From the Editor

Quidditas is a Latin legal term that originally meant “the essential nature of a thing.” In fourteenth-century French the word became “quiddite.” In the early modern period, the English adaptation, “quiddity,” meant “logical subtleties” or “a captious nicety in argument” (OED), and is so used in Hamlet (“Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?” (Act V, scene 1, lines 95–97). Thus, the original Latin meaning, together with the later implied notions of intense scrutiny, systematic reasoning, and witty wordplay, is well suited as the title of the journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association.

Quidditas is the annual, on-line journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. The journal’s content is eclectic, publishing articles focused on medieval and early modern topics from all disciplines. The journal also accepts “Notes” for short articles pertaining to factual research, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other matters pertaining to research and teaching. The journal also welcomes contributions to our “Texts and Teaching” section which seeks review of literature essays, articles on teaching approaches and other aspects of pedagogy, and short reviews of individual textbooks and other published materials that instructors have found especially useful in teaching courses in medieval and early modern disciplines. These features furnish readers and contributors venues not available in other scholarly journals.

Membership Information

The annual dues for membership in the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association is $25. There is an additional $5 fee for joint memberships.

For information contact: Samantha Dressel, RMMRA Treasurer
Department of English
Chapman University
sdressel@chapman.edu
Notice to Contributors

Quidditas, the annual, online journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association invites submissions from all aspects of medieval and Renaissance or early modern disciplines: art, literature, history, music, philosophy, religion, languages, rhetoric, Islamic and New World cultures, global regions, comparative and interdisciplinary studies. Online format enables extensive illustrations. Since there is no subscription fee, Quidditas is easily available from any computer. Authors will be informed about the disposition of manuscripts within three months of receipt.

Articles in Quidditas are abstracted and indexed in MLA, Historical Abstracts, Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index, America: History and Life, EBSCOhost, and Oxbridge Standard Periodical Directory, and Ex Libris has designated Quidditas as a peer-reviewed journal in its SFX Knowledgebase. Quidditas includes a “Notes” section for short articles pertaining to factual research, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other matters pertaining to the research and teaching of medieval and Renaissance disciplines. Our “Texts and Teaching” section seeks longer review of literature essays, articles on teaching approaches and other aspects of pedagogy, and short reviews of individual textbooks and other published materials that instructors have found especially valuable in teaching courses in medieval and early modern disciplines. Membership in the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association is not required for submission or publication.
**Guidelines for Submissions**

Please send your submission electronically in MS Word (.doc or .docx) to the appropriate editor shown below. Use *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.). The author’s name must not appear within the text. All articles must include a short abstract (a maximum of 200 words) before the main text, and a bibliography of works cited at the end. A cover letter with the author’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and manuscript title must accompany all submissions.

**Documentation:** *Quidditas* uses **footnotes**. No endnotes or parenthetical citations, please. Since submissions must include a full bibliography, all footnotes, including the first footnote reference, should use abbreviated author, title, and page. For example:


First and subsequent footnotes—Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 22-24. **Do not use ibid.** Subsequent references to the same work should continue the use of abbreviated author, title and page number.

Please send Articles and Notes to:

James H. Forse, Editor
quidditas_editor@yahoo.com

Please send submissions for Texts and Teaching to:

Dr. Ginger Smoak, Associate Editor
ginger.smoak@utah.edu
Executive Board and Editorial Advisors

President: Todd Upton, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Treasurer: Samantha Dressel, Chapman University
Secretary: Kristin Bezio, University of Richmond
Abby Lagemann, University of Colorado, Boulder
Alaina Bupp, University of Colorado, Boulder
Alani Hicks-Bartlett, University of California, Berkeley
Eileen Mah, Colorado Mesa University
Jeff Moser, University of Denver
Jonathan Davis-Secord, University of New Mexico
Kenna Olsen, Mount Royal University
Ruth Frost, University of British Columbia, Okanagan
Kim Klimek, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Jonathan Davis-Secord, University of New Mexico
Vincent Patarino, Colorado Mesa University

Ex-officio Members

Jean R. Brink, Arizona State University, Emerita
Paul A. Dietrich, University of Montana
James Fitzmaurice, Northern Arizona University
Susan Frye, University of Wyoming
Nancy Gutierrez, University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Francis X. Hartigan, University of Nevada, Reno
Kimberly Johnson, Brigham Young University
Thomas Klein, Idaho State University
Jennifer McNabb, University of Northern Iowa
Darin Merrill, Brigham Young University, Idaho
Carol Neel, Colorado College
Charles Odahl, Boise State University
Glenn Olsen, University of Utah
Charles R. Smith, Colorado State University
Ginger Smoak, University of Utah
Sara Jayne Steen, Montana State University
Jeffrey H. Taylor, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Paul Thomas, Brigham Young University
Jane Woodruff, William Jewell College
James H. Forse, Editor, Quidditas
Table of Contents

The Saint and the Swan: Animal Interactions in the Hagiography of Hugh of Avalon

Emma Grover  7

Allusive Fontaines, Sicamors, and Pins: Figurative Prophecies of Grail Piety in the Prose Lancelot

David S. King  17

The Sparrow Hawk Castle - A Mostly Ignored Literary Motif Across the Cultures and the Centuries

Albrecht Classen  43

The Vanishing Lady: Mélanie, Emblems, and Jacques Yver’s Le Printemps d’Yver (1572)

Jonathan M. Blayloc  69

“That Kingdom is Mine”: On Spain’s Early Modern Polemics of Possession Over Jerusalem, circa 1605

Chad Leahy  96

Explanations and Justifications of War in the British Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century

Roger B. Manning  134

St. Roch Military Marches in Wallonia: Memory, Commemoration, and Identity, 1866-1940

Erik Hadley  182
The Saint and the Swan: Animal Interactions in the Hagiography of Hugh of Avalon

Emma Grover
Stanford University

Animals in medieval hagiography typically appear in conjunction with saints who practice withdrawal from normal human society or are otherwise socially marginalized, such as hermits, outcasts, or mendicant friars. The association of these figures with animals emphasizes the saints’ status on the social margins; for these saints, interaction with animals is a substitute for participation in human society. An exception to this pattern is Hugh of Avalon, bishop of Lincoln in the late twelfth century. An animal companion, the swan of Stow, appears prominently in all three hagiographical accounts of Hugh’s life and is the most recognizable characteristic of his iconography. Yet Hugh was far from the socially marginal saint usually associated with animals. Animals in Hugh’s hagiography function to recognize and legitimate Hugh’s sanctity, raising broader questions about animals’ capacity for moral judgment.

Among the ranks of medieval saints associated with animals, one figure stands out: Hugh of Avalon. Except for Hugh, saints associated with animals predominantly exist outside normal human society. But in contrast to the withdrawal from society practiced by figures such as the desert fathers and other hermits and, later, the mendicant friars, Hugh was deeply involved in secular politics and wielded significant worldly power. Yet Hugh’s association with an animal, the swan of Stow, is profound: the swan is consistently present in Hugh’s iconography, and it appears in all three hagiographical accounts of his life.1 The presence of the swan in Hugh’s hagiography, as well as his other interactions with animals, serves to align him with an eremitic and socially marginal model of sanctity, counterbalancing Hugh’s prominence in secular society.

Animals are a common iconographic attribute of medieval saints. The desert fathers are frequently ministered to by lions, as in the case of Cyriacus, who lived in the company of a lion that guarded his herb garden.2 Farther north, the lions are left behind, but the

1 Walter-Meikle, Medieval Pets, 21.

link between saints and animals remains, as in the case of the sixth-century Irish missionary monk Gall, who was attended by a bear, or the twelfth-century English hermit Robert of Knaresborough and his miraculously tamed deer.\(^3\) The later Middle Ages produce in the fourteenth-century St. Roch, an intercessor against plague who is never depicted without his loyal dog, and at the turn of the thirteenth century Francis of Assisi, the saint most strongly associated with animals in the present day.\(^4\)

All the figures I have named, and the overwhelming majority of other saints who are closely associated with animals, are hermits, outcasts, or mendicant friars. That is, they all exist outside of normal human society. The role of animals in the hagiography and iconography of these saints is closely linked to the saints’ marginal status. For these saints, interaction with animals is a substitute for participation in human society. The desert in hagiography does not function as an empty space.\(^5\) The hermit, in fleeing human society, does not live in perfect isolation; instead, the saint’s separation from human society is met with a corresponding entry into the society of animals. The association of saintly figures with animals thus emphasizes the saints’ status on the margins of human society.

Yet, one saint prominently associated with an animal is Hugh of Avalon, bishop of Lincoln in the late twelfth century. Three hagiographical accounts of Hugh’s life survive today. The earliest, written while Hugh was still alive, is part of Gerald of Wales’ \textit{Vita Sancti Remigii} (\textit{Life of Saint Remigius}); Gerald was personally acquainted with Hugh and also wrote the \textit{Vita Sancti Hugonis} (\textit{Life of Saint Hugh}). Hugh died in the year 1200, and textual evidence suggests that the final version of the \textit{Vita} was composed in the spring of 1214.\(^6\) The third source, Adam of Eynsham’s \textit{Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis} (\textit{Great or Long’ Life of Saint Hugh}), was likely finished


\(^5\) Ševčenko, “The Hermit as Stranger in the Desert,” 75-6.

during or before the year 1214. Adam of Eynsham’s source draws on the depiction of Hugh in the *Vita Sancti Remigi* but is much greater in length than either of Gerald’s depictions. Adam was Hugh’s personal chaplain during the last three years of Hugh’s life, and he describes the later years of Hugh’s episcopate in much more detail than the earlier.

As the bishop of Lincoln, Hugh controlled a populous and politically significant diocese. Gerald of Wales, in the *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, presents Hugh as a mediating figure between the Church and the Crown. Hugh was close to both Henry II and his successor, Richard I, and on several occasions acted as the English king’s representative in diplomatic affairs. Yet Hugh’s close relationship with the Angevin kings did not mean that he complied with every royal wish; he represented English bishops during disputes with the Crown, and his harsh rebukes earned him the nickname “hammer of kings”.

Gerald writes the following in the *Vita Sancti Hugonis* regarding Hugh’s relationship with the Crown:

> It was also because he was so acceptable to the king in everything and so pleasing to him that he could do this so much. For the king knew and was not unaware of the holy man’s intense concern for God. He regarded many actions of his as permissible and privately winked at several things that if done by another might have provoked great indignation in him.

This passage emphasizes Hugh’s close relationship with secular authority and portrays Hugh’s political involvement as fundamentally

8 Farmer, “The Author and Contents of the *Magna Vita*,” xxi.

9 Latin *regum malleus*; *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis* vol. 1, 56.

10 Latin *acceptus*; also “dear”.

11 Henry II.

12 Refers to Hugh’s prioritization of religious over secular matters.

13 Loomis’ translation is accurate in sense though highly idiomatic; Latin *plurimaque sub dissimulacione pertransit*.

connected to his office as bishop.

Hugh’s closeness with the Crown presented problems for his hagiographers, as did his very position as a bishop. Hugh was a member of the Carthusian monastic order, which is characterized by silent contemplation and withdrawal from society. A Carthusian bishop, then, seems a contradiction in terms. In this respect, however, Hugh was not without precedent. Hugh of Grenoble, at the turn of the twelfth century, was a Carthusian as well as a bishop, as were the four subsequent bishops of Grenoble. Yet although Hugh of Avalon’s status as a Carthusian bishop was not wholly unprecedented, it was unusual; Hugh was the first English bishop to be a Carthusian. Unlike Hugh of Grenoble, who diligently maintained the customs of Carthusian life during his term as bishop, Hugh of Avalon at times dispensed with Carthusian regulations in favor of the customs of the see of Lincoln, as when he allowed women to eat at the bishop’s table despite contact with women being prohibited for Carthusian monks. Hugh’s acts as bishop of Lincoln thus at times came into conflict with the Carthusian ideal.

While other saints associated with animals existed on society’s margins, Hugh was deeply involved in worldly concerns. Yet Hugh’s hagiography is peppered with accounts of his interactions with animals. In the *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, Hugh is depicted interacting with wild animals during his days living as a monk:

[Hugh] showed himself so simple and kind in all things that he even tamed little birds and domesticated the forest rodents commonly called squirrels...[they] had somehow discovered the natural kindness and innocence of his soul and so were not afraid to be tame with the simple and harmless man.  

The key factor in this account is the animals’ recognition of Hugh’s saintly status. They are able to judge Hugh’s character, and Gerald presents their trust of Hugh as evidence for his sanctity. The same pattern of recognition appears in accounts of Hugh’s interactions with the swan of Stow:

As by small birds at both Witham and the Grande Chartreuse, so too when he became a bishop, his compassionate and innocent kindness was somehow quickly recognized, not by a small bird but by a large and royal bird\(^\text{17}\)...about the day or the day after Bishop Hugh was welcomed and enthroned at Lincoln, a swan not seen there before flew in at the bishop’s manor near Stow...immediately, the bird took and ate bread from his hand\(^\text{18}\) and stayed with him so like a pet\(^\text{19}\) that for the time being it seemed to have shed all its wildness.\(^\text{20}\)

Gerald’s account emphasizes that Hugh’s interaction with the swan is the continuation of a pattern of recognition begun during Hugh’s time as a cloistered monk. In the Magna Vita, Adam of Eynsham reinforces the swan’s recognition of Hugh’s sanctity when he recounts that it customarily attacked anyone who approached it except for Hugh (including Adam himself!).\(^\text{21}\) These two aspects of Hugh’s animal interactions, recognition and continuity, provide the key to understanding the role played by Hugh’s association with animals in the context of his hagiography.

The swan of Stow is described in all three hagiographical accounts of Hugh’s life. Much of the description of the swan in the *Vita Sancti Hugonis* and the *Magna Vita* is actually quoted directly from the *Vita Sancti Remigii*, with a few additions in each text. The account of the swan is therefore consistent across the three texts, and Adam’s quotation in the *Magna Vita* of Gerald’s words in the *Vita Sancti Remigii* indicates agreement between the authors regarding the major points of the swan narrative.

Evidence within the hagiographical texts, including detailed descriptions of the swan’s appearance and behavior, suggest that there was in fact a historical swan that took a liking to the historical

17 Latin *ave grande et regia*.

18 An evident Eucharistic parallel.

19 Or “on such friendly terms”; Latin *quam familiariter*.

20 Loomis, *Life of St. Hugh*, 33. Most of this passage is quoted essentially verbatim in the *Magna Vita* (vol. 1, 104-5).

21 *Magna Vita* vol. 1, pp.107-8. Adam’s annoyance with the swan is palpable in this passage and is akin to that of a person whose close friend owns an excitable dog.
Hugh. But the historical veracity, for lack of a better term, of the swan narrative within Hugh’s hagiography is beside the point of this paper. Instead, I focus on the function of the swan as a literary element in constructing Hugh’s sanctity within the hagiographical texts.

One way of reading the swan within the text is as an allegorical mirror for Hugh’s own qualities. In the *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, Gerald of Wales offers an allegorical interpretation of Hugh’s association with the swan:

> For it could not lack mystery that a white bird that announces its impending death by song should, as if by God’s design, be given to that pure and holy innocent man who had no fear of the threats of death.  

The swan is also explicitly described as a chaste bird:

> By its greater size, the bird overpowered and killed all the many small swans it found there, except for one female which it spared for the pleasure of companionship, not procreation [*ad societatis solacium, non fecunditatis augmentum*].”

This explanation focuses on the symbolic implications of the swan. This reading fits with the traditional view of scholars that the only positive function of animals in medieval theology was as symbols. Many of the swan’s traditional symbolic associations are connected to Hugh’s own qualities, here his courage and chastity. But it does not address Hugh’s earlier interactions with animals during his time as a cloistered monk, nor the broader associations of this pattern of animal interaction. The swan has a role in the text beyond the purely allegorical.

One function of the swan in Hugh’s hagiography is that it affirms consistency between Hugh’s time as a cloistered monk and his term as bishop. At the time Hugh’s hagiographers wrote, animals had long been and would continue to be associated with saints on the social margins, and his hagiographers made use of this

22 Loomis, *Life of St. Hugh*, 35

association to characterize Hugh’s sanctity. Hugh’s work on the worldly administration of his diocese and his involvement in secular politics seem to conflict with the ideal of silent contemplation and withdrawal from secular society that is central to Carthusian spirituality. However, the swan’s recognition of Hugh’s sanctity is explicitly cast as a continuation of the recognition by other animals that occurred while Hugh was still participating in the traditional Carthusian monastic lifestyle; the Latin word used in the comparison between the two animal interactions is *sicut*, a strong form of “just as”.

By demonstrating Hugh’s sanctity in the same way during his tenure as bishop as during his time as a cloistered Carthusian, the animal interactions in Hugh’s hagiography create a consistent image of Hugh’s character despite his dramatic changes in lifestyle. The qualities of the ideal Carthusian, recognized by birds and squirrels early in Hugh’s life, are implied to be retained by Hugh the bishop through the recognition of his sanctity by the swan.

Crucially, Hugh’s hagiographers explicitly present Hugh’s interactions with the swan as non-miraculous. In the *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, Gerald writes the following passage:

[Hugh’s] subduing and nearly miraculous [*quasi miraculo*] taming of these large and small birds should seem less extraordinary to anyone [*minus admirari debet quisquis*] who at Thornholm in Lindsey has seen the small birds called titmice [*Mesenges*] that emerge here and there from woods and parkways and, afraid of nothing, sit on the outstretched hands, shoulders, and heads of the canons of that place.

Why would Gerald minimize the potentially miraculous nature of Hugh’s relationship with the swan? I argue Gerald does not present the taming of the swan as a miraculous show of power because to do so would be to minimize the agency of the swan itself, and thus to undermine the effect of the swan’s judgment of Hugh’s character.

For context, let us compare Hugh’s interaction with the swan to Robert of Knaresborough’s interaction with the deer. Robert of Knaresborough was another twelfth-century English saint, a hermit.

His hagiography gives an account of his miraculous taming of a pair of deer. The deer have been eating the crops of Robert’s garden. Robert is miraculously able to tame the deer and harnesses them to a plow as if they were oxen.

Robert’s taming of the deer differs from Hugh’s interaction with the swan in two crucial ways. First, the deer do not in any way seek out Robert or feel an affinity toward him as the swan does for Hugh; indeed, the deer are at first harmful to Robert. Second, the deer, once tamed, are explicitly said to behave contrary to their nature – they behave like oxen – and this tame state is not restricted to their interactions with Robert. They cease to be wild animals. In contrast, although the swan behaves affectionately toward Hugh, it does not do so in an un-swann- like way, and its behavior toward others is not tame in the slightest, as Adam of Eynsham recounts. Hugh does not tame or train the swan, or the other wild birds and squirrels with which he interacts, for any human purpose. The accounts of the deer and of the swan function in fundamentally different ways within the two hagiographical traditions. While Robert’s taming of the deer is a display of holy power, the swan’s actions in Hugh’s hagiography serve as a means of conveying aspects of Hugh’s moral character. It is not Hugh’s power over the swan, but rather the swan’s recognition of Hugh’s sanctity, that is essential.

This instinct is not based on the swan recognizing characteristics in Hugh that it possesses itself. While Gerald’s brief allegorization of the swan in the Vita Sancti Hugonis is based on characteristics shared by Hugh and the swan, the swan’s recognition is of Hugh’s “compassion and kindness” – qualities the swan, which “overpowered and killed” many smaller swans, is not described as possessing. Yet even as the swan exhibits behaviors that would be monstrous in a human being, it retains an innate sense of moral judgment with authority beyond its own qualities.

This function of the swan and other wild animals as judges of human character within Hugh’s hagiography raises broader questions about the perception of animals in twelfth- and thirteenth-
century England. The swan and the other animals with which Hugh interacts are depicted as having a non-rational moral sense: their recognition of Hugh’s gentleness and simplicity does not seem to be based on a rational evaluation of his actions, but rather on an instinct which Hugh’s hagiographers can neither explain nor satisfactorily describe.

Much work has recently been done on medieval ideas about the moral treatment of animals, and at what times and in what situations animals were and were not judged according to moral standards, but situations in which animals are portrayed as passing moral judgment, as in Hugh’s hagiography, for the most part have yet to be investigated. What does it mean for an animal to pass judgment on a saint? Examining the role of animals in hagiographical texts like those discussing Hugh has the potential to deepen our understanding of human/animal relations as conceptualized in medieval theology.

Emma Grover is a student in the Classics Department at Stanford University. Her current research focuses on medieval Latin hymnals.

Bibliography


26 Toivanen, “Marking the Boundaries.”


*St. Hugh of Avalon*

*Altarpiece, Charterhouse of Saint-Honoré (c. 1490-1500)*
Allusive Fontaines, Sicamors, and Pins:  
Figurative Prophecies of Grail Piety in the Prose Lancelot  

David S. King  
Stockton University

At the conclusion of Chrétien de Troyes’s twelfth-century verse Chevalier de la charrette, a spring and sycamore allude to concupiscence and betrayal in Scripture, evoking the hero’s and the queen’s adulterous liaison. The author of the thirteenth-century French Prose Lancelot translates this allusion from a moment of joy for the queen to one of terror, foreshadowing a change in fortune for the hero and his prowess. Every subsequent adventure where the hero encounters a spring and sycamore points to his love for the queen as a source of corruption. Springs shaded by a pine tree hint at the sanctity of marriage and the need to protect it against intruders. Amidst these adventures, stags, lions, and a pious vagabond reference hagiography and Scripture, underscoring a thirst for the divine. As a consequence, readers may understand the romance as promoting the austere values of La Queste del Saint Graal, even apart from episodes prophesying the Grail quest.

In the second half of Lancelot, a thirteenth-century prose work, prophecies of the Grail quest appear with increasing frequency. Tombs, inscriptions, and premonitory dreams speak of a future where Lancelot will cede his supremacy among knights to his virginal son, Galahad. Away from the prophetic adventures, however, Lancelot continues to triumph over all opponents. His success in battle gives the impression that “[f]in amor . . . remains an ennobling force in this world and does not cause a degradation on the purely chivalric plane,” or that despite Lancelot’s “échec imminent” (imminent failure), the hero’s love “est exalté par dessus tout” (is exalted above all else). No doubt the very explicitness of the prophecies also contributes to this understanding of the romance’s double esprit in


3 Hult, “Esquisses,” 62. The translation is mine.
leading readers to expect moral clarity in all adventures pertinent to the pious future. Figurative elements of the hero’s later adventures require a closer look, among them, a spring and sycamore that the romancer translates from his source material, Chrétien de Troyes’s twelfth-century verse romance, the *Chevalier de la charrette*. With the motif, the prose author hints at the hero’s moral degradation in the otherworldly realm of Corbenic and in the secular domain of Camelot.

At the end of Chrétien’s poem, where Lancelot dispatches Meleagant, the motif alludes to a spring and sycamores in the Old and New Testaments, evoking Lancelot’s and Guenevere’s sin and their betrayal of King Arthur. The author displaces the spring and sycamore from a scene of “grant joie” (great joy) to one of horror for the queen, portending trouble for the hero (7094). The prose narrative also identifies the spring with the queen herself, reinforcing a simile that likens her beauty to that of a spring on Lancelot’s first meeting with her. Episodes following the queen’s distress, where Lancelot happens upon springs and sycamores, invite the reader to understand his carnal attachment to her as a moral failing. Other springs, shaded by a pine tree or pine trees, allude to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the myth of Attis and Cybele, underscoring the sanctity of marriage and the need to defend it against intruders. In conjunction with these springs, stags, lions and a vagabond king—referencing hagiography and Scripture—conjure a thirst for the divine in harmony with the values of the next installment of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, *La Queste del Saint-Graal*. In short, even before Galahad replaces his father as the finest knight in the world, the allusive springs, trees, and fauna of the Prose *Lancelot* begin celebrating the values promoted during the Grail quest, if much more subtly than in adventures featuring the Holy Vessel.

In Chrétien’s poem, when the hero prepares for his final combat with Meleagant, “as fenestres revont maint--/ la reïne, dames, puceles, / por Lancelot, gentes et beles” (6980-81) (many returned
to the windows—/ the queen, the ladies, and the maidens, / fair and beautiful to watch Lancelot), whereas the king sits on a heath “[s]oz le sagremor gent et bel, / qui fu plantez del tans Abel” (beneath the beautiful sycamore, / which had been planted in the time of Abel) and beside “une clere fontenele” (6989-91) (a sparkling spring). With Abel’s name, the poet turns the reader’s thoughts to Genesis 4 and the murder of one brother at the hands of another. Genesis 4, however, mentions no tree or spring. The spring and sycamore, rather, recall Abel’s parents. The description of the Garden of Eden begins: “fons ascendebat e terra inrigans universam superficiem terrae” (a spring went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground) (2.6).5 Isidore of Seville’s Etymologies identifies the sycamore as a *ficus sycomorous*: “sycomorus, sicut et morus, Graeca nomina sunt. Dictus autem sycomorus eo quod sit folia similis moro. Hanc Latini celsam appellant ab altitudine” (the ‘sycamore fig,’ along with the mulberry, have Greek names. It is called *sycomorus* (cf. σῦκον, “fig”) because its leaves are like the *morus*. Latin speakers call this the ‘lofty’ (celsus) fig because of its height).6 Petrus Comestor, in his widely copied twelfth-century gloss of the Bible, Historia Scholastica, makes the same identification: “[s]ycomorus ficus fatua dicitur, in foliis moro similis” (it is called a sycamore, a tall fig tree whose leaves resemble those of a mulberry).7 In the garden, Adam and Eve live without sin or cause for embarrassment until, having eaten fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in Saint Augustine’s words, “gratia remota, est poena reciproca inoboedientia pleceteretur” (this grace was lost and punishment in kind for their disobedience was inflicted).8 Adam and Eve then cover their shameful parts with “folia ficus” (3:7) (fig leaves), leaves

5 The Revised Standard Version indicates “mist” rather than “spring.”

6 Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae, 17.20. The translation is from Barney, Lewis, Beach, Berghof’s edition, 344.

7 Petrus Comestor, Historia Scholastica, 198:1596.

representing not original sin but the first sin that follows from it, that of concupiscence. 9 The leaves in Genesis no doubt represent those from a *ficus carica* rather than from a *ficus sycomorus*. 10 The former species would not grow in Arthur’s kingdom, but the sycamore, or a tree resembling it, offers the poet a close substitute and one that has the advantage of alluding to sin elsewhere in Scripture.

In the Gospel of Luke, the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith, and he responds “si haberetis fidem sicut granum sinapis diceretis huic arbori moro eradicare et transplantare in mare et oboediret vobis” (17:6) (if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you would say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you). In the words of Saint Ambrose, the tree represents the “spiritum . . . inmundum” (foul spirit) that faith will banish. 11 Similarly, in the parable of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who, “ascendit in arobrem sycomorum ut videret illum” (19:4) (climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Jesus), the tree represents a moral burden that the sinner must surmount. Saint Ambrose likens Zacchaeus’s ascent to “errata . . . corrigens superioris aetatis” (correcting the errors of his past life). 12 As a consequence, readers of Chrétien’s poem may understand the sycamore casting a shadow over King Arthur as evoking the sin not yet overcome, Lancelot’s and Guenevere’s hidden shame.

The thirteenth-century author adheres closely to the narrative of his model, *Chevalier de la charrete*; however, Lancelot’s final combat with Meleagant represents an exception to that faithfulness. The prose author offers a more sober version of events, reducing 301 octosyllabic verses to 325 words. The narrator neither praises

---

9 All citations are from the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*. Translations are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.


12 Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, book 8, 1492 A.
the hero nor vilifies Meleagant. The description of the battle makes no mention of a wound to Meleagant’s gut, the breaking of his teeth, or the loss of his right arm. Elided also is any indication of where the spectators sit, so gone are the spring and sycamore. So that readers may recognize the poet’s motif in a different context, the prose narrative prefaces the translation with reminders of the dead villain and his perfidies. First, King Bademagu discovers his son Meleagant’s remains and holds the severed head in his hands. The narrator indicates that “si en fist le jor si grant duel que je ne le vos savroie deviser” (2:266) (he grieved so deeply that day that I could not describe it to you, 4:323)—evoking pity for the father, if not for the son.\(^\text{13}\) The narrative then turns to a knight attempting to abduct Guenevere as she and others ride through the forest. Readers recognize the would-be abductor as Lancelot’s cousin, Bors, carrying out an ill-considered oath. As in both the poem and the prose romance when Meleagant abducts the queen, Sir Kay comes to her rescue without success, and Lancelot defeats the would-be kidnapper. When another obligation tears Lancelot from her company, the elided natural elements reappear. The queen stops to rest by “une fontaine desos un sicamor” (2:276) (a fountain under a sycamore, 4:328).\(^\text{14}\) From that vantage point, she sees a knight ride by wearing Lancelot’s armor carrying what she believes to be Lancelot’s severed head. The gruesome spectacle obliges her to envisage a duel unlike the one she and her husband witness. Rather than see her new abuser lose his head as Meleagant lost his, she imagines her lover losing his own. Readers know the queen’s impression to be false, but her illusion nonetheless invites them to contemplate a change in fortune for the hero, a future where his virtues shine less bright. That this invitation occurs in conjunction with the displaced motif, itself an allusion to Genesis and Luke, suggests concupiscence as the source

\(^{13}\) All citations of the romance are from Micha’s edition, indicated by volume and page. All translations are from Lacy’s edition, indicated by volume and page.

\(^{14}\) The narrative thread featuring Guenevere at the Fairies’ Fountain mentions the spring twelve times, beginning at 2:276 (4:328) and ending at 2:317 (4:348).
of the hero’s fall from grace.

Because Guenevere takes the spot that Arthur assumes in the poem, one of the deceivers replaces the deceived, so the prose text makes no call on Abel. No doubt to compensate for this absence, the author amplifies the other elements of the motif. Although Marie Luce Chênerie tells us that springs in romance convey “les dangers de la séduction féminine” (the dangers of feminine seduction) and most often manifest themselves in “une demoiselle” (a maiden), the name of this spring encourages readers to think of more mature women: “Cele fontaine estoit apelee la Fontaine as Fees, por ce que les gens qui en la forest habitoient i avoient veu pluisors fois trop beles dames et ne pooiient rien savoir de lor estre, si disoient qu’eles estoient fees” (2:276) (The fountain was called the Fairies’ Fountain, because the people who inhabited the forest had seen some very lovely ladies there several times. Since they were unable to discover anything about them they said that they were fairies, 4:328). By indicating that the fairies are ladies rather than maidens, the author encourages the reader to recall a much earlier figurative spring associated with a particular lady, Guenevere.

The romancer evokes that spring when Lancelot first arrives at Camelot: “Li rois vient encontre et la roine, si le prenent andoi par les .II. mains et s’en vont asoir en une couche et li vallés s’asiet devant els sor l’erbe vert dont la sale estoit jonchie” (7:273-74) (The king and queen came toward him, took him by the hands, and led him toward a couch, where they sat down. He sat down on the green rushes that covered the floor, 3:123). The seating arrangement and the gazes exchanged hint at the love triangle that readers, familiar with the poem, know will take shape. Both Arthur and Guenevere admire the newcomer’s beauty, but Lancelot has eyes only for the queen, stealing glances at her “toutes les fois qu’il puet vers li mener ses iex covertement” (every time he could do so without being noticed), to which the narrator adds: “il ne prisoit envers la roine nule autre dame, car che fu la dame des dames et la fontaine de biauté” (7:274) (he admired no other woman as he did the queen, 15 Chênerie, Le chevalier errant, 189.
for she was the sovereign of all women and the very fountain of beauty, 3:123). At this earlier moment, the narrator seems to applaud the youth’s infatuation with the queen, saying “s’il seust la grant valor qui en li estoit, encore l’esgardast il plus volentiers, car nule n’estoit, ne pobre ne riche, de sa valor” (7:274) (if he had known all the great worthiness that was hers, he would have gazed at her even more gladly, for it surpassed that of every other woman, rich or poor, 3:123).

When Guenevere sits “desos un sicamor,” the romancer draws further attention to the tree with a member of the queen’s escort in a way that puts her “grant valor” into question. While still anticipating Lancelot’s return, she says: “Saigremor, ci feist molt buen mengier” (2:277) (Sagremor, it would be good to eat, 4:328). The knight’s name reflects that of the tree, as evidenced by the verse, “le sagremor gent et bel” (6989), rendered in other manuscripts of the poem as “le saigremor” or “le sicamor” (7011). During his search to satisfy the queen’s appetite, Sagremor is taken prisoner, and his captors place him in a jail “delez un vergier” (next to an orchard), a space representing an ironic turn on his name (2:297; 4:338). Taking pity on the prisoner, a young lady brings him food. The satisfaction of his appetite contrasts with the disappointment of Guenevere’s. Her Sagremor/sagremor bears no fruit, so she and what remains of her retinue go hungry. To color our understanding of that hunger, the author adds a further wrinkle. Gawain frees Sagremor from prison, and from that success, the liberator goes on to the Grail Castle where he admires both the Holy Vessel and the beautiful maiden he sees carrying it. However, “[a]prés regarde la pucele, si se merveille plus assès de sa bialté que del vaisel” (2:377) ([t]hen he gazed at the maiden, marveling more at her beauty than at the vessel’s, 4:377). All witnesses to the procession then sit for a meal, and the Grail fills everyone else’s plate, but leaves Gawain’s empty. With the denial of sustenance, the text evidently condemns his greater appetite for the

flesh than for the sacred. Given the linking of this adventure to the one at the Fairies’ Fountain, we may read the queen’s hunger there as an implied reproach of her carnal appetites.

The narrator’s earlier endorsement of the queen’s inner virtue continues to wither when the narrative returns our attention to Lancelot. A preface for the adventure assures us of this intent. Guenevere has a dream wherein she, Arthur, and Lancelot meet “.I. damoisele, la plus bele qu’ele eust onques veu” (4:119) (a maiden, the most beautiful woman she had ever seen, 5:60). The queen subsequently discovers the maiden in bed with Lancelot and, in a rage, bans Lancelot from court. The vision foreshadows a much later episode where King Pelles’s daughter, the mother of Galahad, once again dupes Lancelot into sleeping with her. The resulting banishment sets the hero on a path to the romance’s final spring and sycamore (6:177; 5:403).

Beside “.I. fontainne bele et clere” (a beautiful, clear spring), Lancelot encounters a knight and two young women “sor l’erbe” (on the grass) picnicking “desouz l’ombre de .II. sicamors” (beneath the shade of two sycamores) (4:133; 5:67). One of the maidens, who has never before loved a man, becomes infatuated with Lancelot’s beauty. She admires him much as the young Lancelot admired Guenevere on their first meeting. Then Lancelot takes a drink from the fountain in the meadow, unaware that “.II. culuevres granz et hideuses” (two huge and ugly snakes) have poisoned it (4:135; 5:68). He falls ill, and his body “devint ausi gros com .I. tonnel” (became as wide as a barrel, 5:68). The maiden begins caring for his health, until unrequited love incapacitates her. He would prefer they both perish from their respective illnesses rather than break faith with the lady who represents for him “la fontaine de biauté” (7:274) (the very fountain of beauty, 3:123). But the maiden offers a compromise wherein he agrees to act as her ami when they are together, and she pledges to remain a virgin forever out of devotion to him.17 Her chaste love finally provides the antidote to the hero’s illness, and in doing so, anticipates once again the romance’s other salubrious

17 Richard, Amour et passe amour, reads Lancelot’s admiration of the beauty of the maiden of the spring and of Pelles’s daughter as unchaste and as an infidelity to the queen that the romancer implicitly condemns, 277-83.
love, the union between Lancelot and King Pelles’s daughter. In that sexual congress, he acts out of lust, believing that he sleeps with the queen, whereas the daughter takes part for the benefit of others: “ele ne le fait mie tant por la biauté de celui ne por luxure ne por eschaufement de char come ele fait por le fruit recevoir dont toz li païs doit venir a sa premiere biauté” (4:210) (she did it not so much for his beauty or from lust or desire, but so as to receive the fruit that would restore that entire land to its original beauty, 5:103). The coupling destroys her virginity, yet in the eyes of God, the son she bears justifies the sacrifice: “se virginitez fu empirie en ce qu’il fu conceuz, bien en fu li mesfaiz amandez en sa vie par sa virginité qu’il randi sainne et antiere a son Sauveor” (4:211) (if virginity was harmed as he was conceived, the wrong was made right in his life through his own virginity, which he returned whole and entire to his Savior, 5:104). The setting for the platonic friendship between Lancelot and the maiden, recalling the Fairies’ Fountain and its sycamore, and in turn “la fontaine de biauté,” invites the reader to understand the poisoned water as representative of libidinous desire. The serpents’ role, evoking the tempter of Eve, further identifies the poison as a moral corruption, sin inciting divine anger. The presence of two serpents, like the two sycamores, is perhaps meant to cast the blame not just on the temptress, Guenevere, but to recognize the lovers’ mutual responsibility for the sin they commit. The description of Lancelot’s recovery contributes to this impression, for after the swelling subsides, the narrator indicates that “il ne li remés cuir sor lui” (4:139) (skin had flaked off him all over, 5:69). In shedding his skin, Lancelot takes on one of the qualities of a serpent. Pierre de Beauvais’s Bestiaire compares the snake’s shedding of skin to a man’s confession and the new skin to the reform of the penitent’s body and soul.18

Figurative elements of the narrative offer praise not just for the restorative power of chaste love but also for the value of love within marriage. The praise comes with the inclusion of a pine tree in

18 Pierre de Beauvais, Bestiaire, 36: 5-20.
the spring and sycamore motif and with a devout custom established at a nearby abbey. When Lancelot arrives at the religious house, the narrative recounts how in the time of Joseph of Arimathea, Eliezer, the king of the Scottish Borderlands dubbed the abbey “la Petite Aumosne” (5:82) (Small Charity, 5:224). The king’s life—his conversion to Christianity, self-imposed poverty, pious wanderings, and reunion with wealth and family at God’s command—reproduces nearly all the major elements a saint’s life popular in thirteenth-century France, that of Saint Eustace. The romance later introduces the omitted element, the stag inducing Eustace’s conversion, in a narrative thread involving one of Eliezer’s successors.

