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Both during her lifetime and since the full manuscript of her forceful autobiography was discovered, no one has quite known what to do with Margery Kempe. Even her staunchest contemporary supporters occasionally lost patience with her or worried that they had inadvertently allied themselves with the wrong side in the divine conflict. Margery followed all the conventional Christian forms: she passed repeated ecclesiastical trials for orthodoxy with flying colors; she went on all the right pilgrimages; she said numberless prayers and took countless communions; even her crying fits and most of her visions have been shown to reflect the experiences of other European female mystics whose writings were available to her. But somehow her life and words defied orthodoxy; as Mikhail Bakhtin says of Rabelais, her story retains “a certain undestroyable nonofficial nature” (Rabelais, 3). Bakhtin ascribes this impressibly nonofficial element in Rabelais and other medieval authors to a pervasive and persistent conflict between what he calls the spirit of carnival and the “official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical

'Margery tells us she is familiar with the writings of many other mystics, both male and female (143). She compares herself explicitly to Bridget of Sweden and her scribe compares her to Mary of Oignies and Elizabeth of Hungary (47, 153-54).
and feudal culture” (Rabelais, 4). In Margery’s autobiography, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, the rhetoric of carnival, with its emphasis on the body and the grotesque, functions to disrupt official discourse and established hierarchies to make space for a new kind of female mysticism and piety.

The intelligibility of any action or utterance is determined by the matrix of interacting social, cultural, historical, political, economic, or religious discourses and the practices that surround it. Modern scholarly analysis has shown that Margery’s text can be seen productively through many different discursive lenses: scholars such as Clara Atkinson and Susan Dickman have analyzed Margery’s text in terms of the English and continental mystical traditions, and others have traced the complex relationship between Margery’s *Book* and Lollardy (Lynn Staley), or between bourgeois and clerical values (Sarah Beckwith), while still others have explored the text in terms of medieval traditions about the female body and the body of Christ (Beckwith, Karma Lochrie). In this essay, I examine the ways in which Margery’s *Book* participates in yet another discursive tradition—that of carnival as described by Mikhail Bakhtin—and how this carnival rhetoric contributes to the effectiveness of Margery’s discourse as well as to the opposition this rhetoric has historically provoked.

All of these readings increase the richness and complexity of our encounter with Margery’s text, with its vivid imagery and characteristic concerns, and help to explain the tremendous resistance that Margery provoked both during and after her life. Margery was by no means the only female mystic to face opposition: religious expression was problematic for any medieval woman because medieval theology and popular wisdom linked women inescapably to the body and then devalued the body in order to privilege other foundations for discourse.

1 Like other medieval pious women, Margery responds by linking her female “physicality” with the body and humanity of Christ. Caroline Bynum’s work shows how frequently medieval women mystics used this rhetorical strategy, suggesting that women focused on Christ’s humanity—his corporality, his body and blood, his human existence as baby, as bridegroom, as crucified
also faced antagonism because she insisted on bringing her religious vocation into the world rather than confining herself to a cloister. Mystics such as Catherine of Siena, Bridget of Sweden, and Margery were particularly unsettling for their contemporaries because they traveled freely and because Bridget and Margery claimed sanctity despite the fact that they were sexually experienced wives and mothers (Dickman, 156–57). However, even though many of Margery’s visions and actions parallel the recorded lives of continental mystics such as Bridget and Catherine as well as Mary of Oignies, Dorothy of Montau, and others, Margery is still probably the most controversial female medieval mystic on record (Atkinson, 13; Fries, 217).

Examining the ways in which Margery disrupts traditional religious and social discourse through the carnivalesque helps to explain why Margery provokes even more resistance than these other female mystics. To begin with, Margery inhabits a carnivalesque body—an earthy, physical, concrete, open (female) carnival body that is directly opposed to the spiritualized, homogenous, closed (male) classical body privileged by the church. As described by Bakhtin, the discourse of carnival is marked by an extraordinary emphasis on the body and its functions: eating, drinking, elimination, and sex. In carnival discourse, the body’s grotesque physicality becomes the link to life, energy, vitality—because women were themselves defined as fleshly (183). In this kind of medieval theology, women “achieve a love of God not by overcoming desire but by transferring it to a more appropriate object” (Robertson, 192).

One modern theologian, Drew Hinderer, tells us that Margery is not as successful a spiritual guide as Julian of Norwich (a contemporary with whom Margery is often unfavorably compared) because Margery’s book doesn’t provide a model for us to follow; he judges her experiences to be of little spiritual worth to others because her “preoccupation with herself and pervasive hysterical fear come close to insanity” and because despite the depth of her struggles “she was not entirely successful in overcoming them” (37). He goes on to tell us, however, that Margery might have succeeded spiritually if she had retired from the world; she could thus have found peace and escaped guilt and hysteria.
and renewal; the body—especially the woman's body—becomes the source of both corruption and renewal, the quintessence of both death and life (Rabelais, 240). Thus, appropriating the discourse of carnival to express real devotion and piety allowed Margery to use the body's potential to generate both life and death as sources of religious power while simultaneously stretching the boundaries of officially sanctioned religious discourse. Second, Margery represents carnival's wholehearted reversal of hierarchy, its enthusiastic disregard and disruption of traditional social and religious hierarchies of power. Additional elements of carnival present in varying degrees in Margery's text are rituals of transformation and liberation through the degradation of what is valued or powerful and an emphasis on masks, excess, laughter, and parody. We also see a recurring preoccupation with the destruction of boundaries—in Bakhtin's terms, the creation of a world without footlights, a world made up of participants only, without spectators.

In this essay, I will focus on two main elements of the carnivalesque in Margery's text: first, her use of the grotesque body to confront official discourse and to empower her own speech and participation in official culture; and second, her use of carnival privilege, frank speech, and temporary suspension of hierarchical norms and conventions to disrupt the established power relationships that exclude her.

Both Karma Lochrie, in *Margery Kempe and the Translations of the Flesh*, and Laurie Finke, in "Mystical Bodies and the Dialogics of Vision," discuss Margery's use of the grotesque body to challenge religious attempts to "close" women's bodies, although Lochrie limits her discussion by explicitly rejecting the carnivalesque as a category of analysis for Margery's text. Janet Wilson identifies Margery as a carnivalesque figure in her essay "Margery and Alison: Women on Top"; however, Wilson tends to equate the grotesque and the carnivalesque, and unlike Lochrie and Finke, Wilson sees Margery's physicality very negatively. For a rich source of additional examples of grotesque bodily elements in female medieval mysticism, see Rudolph Bell's *Holy Anorexia*. 
One of the most salient features of the mystical experiences Margery records in her *Book* is their sheer physicality, even when her imagery is not overtly carnivalesque. Whereas mystics like Julian of Norwich and Richard Rolle carefully distinguish between bodily and imaginative visions, Margery portrays her experiences in “real” terms more often than in symbolic ones. Julian (as well as other medieval theologians) maintains a disjunction between the physical and the spiritual that Margery often conflates. In the carnival world Margery creates, there are no spectators, only actors (an important aspect of carnival identified by Bakhtin), and Margery is always inside the world of her visions, taking an active part. She diapers the baby Jesus (promising not to wrap him too tightly), tells the child Mary she will be the mother of God, takes care of Mary’s white handkerchiefs, and brings the adult Mary a “good cawdel [gruel or spiced wine]” (195) to comfort her after the Crucifixion. As one critic charges, Margery’s text ignores “the distinction between mundane experience . . . and visions and revelations” (Pearson, 370).

Margery brings the same level of straightforward participation to her conversion of female sexuality into religious discourse. Carnival discourse often uses sexuality to link the profane with the sacred, and Margery’s relationship with God is astoundingly sexual. In one passage, God tells Margery that he accompanies her always: “whan bow gost to chyrch, I go wyth pe; whan pu sytttest at pi mete, I sytte wyth pe; whan bow gost to pi bed, I go wyth pe . . .” (31) (“when you go to church, I go with you; when you sit at your meal, I sit with you; when you go to bed, I go with you”) (66). God weds Margery in a very non-mystical ceremony, making the traditional marriage pledge (“I take pe, Margery, for my weddyd wyfe, for fayrar, for fowelar, for richar, for powerar”) (87), with the rest of the Godhead, the Virgin, and all the Saints as witnesses. (Even today, scholars criticize Margery’s description of her marriage to God as “too mundane, perhaps even too earthy” [Pearson, 371].) Later Christ reiterates the propriety of his accompanying Margery to bed:
For it is conuenyent þe wyf to be homly wyth hir husbond. Be he neuyr so gret a lorde & sche so powr a woman when he weddyth hir, yet þei must ly to-gedir & rest to-gedir in joy & pes. Ryght so mot it be twyx þe & me, . . . Perfore most I nedys be homly wyth þe & lyn in þi bed wyth þe. Dowtyr, thow desyrest grety to se me, & þu mayst boldly, whan þu art in þi bed, take me to þe as for þi weddyd husbond, as thy der-worthy derlyng, & as for thy swete sone, for I wyl be louyd as a sone schuld be louyd wyth þe modyr & wil þat þu loue me, dowtyr, as a good <wife> owyth to loue hir husbonde. & þe­ perf þu mayst boldly take me in þe armys of þi sowle & kyssen my mouth, myn hed, & my fete as swetly as thow wylt. (90)

(Margery has certainly not been the only female mystic to use erotic imagery to describe her relationship with deity—medieval theology seems to have been fairly comfortable with properly sublimated female sexuality. However, while Margery’s imagery does seem intended to be allegorical, it surely reflects the same concrete, detailed experiences of conjugal felicity that led to Margery’s fourteen children. Notice that in this passage, Margery is also filling simultaneously the roles of daughter, mother, and wife—embodying the carnival tradition of the eternal female who is the source of all life, just as in other places Margery’s
body is linked to debasement and death. Margery is repeatedly assured through divine revelation that there is no incompatibility between the roles of wife and mother of fourteen and the role of a bride of Christ; she can express the desires of her body in religious discourse, while enjoying some relief from the strain of childbearing (Joensen, 174). Margery’s discourse expresses both revulsion for and celebration of sexuality, resisting contemporary religious categories.

Of course, carnival sexuality is also unruly and often grotesque. Margery’s sexuality manifests itself in some ways she and others found uncomfortable. At one point, she is tempted to infidelity (and then rejected by her tempter when she actually tries to yield). Later, after years of chastity, Margery spends twelve days plagued by “horybyl syghtys & abhominabyl . . . of mennys membrys” (145) (“abominable visions . . . [of] men’s genitals, and other such abominations”) (184). In true carnival fashion these sexual images are linked to the church, for many of the men Margery imagines are priests, “comyn be-for hir syght . . . schewyng her bar membrys vn-to hir” (145) (“coming before her eyes and showing her their naked genitals”) (184). Margery tells us she is extremely relieved when this trial passes, and she sees it as proof of her own disgrace and weakness, but the carnival reversals embodied in this vision make it powerfully subversive. Beckwith points out that this priestly display is also a blatant exposure of priestly claims to privileged (phallic) authority as carnal and “abhominabyl” (“Material,” 211). Wendy Harding adds that these particular “horybyl syghtys” reverse two staples of misogynist medieval discourse about women—

Although Wilson identifies Margery as a carnival figure, she does not address the fact that in carnival discourse the female body represents both death/decay and regeneration. Wilson claims that the sexual nature of Margery’s relationship with Christ reflects Margery’s inability to “achieve that transcendental union which would have released her from the corporeal” and calls Margery’s physicality a simple reenactment of “the traditional patriarchal conception . . . which equates the female body with debasement, passivity, and victimization” (235). The vigor of Margery’s use of the body belies this oversimplified view.
that women are carnal and that their carnality distracts men from God (177). Margery’s vision forcibly reminds readers that priests have genitals too, that under the robes they are just as carnal as they define women to be, and that priestly carnality can also be a powerful threat to a woman’s connection with God.

Carnival discourse uses the grotesque body as an affirmation of the link between decay and renewal, as a source of transformation through its emphasis on the connections between life and death. In addition to her complication of medieval ideas about female sexuality, Margery also incorporates the carnival imagery of eating, excrement, and decay into her religious discourse. For example, at the end of her life Margery converts excrement and lust into virtue by caring for her aged husband’s helpless, incontinent body “as sche wolde a don Crist hym-self,” nerving herself for the task by remembering their previous sexual life and the “many delectabyl thowtys, fleschly lustys, & inordinat louys to hys persone” that she had had years before (181).

