The Labors of the Very Brave Knight Esplandián

by

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translated by

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King Amadís’s letter to Gasquilán, king of Sweden:

If you, courageous king of Sweden, are willing to risk your noble person in grievous dangers and to suffer sorrow in order to serve the lady and princess whom you love so deeply—which is one of the most trivial of temporal pursuits that can be imagined, as I have proved by first-hand experience—then how much more reason do you have to serve the Lord for whom everything evil is alien and against whose great power nothing can offer the slightest resistance. As I can attest that your courageous heart will never be satisfied except by undertaking exploits that seem impossible to achieve, great king, I wish to advise you to seek those exploits where your eternal soul can enjoy the glory that will last forever even though your earthly body may suffer. Because the circumstance to which I am referring is so momentous and because it would require a very long text to explain every detail of it, please refer to the messenger for the rest. Trust his words, for with your trust our holy faith will be increased."

Another letter from King Amadís to Don Bruno, king of Arabia, and to Don Cuadragante, señor of Sansueña.

Beloved brothers, Don Bruno, king of Arabia, and Don Cuadragante, señor of Sansueña:

“Although you are comforted by the great deeds you have accomplished in the past to increase your praises and spread the renowned prowess of your noble persons, and although you are now living carefree lives, I send you news of much more virtuous and more profitable deeds. You will have to abandon the restful comforts that our bodies enjoy during a life of pleasurable delights; instead you will have to face fatiguing anguish in your spirits and embrace the travails that guarantee winning the true pleasures of a repose that knows no end. But because this case deserves to be conveyed to you by word of mouth rather than in writing, listen to the messenger who will tell you about it more extensively.”

About how the knight Handro departed with the letters Amadís gave him.

Well then, Handro the knight took his arms, horse, and a squire with him, he boarded a caravel, and he crossed the sea with the prime intention of fulfilling the duties his seignor assigned him. What success he had will be narrated later. Now, however, the story turns to tell what the pagans’ great fleets and masses of people did in the meantime concerning the siege they were laying around the great city of Constantinople.

How the Turks arrive in the grand seaport Of Constantinople with evil intent,
With sails in a wind of perfidious portent
And showing the vain pride of their ill sort;
Seeing the evil forces there exhibited,
Good Norandel and Flandalo the Strong
Sell their lives so dearly all the day long
And leave the bloody field covered with dead.

When the pagan multitudes arrived in the port of Ténedon of Troy, King Armato quickly joined them with a great fleet he had assembled and which he

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1 Sultan Mehmet II of the Ottoman Empire, a youth of nineteen, began the final encirclement of Constantinople in 1451. For readers of GRM’s time, stories of the two-year siege of Constantinople, “the Queen of Cities, the New Jerusalem,” were circulated widely throughout Western Europe by refugees from the last bastion of Christianity in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Just after describing the city’s utter destruction, Donkas, one of the most important fifteenth-century chroniclers of the fall of Constantinople, apostrophizes the city in these moving words: “O City, City, head of all cities! O City, City, the heart of the four corners of the earth! O City, City, the boast of Christians and the ruin of barbarians! O City, City, a second Paradise planted in the West and containing within many plants laden with spiritual fruits! Where is your beauty, O paradise?” (Donkas, Divine and Fall, 236). Another major source for the fall of Constantinople is George Sphrantzes’ Chronicle Maius (ca. 1477), which circulated in Italy and almost certainly in Spain. Other accounts are: Nicolao Barbaro, Giornale dell’Asedio di Constantinopoli, ed. E. Corret (Vienna, 1856); Leoniokes Chalkokondyles, Leonici Chalkocandyle Historiarum Demonstrationes; (ca. 1480), 2 vols. (Budapest, 1922–27); Demetrios Kydones, Correspondence (Vatican City, 1956, 1960); and Donald MacGillivray Nicol, The End of the Byzantine Empire (London: Edward Arnold, 1979).