Within the abbey, a friar tells Lancelot about the custom of the “Tertre Deveé” (5:93) (Forbidden Hill, 5:229). A young woman promised to love her suitor, in her words “par covenant que vos me garantissiez contre toz homes et me prenez a fame par la loi de Sainte Eglise” (5:94) (on condition that you protect me against all men and take me as your wife according to the law of Holy Church, 5:229). In accordance with the pledge, the knight builds a fortress on the hill and kills or imprisons all knights who dare approach, sending the bodies and shields of the vanquished to the abbey. Lancelot climbs the hill, attaching his horse to a “pin ou il sordoit une des plus beles fontainnes dou païs” (a pine where one of the finest springs in the land gushed forth), and sees the horse of the hill’s defender tied to “.I. des plus biaux sicamors qu’il eust onques mes veu” (one of the most beautiful sycamores he had ever seen, 5:231). Though getting the upper hand, Lancelot suddenly interrupts the fight on recognizing his adversary’s sword as that of the late Galehaut and his adversary as Bors, to whom the hero sent the sword on Galehaut’s

19 The romance also attributes the name Eliezer to the “fiz al Riche Roi Pescheor” (2:339) (son the rich Fisher King, 4:359), in an episode arising shortly after Guenevere’s stay at the Fairies’ Fountain.

20 Boureu, “Placido Tramite, La légende d’Eustache,” 683, identifies twelve manuscript versions in Old French prose and eleven in verse, in addition to the “place d’honneur” afforded to Eustace’s vita in the thirteenth-century legendries of Jean de Mailly, Vincent de Beauvais, and Jacques de Voragine.
death (2:218-19; 4:300). Bors has already killed the hill’s guardian after pledging to continue the defense until defeated by another knight. On the face of it, the adventure resembles many others earlier in the romance in that Lancelot’s victory liberates several knights of the Round Table held prisoner in the fortress, re-establishing his supremacy among knights. But in this instance, that supremacy casts him as an enemy of marriage.

The adventure makes no explicit reference to Guenevere, yet the sword’s original owner highlights the hero’s status as an interloper within another’s marriage, for the reader knows Galehaut as the go-between who transformed Lancelot from timorous admirer of the queen into her lover. That Lancelot’s cousin defends the Forbidden Hill rather than the husband adds to the episode’s figurative power, because Bors and his horse tied to the sycamore return the reader’s thoughts to the Fairies’ Fountain where he attempts to abduct the queen. Although in that moment, his behavior recalls Meleagant’s, Bors acts without libidinous desire and in removing her from Lancelot’s presence would in fact protect King Arthur’s wife from another man’s lust. In that earlier moment, not recognizing Bors, Lancelot at least fights to protect Guenevere from another man, if not from himself. Yet at the Forbidden Hill, he puts an end to a wife’s protection against “la loi de Sainte Eglise” (5:94) (the law of Holy Church, 5:229).

With this fountain adventure’s emphasis on spousal protection, the prose romancer invites readers to recall springs in the Old Testament, other than in Genesis, such as Proverbs 5, where Solomon warns his son to avoid adulterous women, encouraging the young man to remain faithful to his wife and to watch over her in the following terms: “deriventur fontes tui foras et in plateis aquas tuas divide. / habeto eas solus nec sint alieni participes tui / sit vena tua benedicta et laetare cum muliere adulescentiae tuae” (5.16-18) (Should your fountains be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? / Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth). In the Song of Songs, the singer, in addressing his bride,
emphasizes the same notion of water and wife as a private resource: “hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus” (4.12) (A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed).

In this context, the hill and the pine contribute to the celebration of marriage, referencing Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. This ancient poem, in the words of James G. Clark, served “as a stimulus for moral, ethical, and philosophical reflections” in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the poem, mourning the loss of his young wife, “refugerat Orpheus / femineam Venerem, seu quod male cesserat illi, / sive fidem dederat; multas tamen ardor habebat / jungere se vati: multae doluere repulsae” (10:79-82) (Orpheus had shunned all love of womenkind, whether because of his ill success in love, or whether he had given his troth once for all. Still many women felt a passion for the bard; many grieved for their love repulsed). He pours out his sorrows in music on a “collis” (hill) (10:86), drawing in trees, among them, “et succincta comas hirsutaque vertice pinus, / grata deum matri, siquidem Cybeleius Attis / exuit hac hominem truncoque induruit illo” (10:103-05) (the bare-trunked pine with broad, leafy top, pleasing to the mother of gods, since Attis, dear to Cybele, exchanged for this his human form and stiffened in its trunk). Although Ovid does not explain the reason for Attis’s transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, in another poem, *Fasti*, he indicates that Attis “casto vinxit amore” (4:224) (bound himself by a chaste passion) to the goddess Cybele, promising “semper fac puer esse” (4:226) (to be a boy forever) and guard her temple. But Attis breaks his pledge with a wood nymph, and, in revenge, Cybele “Naida volneribus succidit in arbore factis, / illa perit” (4:231-32) (by wounds inflicted on the tree she cut down the Naiad, who perished thus). Attis then goes mad, reproaching himself


22 All citations and translations of the poem, indicated by book and verse, are from Miller’s edition, vol. 4.

23 All citations and translations of the poem, indicated by book and verse, are from Frazèr’s edition.
for breaking faith, and “onus inguinis aufert” (4:241) (removed the burden of his groin). Out of pity, the goddess affects the transformation of her former lover, preserving him in an enduring arboreal form, joining him figuratively with the nymph. The widowed Orpheus’s voluntary forbearance, Attis’s pledge and self-mutilation, his fusion with the pine, all paint monogamy as an enduring bond. We can thus understand the pine replacing the sycamore as the tree shading the spring at the Forbidden Hill as the addition of another pious dimension to the motif. The intention becomes clearer in the hero’s next adventure. It makes explicit reference to the Grail quest and associates pines with a pious, monogamous knight. The episode, focused on chastity and continence, features no sycamore at all and alludes to Scriptural springs representing otherworldly appetites.

A coda to the adventure just finished prepares the reader for the devout nature of the next one. Lancelot dreams that his late grandfather, also named Lancelot and king of the White Land, tells him to go to the Perilous Forest where: “tu trouveras une aventure mervilieuse qui ne puert estre menée a chief fors par toi, et encor ne l’acheveroyes tu pas, se ne fust la roine Heleinne, ta bonne mere, qui prie Nostre Signor por toi et nuit et jor” (5:114) (you will find a marvelous adventure that can be achieved only by you, and even you could not achieve it, were it not for your good mother, Queen Elaine, who prays to Our Lord for you night and day, 5:238). In that forest, Lancelot finds the gravesite of his grandfather whose head lies in a boiling spring “qui sordoit par .I. tuel et chaoit en un vessel de plonc” (that flowed from a pipe and fell into a leaden basin) and whose body lies in “.I. tombe de marbre qui est entre .II. granz pins” (a marble tomb between two tall pines), guarded by two lions (5:118; 5:240). After slaying the lions, Lancelot gathers the head, “ausi vermel com se ce fust li plus biaux hom del monde” (as ruddy as that of the handsomest man in the world) and the body, “ausi biaux com s’il fust orandroit desviez” (as handsome as if the man had just passed away) (5:120-21; 5:241). He and a hermit rebury the grandfather alongside the equally well-preserved remains of the grandmother in a nearby chapel, “ainsi le requist ele, quant ele
trespassa de cest siecle” (5:122) (for such was her request when she passed from this world, 5:242).

The hermit then explains the cause of the grandfather’s misfortune, and in so doing, differentiates the meaning of this spring from that of its predecessors. The king and the wife of a cousin spent considerable time together. Although the king loved the wife “por la grant bonté que il savoit en lui” (5:124) (for the great goodness he recognized in her, 5:243), and she admired him for the same reason, the cousin wrongly suspected the king of betraying him. To exact his revenge, the cousin stalked the elder Lancelot. On Good Friday, the king “nuz piez et an langes o povres vestemenz . . . . se fu faiz confés au prodome qui çaienz menoit, et quant il ot oï le servise del jor, si issi fors de la chapele et ot si grant talant de boivre qu’il torna a cele fontainne ci devant” (5:125) (barefoot and in poor woolen clothing … had himself confessed by the holy man who dwelt here, and when he had heard the service of the day, he went out of the chapel, and was so thirsty that he turned to that spring out front, 5:243). Although the king seeks to slake his mortal thirst, his attitude, dress, and behavior encourage the reader to understand his thirst in a figurative sense. In addition to the uncorrupt quality of his flesh, other elements of the grandfather’s vita hallow his memory. Blood dripping from his tomb heals the wounds of passing knights, the lions begin guarding the tomb after the blood heals their wounds, and the king “chaça de cest païs les mescreuz et les Sarrazins dont ceste terre estoit toute pueplee, et fist tant que la loi creستienne fu espandue par cel païs” (5:123) (drove out the unbelievers and the Saracens who peopled the land, and took measures so that Christianity was spread throughout the country, 5:242).24 The romancer would have us understand the king as thirsting for the divine, much like the metaphorical stag in the Book of Psalms: “quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus. / sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem: vivum” (41.2-3) (As the stag longs for flowing springs, so my soul longs for thee, O God. / My soul thirsts for God, for the

24 On the incorruptibility of saints’ bodies, see Vauchez, La sainteté, 499-500.
living God, 42.2-3). When the jealous husband strikes off the king’s head, it lands in the spring, but not satisfied with his vengeance, the husband tries to remove the head to mutilate it further. A miracle then reinforces the spring’s connection to the divine, for the water begins to boil, and the husband “sot que Diex s’estoit correciez a lui, por ce qu’il avoit occis le prodome” (5:126) (knew that God was angry with him because he had slain the good man, 5:244).\textsuperscript{25} Such is the killer’s understanding of God’s fury; however, the enduring quality of the miracle implies that divine anger extends beyond the homicide because the boiling persists long after the murderer has died--killed when a castle wall falls on him (5:127; 5:244)--and after the grandfather’s head has been removed from the spring. Apparently, God regrets not only the loss of a virtuous man, one who loved both his wife and his Lord, but also the loss of virtue in the younger Lancelot.

The reason for the persistence of God’s anger becomes clearer thanks to the hermit and an inscription on the lead basin indicating that “cil par cui virginitez ne sera corrumpue ne malmise” (the one by whom virginity is neither corrupted or harmed) will succeed in returning the spring to its original state (5:120; 5:241).\textsuperscript{26} The words refer to the as yet unborn Galahad who will live a sinless life, yet it is important to note that unlike the premonitory dream that tells Lancelot of the adventure “qui ne puet estre menee a chief fors par toi” (5:114) (that can be achieved only by you, 5:238), the inscription indicates no such exclusivity. The virginal great grandson will extinguish the heat, but the role does not require Galahad’s moral perfection. The boiling water, after all, honors the memory of the married grandfather who was merely continent rather than virginal.

\textsuperscript{25} I have altered the syntax of Carleton W. Carroll’s translation to better match that of the Old French citation.

\textsuperscript{26} The inscription implicitly condemns Lancelot luxuriousness, yet according to Sturges, “Epistemology of the Bedchamber,” the romance’s “prophecies, interpretations, and inscriptions . . . referring backwards and forwards to past and future events, exist outside of normal narrative time and hence embody or incarnate an eternal reality” (56). As a consequence, the romance incarnates “for the reader . . . the eternally present adultery of Lancelot and Guenever” (58).
The qualities of his remains and blood, nonetheless, suggest his sanctity. Speaking to Lancelot, the hermit hints at the possibility of reform: “puis que li feux de luxure n’est en vos estainz, . . . la chalor de ceste fontainne n’estaindra” (5:130) (since the fire of lust is not extinguished in you, the heat of this spring will not diminish, 5:246). In other words, if Lancelot were to renounce his love for the queen, he could again make the spring drinkable as it was in his grandfather’s time.

The context and Lancelot’s current state of unworthiness echo the story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in the Gospel of John. When she arrives there hoping to fill her container, Jesus says to her: “omnis qui bibit ex aqua hac sitiet iterum, qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei non sitiet in aeternum” (4.13) (Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst). She would willingly drink the water offered to her, yet Christ hints that she is not ready to drink because she lives with a man who is not her husband.27 Christ may deny her water, but in his stubbornness, Lancelot turns himself away. To the hermit’s suggestion that he seek to imitate his grandfather’s example, Lancelot reacts with a shrug, saying: “[p]uis que rien ne feroie ci . . . je m’an irai” (5:131) (since I can do no more here . . . I’ll leave, 5:246). Whereas at that first spring under two sycamores, the maiden’s infatuation with Lancelot implies that virtue abides in him despite the taint of adultery, the spring at the tomb highlights the greater worthiness of others in his family, those in the past and one in the future. Emulating them holds no interest for the hero.

His adventure at “la Fontainne des .II. Sicamors” (the Spring of the Two Sycamores) builds on the themes suggested in the earlier adventure under two sycamores (5:140) (5:250). No maiden appears at the spring itself, but the adventure’s prologue reminds the reader of a young lady whom the text suggests as a more appropriate love interest for the hero.28 Sarras, the young knight who will lead

---

27 See Augustine, In Joannes Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV, 15.28 [1520].
28 Richard, Amour et passe amour, because Lancelot believes Pelles’s daughter to be Gue-
Lancelot to the spring, informs him that “uns chenuz prodom . . .
dist que cil estoit nez par qui les hautes aventures del Saint Graal
seroient menees a fin; si est issu dou millor chevalier dou monde
et de la fille au Riche Pescheor” (5:139) (an aged gentleman . . .
announced the birth of the one who would accomplish the great
adventures of the Holy Grail. He is the offspring of the world’s
best knight and the Fisher King’s daughter, 5:249-50). Despite the
clear identification of the parents, Lancelot allows himself some
doubt about his fatherhood: “se panse que tost porroit estre de lui
issuz cil anfes” (5:140) (he thought the child might very well be his
child, 5:250). Rather than ask about the mother or child, Lancelot
brusquely changes the subject, asking Sarras where he is headed.
Lancelot’s lack of curiosity about his paternity and hesitancy to
acknowledge it, even to himself, underscore the same stubbornness
that he demonstrates with the hermit at his grandfather’s tomb. The
virtues that would suit him better and serve others well escape his
interest.

The adventure features no new serpent or poison, but the
harm Lancelot does at the Spring of the Two Sycamores implies the
corruption of his prowess. Sarras loses his horse in the joust with a
knight who has unhorsed Gawain and other Round Table knights.
Unlike at the Forbidden Hill, the victor imposes no further harm on
the vanquished, denying Sarras neither life nor liberty. Nevertheless,
in avenging Sarras’s humiliation, Lancelot mortally wounds his
opponent, that knight’s brother, their father, and several other men.
The carnage complete, Lancelot learns that the brothers protected
the spring at their father’s suggestion to earn reputations that would
make them worthy of membership in the Round Table. The brothers
carnal union, in a figurative sense, provides a child
for the hero and the queen. In Richard’s words, his “infidelité, quelle que soit sa forme,
répare les effets de l’adultère et amène les signes tangibles de son pardon” (299) (infidelity,
whatever its form, repairs the effects of the adultery and brings tangible signs of his pardon).
The translation is mine.

29 Sarras is also the name of the city in the Holy Land to which the successful questers in
the next romance will accompany the Grail.
leave as they pleased. Although the adventure affords Lancelot a triumphant role, the victory rings hollow, for rather than end evil customs or slay villains, he destroys knights who aspire to be his brothers-in-arms. The prose romancer may elide Abel’s name from the spring and sycamore translated from Chrétien’s poem, but at this spring he presents Lancelot as a figure of Abel’s brother, Cain.

At the Spring of the Two Sycamores, Lancelot comes to the aid of two knights, yet his good deeds further underscore the destructive nature of his love for the queen. The narrative presents the first knight as a figure of Lancelot, identifying him only as “le chevalier de la litiere” (5:180) (the knight in the litter, 5:268). The wounded knight tells Lancelot that only the “li millors chevaliers dou monde” (the best knight in the world) can pull the arrow from his thigh (5:67; 5:217). In light of the hero’s just-accomplished massacre of innocents, his success in removing the arrow reads like ironic praise. Moreover, nothing about the wounded knight’s story suggests that Lancelot has restored a righteous man to health. The litter-bound knight explains that as he attempted to kill another knight in the forest on Easter Sunday, a pair of maidens “a une fontainne” (at a spring) fired the arrow at him, and he would have killed the young women, “si avint que mes chevax chaï en un grant fossé” (but it happened that my horse fell into a large ditch) (5:66; 5:217). Therefore, we know that the wounded knight, like Lancelot, resorts to violence with no thought of moral consequence. Mention of the fall increases the resemblance between the two knights, for the accident recalls Lancelot’s own injury earlier in the romance when he becomes distracted with thoughts of the queen, and he and his horse “caï en unes crevaches moult grans” (7:377) (fell into a gaping crevice, 3:178). There follows an extended period where the narrative identifies the wounded hero as “li chevaliers de la litiere” (7:383-412) (the knight in the litter, 3:181-97).

The second knight is Arthur’s nephew, Mordred, later revealed to be the king’s illegitimate son who will kill his father

30 The two knights meet earlier, but, ignorant of his interlocutor’s identity, the wounded knight rebuffs Lancelot’s offer of assistance.
Prophecy in the Prose *Lancelot* says nothing of Mordred coveting his stepmother, yet his and Lancelot’s adventures together hint at that future desire. As the two knights leave the Spring of the Two Sycamores, the animal from the Psalms alluded to earlier makes an appearance. A white stag, escorted by six lions, passes before them. Lancelot sees the same marvel immediately after leaving his grandfather’s tomb. At that moment, he recognizes the sacred nature of the wonder, and after the animals have disappeared into the woods, Lancelot vows that: “jamés de ceste forest ne partirai devant que je sache la verité de cest cerf, se par home ou par fame le doi savoir” (5:134) (I will never leave this forest until I learn the truth about this stag, if I can learn it from any man or woman, 5:247). This modest pledge brings no harm his way, despite what appears to be a bad omen for him in his next encounter. He seeks shelter at a nearby group of pavilions where the host insists that he joust as a precondition for hospitality. When the joust proves fatal for the host, his entourage reproaches Lancelot for killing a king.

On the second sighting of the white stag, Lancelot makes a bolder vow, hoping to discover what he can first hand: “ja Diex ne m’aïst, se vos me volez croire, se je ne vois savoir ou cil lyon repairent” (5:204) (May God never help me if I don’t go to find out where the lions are going, 5:278). His temerity brings a swift correction, though the reproval’s connection to the supernatural becomes apparent only later. No sooner have Lancelot and Mordred begun their pursuit than two knights approach them, attacking without warning. They knock Lancelot and Mordred to the ground and steal their mounts. A dwarf then leads them first to their horses, which they reacquire without a fight, and then to a hermit. He explains to Lancelot and Mordred that it is useless to pursue the stag and the lions because the adventure—“miracle mervilleux qui avint jadis par la volenté Nostre Signor” (5:211) (a miracle that was wrought in ancient times by the will of Our Lord, 5:280)—can only be completed by a knight more virtuous than they. The hermit offers no explanation of the stag’s significance, and Lancelot and Mordred make no inquiries, despite Lancelot’s earlier pledge to learn more-
“se par home ou par fame le doi savoir” (5:134) (if I can learn it from any man or woman, 5:247). Nonetheless, the thirteenth-century reader can deduce the stag’s significance, particularly given what the hermit tells Lancelot about the king he has killed.

To Lancelot’s surprise, he receives a blessing for the homicide. In the words of the holy man, the victim, Marlan the Accursed, “estoit li plus desloiaux hom et li plus fel dou monde” (was the most disloyal and wicked man in the world). Marlan assumed the throne of the Scottish Borderlands by hanging his father, the king, “qui moult estoit prodom” (who was an excellent man) (5:212; 5:281). The rank and domain reference the earlier adventure about the pious vagabond king of the Scottish Borderlands whose vita resembles that of St. Eustace. The adventure and its allusion underscore both Lancelot’s virtue, his ability to vanquish the wicked, and his vice, his unwillingness to confront his own sin. Whereas St. Eustace finds sacred truth in hunting a stag, Lancelot finds nothing but disappointment.

Because the allusion associates the stag and the divine, one can understand Lancelot’s adventure at his grandfather’s tomb more thoroughly in retrospect. According to the story that the hermit there tells him, a lion appeared at the tomb as it pursued a stag. As the lion began to eat its prey, a second lion arrived and began to fight with the first over the carcass. The two fought until each had mauled the other. After finding themselves healed by blood dripping from the tomb, they worked together to guard the site. In killing the stag, they act as enemies of the divine, until the grandfather’s blood transforms them into protectors of sanctity. In slaying the lions, Lancelot resembles the beasts themselves, imposing in his ferocity yet indiscriminate in the harm he sows, but unlike the lions, Lancelot resists transformation. As indicated earlier, although invited by the hermit to amend his luxuriousness, Lancelot turns away, literally and figuratively, from the divinely roiled spring.

The hermit’s indication that Lancelot and Mordred cannot resolve the stag adventure gives the impression that the episode has
concluded, yet the narrative thread continues as if it were a parable from the *Queste*. When the pair leave the hermit behind, they come upon “une valee ou il sourdoit une fontainne desouz un pin” (a valley with a spring flowing beneath a pine), and because of the day’s heat, “descendirent andui et burent tant com il lor plot” (they both dismounted and drank their fill) (5:213) (5:281). The two knights, who earlier took Lancelot’s and Mordred’s horses, return for battle and are defeated. Against chivalric custom, Mordred and Lancelot then leave the scene without extracting an admission of defeat from the losers or a pledge that they will go to court and surrender to the king or queen. No witnesses stand by ready to administer medical care to the wounded. They are left where they lie. In this way, the text treats the nameless knights like those in the *Queste*, not so much as flesh and blood, but as representatives of a vice or virtue in a moral lesson for knights of the Round Table.

In the first encounter, the nameless knights act as incarnations of humility lacking in Lancelot and Mordred as they chase after the white stag. Humility opposes their presumption, thwarting their pursuit of the animal. Just as the heat at the grandfather’s spring holds sinners at bay, the nameless knights protect the holy object. As the dwarf leads Lancelot and Mordred to the hermit who will tell them of their unworthiness, humility has no quarrel with them. No nearby chapel, saintly corpse, or monk suggests the holiness of the water that Lancelot and Mordred drink at the “fontainne desouz un pin” (5:213) (spring beneath a pine, 5:281). But the pine connects this adventure with those at the Forbidden Hill and at the grandfather’s tomb highlighting the sanctity of marriage “par la loi de Sainte Eglise” (5:94) (according to the law of Holy Church, 5:229). As Lancelot demonstrates at the Forbidden Hill, and in his commerce with the queen, that sanctity is not inviolable, for the divine does not prevent the sinner from sinning. The romancer would have readers understand Lancelot’s and Mordred’s drinking from “une fontainne desouz un pin” (a spring beneath a pine) as symbolic of their violation of the sanctity of marriage. Both drink from the spring, just as one thirsts and the other will thirst for King Arthur’s wife.
The romance’s last fountain keeps the reader’s attention on the motifs borrowed from hagiography and Scripture. The impetus for Lancelot’s visit to this spring comes from the realization of Guenevere’s earlier nightmare. At Camelot, the queen discovers Lancelot in bed with King Pelles’s daughter and banishes him from court. Distraught, Lancelot “em perdi le sens si outreement qu’il ne savoit qu’il faisoit” (6:177) (lost his mind so completely that he did not know what he was doing, 5:403). He wanders about the forest, “si fu em poi d’ore tainz et noirs del souleil” (6:207) (and was soon colored and blackened by the sun, 5:418). When others try to offer him assistance, he lashes out violently. After more than two years of wandering, outside King Pelles’s castle, Lancelot happens upon a fountain, “desouz un sicamor” (6:221) (under a sycamore, 5:425). No one at Corbenic recognizes the deranged man, until the stranger drinks from the fountain. Then Lancelot becomes recognizable to Pelles’s daughter, “cele par cui Lanceloz out esté chaciez de cort” (6:221) (she because of whom Lancelot had been driven from court, 5:425). Because the queen’s anger holds their liaison in abeyance, his drinking from the spring implies no assault on marriage as it does when he and Mordred drink from “une fontaine desouz un pin” (5:213) (a spring beneath a pine, 5:281).

Although the proximity of this spring to the Grail would seem to suggest the water’s holiness, Lancelot’s recovery remains incomplete, until King Pelles has him brought into the Palace of Adventures where the Grail restores the hero’s memory. Cured of his illness, Lancelot looks out a window of the palace and remembers the garden as the place where, on his first visit to Corbenic, “il avoit jadis occis le serpent” (6:224) (he had once killed the serpent, 5:426). This memory provides the key to understanding the quenching of his thirst. Although Lancelot the truculent madman may seem to bear little resemblance to an animal as gentle as a deer, authors of Antiquity saw the stag as an aggressive creature.31

31 See Pliny, *Natural History*, 8.50.117-19 [84-85]; Oppian, *Oppian, Colluthus, Tryph-
fathers drew on that notion to explain the metaphoric choice of animal in Psalm 41. Saint Augustine, for example, writes in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: “Audi quid aliud est in cervo. Serpentes necat, et post serpentium interemptionem majori siti inardescit, peremptis serpentibus ad fontes acrius currit” (Listen now to another particularity of the stag. He kills serpents, and after doing away with them he burns with more intense thirst than before, and runs to the spring even more urgently). With Augustine’s exegesis in mind, we can better understand the figurative meaning of the serpents that poison Lancelot at the spring shaded by two sycamores, for according to the bishop, serpents killed by the stag represent the iniquities against which every sinner must fight. In shedding his skin at that spring, he makes temporary progress in that struggle with the maiden’s assistance. At the spring under the sycamore at Corbenic, he again changes his outward appearance, figuratively shedding his darkened skin. As an unrepentant sinner, he can drink the water, recalling the stag and its spiritual thirst for the reader, because he behaves like an animal, having “perdu le sans et le memoire qu’il soloit avoir” (6:207) (lost his customary reason and memory, 5:418), and, in dress and appearance, resembles Eliezer and the elder Lancelot, “nuz piez et an langes o povres vestemenz” (5:125) (barefoot and in poor woolen clothing, 5:243). At the same time, we may understand the sycamore as diluting the water’s salvific power, for the hero’s adulterous love reawakens. Although the Grail affords Lancelot the grace to live chastely for six years with Pelles’s daughter, his struggle with serpents resumes in the romance’s last folio. Rather than continue the chaste life, he chooses reunion with the lady first associated with springs and sycamores, the queen.


Evidently, the Grail adventure has not yet begun, but Lancelot’s extended abstinence, like the episode at his grandfather’s tomb, points to the values animating the next romance of the cycle, the *Queste*. Although we know why the water of one spring boils and may guess why the water from another alters the appearance of the drinker, the full measure of these fountains remains bound in their allusive power. Inscriptions and proximity to the Grail do not by themselves convey the springs’ metaphorical connection to Scripture and to hagiography, where water and stags that drink from them serve as metaphors for the love of God. Nor does explicit prophecy reveal other figurative meanings of springs in the romance. They symbolize the queen herself and contrast her worth with models of uxorial virtue in the Old Testament. Indeed, the narrative’s internal allusions, and one to Ovid’s poetry, add to the evocative power of springs and pine trees, underscoring the sanctity of marriage, holiness that the hero has violated and that his liberated prisoner, Mordred, will seek to corrupt. The hero’s inner serpents defile him, turning his prowess astray and costing his would-be brothers their lives under the shade of *sicamors*—a danger foreseen in the queen’s distressing vision at the Fairies’ Fountain. With these figurative reinforcements of prophecy, the romancer would have us understand the source of Lancelot’s inspiration as becoming the center of his moral troubles. He remains the best knight in the world, but not for long.

David S. King is a newly minted Professor of French at Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey. His research interests include twelfth- and thirteenth-century French epic poetry and romance.

**Bibliography**


*From a 14th Century Manuscript of the Lancelot-Grail*

*Bibliothèque Nationale Française*
The Sparrow Hawk Castle - A Mostly Ignored Literary Motif
Across the Cultures and the Centuries

Albrecht Classen
University of Arizona

Johann Schiltberger included a curious episode about the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ in his famous travelogue Reisebericht from 1427. This episode can be traced back to John Mandeville’s Travels in the German translation by Michel Velser. This study examines the similarities between Mandeville’s text and Schiltberger’s account, but then also the use of this motif in the tradition of the Melusine novel (Jean d’Arras and Thüring von Ringoltingen). Further attempts are made to identify sources for this episode Mandeville might have drawn from, including an Armenian chronicle and even the love treatise De amore by Andreas Capellanus.

I. The History of Sleep from a Cultural-Anthropological Perspective

People (and animals) need to get enough sleep to operate effectively on a daily basis, both today and in the past. This represents a fundamental biological factor that transcends all cultures, historical periods, religions, and personal experiences.1 Sometimes, however, people do not go to sleep despite being exhausted in times of extreme stress, war, danger, or because of religious demands. Monks, throughout time, have regularly committed voluntarily to long periods of sleep deprivation, while prison systems have used the same strategy as a form of torture. Cultural anthropologists have also distinguished specifically between societies without and those with artificial light, and observed that the latter group experienced normally much better sleep without disruptions in the middle of the night.2 Sleep matters significantly in ancient Greek and Roman mythology, it is discussed in many literary works throughout history, and it is the theme of many art works. Medieval literature, however, is normally ignored in this context.3


2 I could not find a better study than the article on Wikipedia in which much of the relevant research is so well summarized: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep (last accessed on Feb. 9, 2020).

3 For a few exceptions, see Wittmer-Butsch, Zur Bedeutung von Schlaf.
But we can also identify a situation, at least imagined by some medieval poets, in which a young man was challenged to meet the demand of not falling asleep for three days and three nights while spending time in a magical castle. If he then met that challenge, he could ask anything from a fairy, as long as it was honorable. This motif was closely connected with a bird of prey, a sparrow hawk, which the contestant has to guard. Research has until now hardly paid any attention to this bird as an iconic creature, although it played a significant role in courtly culture. In Hartmann von Aue’s *Erec* (ca. 1180), for instance, the young protagonist comes across a contest involving a sparrow hawk, which the winner of the tournament is allowed to claim and to hand it over to his beloved lady who is thereby designated as the most beautiful woman at court. As far as I can tell, however, the specific motif with the sparrow hawk to be won by way of staying awake three or even seven days and nights emerges not until the fourteenth century in John Mandeville’s *Travels*.

II. Hans Schiltberger and the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’

One of those poets or writers who engaged with that motif was the long-term slave and soldier Johann/Hans Schiltberger (1380-ca. 1440), who was forced to serve in the armies of many different lords in the Ottoman Empire, later under Tamerlane, and his successors, and this from 1396, when he was captured after the battle of Nicopolis, until 1427, when he finally managed to escape, together with four other companions. They made their way to the coast of the Black Sea, and were finally taken by sympathetic sailors and their captain, to Constantinople, from where Schiltberger could make his

---

4 There is no separate entry on the sparrow hawk in the famous *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* or in the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. The sparrow hawk is mentioned a few times, but without the literary motif as we find it in our context. Apart from many modern translations and editions, there are only a few critical studies that mostly try to situate Schiltberger’s text within the framework of late medieval travel literature; see, for instance, Kehren, “Temoignages d’europeens,” 325-39; Hellmuth, “Hans Schiltbergers,” 129-44; Weithmann, “Ein Baier,” 2-15.

5 *Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, 56. For a critical edition, see *Ereck: textgeschichtliche Ausgabe mit*. 
way back home to Munich, Bavaria. Subsequently, he composed a highly popular travelogue or rather a history of the Ottoman Empire and other countries in the Middle East punctuated by his personal observations.6

The narrative framework of this specific episode of the sparrow-hawk mountain/castle seems to be entirely fictional, but Schiltberger relates this account because he and some of his fellows also reached that infamous location near the Black Sea, where one of them felt inspired to take on the challenge himself, because this would give him the chance to ask for anything he might like, as long as it would be honorable. The challenge hence proved to be highly risky, as in any fairy-tale or adventure story, for example. Correspondingly, the narrator explains that “if anybody asks for something that exhibits pride, impudence, or avarice, she [the fairy lady of the castle] curses him and his offspring, so that he can no longer attain an honourable position.”7

To specify the situation and to illustrate the direct consequences of a good or a bad decision on the part of the individual who submitted under that test and passed it successfully, Schiltberger relates first of a young and poor man who then asked for nothing but “that he and his family might live with honour” (42). In the second instance, an Armenian prince also managed to stay awake for three

6 Schiltberger, Als Sklave im Osmanischen Reich. See the sixteenth-century print: Ein wunderbarliche/ vnd kürzweylige || Histori/ wie Schildtberger/ einer auß der Stat Mün-chen || in Bayern/ von den Türcken gefangen/ in die Heyden=||schafft gefüret/vnnd wider heymkommen.|| Item/ was sich für krieg/ vnd wunderbarlicher thaten/|| dievel/ er inn der Heydenschaft gewesen/ zugre=||tragen ... (Nuremberg: Johann Vom Berg and Ulrich Neuber, 1548). For the original text, as contained in the Heidelberg manuscript (UB, Cpg 216), I draw from the edition by Neumann, Reisen des Johannes. For an English translation, see Schiltberger, The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger. See also the modern German translation, Johann Schiltbergers Irrfahrt durch den Orient, ed. and trans. Markus Tremmel. Tremmel relies on the edition by Valentin Langmantel, Hans Schiltberg-ers Reisebuch, Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 172 (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1885), which is based on the Munich (formerly Nuremberg) manuscript (Staatsbibliothek, Cod. I, 1603); he intervenes fairly little into the text. Cf. Schiewer, “Leben unter Heiden,” 159-78; and id., “Schiltberger, Hans,” 675-79.

7 The Bondage and Travels (Schiltberger 1879), 41. The purpose of this paper is not to analyze the actual text in its philological minutiae; hence suffices it here to draw from the English translation. I have always compared that with the original Early New High German.
days and three nights, but since he was already wealthy enough, yet
did not have a wife, he wanted the fairy to marry him, to which she
responded: “Thy proud spirit that though hast, must be broken in thee
and in all thy power’; and she cursed him and all his kindred” (42). In
the third instance, a knight of the Order of the Hospitallers likewise
managed to stay awake for the entire period, and thereupon he asked
for “a purse that would never be empty” (42), clearly a reference to
the same motif later included in the prose novel Fortunatus (first
printed in 1509). Even though the fairy grants him that wish, she
then condemns him and his entire Order for their evil greed: “thy
order may diminish and not increase” (42).

Despite the danger which an individual might run into as a
consequence of the test, which could easily expose his lack of
ethics and morality, and this with devastating consequences for the
entire family or the person’s social group, in Schiltberger’s narrative
one the fellows wants to try his luck, after all. However, the entire
company holds him back, warning him of the severe danger if he
were to fall asleep before the set time frame would be over. In the
case of failure, the miserable man would be a prisoner for life in that
castle. Moreover, they are all told that the Greek priests in control
of that mysterious castle are forbidding anyone from taking on that
challenge. Consequently, this fanciful account remains what it is,
especially since no one among the company examines that castle
personally. Instead, as the narrator remarks, they simply “went on to
a city called Kereson” (43).

This Reisebuch quickly gained popularity, as the ten
surviving manuscripts indicate, along with numerous printed
editions from 1460 (Augsburg) onwards, together with a total of
ten new printed editions in the sixteenth century. After all, the

zeit, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), 383-585; for background, the
critical examination of the relevant research literature, and interpretations, see Albrecht
Classen, The German Volkbuch.

9 The only accurate and latest update about these manuscripts can be found online at http://
www.handschriftenkatalog.de/werke/3859 (last accessed on Feb. 9, 2020).

10 For the sixteenth-century prints, see the VD16; for the one seventeenth-century print
(1605), see the VD17, both online.
imminent danger by the Turks on the southeastern flank of Europe, particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, made this rather detailed travelogue highly valuable in political and military terms.\textsuperscript{11} Moreover, Schiltberger’s travelogue continued to appeal to the various audiences even during the following decades, as documented by the new prints that appeared in 1605, 1650, 1659, and 1678.\textsuperscript{12} Considering the numerous modern editions and translations of this text since the late nineteenth century, we can be certain that this author’s personal experiences combined with many historical reflections intrigued countless readers both in the West and in the East, probably because here we encounter a truly global ‘traveler’ who moved around much as a slave and soldier, traversing many Middle Eastern areas where normally no European ever set foot in, and this at a time when most people had very little understanding or knowledge of the more exotic world to the east and the south of their own traditional boundaries.\textsuperscript{13}

This unique perspective toward the hitherto mostly unknown Middle East can easily explain the extensive reception history of this Reisebuch, although Schiltberger offered considerably less exciting reading material than Marco Polo, and even less than John Mandeville, from whom he probably copied major segments. This also includes this curious ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ episode, the object of our investigation, one of a few others with which he obviously tried to spice up his narrative. There are, however, throughout the Reisebuch, no references to exotic creatures, apart from slight comments about people in the far north who were allegedly completely hirsute, except in their face and on their hands. At one point, Schiltberger also mentions an extraordinarily old man, a true Methuselah, who had reached the age of three hundred and fifty years (p. 45). Otherwise, Schiltberger stays clear of fantasizing,

\textsuperscript{11} Höfert, \textit{Den Feind beschreiben}.

\textsuperscript{12} For this information, I have consulted the catalog Worldcat, which actually goes beyond what the VD17 offers (both online).

\textsuperscript{13} For further explorations of this topic, see the contributions to \textit{East Meets West}, ed. Albrecht Classen.
in remarkable contrast to many of his sources, such as Mandeville’s *Travels* (ca. 1357-1371), and he pursued a rather serious effort to relate as objectively as was possible for him the history of the wars and political events in the Ottoman empire and in neighboring countries to the east and the south. Hence, the account of the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ represents an intriguing test case as to Schiltberger’s use of some of his sources (maybe beyond Mandeville) and the wide dissemination of this unique motif in the late Middle Ages. But why would he have included this episode, when he otherwise refrains from offering fanciful reports? Although he traveled to many different truly distant countries, maybe even up to modern-day Kazakhstan (see the common reference to the land of Tartary), there are hardly any comments on any monsters, for instance, or on any hybrid creatures, as was the case in the much earlier *Descriptio Cambriae* (1194) by Gerald of Wales, here disregarding Schiltberger’s almost meaningless reference to a giant in Egypt (64). Instead, our author is mostly interested in the various wars, the armies, the political developments, and then in the individual religions practiced in the Middle East, especially the Greek-Orthodox faith and Islam. He pays great attention to the different cultures that he encountered during his more than thirty years in those distant countries, and he openly admits what he knows from his own experience and what he can relate about only through second-hand reports, such as the holy sites in Jerusalem (57-58) or the St. Catherine monastery on the Sinai (54-56).