In another powerfully carnivalesque passage, the Lord tells Margery that “[y]ou shall be eaten and gnawed by the people of the world just as any rat gnaws the stockfish” (51). In this image, Margery’s flesh will sustain others in a grotesque echo of Christ’s similar sacrifice, but this self-sacrifice is raw and almost unclean—she will be gnawed at in the same way that a rat gnaws a piece of dried cod. Margery creates a fully carnival image of both death and renewal. And in what is perhaps the most powerful example, Margery uses carnivalesque imagery to rebuke a cleric, using a fable about a bear that converts flowers into excrement—the bear, or priest, converts virtue into filth through lust, gluttony, and excess (126–27). This story combines the carnival elements of eating, excrement, excess, and decay to accomplish two powerful reversals: the authorized “holy” man becomes a defiler, while the “carnal” woman becomes the authorized speaker, with power to rebuke clerics and to oppose archbishops. 6

6 Staley points to the ways in which this fable also participates in what she sees as Margery’s attempt to negotiate the line between heresy and orthodoxy (10). Margery repeats this fable on command during a confrontation with the
Margery also uses the rhetoric of carnival to diminish the terrifying aspects of her culture's religious discourse by transforming them into the grotesque. According to Bakhtin, the spirit of carnival "liberates the world from all that is dark and terrifying" by transforming fear into laughter and death into renewal and rebirth (Rabelais, 47, 50). Because the grotesque is ludicrous as well as horrible, and because, as Bakhtin believes, laughter neutralizes fear, the resulting world of carnival is "completely gay and bright" (Rabelais, 47). Margery performs this neutralizing transformation with Christ's suffering, her own suffering, and with her fears of future suffering. For example, Margery describes Christ's bleeding body as "more ful of wowndys than euyr was duffehows of holys" (70) ("more full of wounds than a dove-cote ever was of holes") (106). When Margery first began to imagine herself dying for God,

[h]yer pow[r] sche wold a be slayn for Goddys lofe, but dred for pe poyn of deth, & þerfor sche ymagyned hyr-self þe most soft deth, as hir thowt, for dred of inpacyens, þat was to be bowndyn hyr hed & hir fet to a stokke & hir hed to be smet of wyth a scharp ex for Goddys lofe. (3o)

(þ[s]he thought she would have liked to be slain for God's love but feared the point of death, and therefore she imagined for

archbishop of York, Henry Bowet, an active anti-Lollard. During this scene, Margery quotes scripture, teaches, rebukes swearing, and criticizes priestly corruption, like a Lollard, but her use of a fable to make this criticism signals her orthodoxy (Lollards disliked fables). She denies any desire to preach but insists on her right to "spekyn of God" (126).

Interestingly, Margery borrows this image from the writing of the hermit Richard Rolle. For Rolle, the comparison to the dove-cote is a meticulously worked-out allegory: the wounds are like the holes of a dove-cote, where the dove may flee from the hawk and find safety, just as we can flee from temptation and find refuge in the wounds of Christ's crucified body (113). Margery takes the image without the allegorical meaning and thus ends up with incongruity.
herself the most easy death, as she thought, because she feared her lack of fortitude—and that was to be tied at her head and her feet to a stake, and her head to be struck off with a sharp axe, for the love of God.) (65)

But the carnivalesque solution to fear is to transform the frightening into the grotesque, and Margery's images for her own death soon change. God promises that no actual harm will ever come to her ("schal no man sle the, ne fyer bren pe, ne watyr drynch pe, ne wynd deryn pe" (30); "no man shall slay you, nor fire burn you, nor water drown you, nor winds harm you") (65), so she is free to embroider her death until the fearfulness of martyrdom is swallowed up in the impossibility or ludicrousness of the punishments she imagines. For example, she records for us God's awareness that she would gladly have her head "smet of thre tymes on pe day euery day in sevyn 3er" (131) ("struck off three times a day every day for seven years") (170). She also offers several times to "hen hewyn as smal as flesch to pe potte" (142) ("be chopped up as small as meat for the pot") (181) to demonstrate to God her love for him. In fact, this offer ends one of the most moving devotional passages in the book (a passage about charity and grace), as if to bring Margery's devotions back to the level of her everyday experience. At the same time, Margery's carnival images, whether incongruously pragmatic or overtly grotesque, help to bridge the gap between the earthy, carnivalesque culture of the common people and the official mysticism of the church.

However, the most important effect of Margery's use of the grotesque body is to guarantee her a voice. Margery's ability to channel the discourse of the body into her worship provides her with a great deal of discursive power. She describes the "fir of lofe dos wyth-inne hir brest" (185) as something that "whepyr sche wolde er not, it wolde aperyn wyth-owte-forth" (185) ("whether she would or no, it would insist on appearing outwardly") (225). Her devotion takes the form of violent crying and "roaring" with the pity, grief, and love triggered in her "soul" by any reference to the Passion, the birth, or the manhood of Christ, whether verbal or visual.
Margery's "cryings," as she calls them, begin in Jerusalem, in response to her mental picture of the Crucifixion. When she and her fellow pilgrims came to Calvary,

she fell down because she could not stand or kneel, but writhed and wrestled with her body, spreading her arms out wide, and cried with a loud voice as though her heart would have burst apart. . . . [S]he had such great compassion and such great pain to see our Lord's pain, that she could not keep herself from crying and roaring though she should have died for it.) (68)

On several occasions, Margery describes herself as reeling about "as it had been a drunkyn woman" (198), and the effort of crying leaves her "all of a sweat" (225). One of these descriptions is a particularly good example of traditional devotional imagery combined with the carnivalesque:

Pan was her soul so delectably fed with the sweet converse of our Lord, and so fulfilled with his love, that like a drunk she turned herself first on one side and then on the other, with great weeping and sobbing, powerless to keep herself steady.) (135)
The incongruity here between the traditional imagery of divine nourishment—delectable feeding, sweet converse—and the carnival imagery of a drunk rolling back and forth and roaring is typical of Margery’s visions.

These crying fits astonished bystanders, even in Jerusalem, where extreme demonstrations of grief and piety were almost expected. Her crying is rejected because it goes beyond established forms of discourse: “many seyd þer was neywr seyt in Heuyn þat cryed so as sche dede, wherfor þei woldyn concludyn þat sche had a deuyl wythinne hir” (105) (“there was never a saint in heaven that cried as she did, and from that [the people] concluded that she had a devil within her”) (142). In fact, in one humorous passage, Christ’s Twelve Apostles themselves interrupt one of Margery’s visions to command her “to cesyn & be stille” (175). Margery answers them the same way she answers everyone else, claiming that her grief at what she sees is so overpowering that she cannot help her outcries.

However, the fact that Margery “cannot” refrain from crying guarantees her a voice within her culture. Her crying is a public, not a private act—a carnivalesque participation in the active, public realm of her society, and even more importantly, in its religious discourse and religious power structures. In Margery’s crying, her body provides both the force of her discourse and the means for its expression:

sche kept it in as long as sche myght & dede al þat sche cowde to withstand it er ellys to put it a-wey til sche wex as blo as any leed, & cuyr it xuld labowryn in hir mende mor and mor in-to þe tyme þat it broke owte. & whan þe body myght ne lengar enduryþ þe gostly labowr but was ouyr-come wyth

Mary Russo, in her discussion of the female grotesque, identifies two categories of the grotesque: the uncanny grotesque, associated with “an individualized, interiorized space of fantasy and introspection, with the attendant risk of social inertia,” and the carnival grotesque, a social body conceived in active, political, oppositional terms (9). Margery’s use of her body to participate forcibly in public discourse is consistent with the social nature of carnival.
The form of Margery's expression, its violence and unconventionality, also guarantees her an audience. Margery's crying is powerful because it is grotesque—it acts to disrupt "discourse that excludes her." Through crying her body is "forcibly inserted into Church ritual" (Joensen, r8o). Describing one typical occasion, Margery tells us that as a priest

As her silencing of the priest indicates, Margery’s use of her body to “write” her participation in the service is demonstrably successful.
Margery’s violent crying, then, provides her with a public role, and occasionally it provides her with the courage to speak in other ways. When facing her most dangerous trial for heresy, Margery’s “flesch tremelyd & whakyd wondirly” with alarm (124) (“trembled and quaked amazingly”) (162). However, she prayed until she made herself cry and then was able to speak to the archbishop of York without fear. When she is told not to preach, Margery openly affirms her right to a voice, answering: “I preche not, ser, I come in no pulpytt. I vse but comownycacyon & good wordys, & þat wil I do whil I leue” (126) (“I do not preach, sir; I do not go into any pulpit. I use only conversation and good words, and that I will do while I live”) (164).

Margery finally achieves enough acceptance in her community for her disruptive discourse that even visiting preachers are warned of her crying and requested to accept it; Margery tells us that many priests “suffyrd wol mekely” (“bore with it meekly”), and she recounts a long feud with the only preacher who resented her interruptions. For this priest, the issue is specifically Margery’s attempt to claim holy authority, or to characterize her loud crying as holy discourse; he explicitly agrees to tolerate her interruptions if she will define them as sickness rather than as divine manifestations (151), but when she refuses to deny her claims to divine authority, he silences her by evicting her from the church during his sermons. Characteristically, Margery refuses to be beaten, and she simply listens from outside the church, still wailing loudly enough to be heard from within; moreover, the Lord promises Margery that their situations will someday be reversed:

As hys name is now, it xal ben throwyn down & þin schal ben reysed up . . . þu xalt be in cherch whan he xal be wyth­owtyn. In þis chirche þu hast suffyrde meche schame & reprefe for þe gyftys þat I haue comyn þe & for þe grace & goodnes þat I haue wrovt in þe, et þerfore in þis cherche & in þis place I xal ben worschepyd in þe. (156)

(As his name is now, it shall be thrown down, and yours shall be raised up . . . you shall be in church when he shall be outside. In this church you have suffered much shame and rebuke
Carnival Reversal of Hierarchy

The potential of Margery's discourse to reverse normal social and religious hierarchies, as indicated in several of the examples already discussed, is particularly significant. Official medieval life was stringently governed by hierarchical forms governing actions, speech, even clothing. Above all, consideration of hierarchy regulated all interactions between classes. However, during carnival, hierarchical rank was temporarily suspended, allowing "a special type of communication impossible in everyday life." Carnival communication, both in speech and gesture, was free from the "norms of etiquette and decency" so inescapable at other times. Bakhtin believes that this frankness adds a special intensity to carnival relationships; carnival relationships are "truly human relations" because they allow a union of [t]he utopian ideal and the realistic" that is impossible in any other situation (Rabelais, 10). Bakhtin also points out that frankness doesn't simply mean sincerity or intimacy; it means "a completely loud, marketplace frankness that concerned everyone" (Rabelais, 271). This frankness is loud, uncultured, even earthy.

One of Margery's most endearing (and, for her contemporaries, most unsettling) characteristics is exactly this frank and free disregard for hierarchy. Time after time, she scolds her fellow townspeople, her fellow pilgrims, and the bishops and archbishops holding her on trial for heresy, with an absolute lack of self-consciousness or inhibition. Carnival discourse interrogates hierarchy, including gender hierarchy. Thus the "old woman" could challenge the bishop, normally considered her sexual, spiritual, and social "superior," and Margery made full use of this tradition. According to Dickman, Margery "was considerably freer and more outspoken in her criticism of the clergy than almost any earlier pious woman" (165). In one example, Margery rebukes Archbishop Arundel for allowing members of his household to swear:
My Lord, our Lord of all, Almighty God, has not given you your benefice and great worldly wealth in order to maintain those who are traitors to him and those who slay him every day by the swearing of great oaths. You shall answer for them, unless you correct them or else put them out of your service.

