain, thus highlighting, by contrast, the great power of Christian faith in protecting Agriola against this attack.

In the Spanish text, the Princess, aware of her helpless state, prays for divine protection: "[...] ella començó de llamar a Dios e a Santa María que la valiesse [...]" (Di Stefano, ed. 2004, 161) [(...) she started to call on God and Saint Mary to help her (...)]. Munday translates literally from the French: "[...] with devout prayer shee called on God, desiring him to take pittie on her, and not to suffer that villainous Ruffian to *dishonour* her" (1597, sig. A1^v) (my emphasis). Maugin has removed the Virgin Mary as a protective figure, like Nicolas Herberay des Essarts does many times in the French translation of *Amadis de Gaula*. Maugin, and Munday with him, draws attention primarily to the loss of honour. However, in the French and English versions (unlike in the Spanish text) the reader is to understand that Agriola has already lost her virginity at this point, on account of the consummation of her clandestine marriage to Trineus. In the French and English versions, then, the Princess's concern for her honour has more to do with her status as wife than as a chaste maiden, even though her official marriage has not yet taken place. The threat vanishes, for Agriola's prayer is instantly

answered in all the three versions; Olimael starts shaking uncontrollably, and stops his attack.

In the Spanish text, Agriola attributes her safety to the magical power of a ring that Palmerin has earlier given her, which ensures her inviolability: “[...] pensó que aquella virtud venía de la sortija [...] e dio gracias a Dios [...]” (Di Stefano, ed. 2004, 160) [(...) she thought that power came from the ring (...) and gave thanks to God (...)]. While Munday, following Maugin, also alludes to the ring’s power, he notably affords God’s aid greater importance than does the Spanish text:

The Princesse [...] was [...] greatly comforted [...] *imputing* the whole *worke* thereof to the *Almightie providence*, and the vertue of the Ring [...] wherefore with thankfull heart, and *elevated eyes to heaven*, shee sayd, O celestiall Father, howe great and infinite is thy *goodnesse*? howe happie is the creature, whom thou regardest with the eye of *pittie*? assurdly I nowe perceyve, that such as in extremitie have recourse to thee, shall no waie perish. (Munday 1597, sig. A1^v) (my emphasis)

Munday depicts the scene in a more dramatic light with his addition of Agriola’s devout gesture of raising her eyes while in prayer; other than this, his translation is literal from the French. The extended prayer gives a clear indication of Agriola’s Christian identity and the trust that God’s “goodnesse” and “pity” will protect her from a foreign threat. A magical protective ring features in many medieval romances and its stone can be interpreted as “a material sign of God’s grace,” as Corinne Saunders argues (2010, 89). She comments that in the medieval romance *King Horn*, the ring forms part of other elements that represent divine protection, such as the hero’s sword, and Horn is himself associated with the Christian faith in two episodes in which he defeats the Sarracens (2010, 89–90).

Maugin and Munday again emphasize this dynamic between Muslim sexual danger and Christian protection when Agriola has arrived in the Turkish court and is forced to marry the Emperor. In the Spanish text, the night before the ceremony, Agriola, seeing she has no choice but to go through with the wedding, prays for God’s protection:

[...] aquella noche nunca dormió mas estuvo fincada de rodillas rogando a Dios que la guardasse, e dezía: “Ay Señor Dios, no paréys Vos mientes a los mis grandes pecados qué, aunque son

muchos, yo por mi voluntad no quebrantaré la Vuestra santa ley ni la fe que devo a mi marido Trineo [...].” (Di Stefano, ed. 2004, 162–63)

[...] that night she did not sleep at all but was kneeling praying for God to keep her, and she said: “Oh Lord God, do not dwell on my great sins as, although they are many, I am determined not to break Your holy law nor the faith I owe to my husband Trineo (...).”]

Munday translates literally from the French:

[...] falling downe on her knees at her beds feete, shee thus began.