In other words, the inclusion of the episode with the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ strikes us as rather unusual, and some previous scholars have utilized this as an occasion to search for the actual site of that mountain with its castle perched on the top. J. Buchan Telfer went so far as to try to identify it even in specific geographic terms, comparing it to “Virgin’s towers” that are “by no means uncommon in the East.” He claims, for instance: “The author says, that on quitting the neighbourhood of the mysterious castle, he proceeded to Kerasoun; it is, therefore, just possible that the legend of the sparrow-
hawk was attached to an ancient Kiz-Kalesi seen by Ainsworth . . near Tash Kupri, close to the road that leads from Kastamuni to Boiabad, both to the south-west of Sinope.14 The absurdity of such an attempt does not need to be elaborated here, whereas we face the important task of tracing the origin of this motif and its relevance for contemporary writers. Maybe understandably, modern research has followed Telfan’s model, treating this Reisebuch as a more or less accurate outline of the world of the Middle East because the author claims that he and his companions sought out that castle with the help of a guide but then simply continued on their way.15

For Schiltberger, however, this Sparrow Hawk Mountain did not seem to have mattered much, although he included the episode in his text, probably for entertainment purposes. Instead, as soon as he and his companions have left that site behind them, he is only concerned with the travel route which they subsequently took, discussing the various countries and cities, populating for the reader a mental map: “I have also been in Lesser Armenia; the capital is Ersinggan. There is also a city called Kayburt, and it has a fertile country” (43). In other words, we are simply to assume that this fanciful mountain and castle would have to be located somewhere in realistic terms, although travelers would have a hard time finding it without the help of a local guide because it is “hidden by trees, so that nobody knows the way to it” (43).

III. John Mandeville’s Travels and the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’

Previous researchers have already recognized that Schiltberger here drew from an unspecified German translation of John Mandeville’s Travels, where we already learn about this Sparrow Hawk Mountain with its fairy-tale set-up.16 In this case, Mandeville proves to be rather detail-oriented, as imaginary as the entire travelogue otherwise may

14 J. Buchan Telfer, trans. (see note 6), 149. This is a perfect example of what a positivistic approach can or cannot achieve in literary analysis.
15 Helmuth”Hans Schiltbergers Besuch” (see note 4), 140-42.
16 Ridder, Jean de Mandevilles, 28-59. The passage with the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ can be found in ch. XVI, 289-93. See also Henss, Fremde Räume.
be. He remarks that the test really lasted seven days and seven nights, though he also admits that the period possibly consisted only of three days and nights, “as some men say” (112). In other words, Mandeville himself drew from older sources, which are, however, very hard to detect. In addition, the challenge in this episode was not simply to stay awake, but to make sure the whole time that the sparrow would not fall asleep, whereas Schiltberger does not specify this particularly clearly (41).

In The Travels, the first candidate to try his luck in this test was the King of Armenia, and he also requested the fairy as his wife. She rejected this outright and full of anger, emphasizing that this would be impossible at any rate “because I am not an earthly but a spiritual creature” (112). The king was insistent, however, thus committing an egregious folly, as she underscored, and hence she imposed upon him as a penalty that he and all of his progeny would “have war and no lasting peace unto the ninth generation, and shall always be in subjection to your enemies and lack all kinds of goods” (113).

The second candidate mentioned was a poor man who after having succeeding in the task only asked for wealth, which the fairy also granted him without any negative consequences (113), especially because he was, as the narrator comments explicitly, wiser than his predecessor (113). The third man who also passed the test was member of the Order of the Hospitallers, and he requested an inexhaustible money purse, which she gave him immediately, and yet then she predicted “that he was asking for the undoing and the destruction of his Order, because of the great pride in his riches and the great trust he put in his purse” (113).

Mandeville subsequently closes the account of the Sparrow Hawk Mountain, advising his audience that anyone who takes on the charge of watching over this sparrow hawk never ought to fall asleep, otherwise he would stay in that castle as a prisoner for the rest of his life (113). Nevertheless, the author also emphasizes that even though that castle is located off the beaten path, it would be worth a

visit, especially for those “who want[ ] to see wonders” (113). Then, the narrator comments no further on this curious episode, the source of which remains a mystery, unless he invented it himself. Moseley only refers to the fact that “Haiton of Armenia recounts the foundation of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond by Alexius Comnenus in 1204, after the Crusaders had occupied Constantinople.”18 This Haiton, also known as Hayton of Corycus (ca. 1240-ca. 1310/1320), was an Armenian prince whose brother forced him into exile because he had attempted a coup d’état against him. While he spent time in Poitiers, France, he composed the *La Flor des estoires de la terre d’Orient* (Flower of the Histories of the East), in Latin disseminated as *Flos historiarum terre Orientis*, which he had dictated upon Pope Clement V’s request in 1307. It contains the history of Asia, especially as it pertained to the Muslim and then the Mongol conquests, and it deeply influenced late medieval minds regarding that world. This *Flor des estoires* has survived in eighteen manuscripts, while the Latin translation in thirty-two manuscripts.19 There does not seem, however, a reference to the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain,’ which might have been, after all, nothing but John Mandeville’s result of pure imagination, although, as we will see later, the sparrow hawk appears many times as an iconic bird in a variety of high medieval literary narratives. After all, Haython, Heiton, or Hethum was a chronicler and focused entirely

18 Moseley, trans. (see note 17), 199.

on the history of his country, as far as he could tell. There are no fanciful reports, no comments on monsters, or magical or mystical beings, at least in Jean de Long’s translation from 1351 (*Traitez des estas et des conditions de quatorze royaumes de Aise*).

In her effort to detect an additional or possible source, Christiane Deluz refers to an ancient Armenian legend related by Wilbrand of Oldenburg (before 1180-1230), bishop of Paderborn and Utrecht, who had returned from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and traversed Armenia on his way home in 1211. He had heard of a legendary mountain in the vicinity of the castle of Thila called the ‘mountain of adventures,’ but those who wanted to take on the challenge there would have to spend seven weeks up there, whereupon they would gain good luck and happiness. In essence, however, all these efforts to track down Mandeville’s source for the ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ episode remain, until today, mostly speculation.

IV. Schiltberger and Mandeville

Schiltberger might have drawn specifically from the German translation of John Mandeville’s *Travels* created by the Tyrolean aristocrat and court administrator Michel Velser, sometime between 1393 and 1399. It has survived in forty-four manuscripts, while the translation by Otto von Diemeringen (d. in 1398) is extant in forty-five manuscripts. In Velser’s version, the time period during which the candidate has to stay awake and take care of the sparrow hawk is also limited to three days and nights. Velser lists first the attempt by a king, without specifying what country he ruled over, and then he follows his source, Mandeville’s *Travels*, closely insofar as the king also wants nothing but the fairy as his wife, for which she condemns him because she is not a human being and cannot grant him that wish, cursing him and his next generations down to


21 Sir John Mandevilles Reisebeschreibung, 95-96.

22 http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/1911 (last accessed on Feb. 9, 2020).

the ninth degree. Only then does the narrator reveal that this had been the King of Armenia (96). The second candidate is the poor man who gains his happiness because he only requests riches (96). The third is, as in Mandeville’s narrative, a knight of the Order of the Hospitallers, and he is told the same ominous prophecy by the fairy: “Und also ist es geschenhen” (96; sic; and thus it happened). His final comments closely match what he had found in his source: that castle is not close to the main road to Armenia, but not too far away either (96).

More recent Mandeville scholars have not yet figured out exactly where this famous author might have drawn his inspiration for this episode from. Josephine Waters Bennett, for instance, only concludes with this observation: “Whether Mandeville invented it, or not, apparently he was responsible for the attachment of this story to the legend of the house of Lusignan. The king of Armenia, when the Travels was being written, was a member of the house of Lusignan (1342-75), as Mandeville undoubtedly knew.”24 Malcolm Letts observed that “Other versions mention the king, but the poor man and the templar seem to be Mandeville’s own embellishments.”25 Liria Montañés avers, differentiating further, “La historia del ‘castiello del caballero del Temple puede estar inspirado por la caída de la Orden en 1309, que tanto impresionó a toda Europa.”26 Despite many attempts to specify the sources from which Mandeville culled his information, there are huge gaps, but for our purposes, we do not need to press much further in this regard.27 I will, however, at the end make a new suggestion as to a possible twelfth-century source.

V. The Melusine Tradition

A more promising trail takes us into a very different genre, the novel dealing with Melusine and her two sisters, all three of them hybrid

26 Libro de las maravillas del mundo, 143.
creatures and all of them waiting for their redemption so that they can leave the world of fairies and join humankind once again.\textsuperscript{28} They were cursed by their mother, Presine, after they had punished their father, King Helmas, who had broken a taboo imposed upon him by his wife, never to sleep with her during her time in childbed. Now, operating only as fairies, they themselves impose taboos on men that are then broken by their husbands, lovers, and wooers. The first German version of that text, however, was not written until 1456. Thüring von Ringoltingen drew from two French sources, Jean d’Arras’s prose version from 1393, and Couldrette’s verse version from ca. 1400, so he created his translation of the French text long after Schiltberger had published his \textit{Reisebuch}.

Schiltberger was apparently a highly skilled linguist, after having spent more than thirty years in the Turkish empire and in many countries of the Middle East. After having returned home to Bavaria in 1427, he might have easily been able to pick up French, reading about the Sparrow-Hawk Mountain motif in the original text by this famous armchair traveler, but it is much more likely that he drew directly from Michael Velser’s German translation of Mandeville’s \textit{Travels}.

Since we cannot easily unravel or even fully comprehend this intricate web of textual dependencies, let us pursue further the question how Jean d’Arras and then Thüring von Ringoltingen developed that motif within their own literary frameworks. Their \textit{Melusine} novels treat the interaction between the young nobleman Raymondin (Jean d’Arras)/Reymund (Thüring) and the fairy Melusine, if ‘fairy’ is the right term for her.\textsuperscript{29} Let us first follow the version as developed by Thüring. After all, she operates very much like an ordinary woman, as a mother, and as a very successful wife, but on Saturdays she disappears behind closed doors, and her husband is not allowed to follow her or to investigate what she might be doing there. This is the condition for their marriage, a taboo of great significance, which Reymund easily accepts without

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Juan de Mandevilla, \textit{Libro de las maravillas del}, XXXIV-XXXV.
\item Goodrich, “Fairy, Elves and the Enchanted,” 431-64.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
any concern. In fact, his married life with Melusine proceeds very happily; with the help of her enigmatic resources, she can build a number of spectacular castles; she delivers many sons, but all of them are marked in their faces with a monstrous feature which reveals their mother’s hidden nature as a hybrid creature. Those young men quickly prove to be outstanding knights and achieve heroic deeds, thus establishing their own dynasties in distant lands.

One day, however, instigated by his own brother, Reymund develops a sense of jealousy of his wife whom he suspects of committing adultery. He drills a hole in the door behind which she had disappeared, and then he realizes to his great surprise, maybe horror, but also with amazement, that Melusine is resting in a bathtub, having transformed into a half-snake and half-woman. He quickly leaves and hides in the bedroom, deeply afraid of her having found out that he had transgressed his own promise; yet when his wife finally arrives late in the evening, she pretends as if nothing had happened which allows the marriage to continue as before. Later, however, catastrophe strikes. One of their sons, Geffroy, gets extremely angry about the fact that one of his brothers has joined a monastery, and as a punishment he sets fire to the convent and burns it down, killing all the monks and the abbot, including his own brother. When Reymund learns the terrible news, he collapses, and to find some kind of relief from his emotional pain, he publicly accuses his wife of having been responsible for this horrible development because all their children are somewhat monstrous. Thus, with the husband having revealed at court her true nature, that is, having broken the taboo, she is forced to leave her family and humankind for good and thus has to wait until the Day of Judgment for her redemption.30

The ‘Sparrow Hawk Mountain’ episode occurs much later, when the poet relates the history of Melusine’s sons, and the differences to Mandeville’s tale are in fact rather minimal. Considering the latter’s enormous popularity throughout the late Middle Ages and well beyond, it does not come as a surprise that

30 Classen, “The Melusine Figure,” 74-94.
his *Travels* exerted a direct influence on Jean d’Arras and then Johann Schiltberger. Mandeville’s alleged travelogue appeared in manuscript form sometime between 1357 and 1371, so about twenty to forty years before Jean d’Arras created his *Mélusine* in 1393. Altogether, there are ca. two hundred manuscripts containing *The Travels*, many in different European languages, including German (see above). In other words, Mandeville exerted a tremendous influence on his contemporary and subsequent audiences, so we can safely conclude that Jean d’Arras used *The Travels* as one of his many sources.

One of the reasons for drawing on Mandeville’s narrative is, as the author emphasizes, that the kings of Armenia are descended from the House of Lusignan, hence from this mysterious woman Melusine, and since many stories about the members of that dynasty circulate at the courts, Jean wants to wrap up his account with the legendary report about the events at the ‘Sparrow-Hawk Mountain’ (223). Here, the time-span during which the protagonist has to stay away and watch over the sparrow hawk consists of three days and nights; as a reward, he could then ask for anything he might desire, “with the exception of carnal sin or touching her body” (223). The narrator is very specific about when the entrance to the castle would be granted during the Christian calendar year and about how the king prepares himself. Moreover, the account is richly embellished with many new details, dramatizing the entire event quite elegantly by way of drawing on late medieval courtly culture, so as to the perch for the sparrow-hawk: “at one end was a perch made of a unicorn’s horn; it had a piece of velvet over it, the sparrow hawk on it, and a glove beside it” (224). The old man who guides the king to the room with the sparrow hawk even instructs him explicitly what he can and cannot wish after having succeeded in passing the test: “but do not ask for her body, for that you cannot have” (224).

32 Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville*; Higgins, *Writing East*; see also Quesada, “Reale und imaginäre Welten, 55-76.
33 For Jean d’Arras, see *Mélusine*, 223-26. Maddox and Sturm-Maddox refer to a Middle English version of the same account, as related by Louis Stouff, n. 1. That text is contained in British Museum MS Cotton Titus c.xvi.
Keeping himself entertained, the king looks around and thus learns about the history of King Elinas of Scotland (King Helmas, in Thüring’s text), his wife Presine, and their three daughters (224), which closes the circle and connects this episode with the central part of the novel. Moreover, the fairy realizes that he is a descendent of King Guyon, one of Melusine’s sons, and since she herself is Melusine’s sister (Melior), a relationship with the King of Armenia would constitute incest (225).

Consequently, she curses him and his future generations, and then sends him away, but he tries to take her by force, which he fails to do as well because she simply vanishes. Subsequently, he is badly beaten by invisible hands, hauled out of the fortress, and dumped beyond the ramparts. So, he survives, and is also not kept a prisoner for life, but misfortune later strikes the entire family, first with his brother who takes over the kingship after his death, and the subsequent heirs who “met with great adversity and suffered many tribulations and afflictions, as was and still is apparent” (226).

The narrator then breaks off and only comments further on the genealogical connections between the king of Cyprus and the king of Armenia, who can be traced back to the dynasty of the Lusignan in Poitou” (227). In short, in contrast to Mandeville’s account, Jean limits his anecdote to just one test case, whereupon the fairy disappears, and there are no further words about the ‘Sparrow-Hawk Mountain’.

Although Thüring relied mostly on Jean d’Arras’s version of Melusine, he provides a different background and framework insofar as we are informed immediately that the king of Armenia was Geffroy’s brother and that the mysterious castle is populated by this ghost-like figure, the fairy, whom the narrator calls a “gespenst” (157; ghost), and then specifies as originating from “Awelon” (157), the world of medieval utopia. Already Marie de France has a fairy figure in her lai “Lanval” (ca. 1190) come from there and disappear in that mysterious country once again along with her lover, Lanval who is deeply disappointed about the injustice and cruelty of King Arthur and his court.  

In clear contrast, in Thüring’s version, the candidate who wants to accept the challenge of staying awake for three days and three nights, guarding the sparrow-hawk, would have to be of a high-ranking noble family, connected with the dynasty of the Lusignan (157). The successful contender could also request any wish to be fulfilled, except for winning the ghost or fairy as his wife. The rest of the story proceeds pretty much along the same lines as in Jean d’Arras’s version, with the King of Armenia trying his good luck because he wants to have this mysterious woman as his wife. In opposition to Thüring’s French source, however, the old man warns the king that he would have to stay in this castle not only for the rest of his life but until the Day of Judgment (158), that is, like the three fairy sisters. However, despite the guardian’s warning not to ask for the lady’s hand, the young man secretly plans on doing just that, which the narrator emphasizes strongly, indicating thereby how much the king operates rather deceptively. The king also enters a special chamber that serves as a portrait gallery depicting all those knights who had tried their luck as well but had failed because they had fallen asleep. In Jean’s text, they were then forced to stay in that castle until the end of their lives, while in Thüring’s version, they have to stay there until the Day of Judgment (159). There is also another difference. The king comes across three portraits of knights who in the past had managed to stay awake for the whole time, and who then had asked appropriately for something valuable in their lives, without, however, transgressing the rules: “sein gob redlich gewunnen hett” (159; had won his gift honorably). Jean told more or less the same story, but in his case, there are no portraits to be seen, only coats of arms (225).

At any rate, this particular feature served both authors exceedingly well to authenticate their accounts and to assure their audiences that this adventure of the ‘Sparrow-Hawk Mountain’ could be realized successfully if the candidate observes the rules and does not ask for something dishonorable. However, the entire narrative of *Melusine*, in whatever language version, was always predicated on this critical concept of transgressing the taboo or the rules, and it appears as if every generation, from the three women’s
father Helmas down to the grandchildren, here the king of Armenia, follows the same path and fails to uphold the regulations and laws, and each time this transgression is sexually determined.

In Thüring’s version, Meliora specifies the genealogical connections even further as she identifies this Armenian king as the son of Gyot, who was one of Melusine’s sons. In fact, she relates the entire story of her own father, Helmas, his transgression of the taboo imposed by Presine, the transgression committed by Reymund, and then she recognizes the inheritance trait in Gyot as well who could have gained great riches and happiness, but lost it all for himself and his heirs: “wer dir dise abentewr zuo einem gelück geraten, die muß dir nun ein großer fluch sein” (162; this adventure could have resulted in your good fortune, but now it imposes a great curse on you). The narrator goes even one step further and associates Gyot’s lustfulness and lack of self-control with the famous story of Susanna and the two old judges in the Book of Daniel (here 162; Book of Daniel 13), contained only in the Vulgate, but not in Luther’s Old Testament.35

The narrator adds further details to this scene, compared to Mandeville and Jean d’Arras, insofar as Gyot suddenly tries to rape the fairy, although he had been severely warned about this both by the old guide and by Meliur herself. However, the fairy quickly disappears, and the narrator comments that the king should have understood in the first place about her ghostly character, just as in the case of her sister and also her own mother, Presine, all of whom were “merwunder / vnd von dem gespenst zuo Awelon bekommen. vnd mit vil wunders begobet werden” (162; mermaids who descended from the fairy/ghost of Avalon and who commanded many miraculous powers).

In the case of Jean d’Arras’s version, the king of Armenia is then badly beaten by many invisible hands, whereas Thüring changes this to one ghost that carries out the punishment, as is also demonstrated in the accompanying woodcut (163). Gyot

35 Casey, The Susanna. This theme was enormously popular in sixteenth-century Reformation drama, although this chapter was excised from Luther’s bible. The actual problem in Daniel 13, with the two old judges trying to blackmail Susanna into having sex with them, is not adequately reflected on by Jan-Dirk Müller in his commentary to Melusine, 1083.
feels his death approaching, begs and appeals to the ghost to let him live, whereupon he is mercilessly thrown out of the castle. Thüring elaborates all this much further than Jean, explaining, for instance, how the king reaches his camp again, how his servants help him, return to the coast and travel back to Armenia (164). Most interestingly, the narrator subsequently offers comments about his French source, Jean d’Arras, who had learned about all those events and the subsequent development in the kingdom of Armenia from an Armenian chronicler in Paris, who had been expelled from his own country, by his brother, although both held the rank of king. This chronicler was, as we have learned already above, Hayton of Corycus, but Thüring does not seem to know that name. And he can also not explain the background of this mysterious episode of the Sparrow-Hawk Mountain, although he specifically remarks only on the curious funeral customs observed by the servants of the deceased Armenian king, with everyone dressed in white, which was completely contrary to the French traditions (165). We can, however, accept his final comment as valid for the entire episode: “warumb aber das geschehe wuste der tiechter diß puoches nit” (165; why that happened the poet of that book did not know). In other words, Thüring frankly admits he relied exclusively on his French source and did not do any other research into the Melusine-story. In other words, he obviously did not draw from Mandeville’s Travels.

VI. Conclusion

To conclude, even though we have no firm idea where Mandeville might have learned about this motif of the ‘Sparrow-Hawk Mountain’, he was the first European writer, as far as I can tell, to introduce it into the western narrative tradition. Drawing extensively from Mandeville’s Travels, Jean d’Arras and then Johann Schiltenberger closely followed his model, each on his own. Subsequently, Thüring von Ringoltingen relied on the French prose version by Jean to create his own Melusine in Early Modern German. Considering the extensive popularity of Mandeville’s account and then also of La

36 Jan-Dirk Müller, in his commentary, is also ignorant about this famous chronicle, 1083; he only refers to the reference by Roach, ed., Le Roman de Mélusine, 60.
Flor des estoires de la terre d’Orient, it makes good sense that the history of the kingdom of Armenia exerted such an interest among European readers throughout the last Middle Ages and beyond.

VII. Coda

This does not yet answer where Mandeville truly learned about this episode with the sparrow-hawk. I do not have a final solution either, but I would like to make at least an informed suggestion. The episode as told by this English author consists of several key motifs, a. the sparrow-hawk, b. the challenge to stay awake for three or seven days and nights, c. the promise that any request would be fulfilled as long as it was honorable, and d. the great danger for the contestant. The Armenian chronicler Hayton of Corycus would not have had any reason to offer such fabulous material about a mysterious sparrow hawk and a fairy watching over that castle.

But another writer already had invented a similar motif involving such a bird of prey. There might not be any possibility at least at this point to produce clear evidence that Mandeville could have learned about that earlier source, but it would be worth introducing it for the purpose of outlining the parallels.

Sometime around 1180 or 1190, the Parisian cleric Andreas Capellanus composed his famous treatise, De amore, in which he drew considerably from Ovid’s books on love, the Ars amatoria from ca. 2 C.E. It was fairly popular, considering the surviving twenty-three manuscripts containing the complete work, eight manuscripts containing selections, and several other manuscripts embedding sections of Andreas’s work into their own texts.37 While the first two books engage with the strategies, rules, and warnings about men’s efforts to win a woman’s love, the third book entirely turns against the whole notion of courtly love, especially outside of the bounds of marriage.38

Scholars have long grappled with the question how to come to terms with this deliberate dialectics, but for our purposes here it will suffice to consider a brief narrative at the end of book two.

37 For a summary of the text tradition, see Andreas aulae regiae capellanus, De amore, 593-95. Here I will draw, for convenience’s sake, from Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love.

38 Allen, The Art of Love; Monson, Andreas Capellanus.
where the author suddenly resorts to the traditional genre of the
Arthurian romance and describes how a young knight from Britain
is approached by a mysterious lady (fairy?) whom he encounters
in the middle of the forest and is instructed by her how to win the
fabled sparrow hawk from King Arthur at his court. This sparrow
hawk ("accipiter") "is on a golden perch in Arthur’s court" (177),
and once he would have won that bird of prey, he would have proven
to everyone that his lady love is the most beautiful maiden of them
all (178). He receives the fairy’s horse and soon encounters several
dangerous adventures, but he remains victorious and can thus reach
the inner part of Arthur’s palace where the sparrow hawk is resting
on its perch. After having defeated another knight, the Briton gets
hold of the sparrow hawk and also a parchment on which the rules
of love are recorded. He takes that manuscript with him as well and
hands it over to his beloved lady. Andreas then lists the thirty-one
rules, which completely favor the ideals of courtly love outside of
marriage, which the Briton’s lady then has copied and disseminated
in the world (186).

The outcome of this little Arthurian tale is happy and
glorious, both for the knight and his lady, and thus also for love
itself. However, the third book then contradicts everything, but this
does not have any bearing on the tale itself, a most delightful literary
glorification of courtly love by itself. All the essential elements
outlined here demonstrate a strong resemblance with the ‘Sparrow
Hawk Mountain,’ except that Mandeville and all of his successors/
imitators conclude that the knight’s attempt to win the fairy as
his wife miserably failed. Otherwise, everything is the same: the
mysterious castle difficult to reach, the sparrow hawk, the precious
perch, the fairy figure (in Andreas’s text she lives in the forest), and
the great challenge.

The young protagonist in De amore accomplishes his task
successfully and thus helps courtly love to thrive in this world. In
the late medieval adaptations of this episode, the opposite is the
case since the protagonists only try to force the fairy to become
their wives, which is impossible and brings about their own demise.
Could it hence be that Mandeville drew inspiration from Andreas
Capellanus’s *De amore*? Final evidence is lacking, of course, but the similarities prove to be striking and deserve to be pursued further when investigating Mandeville’s wide range of sources. Considering the enormous intellectual appeal of this intricate treatise on courtly love with all of its paradoxical element, and thus the deep influence which Andreas exerted on subsequent theorists dealing with the same topic, it would make good sense to recognize a direct line of reception taking us first to John Mandeville, then to Jean d’Arras, finally to Johann Schiltenberger and Thüring von Ringoltingen. Alfred Karnein has already identified a highly complex network of textual disseminations of Andreas’s text in the Latin, French, and German tradition, but he has not noted the literary narratives assembled here, especially because they are interconnected primarily via this special motif and do not share anything beyond that one aspect with *De amore*.

Schiltberger might have learned about the mysterious sparrow hawk mountain while traveling through Armenia, but when he composed his treatise, he certainly was deeply influenced by Mandeville (Velser) and saw himself coerced to adapt to it in order to have such a huge authority support his own claim. After thirty years of enslavement, he was certainly not the kind of person to insist on his own observations and personal accomplishments.

---

*Dr. Albrecht Classen is University Distinguished Professor of German Studies at the University of Arizona where he has taught and researched German and European medieval and early modern literature and culture for more than thirty years. He has published currently 105 scholarly books and well over 700 articles. He is the editor of the journals *Mediaevistik, Humanities Open Access, and Global Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*. He explores the wide range of medieval and early modern culture and is constantly working toward the goal of incorporating contemporary critical theory into medieval literary studies (gender, eco-criticism, comparative literature, etc.). In his current book project, he is exploring the epistemological notion of the ‘trail’ in medieval literature.*


40 Karnein, *De amore in volkssprachiger Literatur*.

41 Hellmuth, “Hans Schiltbergers Besuch bei der Spergerburg” (see note 4), 142-43. He assumes that Schiltberger must have been somewhat familiar with local Armenian legends pertaining to the King Guy of Lusignan as King of Armenia and of his nephew Leo VI (since 1363 and again since 1372). Cf. Mekerdich, *The Kingdom of Armenia*; Khorenats’i, *History of the Armenians*.
Bibliography


Het’um the Historian’s History of the Tartars [The Flower of Histories of the East], compiled by Het’um the Armenian of the Praemonstratensian Order, trans. by Robert Bedrosian online at: http://www.attalus.org/armenian/hetumtoc.html (last accessed on Feb. 9, 2020).


*Libro de las maravillas del mundo, de Juan de Mandevilla*, ed. Pilar Liria Montañés (Zaragoza: Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja, 1979).


The Vanishing Lady: Mélusine, Emblems, and Jacques Yver’s *Le Printemps d’Yver* (1572)

Joshua M. Blaylock
Independent Scholar

In the opening pages of *Le Printemps d’Yver* (1572), the narrator evokes Mélusine, the cursed half-snake fairy queen, as the architect of the idyllic castle that serves as the locus amoenus of the novella collection. And yet, as suddenly as she appears, Mélusine vanishes from the text with only one other explicit reference to her at the transition point between the third and fourth novellas. While literary scholars have analyzed the two explicit references to Mélusine in *Le Printemps* as well as Yver’s emblematic prose, none has systematically explored the possibility that her presence pervades the novella collection in ways beyond the two explicit references to her. Viewing Yver’s work through the dual lenses of Mélusine and emblems, this paper suggests that although she is largely absent from the textual surface, like the vanishing point of a painting, Mélusine’s invisible presence pervades the work.

**INTRODUCTION**

In 1572, *Le Printemps d’Yver* by Jacques Yver, a collection of five novellas surrounded by an elaborate frame-tale, burst onto the French literary scene. *Le Printemps* recounts the story of six nobles, who, in order to escape the violence and misery following the Third War of Religion, gather in an opulent castle and tell a series of five tales. The five stories are framed by debates and discussions between the storytellers that are modeled on novella collections such as the *Decameron* and the *Heptaméron*. In *Le Printemps*, Yver vastly develops the frame-tale structure established by these anterior models by combining poetry, prose, detailed ekphrastic description of the architecture of the locus amoenus, and humanist discourses on topics such as love and fortune. Yver’s work was both popular and influential for his contemporaries with more than thirty separate editions of the text appearing from 1572 to 1635. One contemporary translation of the work also appeared in English by Henrie Wotton in

---

1578 entitled *A Courtlie controversie of Cupids Cautels: Conteyning five Tragicall Histories, very pithie, pleasant, pitiful and profitable.*

However, around the mid-seventeenth century, it dropped out of sight and remained relatively obscure until the mid-1970s. Since then, *Le Printemps* has received more attention from scholars.

In the opening pages of *Le Printemps d’Yver*, the narrator designates Mélusine, the legendary cursed half-snake fairy queen, as the architect of the idyllic castle, the titular Le Printemps, in which the narrators of the five novellas find shelter to tell and debate their stories. This reference to Mélusine as the architect of the *locus amoenus* of *Le Printemps* evokes a legend extending deep into medieval folklore and tradition. A prose version of the tale commissioned by Jean de Berry, Jean d’Arras’s *Mléusine ou la noble histoire de Lusignan*, appeared in 1393. A second poetic version by Coudrette, *Le Roman de Méléusine*, appeared in 1401. A rich tapestry that weaves together chronicles of war, genealogy, and conquest with supernatural and otherworldly events, the Mélusine legend was widely disseminated in Europe during the sixteenth century starting with Thüring von Ringoltingen’s illustrated German translation of the legend first published in Basel by Bernhard Richel in 1473/74. Given her important place in the cultural and literary landscape of Europe from the fifteenth century to the present, Mélusine has generated a substantial field of contemporary scholarship.

As the company of storytellers moves through the castle of *Le Printemps*, they view and interpret several pieces of Mélusine’s architecture that are constructed as emblems, which inspire their stories. This essay argues that to read Yver’s text from the perspective

---

2 Yver, *Le Printemps*, CXI.

3 For an extensive bibliography see Yver, *Le Printemps*, 691-706.

4 For an exploration of the importance of Richel’s woodcuts on the iconography of Mélusine that would influence the reception of her legend in Europe, see Zeldenrust, “Serpent or Half-Serpent: Bernard Richel’s Mélusine and the Making of a Western European Icon,” 19-41.

5 For a recent bibliography of the scholarship on Mélusine, see *Melusine’s Footprint: Tracing the Legacy of a Medieval Myth*, 405-428.
of Mélusine and emblematic narrative processes is to reveal that her invisible presence permeates the novella collection. After first pausing to examine Mélusine’s initial appearance and subsequent disappearing act in *Le Printemps*, this essay will follow traces of her legend that appear in Yver’s work in the Third Day’s tale. The essay will conclude by analyzing Mélusine’s reappearance in a magical grotto following the Third Day’s novella. The analysis presented in these pages argues that the two references to her are more important than they might appear. Closer inspection reveals that Yver’s innovation consists in the invention of a technique of emblematic and symbolic layering that borrows from a number of traditional and subversive forms that may have appealed to both Catholic and Protestant readers in a moment of burgeoning optimism immediately preceding the marriage of Henri IV and Marguerite de Valois in 1572.

**MÉLUSINE, ARCHITECT OF *LE PRINTEMPS***

In the opening pages of his work, Yver explicitly describes Mélusine as the architect of the castle, *Le Printemps*, stating that it was, “Built in the past, as we know for certain, by the famous fairy, Mélusine, in order to show the excellence of her hidden arts, leaving within it several traces of her miracles, interpreted by prophecies, which I will not attempt to narrate.” Drawing upon Mélusine, the narrator evokes a legend that has deep roots in the medieval French literary tradition and would have been readily recognizable to a sixteenth-century audience. Along with the explicit mention of Mélusine, the narrator also focuses the reader’s attention on several important characteristics of the fairy queen. First, he evokes the central theme of invisibility and visibility at the heart of the Mélusine legend juxtaposing the expressions “monstrer [to reveal]” and “cachez [hidden]” on either side of her arts, thereby placing Mélusine’s architecture precisely between what is hidden and what is revealed. Angela Weisl aptly notes:

6 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 22-3. “Basti jadis comme on tient pour certain par la tant renommée Fée Mellusine, pour montrer l’excellence de ses arts cachez, y laissant plusieurs marques de ses miracles, interprétez par prophéties, que je ne deduiray.” All translations the author’s unless otherwise noted.
Her narrative might be said to be the frame or the margin—her story is revealed at the start in Jean’s version and at the end in Coudrette’s—and yet she is the preoccupying concern of the narrative and the critical tradition that follows. She demands the most attention while not occupying the most space. This theme is further reinforced by the narrator’s use of preterition to indicate that he is keeping a number of her marvels hidden from the reader’s gaze. Second, he emphasizes Mélusine’s supernatural nature identifying her as a “Fée [fairy].” He further amplifies Mélusine’s magical and otherworldly qualities using the term “miracles” to describe the architectural marvels that constitute “traces” of her in the castle and grounds around it. The narrator suggests that Mélusine is also divine, a point driven home by the mention that her miraculous traces must be interpreted through “prophétie.”

What does the allusion to Mélusine at the outset of Yver’s text mean in the sixteenth-century French context? Marie-Ange Maignan points out that in Yver’s novella collection, the castle, Le Printemps, “comes to replace the real castle of Lusignan (situated approximately twenty kilometers from Poitiers) that is linked to the legend of this fairy, presented under the guise of magician and prophetess.” For Maignan, Mélusine’s magical and prophetic nature are linked to the fictional castle of Le Printemps, which is nevertheless anchored in the real world because of the fairy queen’s association with Lusignan and Poitou. The Mélusine legend, as Jacques le Goff and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie note in their seminal article on the subject, has deep roots in French folklore and legend stretching back to at least the twelfth century. Le Goff and Ladurie argue that one of the most important transitions from the medieval myths and legends in Arras’s text is her role as architect and builder. Alexandra Hoernel presents an overview of the ways in which a diverse range of

8 Yver, 22, n. 21. vient supplanter le bien réel château de Lusignan (situé à une vingtaine de kilomètres de Poitiers) lié à la légende de cette fée, présenté sous sa figure de magicienne (“arts cachez”) et prophétesse.
of authors referenced and deployed recognizable iconography from the Mélusine legend in sixteenth-century France. Hoernel points out, “We know that the transmission of the novel is a success, that the fairy becomes the emblem of enchantment and interests both a learned public and a popular one. In parallel, the fictions of the Renaissance make frequent allusions to the melusinian story.”

In addition to enumerating a number of humanist writers who portray Mélusine in their works, such as Rabelais, Aneau, Brantôme, and Du Fail, Hoernel points out three major modes of reception of her tale in sixteenth-century France: a strong regional identification with Poitou, the central importance of the staging of the forbidden during the bath scene, and the syncretic combination of humanist with medieval fiction in works that reference her (163). All of these characteristics are operative in Yver’s *Le Printemps*. For her part, Margaret Harp, whose recent essay explores the influence of Virgil’s *Eclogues* on the descriptions of the bucolic castle and monuments in *Le Printemps d’Yver*, also notes the allusion to Mélusine pointing out that “[e]vocation of the well-known Mélusine establishes, moreover, a sense of female ambiguity. […] Yver does not repeat this legend – one which would have been well-known to his readers – but its theme of secrets and suspicion between lovers fits in well with the tales about to be told.”

While there are no woodcut illustrations in *Le Printemps d’Yver*, Yver uses the literary technique of *ekphrasis*, or a description of an object, to display for the reader the monuments, architecture, and gardens of the castle, which are so filled with supernatural wonder that they inspire the stories of the collection. Yver’s ekphrastic descriptions are also constructed as emblems and the *devisants* often allude to emblematic images that circulated in the period.

10 Hoernel, “La fiction et le mythe, lectures humanistes du récit mélusinien (1517-1560),” 162. On sait que la transmission du roman est une réussite, que la fée devient l’emblème de la féerie et intéresse à la fois un public savant et populaire. Parallèlement, les fictions de la Renaissance font fréquemment allusion au récit mélusinien.


Additionally, like the classic emblem tripartite structure of title or _inscriptio_, woodcut picture or _pictura_, and accompanying verse or _subscription_, at their most basic level, Yver’s emblems consist of an ekphrastic _pictura_, which is often a description an object such as a painted scene, architectural structure, or statuary, a _subscription_, which explains the meaning of the enigmatic scene or object, and an _inscriptio_, which gives an ideological “frame” to the image and takes the form of a pithy saying or adage.

Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to fully explore the interaction between the iconography of the hybrid fairy and emblem literature in Europe or in France generally in the sixteenth century, it is worthy to note that one of the primary figures associated with the development of emblem literature in France, Barthélemy Aneau, mentions her twice. Aneau first alludes to Mélusine his 1549 translation of Alciato’s _Emblemata_ entitled, _Picta Poesis_. In this work she appears in a commentary added to Alciato’s emblem “Sur le Blason des armes Mylanoises.” Mélusine is also the central figure in _Alector ou le coq_ (1560) where she appears in disguise as the character Priscaraxe. Marie Madeleine Fontaine has noted, “The mental relationship between emblem collections and the text is so evident that we have been able to speak of it as a working emblem dictionary.” With Mélusine as the liminal emblem, Aneau’s work shares striking similarities to Yver’s _Le Printemps_, where the fairy queen is also evoked at the beginning of the text.

Fittingly, Fradin’s publisher’s mark on the title page of the first edition of _Alector_ features Mélusine in an elaborate woodcut (fig. 1), which Marie-Madeleine Fontaine proposes was perhaps suggested to Fradin by Aneau.

13 Aneau, _Alector_, 631.

14 For a detailed exploration of the ways in which Aneau’s text reappropriates many of the themes associated with the Mélusine legend that circulated in humanist fiction in sixteenth-century France, see Hoernel, “La fiction et le mythe, lectures humanistes du récit mélusinien (1517-1560),” 173-7.