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1 As noted previously (chap. 131), Gasquilán is called Gasquilián the Idle, but he is described by the omniscient narrator as courageous and valiant in battle. In fact, he was elevated to the kingship upon the death of his uncle because his bravery was so renowned. In bk. III, when Gasquilán hears that war has broken out between Amadís and Liurarte, he leaves his land to join Liurarte’s forces and to test himself against Amadís, who defeats him in single combat before the general fighting starts. Therefore, Amadís's admiring salutation is probably not ironic, despite Gasquilán's nickname, which is probably due to the fact that he is the son of a giant, Mardarque of Sad Island. Furthermore, Amadís regards knights like Gasquilán who confront danger in their ladies’ names. Avalle-Arce suggests that Gasquilián's name is derived from Gosenain/Gasemain, a character found in the Prose Tristan and the Prose Merlin. If Avalle-Arce is right, then GRM has changed an Arthurian dwarf into a Montalvan giant. See AAce, 209 and 353-55.

2 The lady is never named in GRM's entire Amadís Cycle.
had provisioned with many well-armed men and as many victuals as were to be found. The king placed his son Infante Alforax in charge of the fleet because he was still unwell due to how much he had suffered in prison. Then, because there were so many of them, the pagans were filled with so much arrogance that they thought they could conquer not only that city but also the rest of the world. So, without further delay they departed for the great city. Thus, after seven days they arrived within sight of the city. There were so many ships that the seas were covered with them and scarcely a patch of water could be seen. Indeed, to those who watched them advance, they seemed like the mountains in a great Sierra, or so the high waves made them seem.

The emperor, those knights who were with him, as you have already heard, and all the rest of the people rushed to the places that were most vulnerable to a landing by sea, and there they prepared to defend themselves with great spirit and zeal. The Turks who were in the ships that were best rigged for approaching land arrived with a loud algarad, and at that moment those on the sea and those on the land became embroiled in a fierce battle fought with bows and crossbows, the arrows of which were flying through the air harder and faster than the densest rain. However, in the face of such stern resistance, those on the ships failed to reach land even though many of them jumped in the water, which was very shallow. As they did so, the Christians quickly engaged them and made some of them return unwillingly to their boats; the others were killed by the hands of Norandel, Count Frandal, and their companions. Even so, the pagans were not prevented from landing; for they were spread out across such a broad front that the Christians could not draw on sufficient forces to withstand all of them, who, after landing and mounting their horses, numbered more than two thousand. The Christians wanted to confront and engage them, but the emperor refused permission to do so saying that, if they were to fight against them, the others who remained at sea would land abruptly and be able to capture them while they were still fighting. Furthermore, he said that since it was useless to oppose so many of them, it would be better to withdraw and defend the city, because there the enemy's losses would be so high that they would be seriously endangered.

The crusader knights, who had never before turned their backs in any battle in which they had ever been involved, found it hard to accept this decision, but, recognizing that it was required by both reason and the emperor, they were forced to accept it. Thus, when the Christians began abandoning the port, the Turks left their ships as if they were pursuing a defeated army, and they rushed forward in impetuous disorder. Then and there you would have seen the great marvels Norandel and his comrades did defending their own men. Since the pagans were bearing few arms, and those they had were not very strong, Norandel's men wreaked such devastation among them that they covered the entire field across which they were retreating with dead and wounded enemies. Seeing how much damage they were receiving, the pagans slowed their advance. But then, the other group you heard about arrived. The latter screamed so loud that the Christians could not stand the uproar, and so they were forced to retreat more quickly. Hence, in this last attack, the Chris-