“O my God and benigne Father, pittie thy poore distressed creature, and forget the offences I have heretofore committed: for what is a sinner, unlesse thou in mercie suffer her to come before thee? Wilt thou then vouchsafe (O wonderfull workeman of the whole worlde) one eye of pittie upon thy humble forsaken servant and suffer her not to fall into *subiection*, to the *vowed enemy* of thy holy worde, *arming* me so strongly in this temptation, that I no way iniurie my Lord and husbände Trineus [...].” (Munday 1597, sig. A5^r) (my emphasis)

The French and English translations expand on the Spanish Agriola’s anxiety about breaking her marriage vows to draw attention to inter-faith conflict. The Muslim captors are enemies of Christianity, bent on subjugation, perhaps even conversion. Agriola’s personal struggle represents a more general cultural conflict. As in the episode of Olimael’s attack, Agriola’s prayer here is also answered; when the Emperor tries to make love to her on their wedding night, he suffers from an attack of apoplexy which puts an end to his sexual advances.

The elements of these two near-rape scenes, in the context of the antagonism between two faiths, recall medieval hagiographical narratives, as noted above. Kathleen Coyne Kelly comments on how in these texts the virgin body of the saint represented the “‘body’ of the Church metonymically” (2000, 41). She argues that the “female virgin body “ epitomized “the most apt homology between the self and the institutionalized Church “ because of its “mystification as closed, sealed, intact” (2000, 42). Kelly analyses near-rape tales from late antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages which include a threat of rape by a pagan official or suitor and in which virginity, and, by symbolic extension, the Christian Church, is affirmed, usually by miraculous prevention (2000, 41–43). Kelly notes that most of these

tales of “circumvented rape” were first written “from the second to the fourth centuries,” when the Christian Church was under “assault [...] within the Roman Empire and its ideological margins” (2000, 41–43). Saunders notes that in later medieval Saints’ Lives, the threat does not come from a pagan world; rather, the virgins sacrifice themselves for their faith in the face of the “trials of family life, politics or asceticism” (2001, 142). The Spanish author of *Palmerín* is clearly drawing on this tradition in these scenes and, by emphasising Agriola’s piety and the divine intervention to prevent the rape, the translators are using these symbolic links to highlight the power of Christian devotion to counter Muslim violence. In this sense, Munday’s translation of the French “me preservant” (keeping me) into “arming me,” in Agriola’s prayer before the wedding, echoes the language of these narratives of virgin saints. Kelly argues that the victim is protected from her attackers by a symbolic “armor” that publicly proves her virginity (2000, 42).

In her discussion of Thomas Dekker’s and Philip Massinger’s *The Virgin Martyr* (1620), Jane Hwang Degenhardt notes how, at first glance, the Catholic hagiographic material on which the play is partly based, might be viewed as problematic in the light of Protestant suppression of virgin martyr material (2010, 74). However, Alison Chapman notes the continuing popularity of the genre of Saints’ Lives even during the Reformation, as attested by the great numbers of printed editions in the period. She argues that rather than abolishing the medieval cult of the saints, the Reformation limited its power (2013, 11–12). Also discussing *The Virgin Martyr*, Julia Gasper argues that, in the religious context of their time, Dekker and Massinger incorporated a sense of ambiguity from John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1563) in the representation of the miraculous powers of St Dorotea, and therefore make her state that she cannot perform any miracles (1991, 18). Arguably, Munday here is not only representing contemporary fears about a potential Muslim threat, but also the tensions between the old and new roles of religious symbols, as he does in the *Amadis* in his treatment of the cult of the Virgin Mary, for example. In this respect, the combination of divine intervention and the magical power of Agriola’s ring plays down any element of Catholic devotion. This may be linked to what Joyce Boro notes as a common tendency in post-Reformation Protestant writers to remove the “supernatural marvellous” from romance, as it was reminiscent of Catholic faith (2014, 9), although

here, Munday does not omit it but rather transforms it. References to virgin saints are reworked to fit a different context, since Agriola is at this point a married woman, albeit through a clandestine wedding, and has potentially lost her virginity in the French and English texts, as I mentioned above. The three versions arguably combine the “proof of virginity” topos and the “chastity ordeal,” in which the issue in question is the wife’s chastity, rather than the saint’s virginity (2000, 61–90). Considering this, the possibility of temptation, which the French and English translators incorporate in Agriola’s prayer before the wedding, might be hinting at the issue of adultery and ambiguity developed in vernacular romance and the *lai*. This issue of Agriola’s married status, as opposed to the virginal condition of the hagiographic heroine, would, arguably, not have been problematic to an early modern audience since the Catholic ideal of female virginity had been replaced by the Protestant notion of married chastity (Halpern 1986, 92).