(72)

To the surprise of his attendants, the archbishop listened “[f]ul benyngly & mekely” (37) (“[i]n the most meek and kindly way”) (72). Carnival participants know that the normal barriers are down (although not all of Margery’s listeners responded so meekly). When the bishop of Lincoln does not command Margery to wear white clothes9 as she requests him to do, she is divinely commanded to “sey pe Bysshop pat he dredyth mor pe schamys of pe world pan pe parfyt lofe of God” (35) (“say to the Bishop that he is more afraid of the shame of this world than the perfect love of God”) (70) and that he

9 Margery’s insistence on white clothing, a medieval symbol of virginity, is resisted by many of her contemporaries as wrong and inappropriate, as even untruthful. While we can see the white clothing as yet another carnivalesque parody, a mask or disguise allowable as carnival license, we should also recognize that Margery does not seem to view the white of virginity as parody. But neither is it a simple reinscribing of the value assigned to virginity in medieval society nor a simple reinforcement of the link between virginity and holiness. For Margery, sexually experienced wife and prolific mother, to assert her purity, her virginity, is a useful reenvisioning of the concepts of virginity, purity, and holiness, a public revision of both virginity and motherhood, both purity and sexuality. The bishop of Lincoln, caught between a desire to keep this revision unofficial and unauthorized but fearful that Margery may really have God’s sanction, refuses to command her to wear white clothing but gives her money to buy it.
would have been blessed like the children of Israel if “he had fulfilled [hir] wyl” (35). When a rich man objects to her company on a voyage, she says “many scharp wordys on-to hym,” telling him that “yf 3e put me owt of pe schip, my Lord Ihesu xal put 30w owt of Heuyn, for I telle 30w, ser, owr Lord Ihesu hath no deynte of a ryche man les pan he wil be a good man & a meke man” (108) (“if you put me out of the ship, my Lord Jesus shall put you out of heaven, for I tell you, sir, our Lord Jesus has no liking for a rich man unless he will be a good man and a meek man”) (146). Both these men are influenced by Margery’s rebukes and participate almost against their will in her reversal of normal hierarchical relationships.

God also seems to reverse the normal hierarchy of church obedience, authorizing Margery to transmit his messages to various church officials and telling her what her confessors should command her to do (“bydde thy gostly fadyrs pat pei latyn pe don aftyr my wyl” (161); “tell your confessors to let you act according to my will” (200). So Margery tells her confessors that God said she should eat meat, and her confessors dutifully command her to eat meat. The Virgin tells Margery to be released from an earlier vow to fast weekly, and Margery’s confessors obligingly command her to eat moderately rather than fast. When Margery plans to go to Belgium with her daughter-in-law, and her confessor is opposed, God tells her to “speke no word to hym of pis mater ... for I am a -b ouyn thy gostly fadyr & I xal excusyn pe & ledyn pe & bryngyn pe a-geyn in safte” (226-27) (“I am above your confessor, and I shall excuse you, and lead you, and bring you home again in safety”) (271). This hierarchical reversal extends occasionally even to Margery’s relationship with God. God addresses her as daughter, mother, and spouse—often within the same sentence. God promises that “pyf þu wilt be buxom to my wil I xal be buxom to þi wil, dowtyr, beleue it ryth wel” (218) (“if you will be obedient to my will, I shall be obedient to your will, daughter—believe it indeed”) (260). At one point, Margery is even discursively located as God’s father as well as his daughter, as he tells her, “Dowtyr, þer was neuyr chyld so buxom [meek] to þe fadyr as I wyl be to þe” (31). God tells Margery that he really doesn’t want her to say so many prayers but then promises
that "I wyl not be displesyd wyth pe whedir þu thinke, say, or speke, for I am al-vey pleseyd wyth þe" (90) ("I will not be displeased with you whether you think, say, or speak, for I am always pleased with you") (126).

In fact, Margery feels free to rebuke everybody, secular or religious. "Sche spak boldy & mytily wher-so sche cam in London a-gyyn swerars, bannars, lyars & swech oper vicions pepil, a-gyyn þe pompows aray boþin of men & of women. Sche sparyd hem not, sche flateryd hem not" (245) ("She spoke boldly and strongly wherever she went in London against swearers, cursers, liars and other such vicious people, and against the pompous fashions of both men and women. She did not spare them, she did not flatter them") (289). Her fellow townspeople and chance companions found this disregard for society's normative constraints even more threatening than the clergy did. Elona Lucas points out that, surprisingly, most of Margery's support came from the clergy, not from her secular associates. Only about one-fourth of the priests in Margery's narrative oppose or rebuke her, while many of the common people reject her religious discourse as nonstandard (297). Margery's life did in fact challenge "the popular notions of what constituted holiness in women" (Lucas, 302), and the people ultimately felt more threatened by revisionary or transformative forms of orthodoxy than did the priests. Margery's town labelled her a hypocrite, others labelled her a heretic, and all feared that her innovative ideas would threaten the social order. The mayor of Leicester, whom Margery rebukes as "not worthy to ben a meyr [mayor]" after he judges her harshly, is aware and frightened of the danger to social hierarchies that she poses, saying "'I trowe pow art comyn hedyr to han a-vey owr wyys fro us & ledyn hem wyth þe'" (116) ("I believe you have come here to lure away our wives from us and lead them off with you") (153). The mayor recognizes and fears the potential her unconventional discourse has to unsettle the social as well as the religious order.

The themes of temporal, hierarchical, or spatial reversal integral to carnival discourse do, in fact, have tremendous power to disrupt normative, hegemonic social conventions, and these themes of reversal are
pervasive in Margery's text. Throughout her autobiography, Margery recounts alternations between health and sickness, prosperity and poverty, public favor and mocking rejection, holy visions and abominable ones. Timea Szell notes that these patterns of reversal are apparent at both the sentence and narrative level, as Christ commands Margery first to abstain from meat, then to partake again, to wear white clothing, then black, then white again. Margery's audience perceives her in terms of the same unsettling potential for reversal: they ask whether she is “a Cristen woman or a Iewe; sum seyd sche was a good woman, & sum seyd nay” (124) (“a Christian woman or a Jew; some said she was a good woman, and some said not”). Her opponents usually end up acknowledging their bafflement: “Eylyr þu art a ryth good woman er ellys a ryth wikked woman” (113). Margery uses stories of reversal to challenge her opponents and to establish her own holiness.

IMPLICATIONS

It is precisely the space created by “alle þis thyngys turnyng vp-so­down” (1) that allows Margery to create a new identity and a new, carni­valized religious discourse. The Book begins with Margery's identity in flux, at the mercy of the social influences around her: she is a “reed­spyr whech boweth wyth euery wynd & neuyr is stable les þan no wynd bloweth” (1) (a “reed which bows with every wind and is never still unless no wind blows”) (33). Her conversion into a holy woman with a powerful voice and a story to tell begins, the Book tells us, when “ower mercyfulle Lord Cryst Ihesu . . . turnyd helth in­to sekenesse, prosperety in­to aduersyte, worship in­to repref, & love in­to hatered” (1) (“our merciful Lord Christ Jesus . . . turned health into sickness, prosperity into adversity, respectability into reproof, and love into hatred”) (33).

In his essay on Marxism and language, Bakhtin argues that consciousness and discourse can exist only in dialogue; every change in consciousness or ideology must be negotiated through language, and no experience is fully existent, even to ourselves, until it has been communicated or at least experienced in terms that can be shared
Thus, for Margery to change her concept of herself or of society she must embody this change in discourse. She creates her new self by telling her story again and again, and she creates her story in a form acceptable to clerics by telling it in confession to priest after priest throughout her life, ostensibly to root out any diabolical “deception” in her experiences. She seems to have constructed her story through these confessions long before she actually started dictating it, learning to reconcile her experiences with church expectations and using her audience to shape her own view of those experiences. Her primary confessor charges Margery to receive her thoughts and then tell them to him, so that he could “telle [hir] whelyr pei ben of þe Holy Gost or ellys of [hir] enmy þe Deuyl” (r8); and she frequently seeks out clerics to whom she could recount her entire history (from childhood), “to wetyn [know] yf any dysseyt [deceit] were in hir felyngys” (25). Actions and utterances are intelligible only through the matrix of interacting social, cultural, historical, political, economic, or religious discourses and the practices of a society; and we can see that Margery shapes herself and her experience in terms of these discourses, as do her neighbors and priestly supporters. These preparations later enable her to withstand repeated trials for heresy—her prior clerical audiences had taught her to eliminate all ideas considered “false” within church discourse.

For Mueller, the structure of the Book itself is defined by Margery’s attempt to negotiate acceptance of her new identity with her husband, the church, and her society. The first chapters are dominated by her struggle to persuade her husband to accept a vow of chastity; the next part of her narrative can be seen as culminating with her successive trials for heresy after her pilgrimage; the last part of Book I recounts her struggles with public opinion in her hometown of Lynne.

For example, Margery’s second scribe needed to find authority in the records of the church for Margery’s crying (i.e., the records of the continental female mystics) before he could understand her experience as legitimate and before her desire for a textual record seemed fully appropriate.

Atkinson suggests that Margery’s careful orthodoxy during her trials for heresy may simply reflect her priestly scribe’s deliberate use of his own
The acceptance of her clerical listeners also strengthened Margery’s belief in her visions; her listeners often encouraged her not to be afraid of her own claims to revelation, and each successful verbalization made her “mech comfortyd bope in body & in sowle . . . & gretly strengthyd in hir feyth” (42) (“much comforted both in body and in soul . . . and greatly strengthened in her faith”) (77). In fact, all responses, even negative ones, served to define her experiences more firmly: “pe mor slawnder & repref þat sche sufferyd, þe mor sche increysyd in grace & in deuoçyon of holy medytacyon of hy contemplacyon & of wonderful speçhs & dalyawns whech owr Lord spak and dalyid to hyr sowle” (2) (“the more slander and reproof that she suffered, the more she increased in grace and in devotion of holy meditation, of high contemplation, and of wonderful speeches and conversation which our Lord spoke and conveyed to her soul”) (34).13

We can see that once Margery has begun to articulate her experience, in Bakhtin’s terms this “[r]ealized expression, in its turn, exerts a powerful, reverse influence on experience: it begins to tie inner life together giving it more definite and lasting expression” (“Marxism,” 936). In other words, her experience becomes more real and more definitely shaped through the process of negotiating its verbal expression. Her final text, as available to us, represents “words, intonations, and inner-word gestures that have undergone the experience of outward expression on a more or less ample social scale and have learning to portray her orthodoxy as beyond question (36), but I disagree. Her early efforts to tell her story to eminent church officials, and to solicit their advice and responses, are too marked. Aron Gurevich suggests that this kind of preliminary, almost inadvertent, clerical shaping was a necessary precondition for almost all popular medieval religious expression (38).

13In her rhetorical analysis of Margery’s text, Cheryl Glenn suggests that Margery also uses the negative responses of her original audience to help shape our response to the text as well, deliberately creating a dialogic relationship between the narrative audience of her text, which sees and shares the exasperation of many of her contemporaries, and the authorial audience, which “delights” in Margery’s “antics” and “applauds her decisions” (65).
acquired, as it were, a high social polish and lustre by the effect of reactions and responses, resistance or support, on the part of the social audience” (“Marxism,” 938).

Of course, in the process of articulation, new ideas and experiences are inevitably influenced by previous ideologies and forms. Dhira Mahoney points out that Margery’s final prayer echoes the formality and rhetorical structures of official priestly language (47–49), evidence that her own discourse has been influenced by this process of negotiation and reconciliation. Margery tells us that she acquired the ability to talk about scripture, which she “lernyd in sermownys & be comowynyng wyth clerkys” (29) (“learned in sermons and by talking with clerks”) (65), and she spent as much time as she could “heryng of holy bokys & . . . holy sermownys” (144). But her text and story must also be seen as affecting her interlocutors as well. The generation of new “forms” of speech on the individual level must be reflected to some extent in the change of “language forms” at a collective level (“Marxism,” 940). In other words, individual experimentation can expand the range of forms of expression available to society at large. Margery’s carnivalesque discourse and the unconventionality of her religious imagery are important precisely because they are disruptive; they stretched the boundaries of allowable religious expression.