15 Aneau, _Alector ou le coq: Histoire fabuleuse_, XCIX. La relation mentale entre les recueils d’emblèmes et le texte est si évidente que nous avons pu parler d’un dictionnaire d’emblèmes en ordre de marche.

16 Aneau, _Alector ou le coq: Histoire fabuleuse_, 918-9.
The image presents Mélusine with wings and looking up. Her right hand holds her twisting snake tail, the shape of which combined with her gesture calls to mind the Ouroboros, which has a long history of symbolism related to infinity, renewal, and return. Her left hand conveys Mélusine’s primary association as builder and architect because it rests upon a foundation inscribed in Greek. The top word of the inscription, Fradin, is transliterated in the accusative case. Fradin also has a rare adjectival sense of understanding, wise, or shrewd. The bottom word is the nominative, *logos*, which has a range of meanings related to writing and speech. The middle word is the verb present active indicative, and it has a range of meanings that gives the following translations “*logos* takes up Fradin,” “*logos* destroys Fradin,” or perhaps “*logos* makes away with Fradin.” These multiple meanings in onomastic wordplay also appear to mirror some of the multiple senses of Mélusine’s proper name and the ambiguities of her character as well as those found
in Yver’s title, *Le Printemps d’Yver*. The alchemical and enigmatic resonances abound in this image, particularly since Paracelsus, who was censored in France for his writings critical of the Church, had placed Mélu- line’s elemental association to water at the heart of his conception of the alchemical process.\(^{17}\) Having explored the importance of this first mention of Mélu- line in Yver’s work and its implications in the sixteenth-century context, it is important to highlight several themes and episodes of the tale that are central to the “melusinian vulgate” to which Yver alludes in *Le Printemps d’Yver*.

**MEDIEVAL MÉLUSINE**

Jean d’Arras’s *Mélusine ou la noble histoire de Lusignan*, recounts the mythological foundation of the historical Lusignan dynasty, which, at the height of its power had held territories in Jerusalem and Cyprus in addition to its regional holdings centered around the castle at Lusignan. Mélu- line’s punishment is the first important element to highlight in relation to Yver’s novella collection. After she and her sisters imprison her father in a mountain in Northumberland, Présine, her mother, curses Mélu- line to assume the form of a serpent from the waist down every Saturday. However, along with the imposition of this curse, Présine tells her daughter that she will find happiness should she marry a man who promises to respect the taboo and never reveal her secret. From this moment forward, Arras firmly establishes her hybridity as the defining trait of Mélu- line’s character.

The meeting of Raymondin and Mélusine is a central episode that will influence later writers. The episode begins as Raymondin and his uncle, the Count of Aymerie, who had left Poitiers to hunt, come upon a ferocious wild boar. At the tragic climax of the battle, Raymondin tries to aid his uncle and kill the boar with his spear. However, “glancing off the animal’s back, the boar spear slipped from Raymondin’s grasp; its blade then entered, at navel level, the belly of the count—now fallen to his knees—piercing him through and through.”\(^{18}\) Arras describes with precision that Raymondin’s sword pierces his uncle through the belly button, killing him. However,


this accidental parricide also perversely fulfills his uncle’s prophecy, a fact that Raymondin recognizes and links to Fortune’s role in the murder, “Alas! Treacherous Fortune, how can you be so perverse? You’ve made me kill the one who loved me so, the one who had been so good to me!” As early as 1500, Mélusine was listed amongst a number of figures associated with death caused by “Accident” or Fortune. This association hinges upon the death of Raymondin’s uncle in the boar hunt. Hoernel further points out that the allusion to the boar ensures that Mélusine will also be associated with Venus because of the oblique reference to the tragic death of Adonis.

Perhaps the most famous scene of the legend occurs when Raymondin, jealously acting upon his brother’s suggestion that she may be engaged in adultery, bores a hole in her door and:

saw Melusine in the basin. Down to her navel, she had the form of a woman, gracefully combing her hair. But from the navel down, her body had the form of a serpent’s tale. As big around as a barrel for storing herring, it was, and tremendously long. She lashed the water so forcefully with the tail that it made it splash all the way up to the vaulted ceiling of the chamber.

The central thematic of vision structures the description of Raymondin’s first transgression in several ways. First, Arras places emphasis on the voyeuristic monocular eye piercing into the hidden and invisible space of Mélusine’s transformation. Second, the roundness of the eye and the hole are reflected in the description of Mélusine’s bath as a “cuve [basin],” her belly button, which echoes the hole in the doorway and is situated at frontier of her hybrid form, and her tail, which Arras describes using a simile of a large round “tonne [barrel]” that holds herring. Third, the narrator amplifies the detail of the violence with which she is agitating the

19 Arras, A Bilingual Edition, 88-9. “Hee, faulse Fortune! Comment es tu si perverse que tu m’as fait occire cellui qui tant m’amoit, cellui qui tant de bien m’avoit fait!”


water with her tail describing with spatial precision that the water reaches the vaulted ceiling of her bath chamber. Finally, as Caroline Prud’homme has pointed out, the scene is tinged with a humorous tone because “the eroticism of the metaphoric penetration and of the seductive mermaid sharply contrasts with the workaday barrel of salted fish. Jean completely deflects Melusine’s Otherness; he defuses any frightful response or a devilish interpretation by amusing his readers.”

All of the elements of this primal episode of the legend are found in an illustration from the first printed French edition of the legend edited by Adam Steinschaber and published in Geneva in 1478 (fig. 2).
third of the image, Mélusine’s nudity and her gesture of covering herself demonstrate the betrayal of her secret. The artist has chosen to change some details from the episode in order to make the image embody the key moments of this episode. First, Mélusine is neither combing her hair nor is her tail violently agitating the water. Instead, the direction of her gaze clearly signals that, being supernatural, she is aware of her betrayal and ashamed at her exposure. Like the aperture of a camera obscura, which inverts the image projected on its inner surface, the hole in the door penetrates the divide between the invisible, dark, secret, and supernatural world and the visible, luminous, exposed, and mundane one, which the crescent moon shaped aperture reinforces because the initial meeting of the pair at the Fountain of Thirst occurred while “the moon glowed brightly.”

Situated at the boundary between the two worlds, the opening serves as a focal point of the viewer’s attention and also evokes perspective.

In spite of his betrayal, Mélusine forgives Raymondin for this transgression because it did not violate the totality of her taboo, namely that Raymondin did not reveal her secret to anyone else. However, tragically, he does just that in the episode that constitutes the final important one for the analysis of Yver’s Le Printemps. After their son, Geoffroy la Grande-Dent, who is a ferocious warrior with one boar’s tooth, commits fratricide by killing his brother, Fremont, along with one hundred of his fellow monks at the Abby of Maillezais, Raymondin blames Geoffroy’s crime on the monstrous animal nature inherited from his mother. In a fit of rage, he tragically reveals Mélusine’s secret and blames her for the war crime exclaiming, “Ah! Sordid serpent! By God, thou and all of thy actions are naught but sorcery! Never will any child born of thy womb come to any good end!”

His accusation carries a double meaning of betrayal because he reveals her serpentine nature but also couples it with an accusation tinged with religious overtones because “faux” means


24 Arras, A Bilingual Edition, 596-7. “Hee, tres faulse serpent, par Dieu, ne toy ne tes fais ne sont que fantosme, ne ja hoir que tu ayes porté ne vendra a bon chief en la fin.”
perfidious or cruel in Middle French. Raymondin’s pun on the word “faux,” which also means the part of the human body where the chest torso meets the pelvis, the boundary of Mélusine’s hybrid form, functions as a fundamental rebuke of her humanity because he denies her sex, which had produced his lineage. The replacement of “faulse Fortune” with “tres faulse serpent” establishes a direct parallel between the key episodes in which Raymondin loses someone precious to him.

THE THIRD DAY OF LE PRINTEMPS D’YVER

After having participated actively in the various dances and eaten, the company in Le Printemps d’Yver comes upon one of Mélusine’s architectural marvels, an emblematic fountain composed of statues and inscribed tablets, which is dedicated to Leander and Hero, a tragic tale from Greek legend. The company’s subsequent discussion of the legend inspires Bel-Accueil, one of the male storytellers, to frame his novella as an exemplum of Fortune’s responsibility in the vicissitudes of love. His tale, the third of the collection, recounts a tragic love triangle between Clarinde, Adilon, and the Seigneur d’Alègre set in the Italian Wars.

In stating that his novella will serve as an exemplum for Fortune’s role in tragic love, Bel-Accueil both makes Fortune the center of the narrative and also activates an entire iconographical field of emblematic representation. A good example of emblematic representations of Fortune can be found in the first emblem book in the French vernacular, Guillaume de la Perrière’s Le Théâtre des bons engins (1539) (fig. 3).

25 Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du 16e siècle.
In this emblem, the *pictura* presents a nude woman and man with their eyes blindfolded. The winged woman is shown leading the man to danger, symbolized by the large pit, which reinforces the precariousness of the situation. The woman’s lifted left leg, the wings on her feet, and the billowing sail all combine to give a sense of movement to the scene. The forelocks, the wings, the nudity, the winged feet, the sail, and the blinded figures are all tied to common iconographic representations of the period that conflate Fortune, Nemesis, Occasio, and Venus.\(^{26}\) The position of the woman’s left hand is strikingly close to the male figure’s genitals, which further suggests that Eros, who was also often depicted blindfolded, and thus

\(^{26}\) For a detailed exploration of the changing representations of Fortune in the early modern period, see Kieler, “The Conflation of Fortuna and Occasio in Renaissance Thought and Iconography,” 1-27.
sexual desire are staged in this densely layered woodcut as well. The *subscription* poem on the facing page both explains the image and serves as a warning to those who would follow Fortune blindly.

With the iconography of Mélusine and the emblematic representation of Fortune in mind, this essay can now turn to Bel-Accueil’s tale, the third novella, which begins by introducing Adilon, one of the main rivals for the affection of Clarinde, the niece of the Duke of Mantua, whose castle forms the setting for the tragic tale. Acting upon the bad advice of his friend, Lucidan, Adilon hides his desire for Clarinde and insinuates himself into the household through flattering her mother, which engenders a great degree of disgust on the part of Clarinde. Into this situation of unrequited love and bad friendship, the narrator introduces the Seigneur d’Alègre, who lost his father, was captured after the disastrous defeat of marauding French forces at Ravenna, and is held prisoner by Clarinde’s uncle, the Duke of Mantua. The meeting of the Seigneur d’Alègre and Clarinde constitutes the first link in the inexorable chain of events that will lead to the tragic deaths of all three main characters. The scene occurs when Clarinde’s uncle:

> brought him hunting in the woods near his castle, where the two of them chased after a deer that had run away with such speed that they lost all of their company without thinking about it, and, without any cares other than who would be the first to kill the beast. And they were quite astounded when, totally lost, they found themselves near a beautiful and delectable fountain, so well covered with foliage that the entry was totally blocked from the sun.27

The narrator chooses to tinge the description of the scene with imagery that echoes the Mélusine legend in several ways. First, while the two men’s prey is a deer rather than a boar, the description of their haste and wandering in the forest without their company mirrors that of the scene in which Raymondin accidentally kills his uncle. Third, Alègre and Clarinde meet at a fountain, which, coupled

27 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 268, “le mena chasser en un bois prochain de son chasteau, où tous deux ils coururent un cerf desparqué de si vive affection, qu’ils perdirent tous leurs gens sans y penser, et sans avoir autre soucy que à qui seroit premier à la mort de la beste. Et furent fort esbahis quand tous egarez ils se trouverent pres d’une belle et delicieuse fonteine, si bien couverte de feuillade que l’entrée en estoit totalement deflendue au soleil.”
with the previous description of hunting, resonates with echoes of the Mélusine legend. This scene also reveals Yver’s technique of allusion by arranging elements to be just noticeable to resonate with iconography from the Mélusine legend while at the same time modifying elements such as the deer replacing the boar to attenuate the tone of the scene making it more romanesque and sentimental, which would have presumably appealed to a readership steeped in works such as *Amadis de Gaule*.

After several more episodes recounting the rivalry between the Seigneur d’Alègre and Adilon as well as the courtship of Clarinde, the tragic love story builds to a pivotal scene, another example of Yver’s emblematic narrative technique that calls forth an oblique allusion to Mélusine. The scene is structured around Clarinde unwittingly confessing her love for the Seigneur d’Alègre to Adilon. Because he has the confidence of her mother and can come and go in the castle as he pleases, Adilon, “whilst frequenting the private quarters, it happened that one day, traipsing from chamber to chamber, he spied the child alone, combing her beautiful thick hair in the sunlight.”28 At the outset of this key scene, a fragment alluding to the Mélusine legend emerges because Clarinde is brushing her hair in front of a mirror, which is the first element that Arras describes in the scene of Raymondin’s transgression. Overcome with a desire to play a trick on her, Adilon runs into the room, seizes Clarinde from behind, and covers her eyes. Her response to his gesture troubles him because while shocked at first, she immediately assumes that Adilon is the Seigneur d’Alègre because of the playfulness of his gesture. Blinding her and thus masking his identity, Adilon finds himself in a double bind in that he is suddenly privy to the secret of her love for Alègre. And yet, he cannot reveal his identity now for he would compromise Clarinde’s reputation. Bel-Accueil describes Adilon’s dilemma:

If the poor prince was surprised at such words, and very much ashamed, having found what he had not been looking for through his curiosity, I will leave it to you to judge. But it is easy to assume that he would have liked to be far from there; and he did not even know by which path to escape, for he knew that the embarrassment that the princess would feel in seeing him, could only damage him, as the counter-example of Gyges and Candaules showed him. And so, deprived of any good council, he did not know of anything better to do to save his honor than to continue holding the blond head of the princess.  

Thrust into the midst of a situation that, until this moment, had been merely a suspicion, Adilon wishes to leave immediately to protect both the princess and his own position of power. And yet, Adilon is trapped because he knows that if he tries to leave, he risks revealing his identity and thus engendering “dommage [harm]” to his own reputation. More importantly, the description of Adilon’s shame and surprise is quite similar to the description of Raymondin’s reaction upon seeing Mélusine in her Saturday bath.

Bel-Accueil further reinforces the dangerous position of both Adilon and Clarinde by invoking their plight as an inversion of the story of Gyges and Candaules, a story that is structured around a love triangle, secrecy, and the gaze, found in Herodotus’s *Histories*. Herodotus recounts that after having praised the beauty of his wife and wishing for Gyges to see this beauty with his own eyes, King Candaules arranges for Gyges to hide in the Queen’s bedroom in order to see her naked. After seeing the Queen naked, Gyges attempts to slip out of the room unseen but the Queen notices him. She tells him that he must either kill King Candaules, his friend, and assume the throne with her as his wife, or die on the spot for his transgression. He chooses to kill the King and assumes the throne ruling for 38 years. In alluding to Gyges and Candaules and stating that Adilon is the contrary exemplum, the narrator is thus

29 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 283-4. “Si le pauvre Prince fut estonné de tels mots, et bien camus ayant trouvé ce qu’il ne cherchoit pas par sa curiosité, je le vous laisse à juger. Mais il est facile à presumer qu’il eust voulu estre bien loing de là, et se ne scçavoir par quel chemin en sortir, sachant que la honte qu’en recevoit la Princesse, le voyant, ne luy pourrait tourner qu’à dommage ; comme le contraire exemple de Gigès et Candalles luy donnoit teshmoignage. Parquoy destitué de tout bon conseil, ne scçavoir faire autre chose pour sauver son honneur que tenir toujours la teste dorée de la Princesse.”

evoking a number of themes that have striking parallels with the Méliusine legend such as voyeurism, secrecy, broken fraternal bonds of friendship, and the woman, who perceives the violation of her intimate space.

The pivotal scene between Clarinde and Adilon exhibits several other striking emblematic characteristics. Although there is no explicit ekphrastic description working as a *pictura*, the episode of mistaken identity is structured in highly visual terms, which are cemented as the action slows and stops as the two characters, with Adilon’s indecision, become frozen in a kind of “tableau vivant.” The use of a contrastive simile cements the scene’s status as an emblematic image and thus functions as a *subscriptio*. Also, like the emblem of Fortune presented earlier (fig. 3), this scene demonstrates the ability of emblematic representation to conflate several layers of recognizable imagery. First, the narrator explicitly links the scene to Herodotus’s tale. Second, by also evoking the motif of “blindness” because Adilon has covered Clarinde’s eyes, Bel-Accueil links her to an iconographic image of the blindness and nudity of Fortune (fig. 3), the ideological frame of the tale, because Clarinde’s intentions are now transparent to Adilon, whom the narrator describes, “if he went away quite troubled in his thoughts, he didn’t leave the Princess surprised, for as soon as she had suddenly turned her head in order to see the one fleeing, wasn’t able to perceive him, on account of the veil that her hair, which covered her face, created.”31 Like Fortune, Clarinde is exposed and thus symbolically naked but also literally blinded by her own hair, which adds a somewhat comic aftermath to the revelation that echoes the scene in Méliusine. Third, the scene also suggests a parallel with the episode where Raymondin spies upon Méliusine in her bath chamber because Clarinde immediately suspects that it was Adilon, whose devious character she has already discerned in the novella, and not the Seigneur d’Alègre as the narrator describes: “And what made her more angry was the suspicion that

31 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 284, “s’il s’en va bien troublé en sa pensée, il ne laissa la Princesse moins estonnée, qui combien qu’elle eust soudain tourné la teste pour voir le fuyard, ne le peut appercevoir, pour le voile que luy donnerent ses cheveux qui luy entournoient la face
it was Adilon, whom she hated more than he loved her.” Adilon thus comes to represent an ambiguous Gyges, the blind fool guided by Fortune, and Raymondin, while Clarinide becomes the Queen in Herodotus’s and Plato’s texts, Fortune herself, and Mélusine. However, Yver’s use of the story from *The Histories* as subscriptio, in true emblematic fashion, contains a surprising twist: Clarinide, unlike the Queen from Herodotus’s *Histories*, is at the mercy of the man who will witness her unwitting confession. In this moment, Clarinide shares uncanny similarities to Mélusine because the fairy queen was also at the mercy of Fortune. Because of her mother’s curse, Mélusine risks exposure when bathing and she is undone by her husband’s jealousy, the ensuing transgressive voyeurism, and his public denunciation of her, which culminates in the tragic denouement of her legend.

Yver’s tale also ends tragically, Adilon, crazed with jealousy, decides to murder the Seigneur d’Alègre using an apple saturated with poison. In this scene, the narrator chooses to make the apple symbolize the hand of Fortune in the tragic conclusion of the story because Adilon’s murderous plan goes awry when Alègre decides to give the beautiful apple to Clarinide, leading to her slow laborious death. Clarinide’s murder is the final episode in the novella that summons forth two additional fragmentary allusions to Mélusine. When Alègre realizes Adilon is responsible, the narrator compares him to a boar stating, “This wretched one deserved the payment for his misdeed, for, like the boar feeling savage throws itself furiously upon he who had delivered the blow, in the same way the Seigneur d’Alègre, although he was troubled by his furor and the resolution of his death, had no sooner seen his poisoner than he ran towards him with his sword in hand.”

First, in this final example, Alègre taking on a hybrid animal form through the evocation of the boar.

32 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 285. Et qui plus la faschoit estoit le soupçon que ce fut Adilon, qu’elle hayoit plus qu’il ne l’aimoit.”

33 Yver, *Le Printemps*, 291. “ce miserable cerchoit le payement de son mesfaict, car comme le sanglier se sentant feru se gette furieusement sur celuy qui luy a donné le coup, ainsi le seigneur d’Alegre, bien qu’il fut trouble de sa fureur et de l’arrest de sa mort, n’eust plustost veu son empoisonneur qu’il luy courut sus l’espée au poing.”
activates one of the central motifs of the Mélusine legend linked to Fortune. Second, the choice of the apple is laden with symbolic, religious, and iconographical significance. Bel-Accueil drives home the importance of the apple with his description of the funerary monument, which Jerome Schwartz has analyzed for its emblematic associations and qualities,\textsuperscript{34} that represents the trio with a kneeling Alègre “presenting to the Princess an apple of the same stone, as if it were an Adam tempting Eve. And the figure of Adilon, whose body had been returned to his country, had his shoulder pierced from behind and was spraying venom upon this fruit.”\textsuperscript{35} The mention of venom and the apple call forth a final oblique allusion to Mélusine’s serpentine attributes and also activates biblical imagery associated with temptation and snakes.\textsuperscript{36} However, like the camera obscura that inverts the projected image, Yver makes clear through a rather ironic inversion that the gender roles of this other primal biblical scene are reversed.

**MÉLUSINE REDUX**

After hearing the tale, the devisants of the frame-tale retire for the evening and meet the next day to debate Bel-Accueil’s story. However, the debate begins only after they stumble upon another emblem, one more example of Mélusine symbolism, that summons forth the second mention of her name. As the narrator states:

under the conduct of their Sybil (who was the lady of the place) they entered into a rustic grotto, so well and perfectly elaborated that Nature confessed itself vanquished by human artifice. For the snails, lizards, beavers, frogs, crayfish, shells, stones, with all of the terrestrial and aquatic animals were represented in such living likeness.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{35} Yver, *Le Printemps*, 302. “presente à la Princesse une pomme de mesme pierre, comme si c’estoit un Adam voulant tanter Eve ; et la figure d’Adilon (duquel le corps fut porté en son pays) est par le derriere (avec son espaule percée) qui respandoit le venin sur ce fruict.”

\textsuperscript{36} For an exploration of the representation of the woman-headed serpent in relationship to temptation and sin, see Burns, “A Snake Tailed Woman,” 191-213.

\textsuperscript{37} Yver, *Le Printemps*, 320-1. “sous la conduite de leur Sybille (qui estoit la dame du lieu) ils entrent en une grotte rustique, si bien et naïvement elaborée que Nature se confesse vaincue par l’artifice humain. Car les limasses, lesard, taupes, grenoilles, sauterelles, coquilles, cailloux, avec tous animaux terrestres et aquaticques, estoient representez si au vif.”
In the company of “Sybil,” an allusion resonating with melusinian connotations because Yver had described the architecture of the castle using the word prophecy, the devisants find themselves in a cave, an iconic local of poetic inspiration, and surrounded by a myriad of water animals that include snails, the company savors the craftsmanship that has sculpted an allegory of the four seasons. At this point, Yver mentions Mélusine stating, “And one cannot even compare to this invention, the very well-known work of the Tuileries, of Meudon, or of Anet, or the quite artificial garden of Liencour, in Normandy. For as I have already mentioned, the Fairy Mélusine who built this castle had employed all of the demons and small hobgoblins, who are most expert in the arts of pottery and sculpture.”  

This second mention of Mélusine is further amplified by the narrator’s direct intervention in the scene using the first person and emphasizing his previous mention of her at the beginning of the text. The festive autumnal harvest scene representing Bacchus and his entourage dancing in revelry is yet another example of Yver’s emblematic technique. Described by the narrator through an ekphrastic pictura, the sculpted scene is accompanied by a poetic inscription representing the dancing company’s song. The song takes the form of a Ronsardian strophic ode consisting of 14 heptasyllabic huitains, which are “escrite en fueilles de pampre avec la bave des limassons (323-4)”

In mentioning Meudon and drawing upon Ronsard for his model, it appears that Yver is making an oblique comparison of his rustic grotto to another poetic grotto described by Ronsard in Eclogue III ou chant pastoral sur les nopces de Monsieur Charles Duc de Lorraine, et Madame Claude, Fille Deuxiesme du Roy Henri II (1559). In addition to the allusions to Ronsard, the emblematic resonances in this passage are striking. While formally similar to

38 Yver, Le Printemps, 321-2. “Et ne faut comparer à ce figment, le tant renommé ouvrage des Tuilleries, de Meidon, ou d’Anet, ou le jardin tant artificiel de Liencour, en Normandie. Car comme j’ay desja dit, la Fée Mellusine qui bastit ce chasteau avoit employé tous les demons et farfadets plus experts en l’art de potterie et sculpture.”

an emblem with an ekphrastic description and accompanying poetic text, Yver uses an iconic emblem of secrecy, a snail, to communicate through its secreted slime, which would presumably have a shiny or mirror-like appearance, the celebratory song of praise to Bacchus.

Snails and secrecy are represented in a superb emblem, “Secrecy is to be praised.” (fig. 4) from Gilles Corrozet’s *Hecantographie* (1543). In this emblem, Gilles Corrozet fashions an elaborate *mise-en-abyme* of the relationship between visual perception and secrecy, which is central to both the Mélusine legend and Yver’s *Le Printemps*.

In the *pictura*, a snail emerging from a small cave occupies the center of the woodcut. The roundness of the spiral snail shell is further reflected in the dark or veiled cave opening situated directly away from which the snail is moving. The two subsequent verse *subscriptio* that follow the *picture* connect the snail with the themes
of discretion and defense in secrecy. In her recent analysis of this emblem, Elizabeth Black points out that the emblem evokes the need to protect the household through discretion and secrecy. Implied in this emblem then is a hidden and secret feminine space that the snail protects with its shell. The emblem thus stages male anxiety about the slippery and dangerous nature of secrets because *louer* can mean “praised” but also “rented.”

Tom Conley has pointed out that the emblem creates a dissonance between the image and the text because a snail is typically identified with motifs such as *festina lente* or Zeno’s paradox. This dissonance invites the emblem reader to focus more specifically on the woodcut revealing that the snail is also an eye. In fact, “[t]he cave and snail are part of a zoomorphic landscape in which what is seen is what sees. The ocular snail becomes an event: a monocural shape takes form to suggest that its greater body is found elsewhere or beyond the limits of the frame.”

One cannot help but see certain resonances between Corrozet’s emblem and Yver’s appropriation of the snail motif into Mélusine’s emblematic grotto. With the mention of snail slime, Yver condenses emblematic imagery and form represented by the snail with a direct evocation of Mélusine’s chthonian creation (a cave) alongside her association to water, one of the foremost folkloric attributes of Mélusine and also her central elemental aspect according to Parcelsus’s alchemical treatise.

**CONCLUSION**

Although Mélusine is explicitly mentioned only twice in *Le Printemps*, these evocations occur at highly significant moments at the beginning (or edge) and the middle (or visual center) of the text, forming, to push the metaphor a bit further, “lignes de fuite [projection lines]” gesturing towards the episode at the center of the narrative structure where all the details suggest, yet also, obfuscate her presence. Mélusine’s presence permeates the text because she

---

40 Black, “Mirror/Window, Reflection/Deflection: Regulating the Gaze Inside and Outside the House in Gilles Corrozet’s *Blasons Domestiques* (1539),” 129-30.

leaves traces of herself in the architectural marvels of the frame-tale and in the third novella. Mélusine plays a prominent yet mostly invisible role in Le Printemps making it appear as if Jacques Yver was a canny reader of Jean d’Arras. Like Mélusine’s hybrid body, Yver’s appropriation and reassembly of various contemporary literary genres along with artistic and philosophical discourses makes Le Printemps d’Yver a hybrid work. The primal episode of the bath represented as a camera obscura also appears to find an echo in Yver’s inverted design. The “fictional” novellas more directly reflect the violence and social upheaval during the Wars of Religion while the frame-tale, which is anchored in Poitou during the actual historical moment of peace from 1570-1572, turn out to be more fantastical than “realistic.”

Mélusine’s legend contains many enigmas that remain unresolved at the end of her tale. Similarly, Yver’s text is also filled with ambiguities and enigmas that remain unresolved. For example, the “dame” of the Château or “Sybil’s” identity remains ambiguous. Are there more traces of Mélusine to be found in other novellas such as the fourth tale that her cave inspires? Yver’s text ends with the promise that this “dame” will finish the narrative project by telling a tale that will capture the true essence of perfect love. However, the story ends with the promise unfulfilled. Like the vanishing point, the devisants’ stories as well as their interpretations pivot around the absence of the mysterious hybrid maternal presence of Mélusine, the vanishing lady, at the heart of the narrative structure.

Given that the genesis and publication of Le Printemps posthumously before the events of Saint-Barthélemy corresponded to period of war and peace that culminated in one of the most horrific moments in the Wars of Religion, the Saint Barthélemy Day Massacre, scholars have debated Jacques Yver’s religious sympathies. Marie-Ange Maignan’s recent and thorough excavation of the historical record and publication history of this bestseller has convincingly argued that he moved amongst protestant as well as catholic circles. She writes, “his constant political belief which manifests itself finally with an insolence that is both joyous and
melancholy in the flippancy of the hero of the last story. The writers who erred between the two clans and who know the pleasures of the court, while living much longer than Yver, are legion, and Jacques Yver seems to us to be one of those.”

In his address to the reader, Yver explicitly evokes nationalism and the literary polemics, which Du Bellay’s *La Deffense, et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1549) and Barthélemy Aneau’s response in another of his works, the *Quintil Horatien* (1551), provoked. Given that the narrator uses architectural metaphors that owe their power to a fairy queen from medieval French legend throughout *Le Printemps d’Yver*, it seems that he is also using Mélanusine in a way that reflects a nuanced position in the call to create a national language to rival Italian and Latin.

This line of inquiry seems all the more compelling given Lusignan and Poitou’s central role in the Wars of Religion, to which Yver makes repeated references throughout his work. Mélanusine appears in a variety of forms throughout a diverse range of authors who shared Evangelical and Protestant sympathies such as Paracelsus, Aneau, Rabelais, and Du Fail before the events leading up to the publication of *Le Printemps*. Mélanusine’s hybridity and alchemical attributes as an elemental force seem to be particularly suited to Yver’s own syncretism. In the buildup to the royal wedding of Henri of Navarre to Marguerite de Valois in August of 1572, a book such as *Le Printemps* would have appealed to a publisher looking to promote accord between the factions. However, writing in a way that would appeal to this readership was also a fraught enterprise because those suspected of Huguenot sympathies faced assassination, which was the case for Aneau in Lyon in 1562, or exile. That Yver would need to deploy covert literary tactics is not all that surprising when one further considers that his work appeared in the period after the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1570), and, as Andrea Frisch has shown, authors of the period used coded language and oblique references to reference contemporary events in the face of religious censorship.

and a Royal program of total amnesia.\(^ {43}\)

This flowering optimism post-1570 was short-lived and would soon give way to the Saint Barthélemy Massacre and the subsequent cycle of war, famine, and violence that followed it. In 1575, the Lyonnais publisher Benoist Rigaud published a pamphlet entitled *La Complainte et lamentation ou prophétie de Melusine à la France*. In it, Mélusine prophesizes the destruction of the Lusignan castle and France.\(^ {44}\) This suggests that there is more to Yver’s mention of the fairy queen than meets the eye. However, *Le Printemps d’Yver* was published in early 1572 one year after Ronsard’s *Franciade*, in a period of heightened optimism for peace. Phillip John Usher has characterized Ronsard’s epic, “Upon publication, readers were faced with a text that, more than just delivering royal genealogy or celebration thereof, was actually like a Renaissance château full of beautiful objects” (159). This description of Ronsard’s epic, which was his attempt to fulfill Du Bellay’s call for a national epic, also seems suited to a description of *Le Printemps*. The work overflows with beautiful objects that combine visual and textual elements represented through ekphrasis, verse, and prose. However, this beautiful literary château has as its architect and founder the hybrid fairy queen that was a source of regional and national interest in the period. In the final analysis, one of the author’s major innovations seems to consist in his syncretic appropriation of visual and literary sources from sanctioned authors such as Virgil, Ronsard, and Belleau while also incorporating more subversive elements of the French literary landscape such as Mélusine and emblem literature in order to reach a wide readership. Yver’s own proclamations about the ephemerality of existence in his final address to his book seem all the more prophetic when one considers that this masterpiece may not have made it down to us through the centuries had it been published in Paris three years later in a reactionary climate that appears to have targeted Mélusine, the vanishing lady of Yver’s masterpiece, leading


\(^ {44}\) *Remontrances, prophéties et confessions de femmes* (1575-1650), 5.
to the fulfillment of her prophecy. In 1575, the castle at Lusignan was razed to the ground on the orders of Henri III and visited shortly after by Catherine de Médicis in an episode related by Brantôme. The Château of Lusignan’s destruction suggests that merely three years after the publication of *Le Printemps d’Yver*, Mélusine’s association to Lusignan had been subsumed by the Wars of Religion for the castle had become a Huguenot stronghold and was thus a perceived threat to royal power.

Joshua M. Blaylock is currently an independent scholar living in Massachusetts. He received his Ph.D. in French Studies from Brown University in 2014. He has taught most recently at Texas Christian University and College of the Holy Cross. His research explores the intersections between the visual arts and French literature in the sixteenth century. His research has most recently focused on the interplay between the novella genre, the visual arts, court culture, and secrecy. Recent articles on Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptaméron* (1559) have appeared in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, *The Journal of Early Modern Studies*, *Modern Language Notes*, and *Espirit Créateur*.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


45 For a discussion of the historical castle at Lusignan, see Maignan’s comment in Yver, *Le Printemps*, 22. For a discussion of the episode in Brantôme, see Le Goff and La Durie, “Mélusine Maternelle,” 606-7.


Quidditas 41 (2020) 95


Spanish claims to the throne of Jerusalem in the early modern period have often been viewed in light either of royal mythologies connecting the Habsburg monarchy to the biblical kings David and Solomon or to prophetic discourses of imperial Messianism relating to universal monarchy. This paper broadens our understanding of Spanish claims to Jerusalem through close reading of two archival documents produced in 1605. In defending Spanish preeminence and sovereignty in Jerusalem, I argue that these documents participate in a “polemics of possession” that crucially informed cultural production related to the Holy City in the period more broadly. These documents further urge us to recognize Jerusalem’s role within early modern Spanish culture and politics as a location bound up in pragmatic geopolitical, diplomatic, economic, and material concerns that demand our attention. This novel recontextualization of Spanish cultural production surrounding Jerusalem ultimately advances scholarly conversations by mapping the contours of Spain’s Jerusalemite “polemics of possession,” thereby inviting us to consider new relationships between otherwise disparate material and textual phenomena.

The idea that the king of Spain is also king of Jerusalem was propagated widely in the 16th and 17th centuries in Spain. The claim appears in devout histories, travelogues, and descriptions of the Holy Land;¹ in epic poems;² in architectural treatises;³ in works of royal counsel (arbítrios), political histories, and mirrors of princes;⁴

1 For example, Aranda, Verdadera informacion; Buyza, Relacion nueva, verdadera, y copiosa; and Castillo, El devoto peregrino.

2 For example, Vega Carpio, Jerusalén conquistada and Vera y Figueroa, El Fernando.

3 For example, Amico, Trattato; Pedrosa, Relacion sumaria; and Villalpando, In Ezechiel explanations and De postrema Ezechielis (selected texts edited in Villalpando, El templo de Salomón).

4 For example, Salazar, Política española and Cevallos, Arte Real. Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 159-64 and 176-181, includes translations of pertinent passages.
in prophecies;\(^5\) in works of theater;\(^6\) in anti-*morisco* polemics;\(^7\) in sermons;\(^8\) in numismatics and heraldry.\(^9\) As Diego de Valdés puts it in *De dignitate regum regnorumque* (1602), on the question of the legitimacy of Spain’s rights to the throne of Jerusalem, “non est dubitatio” [“there is no doubt”].\(^10\) A century earlier, even before the 1510 Papal investiture that would formally recognize Ferdinand the Catholic as King of Jerusalem and the Two Sicilies, authors such as Cristóbal de Santistéban in his *Tratado de la successio[n] delos reynos de Jerusalen y de Napoles* (1503) argued that “el derecho de vuestra alteza” [“the right of your Highness”] to those kingdoms is “justo y cierto” [“just and certain”].\(^11\) Despite the ubiquity of this idea in such diverse genres and media, however, the history of Spanish claims to the throne of Jerusalem—and especially the influence of such claims on the political, religious, and literary culture of 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) century Spain—is a story that remains largely untold.\(^12\)

The present article addresses just one small chapter in that story by focusing on a unique articulation of such claims contained

---

5 For example, Gómez de Aguilera y Saavedra, *Jerusalén libertada*; López de Cañete, *Compendio*; and Navarro, *Discurso*, among others.

6 For example, Bançes Candamo, *El Austria*; Cervantes, *La conquista*; and Collado del Hierro, *Jerusalem restaurada*.

7 For example, Aguilar, *Expulsión de los moriscos*; Bleda, *Defensio fidei*; Guadalajara y Xavier, *Memorable expulsión*.


9 See Leahy, “‘Dinero en cruzados.’”

10 Valdés, *De dignitate*, f. 146r. For a transcription and study of Valdés’s chapter 17, entirely dedicated to defending Spanish prerogatives in Jerusalem, see Leahy, “Making the Case.” All translations in the present article are my own.

11 Santistéban, *Tratado*, n.p. The incunable is not paginated. This quotation appears toward the end of the text’s dedication to Queen Isabel the Catholic. Doussinague, *La política*, 620–635, provides a Spanish translation of the Bull investing Ferdinand with these titles. The Spanish monarchy still today under Philip VI maintains its claims to the title, a right enshrined in Article 56.2 of the Spanish Constitution, “Constitución,” of 1978.

12 For general overviews, see Arciniega García, “Evocaciones”; García Martín, “La Jerusalén”; and Leahy and Tully, *Jerusalem Afflicted*, chapter 2. Though Wacks’ recent *Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction* focuses on the centuries preceding the period under consideration here, and though Wacks does not focus specifically on formulations of Jerusalemite kingship, this last monograph offers essential context as well as key corrections to dominant historiography relating to the place of crusade in the Iberian context.
in two documents from 1605. The first is a Council of State report (consulta) offering advice to King Philip III; the second is a diplomatic communiqué from the monarch to his Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome. Both documents make a case for the Spanish crown’s legitimate authority as sovereign in Jerusalem, at the same time arguing for Spanish preeminence ahead of France as ‘first’ in the Holy City. The arguments deployed in these documents oblige us to take Spanish pretensions to sovereignty in Jerusalem seriously. Spanish claims emerge here as potent tools through which to manage Iberia’s Muslim past, to assert historical ties to the Holy Places in the eastern Mediterranean, and to graft Catholic Spain’s local narrative of ‘reconquest’ onto the practices of Christian sacred violence associated with ‘crusade’ in the Holy Land. Perhaps less predictably, these documents further lay bare the pragmatic role that pretensions to Jerusalemite kingship played in the broader negotiation of Spain’s place in the geopolitical order circa 1605.