1 None of the famous gates of Constantinople in the fifteenth century is known to us now by this name. AKCT translates it as "Gate Equiline." If GRM knew about the physical location of Constantinople, he would have known that the city is situated on a triangular peninsula bordered on the north by the Golden Horn, on the east by the Bosphorus, and on the south by the Sea of Marmora. Therefore, the only place for a land encounter such as is described in this chap., and like the one that overwhelmed the city in 1453, is on the west where there was a defensive system of three successive walls about 6.5 km long and in which there were twelve gates. The first main gate on the south end of the wall is now known as the Yedikule ("seven towers" in Turkish), but it was known in GRM's age as the Golden Gate because it was once entirely covered in gold. (One hundred meters to the south of this gate, at the shore of the Marmora, is a smaller gate, which now functions as the main entrance to the city from the airport.) The Golden Gate was the city's main gate, and it gave access to the Triumphant Way which led to the old imperial palace at the far eastern side of the city. No doubt, if GRM's fictional space corresponds roughly with real space, this is the gate referred to as the "first gate" in chap. 147, and known as the Aquiline Gate. DCECH says that the term aquilea [aquiline] was a semi-learned term in 1464. Michael Maclagan says the Golden Gate was probably built in 388, and he describes it thus: "The plan is simple and imposing: a large arch between two lesser entries is flanked on the west by two great marble pylons. In front of them is an outwork and a deep moat. This was the assembly point for the great procession when an emperor returned in triumph to the city. Here came, for example, Heraclius after his recovery of the True Cross, or Basil II after his great slaughter of the Bulgars." Maclagan, The City of Constantinople (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 31-32. After the conquest by Mehmet II, three more towers were added to the four built by the Romans and Byzantines, thereby producing the seven standing today. The mystery of GRM's reference to the Aquiline Gate may be resolved by the fact that the present translator found several sculptures of eagles in the Yedikule; most notably, he found the sculpture of an eagle in the commanding position at the corner of the corinice on the northern marble pylon that flanks the Golden Gate. This pylon is actually older than the walls of Constantinople.

2 It is worth noting here that this episode forms a narrative doublet following Axel Otho's Laws of Repetition (das Gesetz der Wiederholung) and patterning (die Schematisierung). Notice, for example, that having Norandel turn back to challenge a single enemy knight is a repetition and an intensification of a scene in chap. 114 above in which Emil does a similar thing. See Otho, "Epic Laws," 132-37.

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ing across the battlefield very fast in order to succor him. However, Frandalo, who was forewarned, shouted very loudly and said:

"Come along, señores! Now's the time!"

He spurred his horse, held his sword high in the air, and charged to the rescue. All the others who were there also attacked very boldly, and, when they met the Turks, they knocked many of them to the ground. Hence, with the aid of this diversion Norandel had time to lead the pagan king away with him. Then, leaving him in his comrade's hands and forgetting the promise he gave his beloved lady, Queen Menoleta, he turned like a raging lion and waded into the enemy so courageously that he was often on the point of being lost. However, Count Frandalo, Talanque, Maneli, Amhor, Bravor—the giant Balán's son, who also performed wonders like the ones his brave father and grandfather often performed—all their other companions, who were also very valiant, and the good knights from the emperor's household, immediately went to his aid by wounding and killing as many of the enemy as they could reach. By means of that armed intervention they were able to get him out of that crisis even though a great crowd had descended upon them, and with the prudence that accompanies a major effort, they suffered little harm and were able to withdraw to the place where their own men were.

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How, when night came, the Turks retreated to their ships, and the emperor's troops, who had sallied forth to the fight, withdrew into the great city of Constantinople.