The very incongruity of Margery’s imagery allows for both laughter and renewed attention to the religious doctrines involved; her text functions as a dialogue between the language of meditation and divine love and the earthy realities of stockfish and diapers. This kind of dialogue is essential, Bakhtin tells us, because the poetics of the medieval church acted as a “centripetal force” toward a unified language (and thus a unified worldview) by absorbing or obscuring other languages, including the language of carnival. Creating a dialogue with this official language resists this centralizing tendency. As Margery translates Christian doctrine into imagery she finds more accessible, her text becomes, in Bakhtin’s terms, a “reprocessing of almost all the levels of [contemporary] literary language, both conversational and written” (“Discourse,” 301). Her transformation of the divine into the familiar, her crying and forthright opinions in life, and above all, her success in
embodying these subversive elements in a written text allow Margery to challenge the established social and religious order. On a personal level, she succeeds in using religious discourse as a form of liberation, freeing her to move beyond the constraints associated with her socially defined role as wife and mother. As a noncloistered “holy woman,” Margery escapes most of her household duties, achieves a public voice, and acquires the freedom to travel. Furthermore, by speaking as the unruly woman rather than as the idealized woman that Julian and other mystics represented, Margery also succeeds in creating a space within official discourse (albeit a small one) for the discourse of carnival and of women. ¹⁴

Margery struggled all her life to maintain her right to a voice of her own, and she would surely have “roared” with grief and frustration when Wynkyn de Worde later made her Book palatable for his audience by eliminating most of the original text. His gutted version established Margery as a recognized mystic, but only because he presented her as a reclusive anchoress preaching the tender love and condescension of God. To do this, the most human quality of her Book—its uncomfortable, carnival elements—was simply erased. However, Margery's

¹⁴Staley argues that the Book is a narrative of Margery's increasing individuation, her alienation from her community rather than her integration with it, her “growing disengagement from the control of husbands, confessors, and all other figures of authority” and concludes that we should see Margery’s final position at the end of each part of the Book (in her room, and the intercessory prayers that finish the text) as a symbolic disengagement from her community (4, 178). However, the impressive autonomy Margery achieves is only part of her goal—she works hard to achieve this autonomy within the framework of her society; she works hard to get priestly authorization and recognition; she takes an active part in her community; she makes prophecies, visits the sick, prays for and with people, is involved in powerful controversies such as the rivalry between St. Margaret's (the parish church) and St. Nicholas's (a chapel-of-case). She seeks to expand her power and autonomy and influence within the community; she most explicitly refuses to take her eccentricity into isolation, the way that some of her contemporaries wished her to do.
incredible determination to get her text on paper ultimately triumphed over all attempts to silence her: the Book survives—complex, challenging, stubbornly devout—as a standing testament to what she saw as the reality and importance of her special relationship with God and continuing to insist that we make space for discourse that is "undestroyably unofficial" in nature.

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From its inception, the Renaissance Château Anet, located due east of Paris just outside the town of Dreux, was envisaged as a locale not only for the best and brightest of the royal court—namely, the king Henry II and his mistress Diane de Poitiers—but also as a veritable canvas for the most prominent architects, sculptors, painters, and poets of the day. These artists, and particularly the poets, viewed Anet as a spectacular artifice that mirrored Diane’s beauty and elegance. While clearly catering to the court, the poetry reflected the common perception of Anet. Upon visiting the château in 1557 the Florentine Gabriel Simeoni concluded that even Nero’s golden house could not have been richer or more beautiful, while French chronicler Seigneur de Brantôme declared that France would never see decoration to equal it. Historically, Henry II and Diane are most associated not with Anet but with Chenonceau in the Loire valley, from which Diane was removed unceremoniously by the queen Catherine after Henry’s death in 1559. Diane was given Chaumont in exchange, but it was Anet where she preferred to live. She died there in 1566. Largely dismantled during and after the French Revolution, Anet in its full glory remains only in the artistic works it inspired.

Diane’s eventual exalted status was attainable because she was in so many ways not the typical royal mistress. A full twenty years older than Henry, Diane was of the generation of his father Francis I and was rumored to have been that king’s mistress, in order to save her father from the gallows. Despite this age difference, Diane remained Henry’s mistress for virtually all of his adult life. In fact it was at Anet in 1531 that Henry’s marriage contract with Catherine de Medicis was brokered. Once Diane’s role was established, she wielded considerable political and personal power over Henry. She served as mediator between Protestants and Catholics, oftentimes dictated foreign affairs, and even saw to the education of Henry’s children.

The creation of Anet served to both signal and maintain Diane’s power and presumably the love shared by her and Henry. Originally a château-fort, Anet was completely reconstructed between 1547 and 1555, with Philibert de l’Orme being the principal architect. The château offered the latest in Italian influence and yet was a singularly French enterprise. Diane wanted a truly French château and therefore confined its construction and decoration to French artists. In his 1875 history of the château, Pierre Roussel makes the intriguing observation that at this period of the nascent religious wars, Catholic and Protestant French artists worked together peaceably to create a masterpiece. This served in contrast to the bickering Italian artists building Fontainebleau. Roussel does not cite his source for this admittedly rosy picture of artistic unity in the name of nationalism. One can, however, imagine that this bit of lore may well have arisen from the remarkably coherent themes developed throughout the château. Albeit financed by Henry, the château was considered Diane’s, and it was she who orchestrated the unified motifs in Anet’s architecture and ornamentation. Copious notes, drafts, and drawings of Anet still exist, allowing us to better envisage these works.

Anet ostensibly was a funeral monument to Diane’s late husband, Louis de Brézé, who had died in 1531. As such, the color black dominated in the choice of marble, a material used throughout the château.

2Roussel, 28.
The architecture of windows and chimneys was tomb-shaped. Funereal palm shapes were often enlaced with Diane's initials, and this motif was replicated throughout the château. Diane officially remained in mourning the rest of her life, never wearing any color except black and white. Her concern for this outward show of grief extended to Henry, who, in chivalric fashion, took to wearing her colors. And yet Diane very much incorporated Henry into the Anet decoration. His initial is found with hers in various combinations (see illustration 1). Interlaced with arrows, crescents, and deltas of the Greek alphabet, these initials were found on the capitals of columns, on pavements, doors, ceilings, stained glass, locks, screws, furniture, rugs, tapestries, china, and even book bindings.\(^3\) The crescents being particularly ubiquitous, artisans made careful distinctions between them and capital Cs which might inappropriately stand for the queen Catherine.

In her history of French queens of the Renaissance, Simone Bertière speculates that Diane's widow motif was part of her strategy to be not just legitimized, but honored, by the royal court.\(^4\) Hoping to transcend the label of an ordinary courtesan, Diane presented herself

\(^3\) Roussel, 27.

\(^4\) It could be argued that Catherine, Henry's Italian wife, paid close attention to Diane's carefully conceived and extraordinarily successful campaign of legitimization. Upon Henry II's unexpected and premature death, Catherine's influence seemed nonexistent. Indeed, as a foreign queen in a court where her rival, Diane, wielded much greater power, her status, even as queen mother, could have been easily ignored. And yet she immediately established herself as a dominant force at court and, like Diane, used imagery to help confirm and reinforce her influence. In her study of Catherine, Sheila ffolliott explains that Catherine emphasized her role as widow in mourning by always wearing black—not the only color of mourning at this time—because it was also the color worn by the Catholic rulers of the period: Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy; Charles V; and Philip II. "Catherine could thus declare herself Henri's widow while also presenting herself as cut from the same cloth as her contemporary male monarchs. By wearing black, she seemed Henri's virtual stand-in" (229). In addition, her appropriation of black would have diluted its association with Diane. Lastly, just as Diane
1. Diane's and Henry's initials are combined in various ornamentations throughout the Château Anet.
as Henry's protector and tutor. While highlighting a respectable and respected role, the sage mother and widow, Diane also appropriated the symbols of her namesake, the goddess Diana. It is this motif for which Anet is best remembered. Diane exploited the renewed interest in Greek and Roman mythology by humanists, and particularly by the Pléïade (an eminent group of French humanist poets), by surrounding herself with symbols of this goddess. Diana, or Artemis in the Greek tradition, had varied attributes but was principally known as goddess of the moon and of the hunt. Most importantly for Diane de Poitiers's purposes, Diana was the fierce aloof virgin and a protector of marriage and mothers. What better classification could Diane find than being a stalwart defender of chastity and fidelity? These motifs, of course, were only a façade, but their combination caught the imagination of artists who were also eager to please this powerful member of the court. They saw Anet as an incarnation of Diane's own splendor and elegance. The goddess provided the leitmotif for the entire château in all the decorative arts from Anet. Philibert de l'Orme's collection of drawings and descriptions, *Architecture* (1567), offers an engraving of a doorway most likely from Anet that incorporates together the symbols of the crescent, the moon, the quiver, the bow and arrows. And Anet is arguably most known for two famous sculptures of Diana: Jean Goujon's sculpture *Diana with the Stag* and Benvenuto Cellini's bronze bas-relief of a reclining Diana decorating the entrance arch, both of which are now located in the Louvre. Ostensibly Diana the goddess, these statues were taken universally as portraits of Diane de Poitiers. Much has been written about these sculptures but very little associated herself with a particular mythical figure, Diana the chaste goddess, Catherine saw to it that she was portrayed as Artemisia, the powerful widowed mother who served as queen in Asia Minor. (See Sheila ffolliott, "Catherine de' Medici as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986].)

about the poetry inspired by Anet. It is a selection of these poems that this study will consider.

In an ode dedicated to Diane, after having spoken of the idyllic locales of Tempé and Délos, Joachim Du Bellay highlights the inextricable link between Diane and her château:

Apres ceux-ci faut dire
Le Paradis d'Anet;
Mais, pour bien le decrire,
Nommez le Dianet.

Du Bellay elaborates specifically on the close correspondence between Diane and Anet in the following sonnet of praise:

De vostre Dianet (de vostre nom j'appelle
Vostre maison d'Anet) la belle architecture,
Les marbres animez, la vivante peinture,
Qui la font estimer des maisons la plus belle:

Les beaux lambriz dorez, la luisante chappelle,
Les superbes dongeons, la riche couverture,
Le jardin tapissé d'éternelle verdure,
Et la vive fonteine à la source immortelle:

Ces ouvrages (Madame) à qui bien les contemple,
Rapportant de l'antiq le plus parfait exemple,
Monstrent un artifice et despence admirable.

Mais cette grand' douceur jointe à ceste hautesse,
Et c'est Astre benin joint à ceste sagesse,
Trop plus que tout cela vous font emerveillable.

(Ces Regrets CLI)

*Cited in Roussel, 159.
Considering Diane’s funereal pretensions for Anet, what is most striking in Du Bellay’s sonnet is the dominant theme of life. Consider his terms: marbres animés (not black or somber), vivante peinture, éternelle verdure, vive fontaine, source immortelle. Rather than black, the shades of gold and light dominate in the imagery. Here, Anet is a joyful, not somber, residence. Du Bellay was perhaps, like the other artists writing about Anet, emphasizing the château’s beauty rather than its origins. And yet, knowing Du Bellay’s sarcastic wit and derision of Roman power demonstrated in his collection Les Regrets, one cannot help but wonder if he is perhaps tweaking the royal couple. His representation of the adornment and atmosphere of Anet would seem to negate any reference to Diane’s husband. In the concluding tercet Du Bellay diminishes Anet’s grandeur by stressing that in fact Diane’s sweetness and wisdom are what truly make her and her château marvelous. Mellin de Saint-Gelais makes a similar remark, claiming that the beauty of the château only demonstrates Diane’s modesty and good sense:

_{Au long ne veux vous compter l’artifice}_
_{Ni la beauté du gentil édifice}_
_{Qui monstre bien, en mesnage et hautesse,}_
_{La modestie et bons sens de l’hôtesse.} ^8

These verses suggest that Anet simply has too many splendors to recount. Attracted by the splendor of Anet, the poets tend to heighten and then dismiss its beauty in order to better praise Diane. Whether as a sign of respect toward the queen or simply a preference to maintain consistently the image of Diane as the virgin goddess, the poetry rarely refers to Henry.