In what follows, I first offer some theoretical and historical framing for approaching these documents, arguing that they form part of a broader early modern Spanish “polemics of possession” over Jerusalem. The remainder of the article turns to a close reading of the specific arguments that these two documents present. I suggest that both texts give voice to ideas that are central to such a “polemics” over the Holy City, pointing to essential ways in which Spain’s connections to Jerusalem, both historical and contemporary, were imagined and leveraged by cultural producers—including the very center of power itself—at the beginning of the 17th century.

13 The consulta is housed in the Archivo General de Simancas (Estado 1858/12), with an authorized copy also available in legajo 170 of the Archivo de la Obra Pía section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional of Spain. Legajo 170 also includes the letter from Philip III to the Spanish Ambassador in Rome. Spanish transcriptions are available in Arce, Documentos y textos, 106-110; Eiján, Hispanidad, 38-42; and García Barriuso, España, 385-387. In the present article, I cite always from the English language translation of these documents included in Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 164-168, which is based on the manuscript originals listed above.

14 Reyes, “En torno,” 120, characteristically dismisses the title as “meramente honorífico” (“merely honorific”). Much more recently, Arciniega García tellingly entitles his thorough and serious review of early modern Spanish claims to Jerusalem “Evocaciones y ensoñaciones hispanos del reino de Jerusalén.” The term “ensoñaciones” points to the symbolic realm of fantasy, illusion, or dreamy aspirations. More charitably, Wacks, Medieval, 7, refers to the title as “ephemeral.”
Towards an Early Modern “Polemics of Possession”
Over Jerusalem

In *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative*, Rolena Adorno contends that debates over the proper limits of authority, dominion, or possession in the New World fundamentally inform cultural production from the earliest days of colonization up to the present. How was authority imagined, narrated, instrumentalized, contested? In what follows, I adapt Adorno’s vital insights to reframe how we might understand early modern Spanish cultural production surrounding Jerusalem. I offer that by reading cultural production related to Jerusalem as part of a heated debate over how power can be imagined, asserted or subverted in the eastern Mediterranean, we are able to read otherwise disparate textual and material phenomena more holistically, as part of a broader political and cultural problematic.

In making this case, I also seek to push the temporal boundaries implied in Andrew Devereux’s recent *The Other Side of Empire: Just War in the Mediterranean and the Rise of Early Modern Spain*. Devereux urges us to recognize that “during the early decades of overseas expansion, Spain looked to the east as much as it did to the west.”\(^{15}\) Devereux’s call to recenter the Mediterranean within Spain’s early imperial imaginary—at the same time placing the Mediterranean in dialogue with the Atlantic—makes a great deal of sense in view of Spain’s persistent claims to Jerusalemite patronage and kingship throughout the 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^ {16}\) I argue that such recurrent claims demand to be acknowledged as critical interventions in a “polemics of possession” over Jerusalem that in fact far outlasts “the early decades of overseas expansion.”

This enduring, east-facing polemics came to generate a vast body of works aimed at constructing identities through the fraught

---

15 Devereux, *The Other Side*, 2.

16 Wacks, *Medieval*, “Introduction,” embraces the description of the culture and history of the peninsula as inherently *In and Of the Mediterranean* (the title of a recent collection edited by Hamilton and Silleras-Fernández). For Wacks, 8, Iberian crusade fiction offers a striking example of this phenomenon. See Hamilton and Silleras-Fernández and Wacks for relevant bibliography on Mediterranean Studies and its ties to Iberia. See also Kinoshita, “Negotiating.”
process of claiming or contesting the sacred territory of Palestine as a naturalized component of Spanish national or imperial power. As Betsy Wright has noted, the cultural field in early modern Spain confronts us with “a specific, Spanish textual economy built around the Jerusalem theme,” noting in this context that “Jerusalem signified the Habsburg claims to being a universal monarchy; consequently, large, ambitious projects that related biblical history to the Spanish monarchs gained crown patronage.” While I agree unreservedly with Wright’s characterization, I would add that this “economy” should be recognized as rhizomatic in its nature, extending wildly into all manner of cultural production, both textual and material, popular and elite, literary and non-literary, over very considerable periods of time, and affecting questions that go far beyond Spain’s pretensions to “universal monarchy.” This is an economy that is not just about epic poems or sacred antiquarianism. It is also about altar cloths and chalices, shipments of candles and wine, sermons, popular pamphlets, architectural projects, heraldry and numismatics, diplomacy and international relations. And it is an economy that must be read as always deeply enmeshed in the kind of polemics that Adorno ascribes to debates over possession in the Indies: a polemics that necessarily refracts, and at the same time produces, a broad range of complex historical and material practices and experiences tied to the business of staking claims. The documents to which we shall turn our full attention below give powerful voice to the polemics outlined here, asking us to re-orient our understanding of Spain’s national and imperial projects in the period towards Jerusalem.

Texts in the period themselves overtly call on us to embrace such a re-centering of the Holy City. Lope de Vega in the dedication to Philip III of his epic *Jerusalén conquistada: epopeya trágica* (1609), for example, reminds the monarch that of all his royal possessions, Jerusalem is the best:

Si entre los títulos de Vuestra Magestad resplandece más el de rey de Jerusalén que el de emperador de las Indias Orientales y Antárticas, justamente se le debía dedicar la historia de su conquista.

[If among the titles of Your Majesty that of King of Jerusalem shines more than that of Emperor of the Oriental and Antarctic Indies, justly should one dedicate to you the history of its conquest.]  

It may be easy to disregard this idea as the kind of topical silver-tongued bombast typical of royal dedications. What happens, however, if we take this assertion on its own terms as genuinely reflective of the symbolic cartography of the empire as it was imagined and experienced in the 16th and 17th centuries in Spain? First off, let us pause to consider the unexamined supposition driving Lope’s sentiments here. The idea that Spain unquestionably possesses Jerusalem operates as a given; for Lope and his royal dedicatee alike, the claim needs no further explanation because it is nothing less than self-evident. The territorial hierarchy that the poet subsequently constructs places the throne of Jerusalem as a glimmering beacon that outshines the other diverse territories that comprise the Spanish crown’s “polycentric” global colonial-imperial machine. Given that Jerusalem is considered within Christian conceptions of time and space to be the most sacred location on earth, Lope’s suggestion makes sense: Philip III is king of the most precious and sacred territory on earth, the very place wherein the redemption of humanity was wrought, a special location sanctified by the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. In possessing the throne of such a territory, Philip naturally communes with the aura of sacrality that is basic to it. In view both of Catholic cosmology and of Spanish readings of political history, then, there can be no

18 Vega, Jerusalén conquistada, 6.  
19 In his 1954 introduction to Lope de Vega’s epic Jerusalén conquistada, Entrambasaguas asks with dripping sarcasm, “¿qué le importaban a él [Felipe III] Jerusalemes…?” [“what did Philip III care about Jerusalems?”]. Vega, Jerusalén, 32.  
20 On the complex and sprawling early modern Spanish monarchy as “polycentric” or “composite,” see Cardim at al, Polycentric Monarchies and Elliot, “A Europe.”  
21 As Pedro Mexía puts it in his popular Silva de varia lección, 865, of 1540: “Ningún pueblo ni ciudad hay en el mundo que tantas preeminencias, y gracias haya alcanzado de Dios, ni gozado de tantas excelencias y misterios, como la Santa Ciudad de Hierusalem, pues haber sido allí sido Christo crucificado, muerto y sepultado y celebrado nuestra redempcion” [“There is no town or city in the world that has achieved as many preeminences and graces from God, nor enjoyed so many excellences and mysteries, as the Holy City of Jerusalem, for Christ was crucified, died, and buried and our redemption celebrated there”]. Similar descriptions populate countless works in the period. See, for example, Adricomio, Breve descripcion; Alzeda Avellaneda, Ierusalen cautiva; Buyza, Relation; Castillo, El devoto peregrino; and Quaresmus, Ierosolymae Afflictae, among countless others. For an introduction to the Christian theology of place on display here, see Levine, Jerusalem; Walker, Holy City; and Wilkens, The Land Called Holy. Valdés, De dignitatate, f. 141v, explicitly connects Spain’s possession of the coveted royal title with the spiritual capital associated with Jerusalem.
other conclusion than that Lope’s symbolic hierarchy is rigorously factual: Spain owns Jerusalem, and Jerusalem outshines all other locations on earth.

Spanish claims to possession of the Holy City, like this one, of course butt up against practical walls, such as the material realities of Ottoman dominion in the Levant. And this is perhaps what makes the idea of Spanish sovereignty in Jerusalem so easy to dismiss as something akin to a millenarian pipedream or a triumphalist delusion. The two documents under review in the present article serve to complicate that intuitive reading by confronting us both with the material facts of Spanish entanglements in the eastern Mediterranean, and with the complicated role that Jerusalem played in more practical terms as a site for negotiating interimperial and international relations. In other words, the polemics of possession that I have traced above should be read not just as a locus of narrative or symbolic tension through which words and images manifest (or contest) Spain’s claims. It is, furthermore, a polemics that is equally material, grounded in tangible positionings that are at once territorial, economic, political, and diplomatic in nature. The documents presented below manifest both sides of this metaphoric coin. And while they may do so by speaking in the relatively staid language of diplomacy and state bureaucracy, the sentiments these texts express are basic to many assertions of Jerusalemite kingship in the period. When epic poems, plays, chronicles, or accounts of travel reference the Spanish crown’s legitimate rights to Jerusalem, they may speak instead in the languages of poetry or law, history or performance, but they ultimately commune with the same polemics.

**Early Modern Rivalries and the “Polemics of Possession” over Jerusalem**

Such a polemics resonates perhaps most forcefully in light of the dynamics of national and imperial rivalry which numerous scholars in recent years have considered to be key drivers of cultural
processes in the early modern Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Europe. These are debates in which diverse diplomatic, economic, religious, and political interests interact, overlap, or conflict, playing out at once in the complex contact zones of the eastern Mediterranean and in the spheres of European court culture. The central players in the drama enacted specifically in the documents under consideration here are the crowns of Spain and France, the Vatican, the Franciscans living in the Holy Land, and the Ottoman authorities governing Palestine. The central thesis that these documents defend is that—regardless of the vicissitudes of the past (in which France played a key role in the historical drama of the crusades) or the uncertainties of the present and future (in which Jerusalem remains under Ottoman control)—the Spanish crown is the one and only legitimate sovereign power in the Holy City.

Not surprisingly, such claims are driven by the increasingly acute sacralization of national peoples, territories, and cultures that characterizes the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. As Norman Housley and others have argued, opposing—and fundamentally incompatible—claims to a providentially-ordained superior essence yielded divergent aspirations to embodying new Chosen Peoples in new Holy Lands, imagined by reference to the model Holy Land in Palestine. The inter-national and inter-imperial rivalries that are

22 As Hirschi, *The Origins*, 47, puts it in his work on early modern nationalisms, “Nations are... products and producers of a competitive culture and engage in endless contests about material and symbolic values.” See, for example, Griffin, *English Renaissance*, on the “ethnopoeitic” racialization of Spain and Spaniards in the early modern construction of English nationhood; Fuchs’ various monographs on the tensions of “cultural mimesis,” “emulation,” or early modern “orientalism” as generative of problematic forms of imagined national distinctiveness in the imperial rivalries between Spain, England, and the Ottoman Empire (*Exotic Nation; Mimesis; Passing*); the work of Cañizares-Esguerra in re-framing how we understand the relationship of competition and imitation between Atlantic empires (*Entangled Empires; Nature, Empire, and Nation; Puritan Conquistadors*); the collection curated by Fuchs and Weissbound on Representing Imperial Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean; and Schaub’s *La France espagnole* on Franco-Spanish rivalry as generative of political forms in France. See also the important theoretical work of Doyle on “interimperiality” and Fuchs, “Another Turn” and “Imperium Studies” on “imperium studies.”

underwritten by such narratives logically contributed to reinforcing proprietary claims over the Holy Land itself, and such is precisely the case in the documents under review here.

The specifically Franco-Spanish polemics of possession over Jerusalem given expression here forms part of a wider story of rivalry, tension, conflict, and imitation between France and Spain stemming from the colonial expansion of the Aragonese dynasty across the Mediterranean in the 14th and 15th centuries. When Alfonso the Magnanimous conquered Naples in 1449, he appropriated for the Aragonese dynasty two key claims, both deriving from the legacy of the 14th-century Angevine monarchs of Naples: Robert of Anjou, and his wife, Sancia of Mallorca. On the one hand, Robert was titular king of Jerusalem. On the other hand, Robert and Sancia were foundational benefactors and patrons of what would come to be known as the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, negotiating and financing the purchase of key properties in Palestine that would lay the foundation for the enduring Franciscan presence in the Christian Holy Places from the 14th century onwards. Royal patronage over the Holy Places, along with claims to Jerusalemite kingship, thus formed part and parcel of the Angevine dynasty that Aragon—and later Spain under the Catholic Monarchs—would consider basic to the monarchy’s royal patrimony.


26 These are narratives that are still perpetuated today in Spain through the instrument of the *Boletín Oficial de Estado* (Official State Bulletin). See for example, the following Royal Decree, “Real Decreto 1005/2015,” published in 2015:

Fruto de la presencia histórica de España en Tierra Santa y del intenso esfuerzo económico y diplomático que la Corona española llevó a cabo en el sostenimiento de los santuarios allí presentes, existe hoy en día adscrita al Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, una institución singular en la Administración española como es la Obra Pía de los Santos Lugares.
Spain’s ties to this Angevine-Jerusalemite legacy become a story of specifically Franco-Spanish rivalry at the close of the 15th century, when Charles VIII of France crossed the Pyrenees to assert his own claims to the dynastically fused crowns of Naples and Jerusalem, kicking off the protracted military and diplomatic conflicts of the Italian Wars (1494-1559). For our purposes here, the knotty details of such conflicts are secondary to the story that these documents tell, to which we shall turn presently. For now, what is unquestionably relevant is that in 1510, Pope Julius II moved to settle the matter by issuing a bull formally investing Ferdinand II of Aragon with the throne of the Two Sicilies and Jerusalem. From this point forward—and to the chagrin of French authorities—whether through reference to the investiture of Spain’s monarch with the title ‘king of Jerusalem’ in 1510 or through reference to the earlier bulls of 1342 relating to ties of royal foundation and patronage in the

Ya desde los siglos XIII y XIV los monarcas aragoneses envían las primeras embajadas al Egipto mameluco, para interceder ante el Sultán por los santuarios y sus moradores. En el año 1342 los reyes de Nápoles, Roberto y Sancha, obtienen del Papa Clemente la bula «Gratias Agimus», por la que adquieren los derechos de Patronato sobre algunos santuarios, derechos que con la incorporación de dicho reino a la Corona española, pasan a constituir la base de una reivindicación ininterrumpida de nuestros monarcas sobre los Santos Lugares. Ello se ve fortalecido por la bula de 1510 por la que el Papa Julio II reconoce a Fernando el Católico como rey de Nápoles, heredando por esta vía el título de Rey de Jerusalén que desde entonces han ostentado los reyes de España.

[Fruit of the historical presence of Spain in the Holy Land and of the intense economic and diplomatic effort that the Spanish Crown carried out in sustaining the sanctuaries present there, there exists today, attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, a singular institution within Spain’s Administration, which is the Pious Work of the Holy Places.

Already from the 13th and 14th centuries, the Aragonese monarchs sent the first embassies to Mameluk Egypt in order to intercede before the Sultan on behalf of the sanctuaries and their inhabitants. In the year 1342, the monarchs of Naples, Robert and Sancia, obtained from Pope Clement the Bull ‘Gratias Agimus,’ through which they acquired rights to Patronage over some sanctuaries, rights that with the incorporation of said crown into the Spanish Crown, come to constitute the basis of an uninterrupted claim of our monarchs over the Holy Places. This is reinforced by the Bull of 1510 by which Pope Julius II recognized Ferdinand the Catholic as King of Naples, inheriting by this line the title King of Jerusalem, which the kings of Spain have held since then.]

27 See references in note 11, above.
Christian Holy Places, Spanish claims to the throne of Jerusalem could be justified simply by leaning on the supreme authority of papal endorsement.

In short, from the Spanish perspective circa 1605—when the documents under survey here were produced—Jerusalem not only belonged legally to Spain but Jerusalem was also under the particular protection of the Spanish crown. And those claims, on their face, represent a firm rebuke of French authority in the Holy City. Such are the basic historical and legal assumptions informing the polemics of possession of Jerusalem that is manifested in the 1605 Council of State report and diplomatic communiqué to which we shall now turn our full attention.

The pro rege Dispute of 1604-1605

On October 19, 1604, the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, the Duke of Escalona, wrote to Madrid to raise the alarm over a scandalous petition presented by the French Ambassador, requesting that the Pontiff order the Franciscans in Jerusalem to pray first for the Most Christian King of France ahead of the Catholic King of Spain in their pro rege prayers. The French proposal implies a significant rupture of tradition, as the king of Spain was customarily invoked in the Custody’s colecta prayers not only as the first among the crowns of Europe but, even more significantly, as regem nostrum [our king], the possessive being a nod to the king’s dual claims as king and patron of Jerusalem, outlined above.28 By urging for a papally-mandated inversion of this pro rege order, France is playing at a game that may seem trivial but that in fact goes to the heart of long decades of Franco-Spanish tension over the Holy City.

Two key documents register Spain’s fulminating response to the French proposal. One is a consulta (or document of advice) prepared by the Council of State for Philip III, and the other is a diplomatic dispatch from Philip III to his Ambassador to the Holy

28 Writing in 1955, Cayuela, “Un caso,” notes that this specific pro rege order remained in effect well into the 20th Century, with a small modification to the language to accommodate the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, invoking him not as Rex noster but as Dux noster.
See, informed by the earlier *consulta*. Both the *consulta* and the later dispatch make impassioned pleas for maintaining Spanish preeminence in the Holy Places, invoking weighty historical, devotional, legal, and financial arguments, underwritten by some rather nuclear-option threats.

In what follows I offer a survey of the sweeping arguments that these documents lay out in order to present them as a roadmap for tracing the reasoning that animates the polemics of possession outlined above. These are arguments that surface in varied forms again and again in all manner of cultural artifacts in the period. I suggest that the “many reasons that exist on behalf of Your Majesty, and the customs maintained until now to be preferred above all others, without distinction and collectively” as the *consulta* puts it—offer us in condensed form an index of the key narratives used recurrently in Spanish sources to assert Spanish preeminence in the Holy Places. While the narratives here are articulated directly by the center of power itself, any approach to engaging in the polemics of possession over Jerusalem in the context of imperial Spain necessarily demands engagement with some variation of these same narratives, even in cases where Spanish possession is being challenged or contested in some way. These are the pillars upon which the polemics of possession is built. For ease of analysis, I have reduced the key arguments to four points, which appear enumerated below.

29 The Real Academia Española’s *Diccionario de Autoridades* defines a *consulta* as a “representación, informe, dictámen, parecér, que se hace al Soberano, sobre algun negocio ù otra materia” [“representation, report, judgement, opinion that is made or given to the Sovereign regarding some business or other matter”]. In many regards the *consulta* also reads as minutes of a meeting, with the specific interventions of individual members of the Council recorded. The members of the Council of State comprise the innermost circle of confidence of the monarch, representing a body tasked with crafting royal policy at the highest level. Those mentioned by name who intervene in the present document include the king’s Favorite, the Duke of Lerma, the Count of Olivares (Viceroy of Naples and father of the better known Count-Duke of Olivares who would later replace Lerma as Favorite), the Duke of Sessa, the Duke of Escalona, and the Comendador Mayor of Castile, along with three other members who were present for the meeting but not mentioned by name.

1. On Santiago, the Holy Land, and the Antiquity of Spanish Catholicism

Perhaps the most indirect argument in favor of Spanish preeminence in Jerusalem invoked in these documents is the claim that Spain enjoys older, and hence deeper, ties to Catholicism than France. The Council of State report contends, on this front, that if France’s petition to demand recognition above Spain in Jerusalem is made on the grounds of “antiquity of faith,” this argument cannot hold because “this was first received in Spain before other parts of Europe.” The evangelization of Iberia by the Apostle James (Santiago), alluded to here, of course constituted a core tenet of national mythology in early modern Spain. But what might such a narrative have to do with the specific problem of defending Spanish sovereignty over France in Jerusalem? I would suggest that the figure of Santiago served as a powerful vector for insinuating connections between Spain’s national history and that of the Holy Land in early modern Spanish texts.

As an Apostle of Christ who first came to Iberia to evangelize in the first century and whose body was later miraculously transported to Iberia following the Apostle’s martyrdom, Santiago’s westward journeys inscribe a translation (translatio) from Palestine to Iberia not only of the saint’s mortal remains but also of the materiality and sacred aura of the Holy Land that those remains embody. Such a logic of association is made explicit in Spanish interpretations of Matthew 24:27: “Sicut enim fulgur exit ab oriente, et paret usque in occidentem: ita erit adventus Filii hominis” [“For as lightening cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall

31 Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 167.
32 Rowe, Saint and Nation, especially chapter 1.
also be the coming of the son of man”). For example, in his *Prveva evidente de la predicacion del Apostol Santiago el Mayor en los Reinos de España* (1648), Miguel de Erce Ximénez is paradigmatic in reading this verse as prefiguration of the translation of the word of God directly from the Holy Land to Iberia via Santiago:

> pues la manera que el rayo y relajo, que sale del trueno atraviesan regiones enteras con veloz presteza, i efficacia; assi tambien atravesaron estas dos columnas de la Iglesia, desde el Oriente hasta el Occidente sembrando, i plantando la lei Evangelica. I assi po, dar Jesus Christo a Santiago renombre de hijo del trueno fue dezir que tal avia de venir desde el Oriente a España, parte tan Occidental que lo llamaron fin de la tierra.

[just as the lightening and flash that come from the thunder cross entire regions with swift speed and efficiency, so too did they cross these two columns of the Church, from the East to the West sewing and planting the Gospel law. And this author ponders well, advising that Jesus Christ giving Santiago the name of son of thunder was to say that he was to come from the East to Spain, a place so Western that they called it the end of the earth (ie. Finisterre)].

The westward expansion of the Gospel is thus particularized in a refiguring of Santiago’s evangelizing mission and subsequent *translato*, reading these physical displacements as signs of Spain’s providential preeminence over other Christian places. Spain and Palestine here are the two columns (“dos columnas”) upon which the entire “Gospel law” (“lei Evangelica”) rests, and Santiago as “Son of Thunder” is the embodied vector linking those two sacred poles.

This idea is reflected graphically on the title page of Francisco de Jesús Xodar’s *Cinco discursos con que se confirma la antigua Tradicion que el Apostol Santiago uino i predicò en España* (1612):

34 I cite here from the Vulgate and Douay-Rheims versions.

35 Erce Ximénez, *Prveva evidente*, f. 6r.
Here, a fragment of the same verse from Matthew mentioned above frames an image of Santiago behind which we see a brilliant flash of light representing the holy “fulgur” associated with the Apostle. The allegorical figures of “Religion” and “Spain” that stand on pedestals flanking the title are positioned to align with the trajectory of the Apostle’s sacred lightning bolt. Santiago’s “fulgur” thus originates from the spatial position occupied by *Religio* (“exit ab oriente”), material fountain of the faith in the biblical east, traveling directly from there to illuminate *Hispania* (“paret… in Occidentem”), the sacralized nation that receives the faith before all others.

Such an idea is also evident beyond the confines of hagiographies and apologies of Santiago’s preaching. For example, the westward trajectory of the Apostle is poeticized in a central passage of Lope de Vega’s epic *Isidro: poema castellano* (1599), in which the poem’s protagonist, Isidro, encounters an anonymous
pilgrim who is traveling from Jerusalem to Santiago de Compostela in order to venerate the tomb of the Apostle. Isidro is immediately struck by the sight of the pilgrim, and

Trabaron conversación
del Calvario y de Sión,
de la gran Jerusalén,
del Sepulcro y de Belén,
que Ocaso y Oriente son.

[They struck up conversation
about Calvary and Zion,
and the great Jerusalem,
about the Sepulcher and Bethlehem,
which are West and East.]

The pilgrim’s voyage from east to west, from Jerusalem to Santiago de Compostela, mirrors the biography of Christ himself here, whose metaphorical sun rose in the east of Bethlehem to set in the west of the Sepulcher. At the same time, however, this westward trajectory from Palestine to Iberia further reinscribes the message that Spanish ties to Santiago bring with them weighty historical, spiritual, and material linkages specifically binding Spain to the Holy Places. The pilgrim in Lope’s poem serves to reify the message that the very body of the Apostle in Spain stands as a powerful signifier of the material sacrality of the Holy Places re-placed in Iberia.

In the context of the documents under survey here, the nuance of such a message is perhaps left for the Ambassador in Rome to intuit. The broader point, however, is clear. The Apostle James evangelized Iberia before the word of God ever reached France. It is thus a fact that Spain is not just a better Catholic nation than France but also an older one, with direct historical connections to the biblical east. Such an argument is the least developed of the arguments presented in these documents in favor of Spanish preeminence over France in Jerusalem. But it is an argument that I would suggest demands recognition as an ingredient in the polemics of possession over the Holy Places.

36 Lope de Vega, Isidro, IV, vv. 826-830.
2. **On Spain’s historical commitment to crusading**

Both documents take care to insinuate important connections between historical Holy Land crusading in the eastern Mediterranean and the more local history of sacred warfare—whether formally declared as ‘crusade’ or not—that was waged by Iberian Catholic powers against Iberian Muslims throughout the Middle Ages, in the historical process often problematically labeled as *reconquista*.\(^{37}\) They additionally assert that Spain’s historical commitment to the defense of the faith continues to manifest itself in Spain’s contemporary relationship to the Ottoman empire. On both fronts, Spain’s crusading spirit as bastion and defender of the faith contrasts pointedly with France’s hypocritical actions, framed as undermining the collective interests of Christendom.

The *consulta*, on this front, begins its *refutatio* of French claims by first granting that “some Frenchmen went to the conquest of that Holy Land,” while the king’s instructions to his Ambassador, for their part, do openly admit that “Godfrey of Bouillon of the House of Lorrain won that Kingdom.”\(^{38}\) Nevertheless, the *consulta* subsequently insists that Catholic Spain’s own local crusade against Andalusi Muslims should not be read in any way as inferior to Frankish exploits in the east: “it is no less to the glory of the kings of Spain, ancestors of Your Majesty, having been occupied at the same time ejecting the Moors from these your realms.”\(^{39}\) Beyond this suggested equivalency of Iberian and Holy Land crusading, however, the *consulta* clarifies that while Spain’s engagement in the business of sacred violence is directed against Muslim enemies in

---


defense of Christendom, this is not the case with France. Indeed, as Spain was in the midst of “ejecting the Moors,” at the same time “the French were off invading the English.”

The implication is that France’s claims to the symbolic mantle of crusading nation *par excellence* are at once false (because Spain was engaged in equally meritorious conflicts in Iberia) and hollow (because unlike Spain, France used violence against fellow Christians even as Spain was battling on behalf of the faith).

This latter problem of French hypocrisy is cast in even sharper relief in describing the differential relationships that Spain and France maintain with the Ottoman Empire:

> Your Majesty and your progenitors not once but many times have taken up arms against the Turks on behalf of the faith and in defense of those who profess it, while those of France have had peace with them and taken advantage of their forces, on occasion against Christians.

The Franco-Ottoman alliance alluded to here serves as yet another potent argument against France and in favor of Spain’s crusading *bona fides*. The *consulta* makes plain that whatever claims France might have had to a glorious past of Holy Land conquest have been rendered moot by France’s dangerous dalliance with the enemy in the present, which, again, has also brought with it contemptible acts of violence against fellow Christians. Spain is thus positioned in the *consulta* on a moral highground that lends legitimacy to Spanish pretensions to Jerusalem. The original crusaders, the Franks, are now sleeping with the enemy and are in league against the faith. In a final dig against France—and reaffirmation of Spain’s superior commitment to the idea of crusade—the *consulta* further suggests that if Spain were not so burdened by other wars in defense of the

---


41 In *De dignitate*, Valdés makes similar arguments. See Leahy, “Making the Case.” See also Devereux, “The ruin” for an example of similar anti-French logic being deployed in Spanish sources in the context of the Italian Wars.


43 On the strategic alliance of France and the Otoman empire, see Heath, “Unholy Alliance” and Malcom, *Useful Enemies*. 
faith, perhaps she would finally be able to undertake a new crusade to restore Jerusalem once and for all to the Latin West: “if God were pleased to unburden Your Majesty of the wars and expenses of other parts, you would be able to proceed further along in that matter.”

As with arguments about the superlative antiquity of Spanish Catholicism, the narrative that Spain has always been committed to crusade, even as France faltered by allying with the Turks or attacking fellow Christians, is a contentious narrative grounded on specifically Spanish interpretations of the national past. The claim works doubly by effacing France’s own crusading history while insinuating key connections between the crusading endeavors of the east and Spain’s own crusading activity in the past, present, and imagined future, not only in Iberia but also across the Mediterranean against the Turks and even in Palestine. Such arguments contribute significant ideological ammunition in Spain’s early modern polemics of possession over Jerusalem.

3. On Spanish royal patronage of the Holy Places

Arguments related to Spanish patronage and protection of the Holy Places, to which we shall now turn, are rooted as much in the quantifiable, material domains of finance, diplomacy, and material exchange as they are in the more squidgy terrain of contentious nationalist historiography. The polemics of possession of Jerusalem overflows the bounds of narrative imaginary here, sinking its roots in contemporary connections between Spain and the eastern Mediterranean that are significantly more tangible. In highlighting this more material, pragmatic element of the polemics of possession, I do not intend to imply that exclusivist Spanish claims to patronage over the Holy Places are any less contentious or propagandistic than Spain’s better-known pretensions to “universal monarchy,” which Betsy Wright justly highlights as a key component of Spain’s broader “textual economy built around the Jerusalem theme.”

I would insist, in fact, that both of these narratives are

44 Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 167.

45 Wright, From Pilgrimage to Patronage, 91-92.
intimately related in that both claims to patronage over the Holy Places and to “universal monarchy” as symbolized in the throne of Jerusalem ultimately serve as powerful signifiers of Spanish Catholic grandeur and supremacy in the period. Nevertheless, I would argue that Spain’s claims to patronage over the Holy Places are uniquely eloquent in gesturing toward the overtly material, real-world implications of Spanish claims over Jerusalem more generally. Such claims are complicated and interesting precisely because they both commune with, and exceed, the bald mythologizing that we are accustomed to locating in Spanish claims to universal monarchy, or to the related ideas—surveyed in points one and two above—of Spain’s superior credentials as a crusading nation or Spain’s preeminence as first Christian nation in Europe. Unlike these latter narratives, Spanish pretensions to patronage over the Holy Places demand that we acknowledge at once the unfamiliar materiality of Spanish connections to Jerusalem in the early modern period and the surprisingly concrete ways in which such connections could interact with Spain’s practical strategies in the context of geopolitics in Europe and the Mediterranean.

The documents under survey here are unequivocal in their insistence on the protagonism of Spain as principle benefactor and defender of the Christian Holy Places in Palestine:

Your Majesty expends a great quantity of money in the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily in order to sustain the friars that inhabit that Holy Land, and in repairs to the Holy Places of those parts, and this, every year, aside from other miscellaneous alms. […]

Your Majesty with his alms and generosity sustains all those Holy Places of the Holy Land. […]

Those Holy Places of that Holy Land have been sustained for many centuries up to now with the alms and generosity of the kings, my progenitors. Particularly ever since the Catholic Monarchs and, after my-great grandparents, by the Emperor my grandfather and by the King my father, who are in heaven, and now I sustain them in the same way.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 167-168.
In mounting this defense of the preeminence of Spanish protection over the Holy Places, the consulta is explicit in rebutting the suggestion that the French “had been the reason that the said religious today possess and have their convent and other holy places there, under the protection of the Most Christian King, to whom they turn for all their needs.” The royal genealogy of “many centuries” of “progenitors” all uniformly dedicated to maintaining and upholding the Holy Places positions the Spanish crown as exclusive inheritor of the foundational legacy of the Neapolitan monarchs Robert of Anjou and Sancia of Mallorca, an authority that lies at the origins of the Franciscan and Catholic presence in the biblical east and that continues to represent the only Catholic presence in early modern Palestine.

The “generosity and alms” to which these documents refer appear archived in the financial registers and shipping inventories of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, and they also appear substantiated by contemporary accounts penned by Franciscan friars living in the Holy Land in the early modern period. Financial records from the 16th and 17th centuries indicate that a sizeable majority of the Custody’s financial support was in fact received in the form of cash donations from the Spanish monarch. Spain was also responsible for important capital investments in the Custody, such as the reedification of the cupula of the Church of the Holy

---

47 Italic is my own. Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 166.
48 For transcriptions of relevant documents, see Garcia Barriuso, España, 87-104, 157-76, and 219-30.
49 Two particularly rich sources of archival documentation on this front are the Archivo de la Obra Pía (AOP) section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) in Madrid and, especially, the Historical Archive of the Franciscan Custody in Jerusalem. In the latter archive, the section of “Procura Generale” includes manuscript registers of donations received in Jerusalem from across Europe, documented by year by the Order’s Procure in the Custody, which tended to be a Spanish friar. Of particular relevance are “Condotte” numbers 5, 6, 8, and 9, which cover the years 1615-1909. On these documents, see Quecedo, “Cooperación económica de España,” Cooperación económica internacional; “Influencia diplomática y económica,” as well as García Barriuso, España, 189-200, 219-30, and 281-6. Quecedo also transcribes and occasionally translates sections from these same “Condotte.” See also the “Libro de las cuentas de la Procura general,” which covers the years 1665-1673 in the VVAA section of the Custody Archive.
Sepulcher in 1557. Spanish donations to the Franciscan Custody further included a steady contribution of Franciscan personnel as well as supplies and material goods like candles, wine, grain, and oil, and objects of cult including liturgical vessels, altar cloths, candelabras, and vestments, which invariably appear adorned with the royal insignia of the Spanish crown.

It is on the basis of such evidence that Spain offers its most rhetorically explosive argument in the these documents:

> if Your Majesty were to lift his hand, of necessity they would have to abandon those Holy Places because they would not be able to conserve nor maintain them, with which the piety and religion that is exercised there would cease. […]

> Your Majesty should order Escalona [the Ambassador] that on your behalf he tell His Holiness that if he listens to this request [made by France], [Your Majesty] will let the religious of Jerusalem suffer, abstaining from giving them the alms that you are accustomed to giving.

The threat of retaliation implied here is palpable. If the Pope acquiesces to the French request to recognize France ahead of Spain, then Spanish support for the Christian Holy Places and the Franciscans who administer them will dry up, and if that were to happen, the Holy Places themselves would surely be doomed, falling

50 García Barriuso, _España_, 157-75 provides an overview of the extensive archival material relating to this episode, including reproductions and transcriptions of relevant documents. See also an epistle of Bonifacio Stefano de Ragusa, incorporated into his _Liber de perenni cultu Terrae Sanctae_ of 1573 in the 19th-century edition of the work, 278-84. Eiján, _Documentos_, 25-29. Another major building project, the construction of the lead roof of the Church of the Nativity, is attributed to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. Arce, _Documentos_, 65.

51 Aside from the regular presence of Spanish friars serving in the Holy Places, of particular importance here is the naming of Spanish Commissaries and Procurators, a process over which the Spanish crown sought to exercise control. See García Barriuso, _España_, 261-336.

52 See Arce, _Documents_, 166, 184-90 and García Barriuso, _España_, 205-17.

53 I would like to express my gratitude here to Fr. Stéphane Milovich for allowing me to view a number of these latter items in person in the convent of Saint Savior in Jerusalem, including an imposingly ornate, six-foot tall Eucharistic baldachin of bejeweled silver and gold featuring the Habsburg bicephalous eagle with the Spanish royal arms on its breast and the name ‘PHILIPVS III’ at the base. For images of pertinent objects, see Hoyaux, _Trésor du Saint-Sépulcre_, 119-49.

54 Leahy and Tully, _Jerusalem Afflicted_, 167.
into the hands of the malevolent Muslim and Jewish antagonists that populate early modern Franciscan narratives centered in the Holy Land. On a personal level, this passage has always struck me as reminiscent of the kind of stereotypical mobster extortion found in popular film: ‘it would be a real shame, Your Holiness, if something were to happen to your Holy Places.’ The threat is breathtaking in its implications, not only for the soft power that Spain seeks to exercise here equally against France and against the authority of the Vatican in defense of Spanish prerogatives in the Holy Land, but also for the way in which the Holy Places themselves are instrumentalized as a bargaining chip. If we reduce this formulation to its essence, Spain is arguing that it would prefer to surrender the Holy Places to the Ottoman authorities in Palestine rather than assent to allowing the friars in Jerusalem to pray for the king of France ahead of the king of Spain. Spain’s seriousness in defending its stake in Jerusalem here is drilled home in a final diplomatic threat to sever ties with the Vatican if the Pope decides to agree to the French petition: “if His Holiness commits any novelty, this would be a case for Your Majesty to make a great demonstration, even recalling your Ambassador from Rome.” As these examples make clear, Spain unwaveringly adopts scorched-earth tactics in rebutting French pretensions in order to defend Spanish prerogatives in the Holy City.

Beyond the particulars of this exchange, the Spanish claims expressed in these documents ultimately point both to the material entanglement of the Spanish crown with the Franciscan Custody in Jerusalem, and the power that that relationship itself represents as a tool for negotiating international relationships between Spain, France, and the Vatican. Spain’s economic and material ties to the Holy Places are leveraged here in order to negotiate a diplomatic and political victory for Spain over France at the Papal court in Rome, which would result in a reaffirmation by the Pope of Spanish

55 Examples are hyper-abundant. See Almia, Carta; Alzedo Avellaneda, Jerusalen caitiva and Memorial; Aranda, Verdadera informacion; Calahorra, Chronic; and Quaresmius, Ierosolymae afflictiae.

56 Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 168.
preeminence over France in Jerusalem. We are far afield here from the vagaries of simply declaring that Spanish Catholicism is older than French Catholicism or that Spanish crusading is more laudable than French crusading. Here the concrete trans-Mediterranean flow of material, goods, letters, and people between Palestine and Spain lends a pragmatic and tangible character to Spanish assertions of an intimate connection to the Holy Land. This entanglement of the Custody and the Crown is further predicated on Papal acknowledgement of Spain’s pretensions to the mantle of royal protection over the Holy Places, first recognized in the foundational bulls of 1342 through which the Angevine role in the establishment of the Custody is acknowledged, and which the Crowns of Aragon and later Spain would make their own. In short, the arguments articulated here around the notion of Spanish patronage over the Holy Places are some of the most recurrent and potent arguments deployed in texts in the period to insinuate Spanish connections between Spain and Jerusalem.