Some might believe that, given how many pagan forces were gathered there, these pagans represented most of all those who existed at that time. Nevertheless, I tell you—and do not doubt it—that even though there were more than three hundred thousand of them there, counting those who remained on the sea and those who separated from them to land in other places, these did not make up even one tenth of all of them. By the time the Christians had safely passed through the Aquiline Gate the sun had almost set; and the pagans, who had no one else to combat, thought it best to return to their ships where they would decide how to organize the siege. Meanwhile, the emperor ordered the gates closed, and he went with all his people to his grand palace, where the crusaders stayed with him. The other people went to their lodgings to rest, of which they were in dire need. Before resting, however, the emperor wanted to be informed about what his nephew Gastiles, the king of Hungary, Prince Brandalia, Count Saluder, and Admiral Tartario had done on the other side of the city to prevent the pagans from coming ashore. They said they had engaged in a very perilous battle against them, in which many pagans as well as citizens of the city had died. Even so, given the great crush of people who descended upon them, they failed to keep them from coming ashore, and they themselves were forced to retreat to the walls near the gate which was known as Dragon Gate. It was called this because the first people to inhabit the city found a very fierce dragon in a cave there, and they kept it tied up in strong chains for a long time as one of the city's wonders. Hearing this, the emperor sent for those knights, and after this group and that one had removed their armor, and after their diverse wounds were cured by the hand of the great Master Helisabad, the emperor had them sit at dinner at his tables, and he placed his table among theirs. However, he made more of a show of energy and pleasure than he actually felt in his heart; for every time he recalled the Enchantress Damesel's prophecy, it caused him to suffer great torment and anguish. Therefore, men should not try to know such things, for if they truly are to come about, who can prevent them except the Lord on High who has dominion over all human things? And if they do not actually happen, what good does it do people to be afflicted and saddened by them beforehand? For God's sake, let us cease forcing our gross discernment to dwell on such subtleties, for to do so is to go against our mind's natural order whereby we fall into many errors. Instead, let us seize what is graspable by human understanding, what is very easy to follow and even easier to put into practice so that we can drive away the vices that seem to us at every hour and every minute of the day so abominably hard to cast aside, and that lead us into sadness and bitterness, whereby we lose hope for salvation and fall into eternal torment.

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How pagan forces on sea and on land,
Surround the most holy Christian banner
While the saints within fight the devils and
Invent a thousand manners to make war;
Meanwhile, three bold knights defend the first gate—
They are all stout-hearted—and they fasten
The Gates of the Well end of the Dragon;
For all other gates are closed like their fate.

After dinner, the emperor ordered the walls secured, and then everyone went to bed expecting greater challenges when day would come, for they

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1 These pagan ships are nau; that is, the cargo ships referred to earlier.
2 In all previous appearances in this volume, Saluder is referred to as a marqués. There is no explanation for his change of noble rank.
were sure even more opponents would come against them. Norandel took the pagan king with him—he was a very fine-looking young man—and they spent the night together. The next day the emperor rose early, and all the knights went to hear mass in the empress’s chapel, where her daughter, Queen Menoresa, and many other noble ladies had already gathered. After mass ended, Norandel ordered his prisoner brought to him. Taking his hand, he led him to Infanta Leonorina saying to her:

“Lady, given your eminence, one should not put anyone but emperors in your prison, and because this prisoner of mine is not an emperor, but rather is only a king, it seems to me, if Your Grace so orders, that he should be given to a queen. Therefore, I place him at the mercy and judgment of Queen Menoresa.”

“My good friend,” said Leonorina, seeing where his idea was heading, “what you say is just, and I so order it; therefore, I beg the queen to receive into her service the honored present you are giving her. As for me, knowing you and your companions, I am sure I will not lack for presents that are singled out for me.”

The queen took the prisoner and thanked Norandel profoundly with the great love she held for him in her heart, but she was careful to use the dissembling words that are customary in such situations.

At this time, the pagans noticed that all of the city’s citizens were gathering quietly together and that access to the battlefield was unobstructed; so, many of them salied from their ships and completely encircled the city. However, they left an infinite number of other soldiers in the fleet to protect it, for they feared the arrival of Christian reinforcements. Then, working to prepare an attack on the city, they proceeded to pitch their tents and to fortify the encampment with great, deep trenches. Among them were many soldiers, Tamelanes, kings, and other grandees who rule over many vassals. The emperor ordered Norandel to take half the empire’s soldiers and many of his own men to go secure the Aquiline Gate. Count Frandalo along with other men was ordered to take charge of the Gate of the Dragon. And he ordered his nephew Castiles, the king of Hungary and many other knights to guard the Gate of the Well, which was known by this name because next to it was a well that was so deep that its bottom was never found. Because of its depth and because a great roaring sound came from it, everyone believed it was an infernal pit. All of the city’s gates, of which there were more than forty, were closed for fear of the enemy. While all were waiting expectantly, a knight wearing black armor appeared before the wall that was commanded by Norandel along with Talanque, Manell, Ambor, and Gavarte of Fearful Vale. This knight’s armor was adorned with very finely wrought gold: where the cuirass was fastened and all around his shield the gold was studded with many precious stones, but his helmet was so strong that none other like it had ever been seen. He was riding a bay horse that was amazingly large, as was the knight, for he appeared to be nothing other than a giant. In his hand he was holding a lance adorned with golden leafing covered with very valuable gems, and its iron tip was huge and so clean that it shone like a star. He was parading about giving many people orders: some were erecting tents and others were digging trenches.