It is the poet Pontus de Tyard (1521–1605) who would have been the most familiar artistically with Anet. Best known for his poetic works _Erreurs amoureuses_ and _Solitaire premier_, Tyard also served as a humanist

The Château Anet as Artistic Inspiration

expert and interpreter to painters. A member of the Pléiade, Tyard was considered to be, if not the most talented poet, the most erudite and well-rounded one. A scholar of music, astronomy, philosophy, and theology, Tyard incarnated for over half a century, as Sylviane Bodkam has put it, "the alliance of science and the Muses, of the encyclopedia and theology."9 Pierre de Ronsard, principal poet of the Pléiade, claimed that Tyard "kn[ew] all" and Étienne Pasquier borrowed from Ovid's epitaph to offer Tyard's: "Omnia Pontus erat." Tyard was of noble birth and upon his father's death was known as the Seigneur de Bissy. He became canon of the cathedral at Maçon in 1562 and was appointed bishop of Chalon in 1578 by Henry III. His episcopal duties included being counselor to this young king, son of Henry II and Catherine, giving him lectures on the arts and astronomy, and encouraging him to follow an ambitious program of study. Hence, it was early in his career, when Tyard was considered principally a poet, that he became involved in the decoration of Anet. He chose twelve stories taken from Greek and Egyptian mythology to serve as decorative art for Anet. Sharing the motif of miraculous or powerful bodies of waters, these myths—modeled on those found in the pseudo-Plutarch's *De Fluviis*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the writings of Pausanias—were reproduced as paintings in the château but also by Tyard in his corresponding summaries and epigrams of the myths, along with instructions as to the composition of the paintings. These written forms of the myths, known as *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines*, were published by Étienne Tabourot in 1585, long after Anet's completion in the mid-1550s. A great admirer of Tyard, Tabourot chose to distribute these writings in order to prove that Tyard was in fact the principal aesthetic contributor to Anet's beauty rather than those who had since claimed responsibility and hence gained the glory.10 This is high praise indeed, considering

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Anet was, as previously mentioned, designed by Philibert de l'Orme and decorated with sculpture by Jean Goujon and Benvenuto Cellini. Tyard's association with the château was only once again acknowledged in 1860 by A. Feuillet and further emphasized by Roussel. However, more recent studies of Anet and its art, such as that of Anthony Blunt, mention neither Tyard nor the paintings. Thus, while Tabourot's aim in establishing Tyard as a principal designer of Anet clearly failed, his edition does indicate that Tyard was integrally involved in the planning and coherence of the decorative arts of the château. It is unclear why Tyard's participation in the design of Anet has been generally unacknowledged, particularly even in his own lifetime. Perhaps Tabourot exaggerated and Tyard was involved only in the design of the paintings. Or simply the renown of de l'Orme has eclipsed Tyard's role. While little is actually known concerning his personal life, it is doubtful that Tyard fell from favor among the royal family even after Henry II's death and Diane's exit from power. It does not appear that Catherine targeted any of the poets who had praised Diane de Poitiers. Ronsard and others adapted quickly and continued playing a large role at court.

From the viewpoint of architectural historians, it is fortunate that the Tabourot edition remains. While Roussel and other historians do not find reason to doubt that the paintings Tyard designed were executed, these paintings no longer exist, apparently replaced by mirrors in 1698 during a major reconstruction of the château. One-time existence of the paintings is supported by several extant tapestries designed for Anet; these tapestries depict mythological themes. Epigrams believed to be Tyard's are in fact embroidered at the bottom of these screens, recounting the same story.11

This rapid summary is a matter of well-known historical record, certainly for scholars of Tyard. Of primary interest to literary scholars are Tyard's twelve epigrams. They are not particularly epigrammatic, revealing little if any satirical or ironic intent. Instead, their content, in general, is descriptive, emphasizing the moment of metamorphosis

11Roussel, 93.
in the creation or the power of mythical waters. The epigrams follow faithfully the structure of a regular sonnet.

In his critical edition of Tyard’s poems, John Lapp dismisses this collection as an *œuvrage curieux* but nonetheless concludes that it serves to clarify the role of humanism in sixteenth-century art. Indeed, Tyard’s *Fables* are the epitome of the close rapport between poetry and the arts which was taken for granted during the Renaissance. One might claim a general preoccupation with *ut pictura poesis* during this general period. Vasari, Michelangelo, and Ben Jonson all considered “design the father of the arts,” to quote Judith Dundas. Among the Pléiade poets, Tyard may well best exemplify this interest, as his intricate study on musical theory *Solitaire second* attests. In her study of French academies, Frances Yates indicates that this consolidation of artistic endeavors was expected from sixteenth-century poets and that it was only with the establishment of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* by Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1663—a break-away branch of the Académie Française—that poets’ rôles were restricted to that of their medium: words.

While Lapp’s introductory comments are brief, they do include a succinct summary of what is probably the most important aspect of these poems: they indicate Tyard’s interest in “tout ce qui est création, mais surtout ce qui est changement, mutation, transformation” which this “poète des métamorphoses” later develops in his *Discours philosophiques* of 1557. Hence, Lapp emphasizes the common theme found in each fable, not just that of water but the way in which this element causes dramatic change due to the actions of various protagonists. What he does not mention is that the principle of metamorphosis is itself intensified in Tyard’s duplication of the myth through poetry, prose, and painting. At the time of the paintings’ completion, there would have

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12Lapp, ed., 255.
been four versions or, depending on medium, transformations of Tyard’s myths: the painting, the instructions for its execution, the fable summary, and finally, the epigram. Certainly the painted version would have offered the most variation. For even if the anonymous painter or painters followed meticulously Tyard’s precise directions on composition and color, their own renderings—which at times Tyard’s instructions encourage—would not only alter but, quite possibly, enrich a given fable. One could even claim a fifth metamorphosis: that which occurs when the twelve stories are considered collectively, rather than discretely, by the viewer or the reader.

Following are translations of the titles Tyard gives to his twelve fables in the order in which they appear in Tabourot’s edition. First, the fable of the river Clitorie, which can make one sober; next, the fable of the fountain Andre, which can inebriate; third, the fable of the river Selemne, which eradicates the passion of love; fourth, the fable of the fountain Callirhoe, which inspires reciprocal love; fifth, the fable of the river Phasis, which reassures the jealous; sixth, the fable of the river Araxe, which determines a maiden’s virginity; seventh, the fable of the river Inde, from which comes the stone that protects virgins from the violence of attackers; eighth, the fable of Narcissus’s fountain, in which if a lover admires himself, he receives comfort; ninth, the fable of the river Salmace, which creates

15 The French titles are Première Fable du fleuve Clytorie, qui a force de desenyver; Second Fable de la Fontain d’Andre, qui a force d’enyvrer; Troisieme Fable du Fleuve Selemne, qui efface la passion d’Amour; Quatriesme Fable de la fontaine Callirhoe, qui engendre le reciprocque Amour; Cinqiesme Fable du Fleuve Phasis, qui assure le Jaloux; Sixiesme Fable du Fleuve Araxe, ou se preuve si la fille est vierge; Septiesme Fable du Fleuve Inde, où vient la pierre qui conserve les Vierges contre la violence des ravisseurs; Huitisme Fable de la Fontaine de Narcisse, dans laquelle si un amoureux se mire, il reçoit allegeance; Neufisme Fable du Fleuve Salmace, qui fait les Hermaphrodites; Diziesme Fable du Fleuve Chrysoros, dedans lequel se trouve l’or; Onziesme Fable du Fleuve Strymon, qui console les désolés; Douziesme Fable du Lavatoire d’Isis, qui sert d’assurance contre les larves, malins esprits et chiens aboyants.
hermaphrodites; tenth, the fable of the river Chrysoroas, in which is found gold; eleventh, the fable of the river Strymon, which consoles the grieving; and last, the fable of the bath of Isis, which insures against larvae, evil spirits, and barking dogs. It is only this last fable that refers explicitly to Anet. The astonishing attributes of the various waters given in these austere titles derive in most cases from, as will be shown, oftentimes passionate and violent circumstances.

As Lapp has noted, the first four fables are presented as two pairs of contrasting tales. The bacchic theme, and specifically that of inebriation, is integral to the first two fables. Tyard had a sustained interest in poetic variations on the power of Bacchus. In the second ode of his *Lièvre de vers lyriques* (1555), *Au Jour des Baccanales*, Tyard lauds Bacchus’s ability to chase away his melancholy, distracting the poet from the cares of ambition, money, or frustrated love. In the introductory fable, Tyard prefers to highlight the violent and dramatic birth of Bacchus, son of Semele and Jupiter, describing how the tears of the nymph Clitorie, who had saved the infant Bacchus from the immolation of his mother, simultaneously quenched the fire but melted her into a river that, accordingly, extinguishes the power of wine. In this tale Tyard takes great liberty with Ovid’s version of Bacchus’s birth, which makes no mention of the nymph Clitorie. Lapp suggests that Tyard took inspiration from Ovid’s description of the river Clitor, which provokes a distaste for wine to whoever drinks from it. According to the painting instructions, it is Clitorie who is the focus of the composition, “à demy transformée en fleuve.” Next to the dying Semele, she holds Bacchus, who is enveloped in both flames and tears. While he does not name it as such, Tyard’s sonnet emphasizes the *futility* of Clitorie’s generous action. The second quatrain reveals that due to his divinity, Bacchus cannot be injured by the flames that have killed his mother: These last two lines (vv. 7–8) suggest that the flames are in fact salubrious, giving him strength and vigor. And so the nymph’s

16Lapp provides a brief comparison of Tyard’s ode with those of Ronsard and Du Bellay on the same theme (xxxviii–xxxvix).

17Lapp, ed., 258.
compassion proves to be her own undoing. Her river of tears, transmuted by the divine flame, becomes a larger, more potent river capable of extinguishing the “ardeur du vin.” It serves, however, more as a neutralizing source against the power of wine rather than an aggressive antidote as described by Ovid. The river’s protection against drunkenness mirrors Clitorie’s shielding of Bacchus from the ravages of fire. Despite its title’s emphasis on the subsequent magical power of the river Clitorie, Tyard’s epigram highlights the river Clitorie’s origin, which is simultaneous with the birth of Bacchus, the death of Semele, and the transformation of the nymph Clitorie—a moment of multiple metamorphoses to say the least.

Tyard’s second epigram explains how the stream from the Andre fountain became intoxicating. It is a playful poem, one which, fittingly, offers a joyful atmosphere. Bacchus’s master Silenus, in the midst of a bacchanal celebration, has toppled into his stupor in the stream. The thirsty ass which he was riding had trotted to the water and in its haste had unseated its rider. Amused by the scene, Bacchus decrees that in memory of Silenus’s accident the stream henceforth will taste like wine and no animal will further drink from it.

The metamorphosis described in both the fable and epigram is less dramatic than that occurring in the first story. It does not even concern the river, as the transformation takes place by pronouncement rather than by action. The only metamorphosis seen is in Silenus’s mood. Having fallen, he becomes angry and embarrassed. Might we even conjecture that the water has sobered him, giving him further reason for his ill humor? The accident has only heightened the bacchic frenzy of those around Silenus: Tyard’s painting description emphasizes that the drunken satyrs helping Bacchus get up are staggering with laughter as well as drink.

Considered together, we see how the narrative tone of each story is appropriate to the given river’s power. The tragic end to Semele, and by extension to Clitorie, certainly is sobering to the reader, while the reading of Silenus’s ridiculous plight provokes laughter and joy—wholesome attributes of “ivrognerie.” These two introductory fables and their corresponding epigrams and painting descriptions are emphasized here
because they exemplify best the variety of movement and themes found in the other ten fables, all of which would lend themselves to vibrant poems and paintings.

It is important to note that the next two fables follow a similar pattern of demonstrating first the antidote, then the cause of a human predicament. In these, the literal inebriation from wine is replaced by the figurative inebriation of love. The third fable tells of a young “pasteur” transformed into a river after his love for the nymph Argire remains unrequited. Fittingly, his river’s water extinguishes love. The following fable is equally sad, with the tale of Coresis, who commits suicide rather than follow the order to kill his beloved, Callirhoe. She in turn, inspired by his act of “dévouement,” kills herself near a fountain. Their mutual love and death cause the water of this fountain to inspire reciprocal love.

Tyard’s technique of offering sequential fables about waters with contrasting powers as described in these first four fables echoes the principle of contraires, valued by the Petrarchan poets. The counterpoint technique also recalls Marguerite de Navarre’s devisants in the Heptameron, offering stories whose moral contrasts with that of the preceding story. Tyard does not maintain this ordering in the fifth fable but does return to it in a limited way in the sixth and seventh and in an even more subtle way in the eighth and ninth, making the collection all that more intriguing.

Indeed, Lapp finds the connections between the last eight fables not only more complex but to a certain extent inexplicable. They no longer present, certainly, evident pairings as did the first four, but there are further observations to be made, if only to underscore the diversity of these fables. Lapp’s summary, for instance, that the tales told in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and tenth fables concern feminine jealousy and inconstancy is just but does not acknowledge other dominant elements, such as the metamorphosis wrought by these vices. He reasons that there must be further obscure significance to some of these fables, a significance modern readers could no longer decipher. This is undoubtedly true: to see the physical representation of the twelve paintings in the room of Anet, an impossibility today, surely would have enriched the import of the epigrams. But, in general, this remark is curious because the myths, while problematic, are certainly comprehensible at some level and despite the
span of time some substantive conclusions on their import may be made. 18
There very well may be no perfect coordination between the fables to be
found. The question emphasized in this study is to what extent, if any,
the myths can be seen as emblematic of Anet.