4. On Spanish sovereignty in Jerusalem

Among the “many reasons that exist on behalf of Your Majesty… to be preferred above all others, without distinction and collectively,” the simplest and also most unassailable claim that these documents present is the plain fact that the king of Spain is in legal possession of the title “King of Jerusalem.” This claim is rearticulated as a widely-acknowledged fact throughout both documents:

Your Majesty is titled king of Jerusalem, and that kingdom is yours, and in your own house it is unjust that anyone should be preferred over you against your will […] being the good right of Your Majesty so well known, it would be an affront that His Holiness would commit against Your Majesty in allowing novelty in this, and [Your Majesty would have] a just complaint in taking offense […] although Godfrey of Bouillon of the House Lorrain conquered Jerusalem, Your Majesty has the just title of that Kingdom. Thus it is good that our Majesty order Escalona [the Ambassador] to tell His Holiness that what France has hinted at wanting to try in this place is the same as asking that

57 Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 166.
in Your Majesty’s other kingdoms they pray naming the King of France. Because this is so beyond reason, [the Duke of Escalona] should not inform anyone because Your Majesty will not permit that this be discussed because you are legitimate king. […]

For he [the Pope] knows that that Kingdom is mine by just and renowned titles, and he knows the insult that is done in hearing a request that goes against this. […]

I would take anything that might be attempted in praying there for any other temporal prince to be the same as pretending it in the other kingdoms and states that, by the grace of God, I possess, and I would take offense in the same way to any such novelty that might arise. […]

I am assured of the holy and prudent mind of His Blessedness, which will completely disregard that petition, as its exorbitance and inappropriateness merit. 58

As both documents insist, Spain’s “just” rights to the throne of Jerusalem are widely recognized by competent authorities, including the Vatican itself, responsible for investing Spain with the title King of Jerusalem in the first place. Given that Jerusalem is thus sovereign Spanish territory, it only makes sense that the subjects living there should revere the king of Spain preeminently as their only sovereign. Are subjects living in Manila or Mexico or Milan or Madrid called upon to invoke the king of France? Of course not. The same logic applies here. Jerusalem is indistinguishable from such places because it, too, falls under the authority of the Spanish crown and is simply part of sovereign Spanish territory.

What is perhaps most notable about such claims is that they locate effective Spanish sovereignty in Jerusalem in the present-day. The temporal qualification of the claim here—the insistence that the king of Spain is already the undisputed king of Jerusalem now—operates in clear contradistinction equally to the popular discourses of Millenarian prophecy or calls for crusade, 59 which both locate effective Spanish kingship in Jerusalem in the abstractions of an unachieved providential future, and the similarly popular royal

58 Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 166-168.

mythology of the king of Spain as inheritor of the biblical kings David and Salomon, a discourse that in connecting the Crown to a remote biblical lineage locates royal ties to the Holy Land in the misty imaginary of national deep time. Thanks to the 1510 papal investiture of Spain with the title, Spain’s pretensions rest on firm legal footing as a rigorously contemporary reality that is simply beyond dispute. What is further noteworthy here is Spain’s insistence that the Pope himself knows this to be true. Like Lope’s casual invocation of Philip III’s title as king of Jerusalem, these documents eloquently manifest a shared horizon of expectations in which the throne of Jerusalem is self-evidently Spanish.

Conclusions

The four arguments outlined in the preceding pages are not the only ones used to assert connections between Spain and Jerusalem in the early modern period. For example, claims to a universal Christian monarchy with Spain ruling from Jerusalem over a united global Church, as foretold in prophetic discourse, are very common. No less common are narratives linking Spain’s monarchy to the heritage of kings David and Solomon, rendering the king of Spain inheritor of a throne possessed by his biblical ancestors. Nevertheless, the arguments surveyed here complement those better-studied phenomena in key ways by furnishing a far more robust array of points of contact linking Spain and Jerusalem. The narratives surveyed here insinuate historical, economic, and legal connections tying Spain to the Holy Land in concrete, ostensibly verifiable ways, stretching from the first-century evangelization of Iberia by the Apostle James, to Spain’s engagement in autoctonous holy war and crusade throughout the middle ages, to Spain’s firm embrace of the legacy of the throne of Naples, which implies both measurable, material practices of royal patronage over the Christian

60 The most notable expression of this idea relates to associations between the Escorial palace, constructed under Philip II, and the biblical Temple of Solomon. The patio of the imposing palace includes statues of David and Solomon, who stand as forebears of the dynasty. See Lazure, “Perceptions’ and “Possessing”; and Tanner, The Last Descendant, chapter 9. A particularly succinct expression of this idea can be found in Luis de Góngora’s sonnet “Sacros, altos, dorados capiteles.” On this, Chaffee-Sorace, “Salomón Segundo.” See also Villalpando, In Ezechielem explanationes et Apparatus Vrbes, ac Templi Hierosolymitani and De postrema Ezechielis prophetae visione, dedicated respectively to Philip II and Philip III (in El templo de Salomón).
Holiest Places and also legally-certifiable possession of the throne of Jerusalem itself up to the present day.

In early modern Spain, the polemics of possession over Jerusalem is consistently expressed in and through the arguments outlined above. When Philip III sends a massive silver lamp to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher bearing the arms of Spain, that gesture not only expresses private royal devotion to the Holy Places; it also serves to publicly manifest a concrete assertion of patronage over and possession of those very sacred places where the lamp will hang.\textsuperscript{61} When Spanish coins in the period are minted bearing the heraldic marker of the kingdom of Jerusalem this gesture visually and materially manifests Spain’s possession of the throne of Jerusalem for all those who globally interact with that currency.\textsuperscript{62} When López Pinciano poeticizes a pilgrimage of the great national hero of reconquest mythology, Pelayo, sending him to Jerusalem where he receives a vision of his providential mission to “reparar los daños / De la misera nacion destruyda” [“repair the damage / of the miserable destroyed nation”] while kneeling literally within the Holy Sepulcher itself, the poet is at once reifying the image of the Spanish royal body as belonging within that place as proper and natural to it, and also mediating Spain’s local history of sacred warfare against Islam through the paradigm of Holy Land crusade, even drawing explicit parallels between the “santa cueva” [“holy cave”] where Christ was laid to rest and the holy cave from which the reconquest was mythically launched at Covadonga.\textsuperscript{63} When Franciscans like Bernardino Amico, Blas de Buyza, or Antonio del Castillo dedicate descriptions of the Holy Land to the king of Spain, they do so with the expectation that their works will remind the monarch of his royal obligations to continue protecting and supporting those Holy Places, and in view of the fact that there is nothing more appropriate than

\textsuperscript{61} For contemporary sources describing this imposing gift, delivered to Jerusalem in 1615, see García Barriuso, \textit{España}, 216-217.

\textsuperscript{62} See Leahy, “‘Dineros en cruzados.’”

\textsuperscript{63} López Pinciano, \textit{El Pelayo}. See, for example, ff. 2r-3v and 145v.
to give the king of Jerusalem a textualized simulacrum of the Holy City he already possesses. When Villalpando sends a scale model of the city of Jerusalem to Philip II, he similarly makes possible a public performance of the king’s possession of that same city. When Franciscans like Franciscus Quaresmius and Baldassar de Roma call on the king of Spain to undertake a new crusade, they do so by explicitly invoking the monarch’s royal obligations to embrace holy war both as patron and sovereign of Jerusalem.

Examples such as these could be easily multiplied. What all of these examples share is a commitment to polemicizing, to staking claims, to manifesting the myriad ways in which Spain belongs to Jerusalem. They each put Spanish claims to work for different purposes, pursuing different objectives, addressing different audiences, but they each take as their point of departure a core set of suppositions about Spain’s relationship to Jerusalem. The broad arguments outlined in the documents surveyed above cut a wily through-line across the diverse variety of cultural artifacts centered on Jerusalem in the period that these last examples embody. Thanks to the documents produced in the context of the pro rege dispute of 1604-1605, the act of naming these arguments allows us to map the rhizomatic connections that give structure more broadly to Spain’s early modern polemics of possession over Jerusalem. These arguments ultimately allow us to see and recognize the dense, unruly network of connected texts and artifacts that until now has only been glimpsed in selective, fragmentary ways.

Before concluding, we should ask one final question: why does any of this matter? I would argue, in closing, that the

64 Amico, Trattato; Blas de Buyza, Relacion; and Castillo, El devoto peregrino.

65 Pedrosa, Relacion.

66 See Leahy and Tully, Jerusalem Afflicted, 89-159.

67 I have not addressed counter-claims to the Spanish position in the present article. These come from diverse quarters, including Jewish and morisco authors writing in Spanish, as well as rival Christian authorities such as France and Venice, and even from Spanish and Italian Franciscans who thread a delicate balance between recognizing Spanish royal authority in Jerusalem and making plain the patent limits of that authority in ways that are sometimes critical of the crown.
arguments described here above all serve to reinforce a dominant imaginary of imperial and national exultation and supremacy that hinges on powerful ideas of historical Spanish Catholic purity, ideas that we should recognize at once as religious or cultural and also as powerfully racialized and racializing. From this vantage, the very invention of historical notions of what Spain and Spanishness are in no small measure traces a path through the Holy City. Through Jerusalem, Spanish Catholic identity is defined in opposition to diverse internal and external others: Muslims and Jews, moriscos, the diverse indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. It is Catholic Spain and Catholic Spain alone that owns and protects the literal spaces of earthly Jerusalem, and it is also Catholic Spain and Catholic Spain alone that is tasked with gatekeeping the spiritual entrance to the celestial Jerusalem. Indeed, the global Catholic colonial-imperial machine is positioned often as arbiter of who belongs and who does not belong within the Holy City, both here on earth and also in heaven. Spain’s pretensions to exclusive possession of Jerusalem can thus work equally to imagine the violent exclusion or destruction of certain groups, such as Muslims and Jews and their descendants both across the Mediterranean and in Iberia, and also to imagine a mediated or subordinated colonial position for groups folded within Spain’s sovereign body by means of inquisitorial control, territorial conquest, slavery, and/or forced conversion. As we have seen, these same ideas can also serve to powerfully assert Spain’s essentialized superiority both over and against Christian rivals, such as France or Venice. And Spanish ties to Jerusalem themselves can operate as a locus for negotiating Spain’s geopolitical position in Europe and across the Mediterranean. As these multiple fronts suggest, the polemics of possession that I have traced in the preceding pages encompasses, and is generative of, radically diverse practices and experiences in the early modern world whose reach we have only begun to grasp.

Chad Leahy is Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Denver. He is author of Jerusalem Afflicted: Spain, Quaresmius, and the Idea of a 17th-
Century Crusade (Routledge, 2019) and is currently completing a monograph entitled Jerusalem and the Early Modern Invention of Spain. His research has appeared in journals including Anuario Lope de Vega, Bulletin of Spanish Studies, Cervantes, Criticón, Hispanic Review, Lemir, Revista de Literatura Medieval, Romance Notes, Translat Library, and Symposium.

Bibliography


Almia, Salvador de. Carta qve el Padre Predicador fray Salvador de Almia, Hijo de la Santa Prouincia de Cantabria de la Orden de nuestro Serafico Padre San Francisco, escribe al Padre Commissario General Fray Antonio del Castillo, desde la Santa Ciudad de Ierusalen a 23. de Nouiembre de 1656. en la qual le dà razon del estado miserable, y graue peligro en que se han hallado los Hijos de nuestro Padre San Francisco, y los Santos Lugares donde nació, y padeció el Salvador de las Almas, y están oy en día, si no son socorridos de las limosnas de los Fieles Christianos. N.p.: n.p., 1656.

Alzedo Avellaneda, Mauricio de. Irevalen cavtiva, y motivos sobre sv destruicion: svcessos, y entrega de los Santos Lugares de Palestina, a la Serafica Religion de S. Francisco, y el directo dominio que sobre Ellos tiene sv Rey y Señor nvestro, la Magestad Catolica de Filipo Qvarto Rey de las Españas, y Emperador del Nuevo Mvndo. Discvrsos en declaracion de cvan aceta es à Dios la limosna que hazen los Fieles a su S. Sepulcro. Madrid: Maria de Quiñones, 1642.

Alzedo Avellaneda, Mauricio de. Memorial en favor de los misteriosos lugares de Ierusalen, y tierra Santa, y en recuerdo de su socorro, para su conservacion. Madrid: Iuan Gonzalez, 1630.


Aranda, Antonio de. Verdadera informacion de la Tierra Sancta. Toledo: Juan de Ayala, 1537.


Buyza, Blas de. Relacion nueva, verdadera, y copiosa, de los sagrados lugares de Jerusalen, y Tierrasanta. De las misericordias divinas, que en ellos resplanden. De los muchos trabajos, y afligiones, que por conservarlos en piedad Christiana padecen los Religiosos del Serafico Padre san Francisco, que los habitan: y de los grandes gastos que tienen con los Turcos. Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martin, 1622.

Calahorra, Juan de. Chronica de la Provincia de Syria, y Tierra Santa de Gervsalen. Contiene los progressos, que en ella ha hecho la Religion Serafica, desde el Año 1219. hasta el de 1632. Madrid: Iuan Garcia Infançon, 1684.


Doussinague, José María. *La política internacional de Fernando el Católico.* Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1944.


Erce Ximénez, Miguel de. *Previa evidente de la predicacion del Apostol Santiago el Mayor en los Reinos de España.* Madrid: Alonso de Paredes, 1648.


Jensen, Kurt V. “Crusading at the End of the World. The Spread of the Idea of Jerusalem after 1099 to the Baltic Sea Area and to the Iberian Peninsula.” *Crusading on the*


López de Cañete, Cristobal. Compendio de los pronosticos y baticinios antigos y modernos que publican la declinacion de la secta de Mahoma y libertad Hiervsalem. Granada: Francisco Heylan, 1630.


Milhou, Alain. “La chauve-souris, le nouveau David et le roi caché (trois images de


Navarro, Francisco. Discurso sobre la coniunción máxima, que fue en Deziembre del Año 1603. En el qual se pronosticaron los felicísimos sucesos y victorias que señala al Rey Don Phelipe III, nuestro señor, y a su gente Sagitaria, que son los Españoles. Valencia: Juan Crisóstomo Garriz, 1604.


Xodar, Francisco de Jesús. *Cinco discursos con que se confirma la antigua Tradicion que el Apostol Santiago uino i predicó en España*. Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1612.
Explanations and Justifications of War
in the British Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century

Roger B. Manning
Cleveland State University

The influence of Machiavelli on English and Scottish political discourse can be detected not just on politicians and military men, but also among clerics and the well educated elite—even when they do not cite him directly. In England and Scotland, as in mainland European countries, Machiavellian discourse placed war at the center of discussion. Some justified their bellicosity in the secularized language of Roman historians and Italian humanists and thought that since war was the main theme of history and could be regarded as an inevitable phenomenon, England might as well profit by it. This necessarily brought England into conflict with the Spanish in the Low Countries, on the high seas and in the Indies. The discourse of aristocratic swordsmen also reflected the influence of Tacitus, but in order to recruit followers for their military adventures, they looked to public places such as the London theaters, which produced plays about the military heroes of classical antiquity as well as relying on conscription from the county trained bands. While aristocratic swordsmen saw foreign wars as an opportunity to win martial fame and fortune, popular discourse had not yet been secularized to the same degree, and divines and preachers were called upon to help provide justifications for war in religious terms that the commonalty could better understand.

The ambition of the world is such that it is impossible for a realm or dominion long to continue in quietness and safeguard where the defense of the sword and martial feats of war is not exercised and practiced with discipline.

Giles Clayton, The Approved Order of Martiall Discipline, sig. A3v.¹

Great empires rarely enjoy peace. If there is no foreign foe to engage them, their sword is turned upon themselves; and like healthy bodies free from external menace, they collapse from their own excess of strength.

Sir Thomas Craig, De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus, 470-1.

War is a kind of execution of public justice and a means of maintaining right.


War was endemic in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; it dominated men’s lives, and it also came to be regarded as inevitable.² It was thought to be ordained by Divine Providence because of man’s sinfulness, and was therefore part of the human condition. War was also a theater for demonstrating courage and

¹ Compare Lupton, A Warre-like Treatise of the Pike, 16: “’Tis hard for a state to be long in safety when the helmet and the musket are cashiered. ... How quickly will effeminacy and cowardice surprise a nation without exercises or employments for war.”

² Hale, “Armies, Navies and the Art of War,” 171; Nolan, “The Militarization of the Elizabethan State,” 391-420; Carlton, This Seat of Mars, xvi-xviii, 63-4; Manning, War and Peace in the Western Political Imagination, 184-86.
validating honor, but these chivalric concepts were being overtaken by a view of war as an instrument of the dynastic state with specific political and military objectives.\(^3\) Despite the atypical examples of James VI and I and Charles I, who tried to avoid armed conflict, other European monarchs and their governments were organized for making war, and this functional disposition did much to shape the early modern state. War had become a powerful institution in the seventeenth century—sometimes more powerful than monarchy itself—such as when Albrecht von Wallenstein raised armies from his own resources and made policy independently of the king-emperor, but generally armies became better disciplined in the seventeenth century and more amenable to royal control.\(^4\) Kings who made war, led their soldiers into battle and acquired martial glory continued to be more highly regarded than those who valued and worked for peace, and this remained true to the end of the eighteenth century. As long as diplomacy remained in its formative stage, war continued to be the usual way of settling disputes and provided the more plausible form of discourse for those bred in courts and camps.\(^5\) Certainly, in England, diplomacy was a language more suited to gownsmen and clerics, and just as swordsmen did not regard it as appropriate to have their disputes adjudicated by gownsmen, so it was more usual to settle disputes between monarchs and republics by resort to arms.

**The climate of war**

During the period from 1585 (when an English expedition under the command of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, went to the aid of the Dutch in their struggle to be free of Spain) until 1702 (the death of the soldier-king William II and III), Europe experienced only three years of peace. The Three Kingdoms of England, Ireland

---

3 Clark, *Waging War*, 11-12.


5 Black (ed.), “Introduction,” in *The Origins of War in Early Modern Europe*, 10. Cf. also Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, ch. 1 for an argument concerning why war was not an extension of politics by other means in the early modern period.
and Scotland were at war with foreign enemies for half of that time, and the English conquest of Ireland was more or less continuous. However, even during periods of formal peace or truce, such as the Nine Years Truce during the Eighty Years War or the brief cessation of hostilities intervening between the Nine Years War and the War of Spanish Succession, as Thomas Hobbes observed in the middle of the century, the certain knowledge that an enemy intended to make war upon another state constituted a climate of war that cannot be considered a state of peace.

Consequently, peace was difficult to imagine during the seventeenth century. Outside of a few humanist scholars of the sixteenth century and certain sects such as the later Anabaptists and the Quakers, few people questioned the legitimacy of rulers settling their disputes by war. Discussion was generally limited to examining the criteria for a just war, and most Protestant and Catholic divines upheld the idea that the Lord was a God of Battles in the Hebrew mode.

A distinction between public and private war only began to emerge in about the middle of the sixteenth century, and as long as monarchs and martialists viewed international relations in terms of personal honor and glory, the distinction was bound to remain fuzzy. Given the widespread fashion for dueling—often involving multiple combats—it should cause no surprise that wars were so frequent and numerous as to make it difficult for historians to count them—especially if one adds in civil conflicts. As was the case with the feud and the duel, the chief reason for monarchs going to war was to seek revenge or redress for the injured rights of the aggrieved party.


8 Which may, perhaps, explain why Lowe’s Imagining Peace, stops in the early Elizabethan period.


10 Manning, Swordsmen, 1-8, 141-244.

11 Redlich, De Praedia Militari: Looting and Booty, 1500-1800, 2-3.
Nor did these wars undertaken by princes necessarily displease their subjects. Military events and battles such as the Armada or the taking of Boulogne in 1544 remained an important part of popular memory in England. The English people took pride in the victories of their rulers over foreign nations, and these also included the victories achieved by the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, if almanacs are any guide to public opinion. References to rebellions successfully quashed also served as a reminder of the king’s ability to defeat his enemies. War generally enjoyed popular support in Elizabethan England if it was fought to repel foreign invasions or to support the Protestant cause.\textsuperscript{12}

Although theories justifying the right of the nobility to resist unjust, tyrannical or ineffectual rulers persisted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most political theorists, such as the Flemish Justus Lipsius and William Fulbeck, the Elizabethan legal writer and playwright, insisted that only the prince possessed the authority to declare war. Sir Robert Filmer stated in his \textit{Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings} (1680) that the authority to declare war was one of the most important attributes of sovereignty. Lipsius, who brought a more ethical concern to these matters than Machiavelli, thought that the just causes of war were limited to the invasion of one’s country, defense of religious faith and the common security of the realm. Peace was the purpose of war, but peace could not be enjoyed without making war, and a people must always be prepared to go to war to enjoy peace.\textsuperscript{13}

Swordsmen continued to regard the pursuit of war as necessary to preserve the privileges of the aristocracy and to provide a theater for the demonstration of noble honor and valor. Despite the persistence of such chivalric values, however, they did not employ the language of chivalry to justify war. The justification of war to those

\textsuperscript{12} Capp, \textit{Astrology and the Popular Press}, 218; Younger, \textit{War and Politics in the Elizabethan Counties}, 59-61.

outside of their own estate was something which military aristocrats usually were prepared to leave to the numerous divines who were bellicose enough to undertake this task. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the amateur swordsman, who saw war as a chivalric sport, was gradually being displaced by the professional martialist who regarded war as an occupation. Professional soldiers were accused of trying to keep wars going because they did not like being out of employment.\textsuperscript{14} For their part, the martialists adopted Machiavellian language to argue for military preparedness and the special status of the military profession as a means of preserving the peace and integrity of the political community. One of the main thrusts of Machiavellian thought was to make war once again a central concern of political thought and civic life. Basing his ideas upon Roman practice as discussed by Cicero, Machiavelli was an advocate of preemptive war. This meant that the ultimate decision of when to declare war was in the hands of the prince. For their part, the martialists never tired of repeating the maxim that the exercise of arms kept a nation from becoming soft.\textsuperscript{15} Among the English military writers who disseminated Machiavellian ideas on the justification of war were Thomas and Dudley Digges and Barnaby Rich. The former two were fruitful inventors of aphorisms such as “no prince or state doth gain or save by giving small entertainment unto soldiers” and “war [is] sometimes less hurtful and more to be wished in a well governed state than peace.” The latter was justified by arguing in a Tacitean vein that

> it may appear that in a just and good quarrel, which cannot likely want a war wisely managed, [it] cannot but be infinitely profitable. I think that there is none but honors his king, wishes well his country or desires fame, but will prefer the shedding of blood to procure his king’s honor, his country’s safety or his own reputation before the sordid sparing, lazy living or foolish delaying... of blind men.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Hathaway, “Blood is their Argument: Men of War and Soldiers in Shakespeare and Others,” 84-5; Manning, \textit{An Apprenticeship in Arms}, ch. 7.


\textsuperscript{16} Thomas and Dudley Digges, \textit{Foure Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses... concerning Militarie Discipline}, 1, 96-8.
The exposure of the educated classes of the British Isles to Roman history in the works of writers such as Tacitus and Seneca also inculcated republican sentiments, and it led to a characteristically Neo-Stoic acceptance of violence and war as an inevitable part of life. Seneca speaks of life as warfare and praises athletics and the exercise of arms as a worthy preparation for war: “valiant soldiers glory in their wounds, and joyfully show the blood that runneth from them, if spent in a good cause.” The classical Roman concept of peace assumed that peace must be preceded by victory which assumes the existence of war. Roman coins often depict Pax linked to Victoria and wielding a sword and shield or displaying battle trophies. Peace was something to be imposed, hence the motto *Mars pacifer*. The views expressed by Roman poets do not differ significantly from the values expressed by the mottos on Roman coins. The Roman way of war, according to Machiavelli, was to send an overwhelming force against the enemy to secure a decisive victory quickly, and then plant colonies to insure peace. Machiavelli himself had little experience of warfare and had never served in a large campaign, yet war and the military world are at the heart of civic life in his writings and promoted civic virtue and patriotism. The responsibility for promoting the exercise of arms fell on both the prince and the citizenry, and the defense of the state could not be left to mercenary soldiers. Having surveyed all of the empires of the ancient world, Leonard and Thomas Digges concluded that the possession of or lack of martial skills explains their success in establishing monarchies and empires— or their failure in the same endeavors.

Barnaby Rich, a veteran of the Marian and Elizabethan wars


18 Hutton, *Themes of Peace in Renaissance Poetry*, 17, 303.


in France, Ireland and the Netherlands, generally preferred to leave
detailed explanations of the justification of war to the divines, but
he could not resist telling his readers that it was the “sins of the
people” which furnished the first signs of war; and an abundance
of sin “unsheathed the soldier’s sword.” From the Old Testament,
Rich learned that wars were sometimes more pleasing to God than
peace, and from the classical writers it could be learned that “Divine
Plato praised this art of war and commanded that children should
learn it as soon as they be of the ability to become soldiers.”

Elizabethan writers and divines frequently drew upon St
Augustine’s doctrine that “war is a scourge of the wrath of God.”
In a sermon preached at Paul’s Cross in 1627, William Hampton
declared that the sins of the English people were so great that God
must surely punish them with a visitation of war. Thomas Scott,
the Puritan preacher who published a series of sermons attacking
the proposal for a Spanish marriage for Charles, prince of Wales, had
sought refuge in the Netherlands to escape censorship. He settled
in Utrecht where he served as chaplain to the English garrison.
Scott was one of many Puritan preachers who seized upon the
‘Fatal Vesper’ of 26 October 1623, when a gallery in the Blackfriars
collapsed under the weight of a Catholic congregation listening
to a priest preaching a sermon and killing more than 90 persons
as a providential punishment for papists who refused to become
Protestants. Following the Restoration, Thomas Gumble, General
Monck’s chaplain, continued to believe that the British civil wars
were visited upon the people of England and Scotland because they
did “not know how to prize their peace and plenty with thankfulness
to God and obedience to their king; for murmuring and discontent
under God’s mercies procures the greatest judgments.”

21 Rich, *The Fruites of long Experience*, 3-4 (dedication is to Henry, prince of Wales); id., *Allarme to England*, sigs. Aiijr & Biir (dedication is to Sir Christopher Hatton, captain of
the Royal Guard).

22 de Somogyi, *Shakespeare’s Theatre of War*, 17; Hampton, *A Proclamation of Warre
from the Lord of Hosts*, 18 (dedicated to Charles Howard, earl of Nottingham).


Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, recognized the need to analyze the secondary causes of the English civil wars, he continued to believe that the primary cause of those internecine conflicts was Divine Providence and the purpose was to punish the sins of the people. Reading Tacitus gradually led to greater awareness of the distinction between Divine Providence and secondary causation in human history. This more rational and humanistic approach to the unfolding of events came to be called ‘politic history.’ Tacitean or ‘politic’ history acquired a bad name at the early-Stuart court, because its practitioners included those who moved in the circle of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex.

Politic history

While Tacitus had been read in university circles for some time, it was only after the earl of Essex took up Tacitus that the Roman historian came to be read more widely. ‘Politic history,’ based upon the more widespread acquaintance with classical Greek and Roman historians, was thought to teach men “political wisdom.” Essex and his circle were drawn to Tacitus because of the light that his writings cast upon the civil and international wars of mainland Europe, as well as the tactics and military discipline of the Romans. Because Tacitus was the most important historian of imperial Rome, his analytical style was considered relevant to political life in monarchies and to survival in the same. Tacitus also provided an


26 One of the noteworthy features of Tacitus’s historical writing was his determination to uncover and analyze causes and motives. This sometimes led humanist scholars to criticize his writings, because they thought that the historian’s job was to narrate rather than to offer interpretations. Montaigne and Lipsius were drawn to Tacitus because of his interest in the ethical dimension of political behavior. The decline of republics and the growth in power of monarchies in early modern Europe caused a renewed interest in the history of Rome under the emperors as described by Tacitus. Some of the seventeenth-century admirers of Tacitus wished to make use of his writings to construct an analytical system of political science in an age when the supporters of absolutism regarded politics and government as the king’s private business. Moreover, it was widely assumed that if you scratched a Tacitean, you would find a republican underneath (Burke, “Tacitism,” 154, 161-4). Tacitism also provided an alternative system of political and historical analysis to Machiavelli; it possessed a moral dimension that was lacking in the Florentine and its use also prevented, to some extent, being labeled a Machiavellian (Wootton, Paolo Sarpi, 69).

intellectual foundation for the revival and strengthening of a martial ethos. More ominously, it also facilitated criticism of royal policies, and it undermined both political and ecclesiastical hierarchies. While accepting that Divine Providence was the primary cause of what happened in the world, the writers of the English Renaissance who wrote in the style of ‘politic history’ placed increased emphasis on secondary causation. Those who left Divine Providence out of historical accounts were accused of atheism.  

As a result of the English experience of war in the late sixteenth century, the exhortation to martial fervor by divines and the reception of Machiavellian political thought concerning the centrality of war, it became a commonplace of seventeenth-century thinkers that war was inevitable and the martial arts must be cultivated. Geffrey Gates argued as early as 1579 that justice and civil polity cannot be firmly established without military power, and martial prowess should be valued and encouraged; otherwise, the sinful descendants of Adam will always work against the establishment of justice and order. John Sadler, the translator of Vegetius, reminded his readers that the blessings of peace never last long except by divine intervention; peace was something that must constantly be fought for, so it was prudent to equip one’s self with knowledge of military policy for the next war by reading Greek and Roman military writers and historians.

Sir Walter Ralegh insisted on the primacy of military policy in the deliberations of princes; military force by itself was useless “unless the same be governed by counsel and martial wisdom.”

Gervase Markham said

28 Levy, Tudor Historical Thought, 237-9, 250-1; Kewes, “Henry Saville’s Tacitus,” 515-51. Essex opposed the proponents of peace with Spain, such as Sir Robert Cecil, who pleaded the poverty of the kingdom while he and his circle lavished enormous amounts of money on their sumptuous houses and luxurious manner of living (Gajda, The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture, 105). See also Gajda, “Debating War and Peace in Late Elizabethan England,” 851-78.

29 Gates, The Defence of Militarie Profession, 11 (dedication is to Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford); The Foure Bookes of Flavius Vegetius Renatus... of Martiall Policye, trans. Sadler, unpaginated preface and dedication (dedication is to Francis Russell, 4th earl of Bedford); de Gaya, Gaya’s Traité des Armes, 1678, ed. Ffoulkes, 5-6. Cf. also Rogers, A Sermon preached ... at the Funerall of William Proude, sig. Dr & v.

confound the secret, subtle traitor but the soldier? Who shall tread down the public-daring rebel but the soldier? And, indeed, who shall or can do right to all men but the soldier?  

Writing at the end of the French Religious Wars, Jean Bodin was less sanguine. Because soldiers love nothing so much as spoil and pillage, military discipline and the maintenance of defenses remain important because political communities which do not protect themselves become “bait” for soldiers, robbers and thieves. Sir Roger Williams, who had served in the Spanish Army of Flanders, thought that the Spanish state must be perpetually at war with Protestant powers because they were urged on by priests and professional soldiers. The tendency of Spain to make perpetual war produced expert soldiers.

The concern to make war central to politics continued even after the two decades of civil war and upheaval which characterized the Interregnum. Thomas Venn, the author of a widely used military manual published in 1672, said that the Roman historians furnished numerous examples of the lesson that states cannot live long in peace without the exercise of arms. Fulke Greville’s purpose in writing the *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, which was published by the Commonwealth government in 1652, was to demonstrate that greatness of heart was better shaped by war than peace. Sir Philip Sidney had believed that history demonstrated a pattern of war alternating with periods of peace, an idea that he may have derived from reading Polybius. Indeed, he believed that it was desirable to have periods of war now and then to prevent Englishmen from being corrupted by peace. The belief that war and peace alternated with the same regularity as changes in the seasons continued down to the eve of the civil wars among military writers. Algernon Sidney,


who did his best to keep the civil unrest going in England, penned the maxim that “civil tumults and wars are not the greatest evils that befall nations,” which he amplified by explaining that

Tis ill that men should kill one another in seditions, tumults and wars; but ’tis worse to bring nations to such misery, weakness and baseness as to have neither strength nor courage to contend for anything; to have nothing left worth defending, and to give the name of peace to desolation.36

Before the British and Irish civil wars, writers such as Barnaby Rich had a genuine horror of internecine strife. Rich had thought that the highest perfection of nobility was to be found in “deeds of chivalry... enlightened by martial skill,” and that these deeds consisted of repressing those who “compound the miseries of civil war” as well as defending the realm against “foreign invaders.” Ben Jonson, who validated his martial credentials in the Low-Countries wars, thought that his duty as a playwright consisted of persuading his audience “to imitate virtue and renounce vice.” This required recreating the past in his tragedies with accurate examples drawn from Roman historians with whom his audience were already familiar. Two of his most successful plays dealt with the horror of ambitious men whose attempts to usurp constituted authority threatened civil war: Sejanus his Fall and Catiline his Conspiracy.37

Metaphors for war permeated Elizabethan dramatic culture. The tournament furnishes one example of the battlefield being viewed as a “high stage.” The London playhouses encouraged support for foreign wars. In the theaters, plays about Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great recommended those generals for imitation. Thomas Heywood argued that the stage furnished notable examples of courage that could inspire the soldier and rebuke those effeminate gentlemen who neglected the exercise of arms. Just as the poets of classical antiquity had thought that war was introduced with the

36 Sidney, Discourses concerning Government, 206.

discovery of iron mined in the bowels of the earth, so also Elizabethan and Jacobean poets and dramatists thought of the Low Countries as a trope for war, because the Eighty Years War seemed interminable, and because it killed and maimed so many soldiers from the British Isles. The many maimed veterans who limped through the streets of London— a gait associated with the devil— were a constant reminder of the hellishness of war.\footnote{de Somogyi, \textit{Shakespeare’s Theatre of War}, 30-1, 99-101.}

London theaters were both places to dramatize the need for men to volunteer to serve in England’s military forces abroad, and on at least one occasion places where recruiting took place. Indeed, anywhere that crowds gathered— playhouses, bawdy houses and parish churches— became venues where press-gangs sometimes swept men up by force for service in the foreign wars. The Elizabethan Privy Council had thought that impressment for overseas wars was a useful means of removing vagrants, masterless men and petty criminals.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 108-9; \textit{Acts of the Privy Council}, ed. Dasent, xxvii.290. Neil Younger regards impressing men for overseas service in the public places of London as atypical, because most recruiting took place in the counties (\textit{War and Politics in the Elizabethan Counties}, 170, 172 et passim). However, Ian Archer has demonstrated that the levies of recruits in London were heavy and frequent. In April 1602 the Privy Council ordered the impressment of 2,000 men to be sent to Ostend; this “Press proved very controversial because of raids on theaters [and the] press of gentlemen” (\textit{Gazetteer of Military Levies from the City of London, 1509-1603},” comp. Archer, 045-118, esp. 115).}
The governments of Western Europe generally thought that their realms were overpopulated and endeavored to remove such persons to their colonies.

Soldiers in seventeenth-century England, like the continental martialists who had influenced them, came to view war as linked to a broader concept of politics in the Machiavellian mode. As well as reading ancient military writers such as Vegetius and Caesar, or Euclid on geometry, they also came to appreciate Roman historians such as Tacitus. Martialists also understood that they needed to develop their rhetorical skills so that they could exhort their soldiers with speeches on the eve of battle and also to persuade their king and countrymen of the necessity of military preparedness and the
virtues engendered by the exercise of arms. Hobbes, however, saw it differently; he believed that reading Greek and Roman historians instilled notions of rebellion and tyrannicide in the minds of a people who lacked judgment and experience.40

Prior to the Great War of 1914-18, there existed in many societies a “cultural disposition to war,” according to Sir Michael Howard. At times, and certainly during the seventeenth century, war was regarded, not as a pathological condition, but as a normal part of the human condition. Professor Howard thought that such societies were best described as “bellicist” rather than “militarist.” Liberal-minded historians have trouble grasping the idea that anyone would want to go to war; it takes a Hobbesian cast of mind to imagine such a thing.41 War was certainly part of the heroic image of European monarchies and, of course, continued to justify the privileges of ruling elites and to play a part in the collective memory of their subjects. How widely this cultural disposition to war was shared by the commonalty in the seventeenth century is a more difficult question to answer. Adam Ferguson, who had been chaplain to the Black Watch Regiment at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745 and later became professor of philosophy at Edinburgh University, argued that ethnic and provincial prejudices always existed among the common people, whether they were latent or active. These prejudices are irrational and cannot be readily explained, but political leaders can easily fan such prejudices into flames and manipulate common folk to fight their wars. However, such prejudices are not easy to control or stop. Ferguson also listed another culturally conditioned response to war: the experience of war can also bring out qualities of generosity and self-sacrifice, and even ordinary men love to test their courage and bodily strength. “His sports are frequently an image of war.” and he loves competition.42

40 Dewald, Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture, 57-8; Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Pogson Smith, II.29 (p. 25).