While all the Christians were watching him in amazement, they saw a damsel come riding up to him, and as soon as she exchanged a few words with him, she turned away and rode toward the city. When she arrived before the knights, they noticed that she was riding an animal that seemingly seemed very spirited. It had a magnificent saddle and bridle which were decorated with gold. The workmanship of her clothes and headress was extraordinary. Her face and hands were black, but her features were very pretty, and she seemed very beautiful—so beautiful, in fact, that it is certain that some of the knights who saw her would have been happy to serve her. Displaying a letter she was holding, she stopped before Norandel, who was located in front of his men, and she said to him:

“Sir knight, is there a knight here called the Knight of the Great Serpent?”

“Good damsel,” asked Norandel, surprised to hear her speak a language he understands very well, “what do you want?”

“I want to give him this letter on behalf of that knight you see over there,” she answered.

Norandel quickly surmised what she was referring to, and feeling a great desire to find out more, he said to her:

“I am he whom you seek.”

“Then,” she said, “take this letter, and send us the only response that would make us believe the reports about you that are resounding throughout the world.”

Turning around, she went back to the other knight. Meanwhile, Norandel opened the letter, which read as follows:

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1 On the NE side of Constantinople, a half km up the Golden Horn from the Gate of the Drongarion, is the Eis Pegas Gate, which is derived from Greek η πηγή [to rush in]. The noun η πηγή means “running water,” “source,” “fount.” Since this gate is on the wall overlooking the Golden Horn, it is possible that the changing tides caused the sound referred to in the text. Although it is clear that GRM is presenting a universal fictional vision that does not need to correlate his work with real space, nevertheless, there is enough correlation to view this narrative passage as rooted in reality, a characteristic that is a distinctive feature of Spanish literature in general.

2 Constantinople in 1453 had at least thirty-three major gates and many more minor gates in the walls ringing the city. This makes GRM’s figure roughly accurate, which is highly unusual in the context of the epic nature of the battle this is developed from here to the end of bk. V. See Steven Runciman, The Fall of Constantinople 1453 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965). As James Donald Foglequist points out, GRM’s basic approach to the genre of his Amadís Cycle was to write historia ficta [pretend, or fabricated, history]. This methodology accords with a strong vein of literary realism notable more in bk. V than in the preceding four. See Foglequist, El Amadís y el género, 9-27.

3 The redundancy is in the original. It is an example of the excessive chivalric style parodied by Cervantes.

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About the letter Radiano de Liqua sent Esplandian.

I, Radiano, grand soldan of Liqua, friend of the gods, enemy of my enemies, and shield and defender of pagans, inform you, serpentine knight, who commands and governs the Great Serpent Caravel, that I have come to these lands, where I discovered that you, behaving like a cruel enemy, have killed many of the people who serve my uncle, King Armato of Persia; you have seized and plundered some of his villas; you captured him by deceptive means; you announced that you plan to banish him from his great seigniory, while you remain in his place; and, for help and protection you are counting on that emperor of yours, whom we have besieged and whom we have almost captured. Although we hold the keys and power over his destruction and yours, I wish to show you a maximum of mercy and compassion because I have heard your fame and personal prowess praised everywhere. Therefore, I propose an encounter on the battlefield between you and me alone, or between ten against ten, or five against five, or two hundred of my knights against the same number of yours. With the help of my gods, I will make you recognize what a violent affront you have committed against my uncle, who is a great and honorable king. If you are he who by rights deserves to be praised, as your fame has it, you cannot reject any part of this challenge."