As Diana the goddess provides the leitmotif for the rest of Anet’s dec­
orative arts, one of the first striking aspects of this collection of myths is
the relative absence of references to her or even to her symbols: the cres­
cent, the moon, a bow, quiver, or arrows. In the first eleven fables there
are only the most subtle allusions to the goddess or to Diane de Poitiers
and Anet. For example, the fourth fable concerns reciprocal love, such as
Henry and Diane demonstrated. The sixth and seventh fables champion
virginity, the best-known attribute of the goddess Diana, and finally the
eleventh, which concerns bereavement, could allude to Diane de Poitier’s
late husband, Louis de Brézé, and her official status as grieving widow.
Considered more generally, however, with the notable exception of the
second, humorous bacchic myth recounted previously, all the waters
described derive their miraculous properties from the death of characters
suffering most often from the trials of love and loss, and sometimes a com­
bination of the two. For example, the river Phasis in the fifth fable is named
after the son of Phebus, who killed his mother, Ocyroe, after discover­
ning her to be an adulterer. He then drowned himself in despair in the river.
From this double tragedy comes the growth of river plants that have the
affirming property of keeping the wives of jealous husbands faithful. In
the sixth fable the king Araxe, too, drowns himself when his two virgin
daughters are killed. His tragedy continues in his transformation to

18 Both Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani and Jean Miernowski have considered
the significance of these myths in their excellent studies but have empha­
sized the connections between the poetry and the descriptions rather than
between the paintings and Anet (see Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, “Ut fabula
pictura, ut pictura poesis. . . . Les descriptions pour la peinture dans les
Douze fables de Pontus de Tyard,” in Emblèmes de la mort. Le dialogue de
Poésie et la peinture, les Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines de Pontus de
Tyard,” Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance 18 [June 1984], 12–22).
another type of river plant: any young virgin who picks this plant from his river will instantly grow old. On the other hand, maidens' virginity is protected in the next fable by a powerful stone found in the river Inde, the transformation of a young rapist who drowns in the river while being pursued. In short, the double and seemingly opposed motifs of love and death found in the majority of the fables mirror the contrasting symbolic imagery of Anet, both a funereal memorial to Diane de Poitier's dead husband and a joyous tribute to her love shared with the king Henry II.

It is only in the last, twelfth fable that Tyard pays Diane explicit and due homage, and he does so in a characteristically expansive and erudite way. Tyard has metamorphosed the Greek goddess Diana into Isis, the Egyptian goddess of the moon. She is clearly the heroine of the fable, moved by pity at the premature death of Chrysochoas and active in assuaging the youth's fear of Hades' shadows and watchdog, Cerberus. Tyard's description of the accompanying painting confirms the assumption that Isis represents Diane, and yet his instructions are curiously ambiguous. He notes that Isis's long robe should be painted in diverse colors—white, blue, red, and especially black—in order to remain faithful to the descriptions of Isis found in the classical writers. Here he most likely refers to Plutarch's *Of Isis and Osiris*, which has such a description. However, Tyard continues with an aside that he is of the opinion—sure that he has read it in some reliable source—that Isis could also be dressed in black and white, with a veil of black over a dress of white. He goes on to say that Isis should be wearing a crescent on her forehead. Such a description is identical to Diane's appearance in one of her famous portraits (see illustration 2). Why the aside? His description certainly calls for the multicolored gown even if black is highlighted. As already mentioned, Tyard does not contort the other myths to include Diane in the iconography, but he does nonetheless change them in other respects. And yet perhaps he does want to acknowledge that a depiction of Isis wearing black and white, and hence more clearly offering a veritable portrait of Diane, would not be inaccurate. It is curious, however, that he does not specify his "reliable source" as he is so careful to do in the other descriptions. This vague reference may well reveal that Tyard is doing his best to accommodate the myth and its representation to a fitting tribute to
2. Portrait of Diane de Poitiers
Diane. The corresponding poem, which serves notably as conclusion for the entire cycle of poems, ends with a quote from Isis, and by extension Diane de Poitiers, offering refuge and welcome:

Vien (dit Isis) descens dedans mon Lavatoire,
Et ne crains les horreurs de la region noire,
Pendant que tu auras ma faveur opportune:
Ne crains jamais icy ny les larves ombreuses
Ny des malins esprits les faces tenebreuses,
Ny les chiens aboyans vainement à la Lune. 19

The “region noire” alluded to by Isis could also be the black marbled Anet itself, with an invitation to all who enter its grounds. The “Lavatoire” is surely an allusion to the fountain decorated with Goujon’s sculpture, as in his painting description Tyard wants it depicted “like that one found at Anet.” 20 The last line underscores Diana’s immutable power—impervious to Cerberus’s barks but also protector of all who visit. This may suggest Diane de Poitiers’s own unquestioned power at both Anet and the French court. Tyard’s transformation of Diane de Poitiers specifically into Isis, if anything, expands her power and heightens her praise. As described by Tyard’s source Plutarch, Isis is “the female aspect of Nature, which is receptive of all forms of generation . . . She inclines always to the Good and offers herself to it to generate upon her and to sow in her its effluxes and likenesses.” 21 Considered in this light, Isis and Diane are virtually infinite in their influence and benevolence.

Tyard’s preference for the motif of mythic waters and their metamorphoses in his tribute to Diane de Poitiers is perhaps rooted in his poetics. After all, metamorphosis can be taken as an inherently platonic theme, and as Eva Kushner has argued, “Platonism is at the very root of

19 In Lapp, ed., 277.
the thought of Pontus de Tyard between 1549 and 1555," precisely the dates during which Anet was being designed, built, and decorated.22 Neither Tyard nor Tabourot indicates a precise date of composition for the fables. However, as Tyard’s 1549–1555 platonic period corresponds to the construction of Anet it would also necessarily influence the development of the fables and their accompanying paintings and poems. While Anet’s refurbishment was begun before 1547 under the direction of another architect, it appears that de l’Orme began the major construction in 1549 with the central portion of the château, where the room depicting the fables was located, being built first between 1549 and 1551. Hence the decorations would have been painted early in the decade, following Tyard’s instructions. The château was considered complete in 1555. Tyard would pursue the theme of metamorphosis in his subsequent, and better-known, poetry. In his Premier curieux the dominant theme is nature and all its manifestations, but as Lapp points out the emphasis is placed on creation, mutation, and transformation.23

The question of why Tyard chose twelve myths as opposed to, say, eight, ten, or fifteen also arises. He had multiple water myths to choose from and did not hesitate to consider them several years later in his Discours of 1557, listing several examples, only one of which, that of the river Clitorie, comes from the Douze fables. Perhaps the dimensions of the room best accommodated twelve paintings. Assuming they were of the approximate size of the mirrors that later replaced them, the paintings would have been 5'7" high and 2'7" wide.24 The narrow width does suggest either a relatively small room compared to others at Anet or a certain amount of spacing between them. Symbolically, twelve immediately evokes, simultaneously, the zodiac and Christian symbolism: the tribes of Israel, the apostles, a multiple of three (the Trinity) or a multiple of four. The four rivers of Paradise as listed in Genesis do come naturally to mind given the theme of water in the fables. The Book of

23Lapp, ed., 255.
24Yates, 135.
Revelation's description of a twelve-sided New Jerusalem is evoked and seems particularly apt: is Anet the worldly and secular reflection of the City of God? As seen previously in his ode, Du Bellay already has called Anet "Paradis." Given the context of the pagan myths represented in the paintings, these Christian references, nonetheless, are incongruous and uncharacteristic of the harmonious symbolism Tyard emphasizes in his other works.

These admittedly strained speculations are best pursued, perhaps, by art historians. It is crucial to understand, however, that an explanation of the significance of the number of paintings, their sequence, and placement undoubtedly would influence the reading of their corresponding poems. This interplay and synthesis between the plastic and literary arts, an artistic practice so eloquently championed by the poets of the Pléiade, is what makes the *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines* unique. Tyard's ekphrasis thrown in for good measure encourages multiple readings.

I have emphasized Tyard's fables because they are explicitly linked to plastic arts adorning Anet. Yet Du Bellay's ode and sonnet also, very succinctly, concern metamorphosis, not of mythical waters but of Diane into Anet and Anet into Diane—precisely Diane de Poitiers's intent, it would seem.


In 1507 the German painter Bernhard Strigel (Memmingen 1460–1527) created an altar of the Holy Cross of which four side panels have survived, while the presumably carved center has been lost. These four panels were formerly housed in Kynžvart (Königswart) Castle near Mariánské Lázne (Marienbad) in northwest Bohemia but were transferred to the National Gallery in Prague in 1972. The altar apparently was commissioned by the emperor Maximilian I and presented by him as a gift to Pope Julius II. Maximilian at this time was hoping to travel to Rome and to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the pope, as his father Frederick III had been in 1452. His plans came to naught, but the pope received the altar and placed it in Rome’s Basilica of St. Paolo fuori le mura. More than three hundred years later Pope Gregory XVI (1831–1846) made a gift of the panels—the center of the altar was lost, perhaps in the great fire that devastated the basilica in 1823—to Count Clemens Lothar Wenzel von Metternich, the Austrian chancellor, who placed them in his castle.

I wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of Dr. Olga Kotková and Ms. Marie Potuzniková, Národní Galerie v Praze; Mr. Uli Braun and Mr. Günther Bayer, Kulturamt der Stadt Memmingen; Dr. Michael Roth, Ulmer Museum; Prof. Harald Siebenmorgen, Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe; Dr. Charles Odahl, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho; Dr. Stephan Borghemmar, Uppsala, Sweden; and last but not least the anonymous reader engaged by this journal.
at Kynžvart (Königswart). Hence they passed into the possession of the Czech Republic.

The four panels are not of uniform size. Two of them now measure 230 x 94 cm. each and apparently were the outside of movable wings, while the other two now measure 164 x 87 cm. each and apparently were fixed wings. It is likely that there were additional altar components that were lost. One misses especially a representation of the Invention and/or the Verification of the Cross.

A fair amount of descriptive literature on these panels is available, but their narrative content has hitherto not received enough attention. In this article, I intend to show that in their depiction of four events in the life of the emperor Constantine or of his mother,

3Inv. nos. VO 765–68.
Jaroš Pesina, Kynžvart (Státní Zámek), Strigelovy oltářní desky v Kynžvarte (Prague, 1953), 12.
Alfred Stange, Deutsche Malerei der Gotik (Munich and Berlin, 1957), 8:144.
Hugo Rokyta, Kynžvart (Prague, 1958), 3 (Czech), 10 (Russian), 11 (ill.), 13 (German), 20 (English), and 22 (French).
Jaroš Pesina, Alt-deutsche Meister von Hans von Tübingen bis Dürer und Cranach (Prague and Hanau/Main, 1962), or German Painting of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries (Prague, 1962), nos. 31–34.
Gertrud Otto, Bernhard Strigel (Munich and Berlin, 1964), 31–35 with 2 color pls.; 95, no. 20; and ills. 55–57.
Sbírky Národní Galerie v Praze, Šternberský Palác, Staré evropské umění (Prague, 1988), 124 and 134, nos. 320–23, and color pl. 27.
On Bernhard Strigel, see further Edeltraud Rettich in Dictionary of Art 29:773.
Helena, all involving the Cross or a cross in some way, the four panels depart significantly not only from the historical facts as they are understood today but also from the traditional accounts with which Strigel or his imperial patron may have been familiar; furthermore, that this departure is not a matter of accident but rather served a specific ideological or propagandistic purpose.

In the first panel (fig. 1) Helena interrogates Judas, a Jewish elder, threatening him with fire to which she points with her scepter. Her purpose is to have him reveal to her the location of the True Cross of Christ's Passion. Behind Judas are two other Jewish men, one of whom is wearing the pointed hat Jews were often required to wear in the Middle Ages; behind Helena are several attendants. Between these two groups is a richly robed man who must be Constantine. Helena’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land and her building activity there are historical facts. But the primary sources that record Helena’s pilgrimage do not report that she was accompanied by her son, and

This Judas, according to the legend, was converted to Christianity, had his name changed to Cyriacus or Quiriacus, and became bishop of Jerusalem.