41 Howard, Weapons and Peace, 6-7; Black (ed.), Origins of War in Early Modern Europe, 1, 4, 10-11.

42 Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil Society, ed. Forbes, 23-4. A classic example of how the Elizabethan regime and the military governors and planters in Ireland exploited ethnic and religious prejudices to justify the expropriation of previously loyal Old English lords and Old Irish clan chieftains is brilliantly discussed by Bruce Lenman (England’s Colonial Wars, 1550-1688, chs. 2-5).
For Ralegh, “the ordinary theme and argument of history is war:”

Since in human reason there hath no means been found of holding all mankind at peace with itself, it is needful that against the wit and subtlety of man we oppose not only the brute force of our bodies... but, helping our strength with art and wisdom, strive to excel our enemies in those points wherein man is excellent over other creatures.43

Ruthless and arrogant as he was, Ralegh still retained sufficient intellectual detachment to probe the motivation of himself and his class:

In these arbitrary wars, there is commonly to be found some small measure of necessity, though it be seldom observed, perhaps, because it extendeth not so far as to become public; for where many younger sons of younger brothers have neither lands nor means to uphold themselves, and where many men of trade or useful profession know not how to bestow themselves for lack of employ, there it cannot be avoided but the whole body of state (howsoever healthfully disposed) should not suffer anguish by grievance of these ill-affected members.44

Since war was inevitable, Ralegh believed that England might as well profit by it. As a matter of strategy, he urged that England prosecute the war against Spain on the high seas and in the New World. In his History of the World, Ralegh argues that the English were destined for a divinely favored role in building an empire that would exceed the greatness of the Romans. He insisted that colonial expansion would solve England’s economic problems, and a privateering war against Spain could pay for itself. Thus, the crown’s financial embarrassment was not a good excuse for making peace with Spain. The execution of Ralegh in 1618 produced much disgust with courtiers who were thought to have accepted Spanish bribes. Subsequently, the name of Ralegh, a symbol of English patriotism, was much invoked against the Jacobean policy of peace and its continuation under Charles I. Between 1620 and


44 Ralegh, A Discourse of... War, in Works (1751 ed.), ii.26; Rapple, Martial Power and Elizabethan Political Culture, 60-1.
1631, at least four pamphlets were published incorporating the words *Ralegh’s Ghost*. One of them was *Sir Walter Rawleigh’s Ghost* (1626), written by Thomas Scott, a Puritan divine forced into exile in the Netherlands, who wrote many anti-Spanish pamphlets protesting the proposed Spanish marriage, the failure to intervene effectively on behalf of the Elector Palatine and to honor the alliance with the Dutch Republic as well as the neglect of the opportunities for expansion in the New World.45

Like Ralegh, most writers of this period saw an “affinity” between the “necessity of war” and the “necessity of law.” The Puritan divine William Gouge provided a classic statement of the argument that “war is a kind of execution of public justice and a means of maintaining right:”

> For oft there is a conspiracy of many men together in doing wrong, and so obstinate and violent they are therein as by no admonitions, persuasions, threatenings, penalties of law or ordinary means of executing justice will be restrained. And so insufferably ambitious are some, and so insatiably covetous as no dignities or jurisdictions will content them, no revenues or profits will satisfy them. Were not such men restrained and suppressed by force of arms, none should live in quiet; nor should possess or enjoy anything besides themselves. So as the iniquity of men causeth a necessity of war; and the benefit that thence ariseth causes pious and righteous men to use it.46

Sir Thomas Craig, an early supporter of James VI and I’s plan for a union of Scotland and England, thought that the Scots were bound to be perpetually at war either with England or among themselves. He based this assertion on the argument that a martial tradition had always been stronger than a sense of community in Scotland. For this reason, when Scotland was actually at peace, it was necessary to encourage idle soldiers and surplus population to seek military service overseas.47

More recently, Sir George Clark has pointed out that seventeenth-century political economists all treat war as a normal and persistent part of human existence. War was an institution, a “regular and settled mode of action;” in other words, Europe was


47 Craig, *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, ed. Terry, 470-1.
a “military civilization,” and every aspect of economic, social and political life assumed that this would be so.48

Much as he disliked war and suffered personally from its consequences, the great Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius assumed that war was not contrary to natural law or Christian teachings, and must be accepted as part of the natural condition of mankind. When Grotius published his *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* in 1625, war was so pervasive that it made no sense to seek a pacifist solution in the Erasmian tradition. Rather, Grotius sought to restrain war by appealing to natural law and making it serve clear political and judicial ends. He especially was concerned to distinguish between just and unjust wars and to seek principles which would limit the ill treatment of prisoners and prevent the plundering of the property of noncombatants.49

**Providence and war**

Perpetual war was thought to be the curse of mankind because God used war to punish wicked men for their sinfulness and to vindicate the righteous. The theocratic tendencies of Calvinism revived the Hebraic concept of a God of Battles, and removed some of the restraints upon warfare. The concept of a Protestant holy war imposed a positive duty to fight the Catholic forces where there had been incursions of Protestant communities. By introducing the belief that the sword was to be used to punish evil-doers, the chivalric belief in an agonistic struggle was replaced by a determination to utterly destroy the enemy which is perhaps best exemplified by Cromwell’s mode of warfare in Ireland. The belief in a holy war against the Hapsburgs, as the political arm of the Catholic Antichrist, so James Aho has argued, justified removing spiritual restraints upon warfare and substituting natural imperatives. As Hobbes remarked, in a natural state of war there were no “notions of right and wrong” or “justice and injustice.” “Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal

48 Clark, *War and Society in the Seventeenth Century*, 9-10. Edmond Silbener, who systematically examined the writings of early modern English political economists, found that they positively advocated war as a means of acquiring trade (*La guerre dans la pensée économique du XVIe au XVIIIe siècles*, 65).

virtues.” Although martialists and professional soldiers in the wars of mainland Europe did not accept this concept of a holy war without any constraint, this more unrestrained type of warfare did characterize England’s colonial wars in the Celtic borderlands and her North American colonies. Indeed, the English came to believe that war was a means of imposing civility on barbaric peoples.

Medieval treatises justifying war usually start with the Old Testament which vividly depicts a Hebrew God of Battles who instructed Joshua in battle tactics. Medieval theologians and philosophers in the West all seem to have agreed “that war was part of the general struggle against evil.” They also accepted the premise that a just war was also grounded in natural law and the law of nations which was based upon reason and common to all Christendom. This would have seemed logical to Puritan preachers who stressed that the sinner could only hope for redemption through the experience of constant warfare in his soul between Christ and Satan, and that, as a consequence of being a soldier under the banner of Christ in perpetual conflict, he must endure something like the horrors of warfare in his spiritual journey to the next world.

Alexander Leighton, a Scots Calvinist physician and divine, appealed to Charles, prince of Wales to lead a holy war against the Hapsburgs in his Speculum Belli Sacri (1624). For Leighton, “war is the fruit of sin.” A just war was lawful, sanctioned by natural law and not repugnant to the law of God. A war, such as the one fought to help Frederick V, king of Bohemia and Elector Palatine, regain his territories in the Palatinate, was a just conflict, and just wars must be fought in an offensive manner; a defensive stance was not sufficient in the eyes of God.

Lodowick Lloyd, a poet


51 Keen, The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages, 1965), 8-14.

52 Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, 34, 142.

53 [Leighton,] Speculum Belli Sacri, 1, 6, 9, 12, 17-18, 20, 23, 50-1; cf. also Sutcliffe, The Practice, Proceedings and Lawes of Armes, 1-2. Sir Francis Bacon rejected the recovery of the Palatinate as a sufficient cause for a just war, nor did he think that difference of religion was a justification for war. However, he did believe that fear that the Spanish might invade or otherwise subvert the English monarchy justified declaring war (Considerations touching a Warre with Spaine and An Advertisement touching an Holy Warre; comp. Rawley, 1, 3, 5, 15-30, 32-63).
who held the post of sergeant-at-arms at the courts of Elizabeth and James I, asserted that “the whole Bible is a book of the battles of the Lord and the whole life of man a military marching to these battles between the seed of the woman and the serpent.” He assumed that most of what a general needed to know about military principles and practice could be learned from the Bible and classical literature. Thomas Palmer, a militia chaplain, told his audience in the Bristol Military Garden that God was “a man of war... who hath proclaimed it... to be a divine scourge for sin in the hand of the warrior.” In war, kings are but lieutenants of God, who is the commanding general. However, kings could forfeit that divine warrant. The Parliamentary army justified making war on the king because they believed that his divine mandate to rule had been destroyed by his refusal to make peace. He thereby became tainted by “blood guilt”, a concept that dated back to Anglo-Saxon times. According to the Geneva Bible, the shedding of innocent blood required expiation. There was general agreement among divines and soldiers that war was inevitable because it manifested the hand of God, but there was disagreement concerning the exact role of Divine Providence. One anonymous late-Elizabethan military writer said that biblical justification for making war must always be sought, and wars should be undertaken only after consultation to secure “advice and judgment”—presumably from a council of war composed of the nobility and high-ranking military officers. Anthony Wingfield thought that the outcome of any war must always be uncertain because God always uses one side to punish the other. In a variation on the same theme, the first marquis of Argyll


55 Palmer, Bristoll’s Military Garden, 4, 7. Thomas Gumble, General George Monck’s chaplain, believed that the inevitability of war derived from original sin and that it was part of the divine scheme of justice for sovereigns to wield the sword (The Life of General Monck, Duke of Albermarle, fo. 7).


58 Wernham (ed.), The Expedition of Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake to Spain and
said that “war proceeds from the ambition and malice of men, but the success of it depends on the good will of God.” Like an experienced warlord, Argyll also believed that military commanders should be prepared to seize opportunities.\textsuperscript{59} Fulke Greville believed that war allowed a soldier to “play an integral part in the divine plan;” more to the point, it also allowed him to display virtue, enhance his reputation and maintain order in society.\textsuperscript{60} A just war must aim at securing peace, the advancement of the Gospels and the glory of God, thought Thomas Sutton, but it could also involve the element of revenge and the maintenance of honor. Since the “Romish Church” will always be an enemy, a war against papists will always be just.\textsuperscript{61} Furthermore, if a war has been declared good and lawful, then God commands the minister to encourage the soldier.\textsuperscript{62} The second earl of Rochester, a deist who had trouble grasping the concept of Divine Providence, confessed to Bishop Burnet on his deathbed that he could see nothing wrong in God appointing others to take “away people with the sword,” for it “is a much gentler way of dying.”\textsuperscript{63} The hand of Providence cannot always be discerned in battle, warned William Gouge, because “war is wavering” and God sometimes uses war to punish mankind’s sins and to call people to examine their consciences or “to show that victory cometh not merely from man’s preparation.”\textsuperscript{64} But Geoffrey Gates thought that God revealed his hand even before he unsheathed his terrible sword: God punished a wicked nation by causing it to be unprepared for war; at the same time he could advance a people by endowing them

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Portugal, 1589, 249-50.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
59 Campbell, first marquis of Argyll, \textit{Instructions to a Son}, 155-6.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
62 Gosson, \textit{The Trumpet of Warre, 1598}, sig. B3v.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
64 Gouge, \textit{God’s Three Arrows}, 268-70.
\end{flushright}
with martial virtues.65 Although war is lawful, cautioned John Sym, it is such a violent course of action that the decision to participate belongs to Divine Providence. In a warning to soldiers of fortune, Sym stated that a just war can never exist against the church, the gospel or true religion. If one perished in an unjust conflict, he would be guilty of indirect self-murder.66 Richard Brathwait, a poet who later fought on the royalist side during the English civil wars, writing in about 1630, could not imagine a holy war being fought against any enemy except the Turk.67

Justifying war

In an age of religious conflict, both Catholic and Protestant thinkers were strongly tempted to think of armed conflicts between the Hapsburgs and the Protestant states as crusades, and to justify them as holy wars. But, at the same time, other, more sober thinkers sought to work out a secular and rational foundation for discussing the concept of just wars which avoided an emphasis upon religious differences.68 Even Calybuté Downing, when he told the Honourable Artillery Company of London in September 1640 that the right to avenge is God-given, warned his audience that the grounds for a just war must be first ascertained. Richard Bernard stated that a ruler should not go to war lightly, but must first weigh the justness of the cause against the evils that war always brings. But a just war was always to be preferred to an unjust peace.69 Looking back from the eighteenth century, the Dutch-born skeptic Bernard de Mandeville thought that preachers and chaplains who urged Christian forgiveness of one’s enemies and then sought to justify particular wars or rebellions or urged destruction upon others for

65 Gates, Defence of Militarie Profession, 20-1. See also Hampton, A Proclamation of Warre from the Lord of Hosts, 2-3.

66 Life’s Preservative against Self-Killing, ed. MacDonald, 119.


68 Johnson, Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War, pp. xxv-xxvi, 95.

69 Downing, A Sermon Preached to the Renowned Company of Artillery, 4-5; Bernard, The Bible-Battells, 51-3; Leighton, Speculum Belli Sacri, 5.
their religious beliefs were hypocritical.\textsuperscript{70}

The divines were in general agreement that a just war might be declared to defend one’s country, religion, liberty and goods, to help friends and allies who were oppressed, to suppress rebellion and to enforce the laws, to obtain a crown justly claimed, to repress pirates and to punish breaches of covenants. An army also had the right to march through neutral territory in prosecution of a just war.\textsuperscript{71} Thomas Proctor was probably referring to the Irish when he declared that wars might be undertaken to spread good laws, to promote civility and to keep men from living in disorder without good government. Thomas Fuller may have been thinking of others besides the Turk when he argued that force might be used to begin the process of conversion which could then be followed by more gentle methods of persuasion.\textsuperscript{72} Fuller also believed that preventative war or a pre-emptive strike was justified where there was a “just fear of invasion” by the perceived enemy, while Richard Bernard argued in a similar vein that another just reason for war was to establish dominion in territory close to one’s borders.\textsuperscript{73}

In order to sustain the concept of just war, divines and military writers attempted to banish motives of private vengeance from warfare. Princes and magistrates must wage war as servants of God without any private motive of revenge. For an individual soldier to seek revenge was seditious, because God had given the sword of justice to the prince or magistrate. None were to be regarded as enemies except those so declared by public authority. Moreover, fighting a just war never excuses killing the innocent or those who have surrendered and been disarmed. Putting prisoners

\textsuperscript{70} de Mandeville, \textit{An Inquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War} 168-9.


\textsuperscript{72} P[rocter,] \textit{Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres}, fos. 44-5; Fuller, \textit{The Historie of the Holy Warre}, 13.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{bid.}; Bernard, \textit{Bible-Battells}, 46.
to the sword was not permitted unless there was a threat to one’s safety. Even during the English civil wars, when a royalist chaplain told the troopers of the Prince of Wales’s Life Guard that they were messengers of God sent to punish rebels, who were by definition “evil men,” he cautioned the soldiers never to visit divine retribution upon the innocent. They were to distinguish between the leaders of rebellion and those who were duped and drawn into rebellion. François de la Noue, a veteran of the French Religious Wars and the Low-Countries wars, did not condemn service in lawful wars fought by one’s prince, but he could not bring himself to believe that the former were proper wars; rather, he called them “butcherly slaughters.”

The thrust of the many sermons and military treatises which urged support of the war efforts of British monarchs and other Protestant princes was to rally the political nation, both clerical and lay, and to get them to open their purses for taxes and voluntary contributions and to elicit the support of volunteers. Clearly, some of these writings go beyond official military and foreign policy with a view to urging more active participation in the mainland European wars on the Protestant side. There is much evidence that the efforts of the clergy and the military writers to achieve their goals were successful. Indeed, official efforts to license sermons and printed books and, thus, to contain and direct these debates were increasingly less successful as more and more of the Protestant subjects of the early Stuart monarchs became dissatisfied with government foreign and military policy and convinced of the necessity of intervention in the continental religious wars.

The writings and sermons of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries concerning what constituted a just war became


more focused on particular causes and events, such as the plight of the king and queen of Bohemia who had been driven out of their lands by the Hapsburgs at the beginning of the Thirty Years War. At the same time, sermons and writings on the justification of war which were specifically aimed at military audiences became more politically charged in the years leading up to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. In a book published in 1598, Robert Barret, answering the question whether it was wrong for Christians to fight Christians, asserted that the soldier is bound to serve his prince and it is not for him to question whether the cause “be just or unjust.” Then, as an afterthought, he added that “in such a case, I wish men to be well advised.” In 1631, William Gouge wrote that soldiers should take comfort and be encouraged by the knowledge that they were fighting a just war. To die in such a war was a kind of martyrdom. In September 1640, Calybute Downing told the Honourable Artillery Company of London that the enemy was the “Jesuited” faction at court.

In an attempt to prepare his congregation for the coming of civil war in 1642, Richard Ward, a Puritan minister at Stanstead Mountfitchet, Essex, provided a justification for taking up arms which drew upon the writings of classical authors such as Plutarch, Seneca and St. Augustine. Everything must be done to avoid civil war, and such a conflict must never be undertaken lightly, but once begun it was necessary to achieve victory, because civil wars were “not easily quenched,” and fell particularly hard upon noncombatants. St. Augustine was cited to the effect that wars were sometimes undertaken “out of a true and sincere desire of settling peace.” Ward also drew upon Seneca to place the blame for conflict upon the new concept of possessive individualism, or the unqualified rights of private property: “Take from the world these pronouns, mine and thine/ The wars will cease, and peace through the world will shine.” From Plutarch, a priest of the cult of Apollo, Ward quoted the belief that “there is no war whereof some sin or vice is not the cause, viz., either pleasure, covetousness, ambition, desire to rule, or the

76 Leighton, Speculi Belli Sacri, dedication; Barret, The Theoricke and Practicke of Moderne Warres, 1598), 11; Gouge, God’s Three Arrowes, 217; Downing, Sermon Preached to the Renowned Company of Artillery, 22-3.
like.” Those who desired to live in peace with others should “wage continual war” with themselves and their sins, because “wickedness within” was the cause of “war without.” Ward doubted that war could ever be eliminated, and he reminded his audience that one of the useful functions of war was to act as “a whetstone of fortitude,” which encouraged youth to embrace martial discipline.\textsuperscript{77}

Seasoned politicians—especially from among the ranks of the gownsmen—were less persuaded by clerical and martial rhetoric concerning just wars. Lord Burghley thought that there was no such thing as a just war, although a good cause could confer legitimacy upon a conflict.\textsuperscript{78} Bacon derived his rules of war from the agonistic struggles of the Greeks—especially the mythological tale of Perseus. There must be “a just and honourable cause of war,” which ordinary soldiers can support, for example, the overthrow of tyranny; such a war should have the prospect of being completed within a short period of time; and one should avoid conquering neighboring nations.\textsuperscript{79} The first earl of Clarendon remained convinced that there were strong moral and religious grounds for opposing war, but he accepted that the law allows war as a means of seeking justice when other resources have failed and as a means of deterring evil-doers. To fail to do justice was a greater evil than war. But Clarendon reminded his readers that the vindictiveness which was engendered by war lives on long after the war has ended and poisons behavior and discourse.

In war, the confidence and the courage which a victorious army contracts by notable successes, and the dejection of spirit and the consternation which a subdued party undergoes by frequent defeats is not at an end when the war is determined, but hath its effects very long after; and the tenderness of nature and the integrity of manners, which are driven away or powerfully discountenanced by the corruption of war, are not quickly recovered, but instead thereof a roughness, a jealousy and distrust introduced that makes

\textsuperscript{77} Ward, \textit{The Anatomy of Warre}, 2-4, 9-10, 14, 16.  
\textsuperscript{78} Cecil, Lord Burghley, \textit{Certain Preceptes or Directions for the Well Ordering and Carriage of a Man’s Life}, 10-11.  
conversation unpleasant and uneasy, and the weeds which grow up in the shortest war can hardly be pulled up and extirpated without a long and unsuspected peace. 80

**War and the state of nature**

Clarendon added that pacifists are closer to natural law and revealed religion than those who think that God prohibited only single murders but allowed war. Looking back upon the destructive religious wars of the seventeenth century, John Locke reasoned that public officials in a commonwealth did not possess the authority to wage war for religious motives such as the obliteration of heresy and idolatry, because they never possessed the natural right to change the religious views of others or to punish them for such views nor to impose their own religious beliefs. Locke further stated that most religious wars in the past had served as a cover for ambition, greed and lust for plunder and rapine. 81

The early modern preoccupation with war in the political thought of mainland Europe, reflected in the writings of Machiavelli, Grotius and others, became especially evident in the British Isles after 1640 in the political thought of Hobbes, John Locke and Algernon Sidney. All agreed with Grotius that political communities existed in a ‘state of nature’ where there was no agreed-upon body of positive law, arbiter or superior authority which all parties in the international sphere would accept, and hence for Hobbes they lived in a condition of perpetual war. Although it used to be understood that to John Locke this state of nature meant a state of peace, Richard Cox argues that Locke’s views were much closer to those of Hobbes than Locke found it safe to admit in the repressive atmosphere of the Restoration when his *Two Treatises of Government* was actually written. Locke was at pains to disguise this similarity of his views to those of Hobbes because of the odium in which Hobbes came to be held during the Restoration. Locke also believed that the state of nature was one characterized by war and anarchy in which there


81 Cox, *Locke on War and Peace*, 155-6.
existed no natural law. It was the unjust use of force, or implied force, which brought about this state of war; such actions put man into a state of nature where there was no judge but the successful application of force. Such behavior was against reason, but because there was no arbiter in a state of nature, the party or person who resorted unjustly to force forfeited any claim to his life.\footnote{Scott, “Law of War,” 565; Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. xviii-xix, 21-8, 72, 146; Locke, Two Treatises of Government, ed. Laslett, introduction, 45-8, 320 (ii.17), 321 (ii.19), 436-7 (ii.181-2); Teitler, The Genesis of the Professional Officer’s Corps, 3-5.}

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, midway through the Eighty Years War, the exigencies of war nearly overwhelmed political thought; Grotius had labored to restrain the excesses of war by developing a body of international law which he called “the law of war.” Grotius added that it was the duty of the Christian soldier to fight on behalf of justice. Thus, war had a moral purpose when properly fought. Although Sidney and Locke did not accept the concept of a corpus of positive law relating to war, they did try to lend a moral purpose to warfare. Hence it was morally justifiable to settle disputes by war, or, within a political community, to resort to rebellion. There was a rawer edge to Sidney: for him war remained at the heart of political relations and the neglect of military preparedness would lead to the dissolution of political communities.\footnote{Scott, “Law of War,” 565-6, 581, 583.} The temper of Algernon Sidney, the aristocratic soldier, is revealed by the motto which he inscribed in the Visitors’ Book of the University of Copenhagen in 1659: “This hand, always an enemy to tyrants, seeks by the sword peace under liberty.”\footnote{Scott, “Law of War,” 583.} How much Sidney actually desired peace remains an open question. He argued that war was necessary because human society was not intended for peace, and civil society would dissolve without constant military preparedness and vigilance to defend liberty against tyrants. Also, as a younger son of a peer, he knew that peace meant unemployment for the soldier.\footnote{Scott, “Law of War,” 581-2.}
Employment for swordsmen

The need to find employment for the nobility had long been used as a justification for war. In 1472, the archbishop of Canterbury, speaking to Parliament, advocated war with France because it would promote domestic peace by giving employment overseas to unruly younger sons of knights and barons.\textsuperscript{86} Shakespeare has King Henry IV, who regretted the civil wars of his reign, give the following advice to the future Henry V to unite the subjects of his realm:

\textit{Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,  
May waste the memory of former days.}\textsuperscript{87}

Thomas Fuller thought that a holy war, like the Crusades, might be undertaken to provide employment for restless and violent men, although he was troubled by the prospect that men might go to war for adventure and companionship rather than religious motives. Although Marlowe’s plays exploit the theater-goers’ appetite for dramas about heroic soldiers. Alan Shepard insists that they also warn audiences about the dangers of militarism—exemplified by the delight in war sometimes displayed by military leaders.\textsuperscript{88} In \textit{The Maid of Honour}, Massinger argued that the nobility were intended to be warriors with a special mission to seize and plunder that which England lacked:

\textit{Nature did  
Design us to be warriors, and to break through  
Our ring the sea, by which we are environed;  
And we by force must fetch in what is wanting,  
Or precious to us.}

Younger sons and brothers would get into mischief, if the monarch did not provide them with honorable employment.

\textsuperscript{86} Ferguson, \textit{The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England}, 39.

\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Henry IV, Part II}, IV.iv. Compare Monck, \textit{Observations upon Military and Political Affairs}, 4-5.

\textsuperscript{88} Fuller, \textit{Historie of the Holy Warre}, 14; Shepard, \textit{Marlowe’s Soldiers}, 3-5, 22-5.
May you live long, sir,
The king of peace, so you deny not us
The glory of war; let not our nerves
Shrink up with sloth, nor want of employment
Make younger brothers thieves; ’tis their swords, sir,
Must sow and reap their harvest.89

Plays about war proliferated during the 1590s. Like the Romans, late Elizabethan playwrights frequently used the theater to dramatize new concepts of making war. There was also an element of innovation in the ways in which playwrights presented what Patricia Cahill calls “narratives of modernity.” As a consequence of this exposure to Roman historians, British dramatists, essayists and the military nobility and their gentry adherents also came to believe that the people, when exposed for long periods of time to peace, grew discontented and self-indulgent and were given to disorder, which, in turn, bred civil war. The degree to which the military aristocracies of the British Isles had enshrined the idea that honor must be validated on the battlefield in every generation meant that a state which was long at peace must testify to the effeminacy of kings and nobles alike.90 Lucan had observed that civil war broke out in Rome because of extravagance which arose from riches which were derived from the spoils of war. Thereafter prosperity and extravagance effeminated its citizens:

Among the people there were hidden causes of war– the causes which have brought down ruin on Imperial races. For when Rome had conquered the world and Fortune showered excess wealth upon her, virtue was dethroned by prosperity, and spoil taken from the enemy lured men to extravagance: they set no limit to their wealth or their dwellings; greed rejected the food that once sufficed: men seized for their use garments scarce decent for women to wear.91

Late-Elizabethan writers believed that long periods of peace effeminated people and invited attack by foreign powers. A just war

90 Taunton, 1590s Drama and Militarism, 2-5; Cahill, Unto the Breach, 2-3, 68; Waggoner, “An Elizabethan Attitude toward War and Peace,” 23; Shifflett, Stoicism, Politics and Literature in the Age of Milton, 11-12; Wells, “‘Manhood and Chivalrie’: Coriolanus, Prince Henry and the Chivalric Revival,” 395-422.
was a natural function of a healthy state; a state long at peace could fall victim to civil wars and aggression. Bacon essentially agreed, and stated that the body politic could not remain in good health without military exercises. Otherwise effeminacy would corrupt men’s courage and manners. A good ruler understood that his duty was to govern his subjects so that they might live in peace, but, at the same time, insure that they did not neglect the arts of war during periods of peace so that they would always be ready to defend themselves. Fulke Greville thought that the English people were naturally valiant, but were corrupted by long periods of peace. They were best kept from mutiny and decay through periodic employment in foreign wars. Thomas Scott insisted that the aristocracy should display the virtue of courage, pursue an active life and take up the sword so as to avoid the corrupting influence of the pursuit of peace and profit. These arguments were intended to show that James VI and I’s policy of peace could only effeminate the aristocracy.

Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, thought that the 1630s were viewed by many Englishmen as a period of peace and prosperity. He explained the coming of civil war in the 1640s by falling back on the explanation employed by Roman authors such as Lucan and Virgil which asserted that cycles of war and disaster naturally alternated with periods of peace and plenty that produced pride and excess if they persisted too long. Clarendon was attempting to explain the Caroline myth of peace. This belief in a halcyon moment followed by civil war, which could not be entirely blamed on Charles I, was shared by many other contemporaneous writers. Historians of the Restoration period continued to believe that wars were a divine

92 Waggoner, “An Elizabethan Attitude toward War and Peace,” 22-3; Bacon, “Of the Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates,” in Works, ed. Spedding et al., xii.185.


94 Peltonen, Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640, 248.

95 Hyde, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ed. Macray, i.2; Anselment, “Clarendon and the Caroline Myth of Peace,” 37-9. See also Donagan, “Halcyon Days and the Literature of War,” 65-100, for a discussion of the news-books’ reports on the horrors of the Thirty Years War as well as the extensive military literature warning the English to be militarily prepared.
punishment visited upon nations and peoples who possessed a surfeit of peace and plenty. They also assumed that peace and plenty were self-limiting and wars were cyclical.\textsuperscript{96}

Those who followed the profession of arms for pay were often called soldiers of fortune, but Sir James Turner thought “most of them might be called sons of misfortune” because so many soldiers were reduced to begging when caught between wars or in old age. Turner admitted that it was morally wrong for a soldier to serve a state or a prince in a war which he knew to be unjust, but he pointed out that the issues in most wars, such as the Dutch war of independence or the civil wars of France, Germany and the British Isles, were complicated and exercised jurists, divines and politicians in long debate. The prosecution of such wars could not have waited until the issues had been resolved to the intellectual and moral satisfaction of “every dull and block-headed soldier.” “It was enough for them to believe what their masters had said, that the cause was just and therefore lawful for them to serve for wages.”\textsuperscript{97} Thomas Hobbes charged that the flames of civil war in the Three Kingdoms were fanned by gentlemen who had “wasted their fortunes” and were looking for employment as soldiers for whatever side offered them the most money.\textsuperscript{98} Sir William Segar thought that war was necessary to sort out those born to command from those destined to be subjected. War was necessary to keep swordsmen from idleness, and the labor and discipline of war made men temperate and honest.\textsuperscript{99} Jean Gailhard, a French immigrant and advocate of martial preparedness in Restoration England, believed that young gentlemen were corrupted by university life. Rather, they should be kept from luxury and accustomed to hardship so that the

\textsuperscript{96} MacGillivray, \textit{Restoration Historians and the English Civil War}, 19, 238-9. For other examples, see Anon., \textit{Britania Triumphalis}, 1-2; Churchill, \textit{Divi Britannica}, 342; Heylen, \textit{Cyprianus Anglicus}, 449; D[avies], \textit{The Civil Warres of Great Britain and Ireland}, proem, sig. C.

\textsuperscript{97} Turner, \textit{Pallas Armata}, 363-5.


state might remain in a posture of arms, and have a reputation for the same among neighboring states. In France, Louis XIV felt that he needed the example of bravery which the *noblesse d’ épée* provided, and he was reluctant to discipline their excesses too harshly.

**Impressment and social control**

The military aristocracies of the British Isles could not march off to war without followers; except where clan loyalties and kinship ties remained strong, the lesser orders were reluctant to volunteer and often had to be impressed. Sir Henry Knyvett had advocated compulsory military service during the late-Elizabethan wars not only because he feared a Spanish invasion, but also because he believed that overseas military expeditions employing impressed soldiers from England could make use of surplus population. The belief that impressment and martial discipline were effective means of social control was quite widespread. Jean Bodin thought that no city was so well governed that it would not be better off by purging its vagabonds and mutinous multitudes and sending them off to war. But Thomas Fuller had difficulty reconciling this practice with his concept of a holy war. He did not care for the idea of recruiting murderers and thieves for such an army lest “the Devil’s Black Guard should be God’s soldiers.”

The Elizabethan Privy Council and most county and borough magistrates viewed impressment as a legitimate means of removing beggars and masterless men, whom, they believed, constituted the bulk of participants in popular tumults, from the scene of their misdeeds. The belief that impressment was a remedy for excess population and popular disorder in a commonwealth was also expressed by Thomas Hobbes. One of the examples that Ralegh


gives of necessary or natural war is when a country is afflicted with overpopulation to the point where famine and misery threaten internal stability and cause suffering hordes to migrate to other parts of the world that are more thinly populated. In practice, Ralegh’s distinction between necessary and arbitrary war breaks down. For example, a country such as Spain, which suffered from widespread poverty, but not necessarily famine, resorted to colonization of lands in the New World in order to reduce the danger of domestic rebellion. Ralegh approved of this kind of arbitrary war, following Machiavelli’s reasoning, and applied it to the English plantation of Ireland.  

Few governments of the seventeenth century were able to pay the full costs of warfare. Therefore, soldiers were usually expected to plunder in order to subsist in the field and to seek recompense. “Just wars hath these effects: whatsoever we take or win from the enemy, that is justly ours, and the same by the law of nations is accounted lawful purchase.” Land that is won belongs to the prince who paid for the war, while the goods were customarily divided among the soldiers whose blood paid for the purchase, according to Matthew Sutcliffe. In order to maintain discipline and morale, Sutcliffe, citing ancient authorities, thought that the best practice for distributing booty was to bring it all to one place and allow the general to divide it, having regard to soldiers of exceptional valour and the wounded who could not be present to share in the spoil. Jurists of the sixteenth century generally agreed that looting and plunder were justified, and that practically anything could be done to destroy the enemy’s ability to wage war, including extorting money, burning houses, destroying food supplies and ransoming captives. Attitudes changed little in the seventeenth century, and, although Grotius wished to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants and to spare the latter and their property, he did hold that by the law of nations “enemies are held to be entitled to no consideration.” Grotius reasoned that since the slaughter of the enemy was permitted, the destruction and


plunder of his property followed logically. Gervase Markham believed that the proper rewards of the soldier were honor, fame and wealth. Wealth consisted of “a competent or bountiful maintenance to support the soldier in his place and make him capable of glorious undertakings.” However, Markham believed that honor must be the soldier’s principal reward.

The influence of martial culture in England also extended to the mercantile community. English mercantilist thinkers were bellicose and believed that since war was inevitable, a ruler must always be ready by encouraging the exercise of arms. They also assumed that the king would tax and store up the proceeds of foreign trade so that he would have the financial means to wage war. Building upon this premise, Thomas Mun argued that one of the main reasons to seek opportunities for expanding foreign trade was to acquire the treasure to possess standing armies and navies and to be able to wage war on both land and sea. Like many Englishmen of his time, Thomas Mun had little liking for the Dutch, but he did greatly admire their industry in accumulating wealth from fishing and trading, just as English and Scottish martialists discovered that they had much to learn from Dutch methods of warfare. In response to the argument that the Dutch fortresses were England’s first line of defense, Mun replied that English soldiers manned those defenses while Parliament subsidized the States’ Army, which freed the Dutch to concentrate their efforts on conquering and plundering the East Indies. He thought that England had the “right and power” to make war on the Dutch, conquer their empire and subordinate their mercantile interests to those of England.

Mun insisted that an increase in the foreign trade of England (by taking commerce away from the Dutch) would also confer many domestic benefits. In preparing for war, which Mun also regarded

106 Redlich, *De Praeda Militari*, 4-5.
107 Markham, *Honour in his Perfection*, 3-4.
as inevitable, the king would provide employment for many of his subjects who would be kept busy building warships, constructing and repairing fortifications, growing and storing grain and other provisions necessary for waging war. Mun also thought that banks would be necessary to pay and maintain armies and navies, and, by providing regular pay, keep them in good discipline. Since the Bank of Amsterdam (founded 1635) did not yet exist when Mun wrote these words, he must have been thinking of Italian and south German banks. Armories and magazines would also be needed for arms, ordnance, munitions, fodder and provisions. All of these activities would stimulate employment. As for storehouses and magazines, Mun was thinking of the famous Venetian Arsenal “admired for the magnificence of the buildings, the quantity of the munitions and stores for both sea and land, the multitude of the workmen, the diversity and excellence of the arts.”

Justifications of war were also stimulated by particular events such as the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, the Hapsburg invasion of the Palatinate and the resumption of the Eighty Years War. England had always retained a respectable military tradition, which was strengthened by the rechivalrization of the aristocracy and the experience of the late-Elizabethan wars. This bellicism was reinvigorated in the 1620s by the voices of those who called for intervention in the Palatinate as well as military aid to other Protestant princes. The Mirrour of Majestie, an emblem book published in 1618, urged Prince Charles to assume a martial stance and to emulate his late brother Henry, prince of Wales. Prince Charles was also told that the three black plumes of the traditional crest of the prince of Wales should remind him of the notable valour of the Black Prince. In 1626, Thomas Barnes published a sermon addressed to the Puritan war party which favored intervention in the Palatinate and called upon the nobility and gentry to return to the exercise of

110 Mun, England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade, 69-70.
111 G., H., The Mirrour of Majestie, 6-7; Cust, Charles I and the Aristocracy, 1625-1642, 131-2, 176-7.
arms. Thomas Trussell, a military writer, warned that England must awaken herself and look to her defense because the times were no longer “secure.” Life was so altered that the military profession had replaced the legal profession as the better guarantee of justice and the laws and of peace and concord. The Thirty Years War laid before Englishmen the issues of religious ideology, national honor and dynastic interests. Not only did many feel strongly about the need to support their fellow Protestants in Germany; they were also mindful of the fact that Elizabeth of Bohemia and her descendants would be the heirs to the thrones of the Three Kingdoms if the then unmarried Prince Charles failed to produce heirs. If literary activity is any measure, English authors took this to heart: between 1620 and 1642 (when the theaters were closed by order), some 55 plays and masques and at least 60 poems and prose works were published or written containing references to the German wars. In a more practical vein, the Council of War subsidized the publication of military manuals in preparation for expeditions to be sent abroad.

When Charles I and the duke of Buckingham reversed their pro-Spanish policy and mounted the expedition to Cadiz in 1625, they were emulating the second earl of Essex’s more glorious raid of 1596. However, the disastrous expedition to the Isle of Rhé did nothing to add to the reputation of Charles and Buckingham. The attempt to relive the myths and glories of late-Elizabethan martial culture ultimately proved embarrassing. Thereafter, the Caroline Court undertook to redefine chivalric ideals in a way that de-emphasized the martial values of old. The jousting tournament was cast aside and replaced by masques which made a virtue of the Caroline peace of the 1630s. At Whitehall Palace, the Armada

112 [Barnes,] Vox Belli, sig. A2, p. 40 (Dedication is to Sir Horace Vere, Lord Tilbury).
113 Trussel, The Souldier Pleading his owne Cause, B1v-B2r (Dedication is to Edward, Lord Conway).
115 Markham, The Souldier’s Accidence, sig. A2; id., The Souldier’s Grammar was a more advanced military manual aimed at field-grade officers which discussed formations and maneuvers for military units larger than companies and troops.
tapestries hanging in the guard room which depicted the naval victory of 1588, were taken down and stored. With the outbreak of the Bishops’ Wars in 1638, Charles I had Sir Anthony van Dyck paint a portrait of himself mounted on a horse, dressed in armor and wielding a baton of command together with another portrait of the eight-year-old Charles, prince of Wales also wearing armor and flourishing a pistol. But these gestures were not sufficient to make up for the royal neglect of military preparedness after 1603.

Much has been written about the reception of Machiavellian thought in seventeenth-century England, and it is evident that its influence on clerics, soldiers and political thinkers as well as the educated elite in general was considerable even though they did not quote him directly. War had been the stuff of history—whether perused in the works of classical authors, medieval chroniclers or the Old Testament—and Machiavellian discourse restored war to its central place in politics. The peaceful inclinations of James VI and I and Charles I were untypical of the behavior of early modern European princes and have long distracted historians from the influence of the many swordsmen and professional soldiers from the Three Kingdoms who fought in the religious wars of continental Europe or the divines and members of Parliament who advocated that their monarchs should alter their foreign and military policies and go to the aid of fellow Protestants.