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About the note the crusaders sent Radiano, soldan of Liqua.

We knights, crusading under the sign of the tree on which the world’s Redeemer and Savior received death, for whom we toil and whom we serve, before the emperor of Constantinople; we, ministers of the Highest Lord, in order to profess our belief, to defend His holy law and to destroy all other laws outside ours; we say to you, Radiano, who call yourself soldan of Liqua, that we received a note from a damsel who claimed she came from you; and the note said you wish to dispute some things the blessed serpentine knight has done either by entering into battle with him or by having an equal number of knights on both sides fight each other. You leave the choice to our will and disposition. Since responding to other issues is not to the point, if you please, due to the absence of that knight, and because he cannot be reached temporarily, we tell you that there are sufficient knights, all sons of kings, who are ready to satisfy your challenge either against you alone or in a group of ten,
as you suggest. Choose whichever pleases you most. When you designate a secure battlefield, then we will enter it, and there the ignorant obscurity of your law and the brilliance of ours will be manifested. 1

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How one side and the other agreed upon a battle of ten against ten.

The squire took this note to the place where the soldan was parading in his armor, and he said to him:

"The knights of Jesus Christ send you this letter. Answer however you please."

He took it, read it, and paused for a while to think; then he said:

"Squire, tell those who sent you here that my only desire is to test my prowess against him who they believe has no equal, no matter how great his strength. Also, tell them that my fondest desire is to meet him on the field more on account of his fame than his estate; for I am certain that, given the glory he has earned among you, my praises will be somewhat increased by the glory I will win by defeating him. 1 If it were not for this, I have many others like him in my service; but since he is not available for the time being, to battle those knights of yours, as I just mentioned, I shall offer ten of the knights who are all sons of kings or grandees."

"Soldan," said the squire, "I only came to you to give you that note; therefore, I will not respond further. But what I will say is that, if you were to dare enter the field against that blessed knight whom you now despise, you would find everything you thought you believed turned upside down."

Rather angrily, the soldan said, "I have given you an answer, so delay no more in my presence. Since you know him but not me, you have replied like a senseless man."

The squire returned to those who were anxiously awaiting him, and he told them about everything that happened. They took counsel and said to him:

"Return immediately and tell the soldan that we accept what he says, and we believe firmly that, even though it is not on account of our honor but rather his, he should send to the battle only knights of high station, which is what we shall do on our side. Then tell him to order his men to arm quickly, for we shall be there soon."

Returning fast, the squire said to Radiano:

"Soldan, those knights concede what you determined. Now order your knights to be armed, for you will find ours in the field provided you give the safe-conduct assurances required in such cases."

"Squire," replied the soldan, "I am not accustomed to having low-grade men enter such battles as my knights. Tomorrow I shall enclose a large battlefield with wooden planks and iron chains. Furthermore, security will be so securely enforced that it will be as if the battle were taking place within that great city. Have them arrive promptly, for mine shall be waiting for them. As for that other matter, I shall supply knights who are their equals so that there will be no reproach possible."

When Norandel and his companions heard this answer, they thought well of the arrangements. Meanwhile they remained guarding the gate hoping to do some damage to the enemy if time offered them the opportunity to do so. But time did not, because the great soldan, who wanted to see some signs of the prowess he heard those crusaders possessed, ordered his forces not to take undue risks in attacks on the Christians during that day. Likewise, he announced to all pagans who were at sea or on land that he had arranged the battle for the next day, and he asked them to make no move whatsoever so that his word would not be broken. All of his princes agreed, because, although many were of very exalted estate, the soldan of Liquia was one of the very highest; and in terms of personal valor and a courageous heart, he was the most distinguished of all. Moreover, he prized himself for always retaining in his service the most select knights to be found in the various regions of his great seigniory; and so they were, for all other knights considered them the most select group.