Paulinus of Nola, *Epist.* 31.5 (Migne, *PL* 61.328–29; ed. Hartel [*CSEL* 29], 272–73); Borgehammar [n. 4], 66–71; Drijvers [n. 4], 113–16 and 121–22; Pohlsander, *Helena* [n. 4], 106.

Gelasius of Caesarea, narrative reconstructed by Borgehammar [n. 4], 31–55 and 57–60; Pohlsander, *Helena* [n. 4], 107.
Fig. 1: Helena interrogating Judas,
Altar panel by Bernhard Strigel
Constantine’s itinerary for the years 326–327—the most likely time of Helena’s travels—did not include the Holy Land. Nor is it suggested by medieval vitae or legendaries that he was present at the Invention of the Cross.

Nevertheless, Strigel was by no means the first artist to include Constantine in the depiction of events believed to have occurred in the course of Helena’s pilgrimage: In the village of Eriskirch (Kreis Tettnang) on the north shore of Lake Constance, the parish and pilgrimage church of Marià Himmelfahrt has on the south side of the choir a stained-glass window dating from the early fifteenth century. This window includes Constantine in three scenes from the legend of the True Cross: in the fifth register from below, Helena is interrogating Judas while Constantine stands by; in the third register, the True Cross is being dug up by Judas while Helena and Constantine watch; in the first register, the True Cross is verified in the presence of both Constantine and Helena.

A second example is provided by a tapestry in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg; this tapestry dates from ca. 1430–1440 and is on loan from Nuremberg’s Church of St. Sebaldus, where it perhaps served as an antependium. It offers an

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Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden, anders genannt das Passional (ca. 1400), noncritical edition by Severin Rüttgers (Leipzig, 1913), 248–53.

8 Werner von Matthey and Adolf Schahl, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Tettnang* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1937), 55–56 and pl. 34.


The last of the three scenes is a modern copy; the original is in Geneva’s Musée d’Art et d’Histoire (see Paul Frankl, “Die Herkunft der Helenscheiben im Genfer Museum,” *Geneva* 14 [1936]: 107–12 and pls. VII–IX).
Invention and a Verification of the True Cross in one continuous scene, again in the presence of Helena and Constantine.⁹ A third example, the Landesmuseum Joanneum in Graz holds a painting that is a combination Invention and Verification of the True Cross; it is attributed to the “Meister von Laufen” and dated to ca. 1440. In the center of the composition is Helena; behind her to the left there is Constantine.¹⁰ Yet another combination Invention and Verification of the True Cross in which we encounter both Helena and Constantine, by an anonymous Upper-Rhenish painter and dated in 1479, is to be seen in the Kunstmuseum of Basel.¹¹

All four examples are found in southern Germany, Austria, or Switzerland, that is, in Strigel’s part of the world, and date from the fifteenth century, a time when the legend of the True Cross was particularly popular. Constantine and Helena are so closely associated

⁹Gew 3715.
Friedrich Wilhelm Hoffmann et al., *Die Sebalduskirche in Nürnberg* (Vienna, 1912), 203.
Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, *Führer durch die Sammlungen*, 3d ed. (Munich, 1985), 82, no. 185.
¹¹Inv. no. 382.
Stange, *DMG* [n. 2] (1960), 10:19 and ill. 38.
Gottfried Biedermann, *Katalog Alte Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum: Mittelalterliche Kunst* (Graz, 1982), 94–95, no. 14, and ill. 23.
¹³Inv. no. 204.
Stange, *DMG* [n. 2] (1955), 7:9 and ill. 2.
with each other and with the True Cross that it must have seemed
natural to include both of them in works of art that were meant to
convey an idea more than to record historical events. Yet Constan-
tine's presence in scenes of the Invention or the Verification of the
Cross remains the exception rather than the rule.

There is, additionally, a small (54 x 64 cm.) study, produced
in Strigel's workshop and last reported to be in private possession in
Switzerland, in which again Constantine and Helena together act
in roles the traditional accounts ascribe to Helena alone (fig. 2). On

Fig. 2: The Invention, Verification, and Exaltation of the True Cross,
Study from the workshop of Bernhard Strigel

"This association of Constantine and Helena with each other is even
stronger in the East than it is in the West. In the Orthodox churches the
emperor and his mother are both recognized as saints and share a common
feast day, May 21. In Byzantine icons, frescoes, and coins they are frequently
depicted standing side by side, holding a cross between them (see Klaus
the left side we see a combination Invention and Verification of the True Cross in which both Constantine and Helena have a part; on the right side an Exaltation of the Cross with Constantine, Helena, a pope, and a cardinal. The measurements of this study and its lesser quality preclude the possibility that it was actually part of the altar in question, but it may suggest the subject matter of the presumably lost inside of the two movable wings.  

Now to return to Strigel’s paintings in the National Gallery in Prague: In the second panel (fig. 3) Constantine, barefoot and in penitent’s dress, but crowned, carries a large cross on his left shoulder as he enters through a city gate. Behind him on the left we can identify Helena and Judas. More importantly, behind him on the right we see the full-length figure of a man in a rich robe and with the unmistakable features of the Emperor Maximilian. Strigel was well familiar with those features; he and his workshop produced numerous portraits of Maximilian. Note also that Maximilian is not shown in the

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13 Otto, “Ein Altar Bernhard Strigels” [n. 2], 5.
Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 32, 95, no. 21, and ill. 58.

14 A convenient inventory of these is provided by Stange, Kritisches Verzeichnis [n. 2] (1970), 2:212–15, no. 934–43d. See also the following:
Ludwig Baldass, Der Künstlerkreis Kaiser Maximilians (Vienna, 1923), 12–13 and pls. 15–16.
Hans Ankwicz-Kleehoven, Der Wiener Humanist Johannes Cuspinian (Graz and Cologne, 1959), 190–93 and pl. facing 201.
Cat. Vienna 1959, pp. 179–80, no. 526, and pl. 90.
Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 101–2, nos. 54–60.
Rettich, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 104–8.
Otto Benesch, German Painting from Dürer to Holbein (Geneva, 1966), 51 and 151–52.
Fig. 3:
Constantine
Penitent
Altar panel by
Bernhard Strigel
manner in which donors are usually shown, that is, in reduced scale and kneeling in the lower left or lower right corner. Rather he is an anachronistic participant in an event which in itself is unhistorical. Is


Salem Castle (in the Linzgau district of Baden-Württemberg, just north of Lake Constance) was until recently home to four panels and the predella of an altar of St. Mary that Strigel painted for the monastery of Salem in 1508, that is, shortly after completing the altar of the Holy Cross. In 1995 these components were acquired by the Badishes Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (Inv.-Nr. 95/1361) and reunited with the carved central shrine, which the museum already owned (Inv.-Nr. C 3795). One of the four panels, the inside of the right wing, is an Adoration of the Magi in which, in keeping with the tradition of the three Magi or Kings, one is elderly, one middle-aged, and one young. The middle-aged one is positioned between the other two and bears the features of Maximilian, who had commissioned the altar. See the following:

Stange, *DMG* [n. 2] (1957), 8:143.


Pešina, *Alt-deutsche Meister or German Painting* [n. 2], no. 32.

Otto, *Bernhard Strigel* [n. 2], 36–38, with color pl.; 95, no. 22; and ills. 63–66, esp. 66.

Rettich, *Bernhard Strigel* [n. 2], 44–45.


Some years later, in 1518, Strigel painted a Death of the Virgin; this painting was housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Strasbourg until it was destroyed by fire in 1947 (together with one of Strigel's portraits of Maximilian). To one of the figures in this painting, too, Strigel gave the features of Maximilian, who had commissioned this painting as well. See the following:

Stange, *DMG* [n. 2] (1957), 8:145 and ill. 302.

Pešina, *Alt-deutsche Meister or German Painting* [n. 2], no. 32.
the city meant to be Jerusalem or Rome? The half-timbered house we see through the gate suggests neither, but rather the painter's hometown, Memmingen! In none of our sources do we find mention of an event or incident in Constantine's life even remotely similar to what is depicted here. And humility is one Christian virtue Constantine certainly never made his own.

In the third panel (fig. 4) Constantine, now in splendid dress, rides triumphantly into a city; again he carries a large cross but holds it aloft, like a military banner. The city seems to be the same as in the second panel. It is true, of course, that Constantine won the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in the sign of the Cross, but nowhere in our sources is it recorded that he entered Rome carrying a cross. In these sources we do learn of a much less pleasing aspect of Constantine's

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Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 43; 97, no. 31; and ill. 85.


Maximilian's likeness is also known to us from his coins; on these, see n. 54 herein.

Among the primary sources on the reign of Constantine the following might be expected to mention such an event if indeed it had happened:

Eusebius, Vita Constantini.


On this point, see Hans A. Pohlsander, The Emperor Constantine (London and New York, 1996), 86.
entry into the city on 29 October 312: the body of his rival (and brother-in-law) Maxentius was recovered from the Tiber River; Constantine had the head cut off, fixed to a pike, and carried through the streets of Rome. If we prefer to identify the city as Jerusalem, we encounter the same problem as in the second panel. If the second panel refers to the Invention of the Cross and the third panel to Constantine's entry into Rome after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, why has the chronological order been reversed?

These two panels borrow heavily from another hagiographical tradition: the return of the Cross to Jerusalem by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–641). When the Persians captured Jerusalem in 614 they carried away the cross, or rather part of the cross, that was venerated in Jerusalem as the True Cross of Christ's Passion. Heraclius, having gained a splendid victory over the Persians, was able to return the cross to the Holy City in 630 or 631. This historical event has been subject to much embellishment, and predictably it is the embellished version of the story that became popular, in the liturgy, in literature, and

17 Anonymus Valesianus, *Origo Constantini* 4.12 (MGH, AA 9.8; ed. Rolfe [LCL Amm. Marc. 3], 516; ed. König [Trier, 1987], 38–41; English translation by Stevenson, in Lieu and Montserrat, eds., *From Constantine to Julian* [n. 15], 45).


18 It is reliably reported that Heraclius entered Jerusalem on a March 21. The year is more difficult to ascertain. Anatole Frolow, “La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse,” *REB* 2 (1952): 88–105, argues for 630. This date has been accepted by Georg[e] Ostrogorsky; see either the German or the English edition of his Byzantine history:

*Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Byzantinisches Handbuch 1.2 = Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 12.1.2), 3d ed. (Munich, 1963), 87.


Also by Herbert Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte* (Graz, 1965), 19–20; Andreas N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Amsterdam, 1968),
Fig. 4:
Constantine Triumphant,
Altar panel by Bernhard Strigel
in the arts. A liturgical text, *Reversio Sanctae Crucis*, for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14), tells the story this way:

But when the emperor, coming down from the Mount of Olives, sitting on a royal horse decorated with imperial ornaments, wanted to enter by the same gate which the Lord had entered when coming to his Passion, the stones of the gate suddenly descended and joined themselves to one another, making a solid wall. As they were wondering in astonishment, constricted by exceeding sorrow, they looked up on high and saw the sign of the Cross in the sky, shining brightly with flaming splendor. An angel of the Lord took it in his hands, stood above the gate, and said; "When the King of the heavens, the Lord of all the earth, entered through this gate on his way to fulfilling the mysteries of the Passion, he did not appear in purple or a shining diadem, nor did he ask for a strong horse to carry him, but sitting on the back of a humble donkey he left his servants a paradigm of humility." This said, the angel quickly returned to heaven. Then the emperor rejoiced in the Lord because of the angelic visit and, having removed the tokens of imperial rank, he hastened forward, without shoes, girded only with a linen belt, carrying the Cross of the Lord in his hands, his face covered with tears, his

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eyes raised to the sky, making his way right up to the gate. As soon as he approached with humility the hard stones sensed the celestial command, and immediately the gate raised itself and gave unrestricted entrance to those going in. 19

Another text, *Exaltatio Sanctae Crucis*, a sermon in form, gives this account:

So the blessed Heraclius went out of that city with a great victory and returned to the holy city of Jerusalem. But when he approached the gate of the holy city of Jerusalem, he forgot to dismount from his horse and to enter barefoot into the Holy City with the lifegiving wood of the Holy Cross, and instead he came to the gate with the diadem of the kingdom, in order to enter the Holy City with his cavalry. An angel of the Lord sat down over the city gate and placed stones before the doors and closed them, so that no one could enter. But the most blessed Heraclius, when he saw the gate closed by the angel, turned back, his face blushing with immense shame, and he knew that he was not worthy of entering the city with such exalted glory. A divine voice came to him saying: “Heraclius, do you not know that, when the Maker of all the world, who hung on this wood, came to this gate and sat on a donkey’s foal, the people in front came towards him with flowers and palm fronds and shouted and said: ‘Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel,’ and thus he entered the city?” But Heraclius, confused within himself, went back and put ashes on his head and clothed himself in hairshirt and sackcloth. And so everyone hastened barefoot to the gate with praises and hymns. The angel of

19This text was in liturgical use between ca. 800 and 1300, according to Stephan Borgehammar of Uppsala, who is preparing a new, critical edition and has provided this translation. Highly inaccurate printed texts are found in Hrabanus Maurus (ca. 780–856), homily 70 (Migne, PL 110:131–34), and in Boninus Mombritius (Bonino Mombrizio), *Sanctuarium seu Vitae Sanctorum*, ed. nova (Paris, 1910), 1:379–81.
the Lord then commanded that the rocks which lay before the gates should return each to its place, and the doors opened themselves. And the most blessed Heraclius entered with a large army, praising and blessing the Lord who performs miracles on his servants.\textsuperscript{20}

The account offered by the Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1230–1290) is not very different.\textsuperscript{21} Given the legend’s popularity and its availability in both Latin and several vernacular languages, Strigel in all probability was familiar with it. He also may have known other accounts: the Middle High German romance \textit{Eraclius} by the poet who is known only as Otte;\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Der Heiligen Leben}, a legendary account.