Munday anticipates, at the end of *Palmerin* Part I, the concern for chastity that he later develops in Part II, by drawing attention to Agriola’s near-rape experiences. At the end of Part I, Munday translates literally from the French when Ptolome tries to comfort Trineus who is desperate to see Agriola taken away. Ptolome tells him: “As for your Lady Agriola, doubt not of her unconquerable loyalty, for shee hath in her custody a *jewel* of such vertue, as no one can dishonour her against her owne lyking” (Munday 1588, sig. Z3^r) (my emphasis). Munday plays here with the term “jewel” (which translates the French “bague”) for he could be alluding to the ring, but he could also be referring to Agriola’s chastity, since he uses the term in this sense at other points in the text. A few lines after this dialogue, Munday specifically alludes to the topic in an epistle to the reader which puts an end to Part I, and which is original to the English text. The translator provides a summary of the final events and points towards the resolution in Part II of the pending narrative. Munday here refers twice to the Princess’s situation:

Right straunge will bee the meeting of all these friendes againe, after the hazards of many perillous fortunes. For Agriola thus separated from the Prince her husband, is married to the great Emperour of Turkie: howe wonderfully the *ring* which Palmerin gave her, preserves her *chastitie*, will be worth the hearing. (Munday 1588, sig. Z4^r) (my emphasis)

After this, he anticipates the reunion of the three main couples that will take place at the end of Part II: “How Palmerin gains his Polinarda, Trineus his *chast* wife Agriola, Ptolome his Brionella, and all Honors meeting together in the Emperours Court of Allemaigne, will be so strange as the like was never heard [...]” (Munday 1588, sig. Z4^r) (my emphasis). Clearly Munday is concerned with the issue of chastity and honour, which he develops in Part I, where he modifies Maugin’s sexual material by drawing attention instead to the value of the clandestine marriage that precedes, and therefore sanctions, the erotic encounters in the first half of the *Palmerin*. His interest in the institutional consent of marriage also explains Munday’s cautioning against adultery and divorce in Part I. The English translator solves the problematic loss of female virginity in these unions by associating the event with the requirements of marriage.⁹ Munday continues to draw attention to the topics of sexuality and chastity in Part II, although in combination with the theme of Christian/Muslim antagonism which is present in his source. Crucially for the discussion of his religious message, he only points here to the power of the ring in protecting Agriola’s chastity, whereas he later clearly gives divine intervention the same amount of importance, as I discussed above. Perhaps his omission here of the religious connotations of the Princess’s miraculous protection is indicative of an intention of self-preservation which makes him avoid being overt about matters of religious polemic in the paratexts of his editions, as is evident from the lack of religious references in his dedications and epistles to the reader.

Overall, Munday follows Maugin closely in exaggerating Christian and Muslim difference and antagonism. Many of the elements that the translators use to describe Islamic culture seem to be informed both by contemporary stereotypical representations of the kingdoms of the Near East and by medieval misrepresentations. However, Munday re-works his source’s manipulation of sexual stereotypes in the portrayal of Muslim culture to develop issues of sexuality and religion which clearly concern him, and which are first made evident in his translation of the first part of the romance when

⁹ For Munday’s attention to the clandestine marriage that sanctions sexual relations and guards female honour, see, for example, the union between Palmerin’s parents, Princess Griana of Constantinople and Prince Florendos of Macedonia (Munday 1588, sigs. D1r-D2r; N1v) or the consummation of the marriage between Princess Agriola of England and Prince Trineus of Germany (Munday 1588, sigs. Y2r-Y2v, Y8v-Z1r).

he draws attention to the sanction that clandestine marriage provides for the sexual activity of the characters, as noted above. The English translation then becomes a commentary on contemporary views of religious doctrine and sexual conduct, all the while following his source closely and respecting the logic of the romance. Munday arguably uses Eastern locations to highlight those issues that he is interested in. Through his treatment of this material he also at times reveals his concerns with the tensions of the Reformation between old and new devotional practices which will become crucial to his *Amadis de Gaule* a few years later.

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How to cite this article:

Ortiz-Salamovich, Alejandra. "Anthony Munday's *Palmerin d'Oliva*: Representing sexual threat in the Near East." *SEDERI* 26 (2016): 67-84.

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Submission: 23/10/2015

Acceptance: 06/12/2015