It is now clear that England had become a bellicist society in which a cultural disposition to war had developed— if, indeed, it had ever lost such an inclination. Evidence for the existence of an irenic culture outside of the courts of James VI and I and Charles I is weak, but even swordsmen had their doubts about this bellicosity. Although he had been a companion of Sir Philip Sidney and thus associated with the Puritan war party, Fulke Greville’s “A Treatie [i.e., Treatise] of Warres” is ambivalent about war and recognizes that it was a destroyer of the arts of peace, a subverter of good

government and “the perfect type of Hell.” Although a leader among martialists, the second earl of Essex was willing to concede that peace was a more natural state of affairs than war, and that after twenty years of war with Spain England needed peace if only to restore its commerce. However, Essex thought that the prospect of peace was doubtful because the Spanish could not be trusted. At the same time, Essex believed that too much peace softened the sinews of the country—the valor of its men. As for Scotland and Ireland, they had always remained societies organized for war—if on a smaller scale and lacking the resources for modern warfare. At the end of the English civil wars, one of the objectives which John Milton had in mind when writing *Paradise Lost* was to cure his audience of their fascination with and ready acceptance of war. Milton had assumed that his readers, many of whom had served as soldiers either at home or abroad, or had studied military history in the works of classical historians, or had devoured news-books about the numerous wars of their own age, would be quite familiar with military terminology and institutions. Little wonder that this would be so, since they were frequently reminded from pulpit and press that war was inevitable, a punishment for the sins of mankind and part of the human condition. Even for the secular-minded who might reject the second argument, human history still afforded much evidence of the truth of the first and third arguments, and therefore it was imprudent not to prepare for war. Moreover, if one believed that justice could be maintained only by war and that the defense of liberty required that the sword remain unsheathed, then there was no recourse but the perpetual exercise of arms.

During the 1620s, the arguments for going to war to preserve dynastic interests, to assist beleaguered Protestants and to redeem the tarnished reputation of the House of Stuart had led to a series of military and naval expeditions to the Palatinate, Cadiz and the Isle of


120 Locke admits that the original state of nature, where everyone is “both judge and executioner of the law of nature,” was not peaceful, and individuals were quickly driven into civil societies and commonwealths (Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Laslett, II.212, 455).
However, the English government was no longer organized for war, it lacked the political will to wage war and it shamefully mismanaged these expeditions, while Parliament neglected to provide the necessary funds. Yet, the lesson of the need for military preparedness was not entirely lost, and considerable money and effort was invested in preparing the county trained bands for home defense during the 1630s. This effort, with the notable exception of the trained bands of the City of London, was also unsuccessful. In the short run, the many arguments put forward to justify the waging of war as policy appear ineffectual. But, between 1638 and 1642, when the various crises deepened in the Three Kingdoms, the theological, moral, rational and political arguments justifying a resort to arms were ready at hand.


Bibliography

Primary Sources

An Apologie of the Earle of Essex against those which jealously and maliciously tax him to be a hinderer of peace and quiet in his country. London: Richard Bradocke, 1663.


121 Manning, An Apprenticeship in Arms, ch. 5.

122 Manning, An Apprenticeship in Arms, ch. 6.


Cecil, William, Lord Burleigh. *Certain Preceptes or Directions for the Well Ordering and Carriage of A Man’s Life...Left by a Father to his Sonne at his Death*. Edinburgh: Andro Hart, 1618.


*Foure Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses…concerning Militarie Discipline…and of the worthiness of warre and warriors.* London: Clement Knight, 1604.


Heyden, Peter. *Cyprianus Anglicus: or the History of the Life and Death of the Most Reverend ... William... Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*. London: A. Seile, 1688.


P[rocter], T[homas]. *Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres*. London: Richard Tottell, 1578.


**Secondary Sources**


St. Roch Military Marches in Wallonia:
Memory, Commemoration, and Identity, 1866-1940

Erik Hadley
Boise State University

Ritualized public processionals known as military saint marches thrive in popular memory and define local identity in Francophone Belgium (Wallonia). The annual processionals involve thousands of marchers dressed in Napoleonic-era military uniforms, carrying authentic muskets and escorting a statue of St. Roch, the patron saint of disease protection. Many of these marchers trace family participation through multiple generations and two St. Roch marches received UNESCO recognition as examples of “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” in 2012. While participants claim there is no historical rupture between the modern marches and the processionals celebrated prior to the French Revolution, there is a fictive, inventive origin to these marches. Like many religious processionals in Belgium, the St. Roch marches ended during the radical phase of the French Revolution (1794) and only reemerged in the 1860s. The processionals evolved in structure, rituals, and costume through the 1930s. Participants and spectators share in the creation of historical memory, infuse the marches with notions of local identity and socialization, and create new narratives that legitimate ritual elements and participant costuming. This paper explores the tension between historical experience and modern commemoration of St. Roch military marches, as expressed by their organizers, marchers, and spectators.

On the evening of the third Saturday in May, townspeople gather in the market square in Thuin, a small city in Wallonia, Belgium’s Francophone region. Firing an antique cannon, they light torches and march through medieval streets, completing a ritual known as the retraite aux flambeaux, eventually arriving at a monument called Au Marcheur, where the president of the St. Roch Military March Committee ceremonially inaugurates the three-day festive procession.1 The following day, the sounds of fifes, drums and musket shots echo through the fortified upper town sprawling on a bluff and the riverside lower town below it. Hundreds of marchers dressed in

Napoleonic-era uniforms form companies complete with officers, musical accompaniment, and cavalry. They trace a route through both parts of the city, the neighboring countryside, and pass by a chapel dedicated to St. Roch. At the end of the processional, a group known as zouaves, wearing French North African colonial military-style costumes and accompanied by local clergy, carry a statue of St. Roch. More than 2,000 people participate in the march. They pass the Au Marcheur memorial, for recognition from local officials and to pay homage to past generations of marchers and veterans of both world wars. A military mass is held in honor of the marchers on Monday morning, followed by another day of marching the geographical limits of the commune. Each evening, marchers and spectators mingle in open-air bars and cafés, and festivities fill the town square, complete with carnival rides and games. Spectators include locals as well as visitors from other Belgian provinces and nearby France. A similar march occurs in August in nearby Ham-sur-Heure; many of the marching companies and spectators overlap between the two events. On the first night, a religious processional accompanied by several members of each marching company transfer a St. Roch statue from a chapel to the local church. Three days of marching ensue, each ending with a retraite aux flambeaux. On Monday, the marchers end their circuit at the medieval-era chateau of Ham-sur-Heure, where city government representatives host the marchers at a reception. The festival ends with a fireworks show, carnival rides, and late-night visits.

These marches are prominent examples of the saint military marching tradition in the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region: the communities located between the Sambre and Meuse rivers in central Wallonia. The Thuin and Ham-sur-Heure St. Roch marches count among the most famous military marches in the region. Additionally, there are dozens of smaller marches in the region, including

2 Marches are dedicated to a variety of saints, including Peter, Paul and Anne. The five most famous marches in the region, also known as grandes marches for their size and historical pedigree, are those of Thuin, Ham-sur-Heure, Fosses, Gerpinnes, and Walcourt.
five additional St. Roch marches. Few of these marches overlap; the marching season begins in May and lasts until October. Thus on any summer weekend, it is likely that marchers in Napoleonic-era uniforms escort a saint statue somewhere in the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region.

After viewing both marches firsthand, I interviewed participants about the marches’ origin and purpose. Answers varied, but generally pinpointed the origin of the Thuin march to 1654, when Spanish forces besieged the city. Thuin was on the verge of capitulating when plague struck the besieging force, forcing their retreat. The townspeople celebrated with a processional dedicated to St. Roch, whom they believed had deployed disease to protect the town. The militia, still carrying weapons and wearing uniforms, escorted the processional outside the city walls. According to popular tradition, every year, the town commemorated their miraculous salvation with the same march. During the 1820s, the uniforms changed as Napoleonic war veterans accompanied the processional, and the tradition continues unabated to the present day. The popular response regarding the Ham-sur-Heure march was less dramatic but claimed an older pedigree: after an outbreak of plague in the town in 1636, the townspeople beseeched the local curé for a processional to stave off disaster. In 1638, a confraternity dedicated to Saint Roch was founded and a chapel built off the main square. A military escort for the ensuing processional was necessary because of the precarious security at the time, with French and Spanish soldiers fighting in the region during the Thirty Years War. Like Thuin, locals claim the processional became a central focus of the town’s liturgical calendar.


4 Author observance of the marches and interviews, Thuin (May 2004); Ham-sur-Heure (August 2015). In Thuin, the author interviewed numerous spectators and marchers during the course of the march. In Ham-sur-Heure, the author interviewed spectators, several marchers, members of the Ham-sur-Heure municipal commune, and members of the Executive Committee for the Procession et Marche Militaire St. Roch de Ham-sur-Heure, including the president of the committee, Dominique Gagliardini.

5 Foulon, Marches militaires et folkloriques de l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, 39.

6 Dolimont, Procession et Marche Militaire Saint-Roch, 375e Anniversaire, 1.
To the modern spectator and participant, the marches compress notable events from the last 400 years: late-medieval saint processions, plague outbreaks, and military campaigns. Yet discrepancies emerge with the popular memory of the march’s history. St. Roch’s official day is 16 August and the 1654 siege of Thuin occurred during January. Why is the military march held during the third weekend of May? Additionally, the St. Roch processionals ceased completely during the French Revolutionary era and only re-emerged as military marches some seventy years later. If the marches didn’t exist until the 1860s, why are marchers costumed in Napoleonic-era uniforms? Despite Old Regime historical claims and appearances, the modern St. Roch military marches originated in the mid-19th century and subsequently, through commemorative efforts, were integrated into an Old Regime historical narrative by 1940. Generations of participants added rituals, dates, and memorabilia, filtering commemoration through innovative explanations linking the march (as experienced) to history (as imagined). The marches are not conceptualized as having originated during the 1860s and inspired by Old Regime processionals; rather, the modern marches are associated with the ancient processionals through invented stories of continuity and the historical rupture between the two has been ignored or reinterpreted. In the present day, a full apparatus of commemorative structures standardize, promote, and preserve the marches as historical rituals dating to the early 17th century.

If the modern marches lack continuity with their Old Regime antecedents, they nonetheless retain the vibrancy and cultural relevance that define a ‘living’ or functional communal rite. The marches annually re-enact local historical traditions, present overlapping and unstable declarations of local and regional identity, and reinforce social hierarchies. Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger’s seminal work *The Invention of Tradition* analyzes a similar phenomenon regarding the invention of British, French, and German traditions, which were utilized primarily for nationalistic purposes in the middle-to-late 19th century.7 Both Hobsbawn and Ernest Gellner linked the ‘invention of tradition’ to the arbitrary construction of

---

national identities during the era of Western European urbanization and industrialization, a pattern, which, at first glance, seems applicable to the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse saint marches. Hobsbawn identified two types of invention common to European nationalistic rituals: first, the ‘rediscovery’ of historical traditions from collective memory; and, second, the creation of new traditions legitimized through specious historical claims. Both forms of reconstruction are identifiable in the 19th-century re-imagination of the St. Roch marches. During a cholera epidemic in the 1860s, communities “rediscovered” the Old Regime St. Roch processionals and initially utilized them for a similar purpose as their ancestors: protection from disease through the deployment of church relics and public, pious rituals. But the underlying communal motivations for continuing the saint marches quickly transformed into secular festive celebrations, frustrating and alienating clergy and lay pilgrims alike. Between 1866 and 1940, innovations in costume, ritual behavior, and communal understanding of the purpose and history of the march fundamentally transformed the ritual. Nevertheless, while revising the historical origins and traditions of the march, participants claimed that they were in fact engaged in authentic historical re-creation of an event dating back to the 17th century.

This study examines how participants and observers historically conceptualized and commemorated the St. Roch military marches in popular culture. Accordingly, documentary evidence for this study centers on publicly published sources that describe and commemorate the Thuin and Ham-sur-Heure St. Roch marches: primarily newspaper and journal articles published in Charleroi and Namur between 1866-1940. Additionally, the paper utilizes primary documentation of the post-1860 marches themselves, including event pamphlets, marching association publications, and personal interviews with spectators, marchers, and members of the marching organizational committees.

8 Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, 73-74.

9 Hobsbawn and Ranger, The Invention of Tradition, 2.

10 There is minimal archival information regarding the marches prior to their re-establishment in the 1860s.
Old Regime Origins

Communities in the Burgundian Low Countries were central to the medieval processional movement. The Corpus Christi processional, for example, began in Liège during the mid-13th century as a tribute to the Eucharist. The annual Processional of the Holy Blood, dating to 1290, occurs on Ascension Day in Bruges, where the local cathedral claimed possession of a vial of Christ’s blood obtained during the Second Crusade. Brussels, Ypres, and Nivelles also have traditions of religious processionals. Many communities developed saint processionals called *dedicaces*, later known as *ducasses*. A pilgrimage atmosphere permeated the processionals: clergy and participants emphasized piety, discipline and the power of relics in protecting Catholic communities.\(^\text{11}\)

One such processional centered on St. Roch, a late-13th-century pilgrim from southern France. He legendarily recovered from the plague and was thereafter known for his miraculous healing. After his death, St. Roch became a regionally celebrated figure for protection from disease. Cults devoted to St. Roch spread northward during the outbreak of the Black Death in the mid-14th century. The first written evidence of St. Roch veneration in the Burgundian Low Countries dates to 1485, while the first recorded processional occurred in 1599 in Châtelet.\(^\text{12}\) Two decades later, the town magistrate requested permission from the bishop to build a chapel dedicated to St. Roch. During a plague outbreak in 1636, eight St. Roch chapels were built in the region, including in Thuin and Ham-sur-Heure. Confraternities supported chapels dedicated to specific saints, paid for saint-day masses, and organized annual processionals for the chosen saint. A Catholic region, the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse communities had numerous saint days involving ritual processionals; St. Roch veneration became a common addition to the liturgical calendar by the mid-17th century. Confraternities—piety-based lay

---

11 For example, in 1703, pilgrims from Mons traveled to Thuin to pray for salvation against an outbreak of disease in Mons. Conreur, *Folklore thudinien, Tome I*, 12.

12 A local confraternity “sang a mass to Monsigneur St. Roch and held a processional.” Conreur, *Folklore thudinien, Tome I*, 57.
organizations—supported chapels dedicated to specific saints, paid for saint-day masses, and often organized annual processionals for the chosen saint. In Ham-sur-Heure, for example, a local St. Roch confraternity supported the saint’s chapel. Thuin also hosted multiple saint processionals. The most significant of these was that of Notre Dame d’el Vaulx, organized by a local confraternity, which venerated a 12th-century statue of Mary. Yet evidence also suggests the existence of a St. Roch confraternity and procession in Thuin during the 17th century.13 Armed escorts of bourgeois, rural militias, or youth societies accompanied these processionals.14 One curé in Thuin, for example, witnessed a St. Roch procession with military escort on 15 August 1662.15 That same year, the Thuin city magistrate recorded distributing 70 pounds of gunpowder, “as was the custom for the youth societies in this town, for the day of St. Sacrament 35 pounds and for la dédicace, the same amount.”16

The St. Roch confraternities lasted until 1794, when French revolutionaries invaded the region, sacked local churches, and banned church-related public festivals, including the ducasses—a pattern repeated in communities throughout the Austrian Low Countries.17 At the Congress of Vienna after Napoleon’s defeat in

13 After the construction of the St. Roch chapel, parish records in 1637 document a donation of, “20 pataçons to the confraternity of St. Roch.” Moreover, in a 1652 receipt, the Magistrate of Thuin indicates reimbursement to a “Jean Lescourcel for refreshments given to the confrères des harquebusiers of Lobbes who accompanied the procession in the town,” indicating the presence of an armed escort for a saint procession. Roland, Les “marches” militaires de l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, 21.

14 Roland, Les “marches” militaires de l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, 21; Foulon, Marches militaires et folkloriques, 25. Foulon quotes a 1611 edict by the Prince-Bishop of Liège regulating the use of archers and harquebusiers in a local saint march.


17 In Mons, for example, the St. Waudru processional survived the first French occupation of 1792-93, yet was suppressed following the second invasion in 1794. The St. Waudru chapter was abolished and the procession ceased. De Vriendt, “Entre réformes autrichiennes et Révolution française,” La Ducasse, rituelle de Mons, 92-93.
1815, the former Austrian Low Countries and Principality of Liège merged with the United Provinces to create a new Kingdom of the Netherlands under Dutch hegemony. The Dutch rulers, Protestant and anti-Bonaparte, forbade any celebration of Napoleon or unauthorized saint military marches. Even some processionals that had officially reemerged during the Napoleonic Empire withered away during the Dutch era. During this period, despite the emergence of the independent nation-state of Belgium in 1830, there is no evidence of the continuation of the Old Regime St. Roch processionals: they had simply disappeared during the tumultuous years of the French Revolution and Napoleonic First Empire.

**Reconstructing Processionals in the 19th Century**

Several factors influenced the reconstruction of marches in the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region during the mid-19th century. One catalyst was the outbreak of cholera, which proliferated in the densely urbanized Wallonian industrial communities. Though the St. Roch confraternities, chapels, and processionals disappeared in 1794, Catholic practices and worship had not and acceptance of St. Roch as a healing saint endured. For example, after the 1801 Concordat, the Notre-Dame du Val church in Thuin maintained a weekly Tuesday mass for St. Roch. During the same era, the Napoleonic legacy became fashionable, in part due to Napoleon III’s Second Empire, which commemorated veterans of the Napoleonic wars. Commemoration occurred in Wallonia as well; surviving First Empire soldiers received service medals and donned old uniforms to


receive official accolades. The Napoleonic era provided nostalgic cultural references for organizers developing new saint marches, and recalled older traditions of religious relics accompanied by military escorts.

Several other factors assisted the logistics of marching. The construction of a railroad in the region between 1848-62 (a side effect of mid-century industrialization) greatly facilitated communication between towns and allowed both marchers and spectators to travel easily. Second, there was a large military depot in the French garrison town of Givet on the Franco-Belgian border, which included an enormous collection of surplus uniforms from the Napoleonic era; these could be rented or purchased by marchers. A third factor was the resurgence of Catholic pilgrimages and saint worship during the 1850s, spurred by Pope Pius IX’s declaration on the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the purported appearance of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858. This precipitated enormous tourist-pilgrimages to southern France and similar pilgrimages occurred on saint-days across both France and Belgium. Religious appeal and secular patriotism intersected in the form of reimagined saint-military marches.

In 1863, cholera struck the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region. By 1866, over 700 people had died in the town of Châtelet, ironically the first site of St. Roch veneration during the 1636 plague. Duplicating its leadership in saint veneration, the town held the first modern St. Roch processional in 1865 by carrying a statue accom-


23 Conreur. Folklore thudinien, Tome II, 19.
panied by a military escort “wearing French uniforms.”

The following year, a St. Roch processional began in Ham-sur-Heure. The 17th-century chapel survived the Revolution and the saint’s confraternity congregated anew. In 1866, a journalist reported that, “St. Roch was celebrated by religious and military attendees” including 350 “soldiers” and that the St. Roch statue was “carried by eight young officers in the religious group.”

Thuin’s modern march began in 1867, a year after that of Ham-sur-Heure. During the cholera epidemic, the St. Roch confraternity was re-established by the curé and a mass and impromptu processional were held in the saint’s honor on 16 August. The following year, the curé announced a St. Roch military march on the third Sunday in May. The communal government lobbied for the change in order to avoid competition with Ham-sur-Heure, which held their St. Roch march on the traditional 16 August date. This decision indicates secular business interests, for whom sacred dates were negotiable in the reconstructed ritual. The curé consented, though he continued to conduct a purely religious processional on 16 August to the recently reconstructed St. Roch chapel. The commune’s influence was apparent in an additional innovation: volunteer marchers in military uniforms accompanying the processional. Companies of marchers headed the march, followed by the curé and new confraternity carrying a statue of St. Roch. The curé also presided over a “military mass” requested by the marching companies on Monday morning following the Sunday march.

24 Conreur estimated that 43,000 Belgians died of cholera in 1866, Conreur, “Les origines de la procession et de la Marche militaire Saint-Roch à Thuin,” 26.


27 Conreur. Folklore thudinien, Tome II, 29.

28 “Today in Thuin will be the processional instituted last year in honor of St. Roch; the communal administration voted 250BF for costs associated and named a commission charged with directing le cortège and inviting outside [marching] societies.” Journal de Charleroi, 17 May 1868. Conreur, Folklore thudinien, Tome II, 31.

29 “Today [Sunday, 9 May] the procession will leave in two hours… On Monday, 10 May [1869] at 10am: the military mass in honor of St. Roch.” Conreur, Folklore thudinien, Tome II, 32.
Participants at the time viewed the marches as modern creations and journalists rarely referenced Old Regime antecedents. Reporting on the 1866 Ham-sur-Heure march, one journalist seemed unaware of the 17th-century processional, noting, “this procession was instituted in the [18th] century in honor of St. Roch following an outbreak of dysentery in l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region… At our demand, Monseigneur [our bishop] authorized an annual processional.”30 In 1892, another journalist simply stated that the processional originated in, “time immemorial.”31 In Thuin, organizers referenced the anniversary date for the march from 1867. As late as 1909, the march was characterized as, “the 42nd annual Grand Military March of St. Roch…organized by the commune.”32

By the turn of the century, however, participants started re-conceptualizing the origins of the saint military marches. In Ham-sur-Heure, organizers began emphasizing continuity with Old Regime processions and ignored the 72-year gap. In 1904, one journal claimed that the march “had been going on for centuries”; in 1908, the claim was more specific: “the annual march has been consecrated for three centuries.”33 By the following year, a particular date was attributed to the processional: “Ham-sur-Heure celebrates the 271st anniversary of the St. Roch march,” linking the processional back to the 1630s.34 In Thuin, admirers also framed the march as a continuation of the Old Regime processional. One marching society protested the characterization of the march as having been recently established: “This is an error. The March was suppressed like all others at the end of the 18th century, during the French Revolution.

32 Gazette de Charleroi, 14 May 1909. Golard, Chroniques des Marches Passées, Tome I, 179; also see the 1907 marching program titled “40me anniversaire” (Thuin 1907).
33 Gazette de Charleroi, 20 August 1904 and 29 August 1908. Golard, Chroniques des Marches Passées, Tome I, 133-134.
The Marche de Thuin, once known as “The Procession of Saint-Roch,” was reestablished in 1866 after the outbreak of cholera.\footnote{Gazette de Charleroi, 16 September 1911. Golard, Chroniques des Marches Passées, Tome I, 179.} Journals reporting on the Thuin march connected the Old Regime processional to a famous event: the siege of the city in 1654.\footnote{Journal de Charleroi, 14 May 1904. Golard, Chroniques des Marches Passées, Tome I, 176.} The poster painted to advertise the march in 1901, painted by Brussels artist Léon Belloguet, depicted marchers in Imperial uniforms carrying St. Roch, behind which was the beffroi of the upper town. In 1904, a local journalist asserted, “The military march of St. Roch is one of the oldest in the l’Entre Sambre-et-Meuse. It was founded after the siege of Thuin in 1654 and continued until the end of the 18th century. It returned in 1866 during the epidemic of cholera which ravaged the region,” illustrating the perceived continuity between the ancient and modern St. Roch processions.\footnote{Gazette de Charleroi, 14 May 1904. Golard, Chroniques des Marches Passées, Tome I, 176. Emphasis mine.}

This historical revisionism regarding the origins of the St. Roch marches was related to the larger regional cultural renaissance called the Mouvement Wallon. The movement was initially a late-19th century Francophone response to the increasing politicization of language between French and Flemish-speaking communities in Belgium. As it grew in popularity, however, the movement sought to elevate Wallonian identity and pride through the commemoration of cultural achievements.\footnote{Demoulin and Kupper, Histoire de la Wallonie, 270-271; Philippe Raxhon, “Les contours d’une quête en pointillé,” Histoire Culturelle de la Wallonie, 115-118; Strikwerda, A House Divided, 37-39.} A logical application of this regional cultural commemoration was the revision of prominent examples of local tradition as permanent fixtures of Wallonian patrimony. Thus the nostalgia elicited by characterizing the St. Roch marches as having originated in ‘time immemorial’ was far more compelling than regarding them as recent creations.

By 1920, the rebranding of Thuin’s St. Roch march was complete. Posters and pamphlets now ignored the 1867 anniversary
in favor of 1654. The mayor collaborated with a religious instructor named Abbot Mathon to defend the revised history. In a 1923 article, Mathon linked the Old Regime processional to the modern march without mentioning differences in organization, purpose or date. In effect, he treated the 1794-1866 period as a pause in a continuous, homogeneous evolution. 39 Three weeks later, Mathon reiterated the perceived continuity, noting:

The St. Roch processional in Ham-sur-Heure is two hundred years old. But that of Thuin is the oldest of all… We won’t forget, I hope, that [the processional] began with the siege of 1654 and the pause, a product of the European revolutions, could not destroy it. 40

This is a stunning assertion, both in claiming that the Thuin processional was the oldest, as well as suggesting that the modern march was in fact a continuation of the Old Regime processional. 41 Refuting these claims was difficult, as chroniclers utilized popular oral tradition to link the Old Regime processionals with the reconstructed military marches. The processionals were an established folkloric tradition while the modern marches were, by the 1920s, already a lifelong memory for most participants. In 1927, the Gazette de Charleroi noted, “This festival is a local event to which the Thudiniens population is most attached, due to the fact that it is central to the history of the town and, transmitted from generation to generation, remains alive today.” 42 The dearth of historical records facilitated the fancied link between the two eras. The St. Roch processional remained shrouded in mystery (“time immemorial”), which assisted in the imagining process. Thudiniens knew an Old Regime processional existed, but not exactly when or how it was


41 That honor would go to the town of Châtelet; he also ignored the plague of 1636 and the St. Roch chapel and confraternity founded during the 1630s.

celebrated. Important dates such as the siege of 1654 emerged from the historical fog and facilitated the commemoration process.

Organizers supplemented their claim by appropriating local historical artifacts. An old cannon, still in the possession of the city commune, was purported to be a prize taken during the brief siege. The cannon’s popular nickname, Spantole, simultaneously reflected its Spanish origins and centrality to the conflict. In 1925, Spantole was adorned with a new inscription that associated the cannon with the siege, turning oral tradition into written commemoration. The ancient weapon functioned as an artifact that connected onlookers to the 1654 event. Yet archival evidence does not support this: the cannon was listed in the town’s military inventory prior to the siege and specialists date it to the 15th century. It was never used by the Spanish, nor captured by the defenders. Facts notwithstanding, the physical presence of the ancient cannon, carried around town by marching groups on the 300th anniversary of the 17th-century siege (1954) helped fuse the historical claim in popular memory.

Some admirers constructed elaborate histories that wove together threads of famous historical events. A 1958 article postulated that military escorts became necessary during the 16th-century religious wars to protect relics from iconoclastic Protestants. Referencing the 1654 siege, author André Miot reiterated the Spantole connection and hypothesized that the processional emerged as a consequence of a grateful population. He then turned to the 1866 cholera outbreak and revitalized march, noting, “Since then, there have been no more interruptions,” apparently viewing the 70-year hiatus as a mere pause and ignoring the WWI/II suspensions altogether. As for the distinctive Napoleonic costumes, promoters, and amateur historians advanced two theories: either local Napoleonic-
era veterans marched in their old uniforms\textsuperscript{46} or youth societies in the post-Waterloo era commemorated veterans by adopting Napoleonic uniforms.\textsuperscript{47} This history, self-referencing and tidy, remains in present-day descriptions of the military marches.

By the mid-1920s, the presence of regional governmental representatives lent the marches an official atmosphere. While a subcommittee of the city commune supervised the Thuin march, a local commercial association (the \textit{Association des Commerçants Indépendants et Propriétaires} or ACIP) was increasingly involved in the years just prior to WWI in an effort to coordinate and promote the march with local businessmen.\textsuperscript{48} Communal delegates and members of the ACIP opened the festivities with an official reception at the \textit{hôtel de ville}, complete with a champagne toast. Following the Tuesday military mass, officials held a banquet that recognized individual marchers with service medals.

The Ham-sur-Heure march, now organized by an executive committee like that of Thuin, also used historical artifacts to reinforce the authenticity of the St. Roch march. The two focal points of the march are the 17\textsuperscript{th}-century St. Roch chapel and the ‘Court of Honor’ in the medieval castle of the Mérode family. Maximilien de Mérode, seigneur of the town and chateau, founded the chapel in 1636. In the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, the chateau was occupied by French forces including Louis XIV himself, who ordered the demolition of one of the towers, reducing the castle from a square defensive structure to an open courtyard, which now serves as the ‘Court of Honor’ for the reception of marching companies by communal officials and dignitaries. The neo-Gothic St. Martin church, constructed a decade after the commencement of the march (1870s), sits in the middle of the town square, between the chapel and the chateau. The church

\textsuperscript{46} “En l’on marche en costumes de 1er Empire à la fois parce que beaucoup des jeunes ont servi dans les armées impériales.” Lefèvre, \textit{Traditions en Wallonie}, 265.


\textsuperscript{48} In 1924 the subcommittee was named the \textit{Comité St. Roch}. 
serves as a nexus between these two symbolic locations: the Ham-
sur-Heure marching companies remove the St. Roch statue from the
chapel and carry it to the St. Martin church at the beginning of the
festival, where it will remain for the duration of the five-day event
(when not touring with the marchers). As in Thuin, physical artifacts
and locations serve to reinforce the historical claims perpetuated by
the marching companies and organizers as theatrical scenery for the
performance of folkloric expression.

**Commemoration, Memory and Identity**

One of the earliest modern efforts commemorating the 19th-century
marching tradition in l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse occurred at an in-
ternational exposition of Walloon art held in Charleroi in 1911. 49
As part of the *Mouvement Wallon*, highlighting cultural traditions
in the region, a *Tournoi historique des Marches de l’Entre-Sambre-
et-Meuse* was held on October 1. 50 Marching companies from vari-
ous l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse communities assembled for a march
through the streets of Charleroi. The *Gazette de Charleroi* reported
the participation of 1,300 marchers from 22 companies across the
region, including St. Roch marchers from Ham-sur-Heure and Thu-
in. 51 Philippe Passelecq, the *Président d’Honneur* of the organizing
committee for the *tournoi*, gave a speech before the assembled com-
panies in which he voiced an early vision of the modern folkloric
origin of the marches: armed escorts, “the majority of which go back
to the year 1300,” protecting religious processionals against bandit-
ry in the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse. 52 He then directly addressed the
marchers: “You possess, in your souls, the cult of memory; you hon-
or the traditions of your fathers; you are the conscientious continua-
tion of deep-rooted habitudes of your forbearers and we congratulate


you on your perseverance; this is how we honor our ancestors.”53 In 1930, during the centenary celebration of Belgium’s independence, the Thuin St. Roch march, despite having no association with the 1830 Belgian revolution, was included as part of the festivities leading up to the September commemoration.54 By 1939, Thuin’s march was unquestioningly a central contributor to local folkloric and tourist life. An article in Le Rappel noted this attachment, stating: “This military march forms part of our Wallonian folklore that we must maintain as our national patrimony, like that of Les Gilles of Binche or Le Doudou of Mons.”55

The act of constructing a linear and interconnected history for the marches continues in the present day. The 2015 Ham-sur-Heure program declares continuity with the Old Regime, referencing the origins of the march to the 1630s plague in the region and a “purely religious processional” in 1640. The military aspect is justified through a discussion on security concerns in the 17th century, notably a 1695 edict by the Bishop of Liège authorizing an escort to the processional. Yet there is no mention of the collapse of the processional in 1794, the cholera outbreak, or the re-establishment of the saint march in 1866. In fact, the only mention of the 19th century is a reference to the “passage of Napoleonic troops in the countryside during 1815” as a means of explaining the uniforms today.56

If the modern marches lack a verifiable connection to the Old Regime saint processionals, does that mean that they are not authentic expressions of local cultural identity and tradition? Edward Muir defines ritual as an act that “appeals to the senses” which is

54 The marching program title in 1930 reads Fêtes du centenaire – Procession St. Roch and Grand Marche militaire (St. Roch March event pamphlet, Thuin, 1930, 1). This example of using an invented tradition for nationalistic or patriotic purposes follows the standard argument set forth in Hobsbawn and Ranger’s work, The Invention of Tradition.
both repetitive and seeks an emotional response.\textsuperscript{57} Emile Durkheim similarly stressed the role that public rituals play in communal identity, acting as a mechanism for “social self-worship.”\textsuperscript{58} While the marches retain significance in local historical memory, yet have changed focus and structure over time, then authenticity is surely less about outward appearance than emotive appeal and community identification. The marches perform authentic expressions of local culture, in so much as they remain relevant to those participating and observing.\textsuperscript{59} The evolution of the Thuin St. Roch march reveals a conscious communal act of construction, which, like 19th-century novels and newspapers in France and Germany, projects a vision of an imagined community.\textsuperscript{60} Unlike the invented rituals and traditions that Hobsbawn and Gellner asserted were instrumental in the construction (rather than reflection) of national culture, the St. Roch marches, in privileging a local identity that emphasizes both historic regional and trans-national traditions, undermine the very notion of nation-state construction as integral to the development of ‘invented traditions’.

Indeed, as Muir asserted, channeling Clifford Geertz: “rituals do not function to create social solidarity at all, but to provide enacted narratives that allow people to interpret their own experience… rituals produce a story people tell themselves about themselves.”\textsuperscript{61} Jay Winter similarly noted, “Historical remembrance borrows from [familial and liturgical remembrance] but uses them to construct a story about a shared past, the shape and content of which tell a group

\textsuperscript{57} Muir, \textit{Ritual in Early Modern Europe}, 2.

\textsuperscript{58} Gellner, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, 56.

\textsuperscript{59} Darnton observed that rituals often function as model or mirror, either modeling an idealized form of society or mirroring a community as it was understood by community members themselves, providing a declarative, rather than instructional, purpose to the ritual. Darnton, \textit{The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History}, 122-124.

\textsuperscript{60} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 25-36. For instance, a common expression one hears in at l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse marches is, “Les Marches, dans la region, on a ça dans le sang,” Bouchat, “‘Le village magique’ Pluralité des engagements dans les Marches,” 113.

\textsuperscript{61} Muir, \textit{Ritual in Early Modern Europe}, 5.
of people who they are and from whence they have come. Muir, Geertz, and Winter’s observations on the use of ritual and performance to assert cultural identity is useful in considering the communal significance of the military marches. They re-enact a cohesive but unstable memory, which reinforces wider historical narratives proclaiming a particular vision of local identity. Symbols associated with the marches, including St. Roch statues and chapels, city beffroi, and the ‘Court of Honor,’ serve as props on a public stage and stand as permanent physical reminders of this communal folkloric declaration. Marcher genealogies overlap with public commemoration, as children march in the same companies (and even the same costumes) as parents and grandparents. The marches are not dead rituals, observed but misunderstood; rather they remain vibrant ceremonial events that simultaneously declare and validate Thudinien and Bourquis cultural identity. A recent publication commemorating the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse marches emphasizes the potential for regenerative communal attachment, as well as the homage paid to social hierarchies, echoing Passelecq’s speech a century earlier:

[Marching] renews the marcher’s relationship with his community. For several days, he is proud to march amongst his equals, with devotion, simplicity and humility. The marcher marches like his ancestors; to the rhythm of fifes and drums, he rediscovers his roots. When he fires a salvo, he renders honor to both saints and local authorities.

The close link between invented traditions and the construction of popular national consciousness advanced by Hobsbawn, Gellner and Benedict Anderson, all of whom connected symbolic acts to nascent national identity construction (directed by the nation-state itself), emerged in Belgium as, ironically, a mechanism for advancing intra-state nationalism. Proponents for regional autonomy (the Mouvement Wallon, for example) or outright independence, particu-

62 Tilmans, van Vree, and Winter, Performing the Past: Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe, 15.


64 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 86-90.
larly within the Flemish language (*Flamingant*) movement, problematized the very notion of Belgium as a ‘natural’ nation-state; the artificiality of nation-state construction, as asserted by Hobsbawn, Gellner, and Anderson, echoes populist regional movements that belie the very existence of a common national culture.\(^{65}\) In the midst of the modern political and cultural deconstruction of Belgium into autonomous linguistic regions bound by tenuous federalism, the invention of tradition in the l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse military marches intensified the commemoration of local identity. That is to say, the celebration of regional or local identity fuels commemorative efforts that were once theorized as being purely nationalistic, yet ultimately serves to undermine Belgian national identity. As Céline Bouchat notes, “Without doubt, the village constitutes the visible social center around which the March constructs social relations: a March organizes a hierarchy of a locality and circumscribes its physical space.”\(^{66}\)

**Conclusion**

St. Roch, a relatively obscure figure in saint commemoration, became synonymous with the cultural identity of several l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse communities by 1940. The St. Roch military marches evolved from a popular response to cholera in the form of a traditional Catholic ritual, to secular military marches commemorating the Napoleonic wars, while maintaining the trappings of Old Regime saint processionals. In Thuin, the rite linked the town to famous events including plague outbreaks, 17th-century wars, and the Napoleonic era, offering the community a cohesive and powerful historical narrative. Today, fading Belloguet posters and old pictures of marchers line the walls of cafés and the tourism bureau places the march foremost as a local attraction. Oversight organizations ensure

---

\(^{65}\) The *Flamingant* and *Wallon* movements were already well established prior to WWI. Strikwerda notes Jules Destée’s “Letter to the King on the separation of Wallonie and Flanders” in 1912: “There are no Belgians, there are only Flemings and Walloons.” Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 37.

standardization and historical continuity, though there is no obvious standard for enforcing historical authenticity when the ritual itself is largely an invented tradition and enforcement could actually impede folkloric traditions. As Ernest Renan noted, “Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation.”67 This assertion applies to formation of regional identity as well.

Commemoration of the marches has increased dramatically in recent decades. A full spectrum of commemorative structures surround the marches, including a marching museum, chapels, memorial statues, organizing committees, folkloric associations, regulatory marching societies, and recognition by regional, national and international entities, including UNESCO. Annual marching performances offer a sensory demonstration of suspended time: participants are immersed in a repetitive communal memory that projects four centuries of local history as a form of living memory. The authenticity of performance is reinforced through the use of commemorative celebrations, which allow communities to “perform the past” using an historical pedigree.68 While ritualized aspects of the march are largely modern constructions, underlying themes remain historically similar to those of the Old Regime processions: saint worship at a sacred time of year, volunteer military companies, and declarations of local hierarchies and identity. Despite the gaps, inventions and revisions, the St. Roch marches of l’Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse remain a meaningful and relevant, if perpetually evolving and contested, manifestation of regional historical commemoration.

Erik Hadley is an Associate Lecturer of History at Boise State University. His research interests center on 18th and 19th century folkloric history, popular memory, and commemoration in Belgium.

67 Ernest Renan, Qu’est-ce c’est une nation?, 7-8.
68 Tilmans, van Vree, and Winter, Performing the Past: Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe, 17.
Bibliography