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How Norandel named the nine knights who were to enter the battle in his company.

Well then, after the sun set and the gates were locked, and during the time when those in the city were retiring, those knights went to the place in the emperor's palace where the royal apartments were. There they found the tables set and dinner prepared. After disarming, they sat down in the order mentioned earlier. Eating and chatting in animated good spirits, they told the emperor how they had not negotiated the battle with the soldan himself because he had withdrawn on the pretext that he could not fight against Esplandián; but rather they had concerted a battle against ten of what the soldan called his noblest knights. Likewise, they told the emperor the soldan had made arrangements for the field and designated the battle for the next day.

1 For a discussion of the notion of knightly fame and glory in Amadis de Gaula, see James Donald Foglequist, El Amadís y el género, 69-71.

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Although the emperor was pained over putting ten of his good knights at risk, in order not to appear dishonored, he said that everything seemed to be in order, and he told them to beg God's help for His own, and he added this:

"I tell you, friends, given my knowledge of certain people, this soldier is one of the finest knights to be found in the entire Orient, and the same holds true for those who live with him; for he boasts of them above everything else."

After dinner was ended, while everyone was withdrawing to rest, Norandel said to his companions:

"Good señores, you see very well what we're involved in. We can only have ten knights in this battle. If you don't mind, I shall name them, and when we see how things start off, those of you who are left out will not lack opportunity to demonstrate your great talents."

They all replied that they would be content with whatever he chose to do.

"Then, señores," he said, "those who ought to enter the field for now are these knights: Don Gavarte of Fearful Vaill; Talanque; Maneli the Prudent; Ambor de Cadel; Helián the Vigorous; Bravor, the giant Balán's son; Imosil of Burgundy; Trion, Queen Briolanja's cousin; Listorán of the Silver Bridge; and, of course, I will join this group. As for the others of you, implore the world's Lord on High to give us victory, and to give you victory when you find yourselves in similar battles. And if we are to serve Him more by means of our deaths, may He have mercy on our souls."

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1 There is another character known by the epithet "of the Silver Bridge" in bks. II through V: Madancián, who is also known as Madanciel and Madansil. It appears GRM has confused Listorán with Madancián, for Listorán is known in bks. III and V as "of the White Tower."

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With the sun fairly placed, they saluted forth, Equal number against equal number; Infidels and faithful kill each other While shouting and charging south and north; On the field, after becoming well mixed, Norandel, Talanque, Imosil, Helián, Trion, Gavarte, Ambor, Listorán, Bravor, and Maneli won and conquered.

As soon as this decision was made, they all laid down in their beds, but when the hour of midnight arrived, those ten knights rose and, ordering the emperor's chaplains summoned, they went to the chapel, where they confessed and communicated very devoutly. At daybreak the emperor and empress with their daughter, duennas, and damsels all appeared at mass to keep the knights company, after which Norandel took the other nine knights, approached Infanta Leonorina, knelt, and said to her:

"Beautiful lady, since we are all yours, just as your knight is, we wish you would allow us to kiss your hands so that we can go to the battle with your favor and love."

"My good friends," said the infanta, asking them to rise, "you have my full love, and you will have it as long as I live. Hence, I implore our Lord to give you His love and favor and to bring you through this peril with weal and honor so that my lord, the emperor, can give you the guardeons your great services merit. But I shall not offer you my hands; instead, I shall hold them up together toward heaven begging for you good health."

Then, while the infanta was asking if they had any news from her knight, Norandel went to Queen Menorena and said to her:

"My true lady, I beg you for a favor so that I can be certain that I have been accepted as your knight; please give me some empress cloth that I can carry as a sign of your love."

The queen, who was a captive of love's power as much as or perhaps more than he, was no longer able to resist or to dissemble her love; so she replied:

"Friend of mine, the most precious jewel I can give you to carry is my heart. As I told you before, if you love me as you say you do, it is only right for you to safeguard your heart in order to protect your life; so, with my love, take this ring of mine."

Then from her finger she took the ring, which was adorned with mag-