\textsuperscript{20}This text is extant in only two manuscripts: Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense 713 (eleventh cen.), f. 84\textsuperscript{v}–85\textsuperscript{r}, and Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana t. 26 (twelfth cen.), again according to information helpfully provided by Borgehammar; the translation, again, is also his.

\textsuperscript{21}Chapter 137, \textit{De exaltatione sanctae crucis} (ed. Græssle\textsuperscript{1}.603–8). English translation by Ryan and Ripperger [n. 7], 545–46.

\textsuperscript{22}Otte is not known from any other sources. The \textit{Eraclius} is approximately 5400 verses long, was probably written in the early decades of the thirteenth century, and is based on a French work, the \textit{Eracle} of Gautier d’Arras. There is a modern edition of it by Winfried Frey (\textit{Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik} 348. [Göppingen, 1983]). See also the following:


Wolfgang Walliczek in \textit{Verfasserlexikon}\textsuperscript{1} (1989), 7:199–203, s. v. Otte I.

Joachim Bumke, \textit{Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im hohen Mittelalter} (Munich, 1990), 243–44.

compiled in ca. 1400 by a Dominican friar at Nuremberg;\textsuperscript{23} or the miracle play known as the \textit{Augsburger Heiligkreuzspiel}.\textsuperscript{24} But a direct relationship of Strigel’s paintings to any of these accounts cannot be shown.

Other sources, closer to the event in time, are more sober and contain no element of the miraculous. Thus the Byzantine poet George of Pisidia (Georgios Pisides) soon after the event composed a poem, really a panegyric of Heraclius, \textit{116 iambic trimeters long}, but not mentioning any miracle.\textsuperscript{25} Another author, too, Antiochos Strategos, known to have been a contemporary of Heraclius but otherwise rather obscure, reports the event but fails to mention any miracle.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23}Ed. Rüttgers [n. 7], 2:402–4.
Friedrich Wilhelm, \textit{Deutsche Legenden und Legendare; Texte und Untersuchungen zu ihrer Geschichte im Mittelalter} (Leipzig, 1907), 174–212.
\textsuperscript{24}Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 40 cod. H. 27 (before 1494), folios 47r–89v.
\textsuperscript{26}The original Greek text is not extant. A Georgian version has been newly edited by Gérard Garitte in \textit{CSCO} 203 = \textit{Scriptores Iberici} 11 (1960); an English translation of it (from an earlier edition) was provided by Frederick C. Conybeare, “Antiochus Strategos’ Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in
This same author does specifically say that "the tree of the Cross" was sealed in a chest; this would imply that what the Persians carried away and Heraclius brought back was a piece of the Cross, not an entire cross. Theophanes the Confessor (ca. 760–817) also reports merely that Heraclius returned the wood of the Cross to Jerusalem; he says nothing about Heraclius humbling himself before being admitted into the city.\textsuperscript{27}

The story is also depicted frequently in ecclesiastical art, both in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. We find it, for instance, in the Cathedral of St. Blaise in Braunschweig, among the frescoes that take up the east and south walls of the south transept (second quarter of the thirteenth century);\textsuperscript{28} in the Church of S. Croce in Florence, among Agnoli Gaddi's frescoes in the Alberti-Alamanni Chapel (ca. 1370);\textsuperscript{29} in two altar panels by the so-called Master of the Vision A.D. 614," \textit{English Historical Review} 25 (1910): 502–17 at 516. Conybeare's translation is also found in F. E. Peters, \textit{Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times} (Princeton, 1985), 173–74.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Chronographia} annus mundi 6120 [A.D. 627/28] (ed. Carl de Boor I, 328; misprint 6020. English translation by Harry Turtledove [Philadelphia, 1982], 30; now also by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott [n. 18], 459).


\textsuperscript{29} Bruce Cole, \textit{Agnoli Gaddi} (Oxford, 1977), 21–26, 79–81, and pls. 25–33.


At nearby Volterra, in the Chapel of the Holy Cross, which is attached to the Church of S. Francesco, another Florentine painter, Cenni di Francesco di Ser Cenni, painted in 1410 a series of frescoes very similar to,
of St. John (active in the middle of the fifteenth century) in the Westfälisches Landesmuseum in Münster; and in the famous cycle of frescoes Piero della Francesca completed in 1466 in the choir of the Church of S. Francesco in Arezzo. Given the proximity of Memmingen to Ulm, we must note yet another example, two painted panels on loan to the Museum of Ulm from Wolfegg Castle. These two panels date from ca. 1440 and are attributed to the circle of Hans Multscher in Ulm. Now cut into two but placed in their original configuration one above the other, they were once a single panel and formed the inside right wing of an altar. While the upper panel depicts the Verification of the Cross, we see in the lower panel a dismounted and barefoot Heraclius, in penitent’s dress but crowned, carrying a cross, before a city gate (fig. 5). A reasonable assumption is that the lost left wing showed the Invention of the Cross in the upper portion and Heraclius being barred from entry into Jerusalem in the lower not to say a copy of, Agnoli Gaddi’s frescoes in Florence. On the Volterra frescoes, see Susanne Pjleger, “La Cappela della Croce nella Chiesa di S. Francesco di Volterra,” Rassegna Volterrana 59–60 (1983–1984): 171–245 at 197–220 and figs. 4–10; and Marilyn Aronberg Lavin [this n.], 114–17 with figs. 91–95.

A small painting of Heraclius’ Entry into Jerusalem, attributed to the school of Agnoli Gaddi, is to be seen in the National Gallery, Prague. Inv. no. O 11884. See Sbírky Národní Galerie v Praze, Šternberský Palác, Staré evropské umění (Prague, 1988), 60 and 65, no. 52.

The literature on Piero della Francesca is exceedingly rich. I shall limit myself to some of the more recent books:


portion. In these five instances and in many others the story is presented in conjunction with the Invention and/or the Verification of the Cross; that is, the return of the Cross to Jerusalem by Heraclius is seen as a parallel to the Invention of the Cross by Helena.

An even more interesting association of Heraclius with Helena is found once in the arts of Spain and once in the arts of Hungary. In

Fig. 5: Penitent Heraclius,
Altar panel attributed to the circle of Hans Multscher

Spain Miguel Ximénez (Jiménez) and Martin Bernat painted an impressive retable of the Holy Cross for the parish church of Blesa near Montalbán in Aragon ca. 1475 or 1476. Thirteen panels of this retable are now displayed in the Museum of Fine Arts in Zaragoza (Saragossa); they feature scenes of the Passion, culminating in a Last Judgment, as well as scenes of the Invention and Exaltation of the Cross. In one of the latter, Heraclius, on horseback, carrying a huge cross, and nimbed, is stopped by an angel before the walls of Jerusalem. Heraclius is accompanied by Helena, whose identity is beyond question, as she holds two of the holy nails in her hands. In another panel of the same altar Heraclius and Helena, again with two nails in her hands, adore a large cross held up by two angels. In Hungary an unnamed master painted an altar of the Crucifixion for the Church of St. Egidius in Bárfta ca. 1470–1490. In the outside of the two wings are the themes of Heraclius and Helena in six panels (each wing is arranged in three registers). In the middle register of the outside left wing Helena, easily identified, joins Heraclius as he, crowned but in penitent’s dress, is about to carry the Cross into Jerusalem. In neither case did a

José Gudiol i Ricart, Pintura Gotica (Madrid, 1955), 309–10 and fig. 269.
José Camón Aznar, Pintura medieval Espanola (Madrid, 1966), 517 and fig. 500.
José Gudiol i Ricart, PintURA medieval en Aragón (Zaragoza, 1971), 63, 85, and fig. 96.
34Dénes Radocsay, A Középkori Magyarország Táblaképei [Panel Painting of Mediaeval Hungary] (Budapest, 1955), 269–70, with earlier bibliography, mostly in Hungarian, and pls. CXIV–CXV.
Alexander Frický, Bardejov Kultúrne pamiatky (Bardejov, 1976), 49, no. 14.
But Bárfta is actually located now in eastern Slovakia; it is called Bardejov in Slovak and Bartfeld in German (see Vladimir Hruby in Dictionary of Art, 3:223–25).
chronological distance of three centuries prevent Heraclius and Helena from being placed in a single scene; a thematic link, the Holy Cross, is all that was required.

A similar lack of concern for historicity may frequently be observed elsewhere in religious art. London's National Gallery, for instance, holds an Annunciation that was painted by the Venetian painter Carlo Crivelli in 1476 and may serve to illustrate the point: here the Archangel Gabriel is joined by St. Emidius (also Emigdius or Emygdius), the legendary first bishop and patron saint of the town of Ascoli (Ascoli Piceno in the Marches; the painting was made for a convent in that town). Another example is provided by the so-called Master of the Altar of St. Bartholomew, who was active in Cologne at the end of the fifteenth century: in the central panel of his Altar of St. Thomas, now in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Sts. Helena, Jerome, Ambrose, and Mary Magdalene are witnesses to the encounter of St. Thomas with the risen Christ. We shall see shortly

Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting* (The Hague, 1936), 18:38–40 with fig. 27.
36 WRM, 179.
Stange, *DMG* [n. 2] (1952), 5:67 and ill. 137.
that Constantine and Helena may take their place at the feet of the crucified Christ. The inclusion of donors, often with their families, in the composition of altar paintings is, of course, quite common and not in need of further demonstration.

But the theme of Heraclius is also found separately, as, for instance, in three enamel plaques on the reverse side of a processional cross, a work of Mosan art of the twelfth century;\(^{37}\) in a thirteenth-century painted altar-frontal from Nedstryn (Nordfjord, Norway), now in the Historical Museum of the University of Bergen;\(^{38}\) or in the fourteenth-century cycle of frescoes that decorate the village church of Fraurombach (in Hesse, near Schlitz).\(^{39}\) But always the artists show Heraclius

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Alfred Stange, *Deutsche spägotische Malerei 1430–1500* (Königstein im Taunus, 1965), 57.


\(^{37}\) The components of this cross were scattered over six European collections and were assembled in 1977 for an exhibition in Stuttgart. (See Württembergisches Landesmuseum Stuttgart, *Die Zeit der Staufer* [Stuttgart, 1977], 1:414–17, no. 550; 2, ills. 343–49; and 5, ills. 126–27.)

\(^{38}\) Inv. No. MA 1.


Henric v. Achen, senior curator, has been kind enough to provide additional information.

\(^{39}\) Stange, *DMG [n. 2]* (1934), 1:75–76.


carrying an entire, large cross, not a part of a cross; this, of course, makes a more dramatic scene.\footnote{For additional exemplars, see Louis Réau, Iconographie de l’art chrétien 3.2 (Paris, 1958), 639; esp. H. W. van Os in LCI 2:241–42.}

The penitent Constantine from Kynžwart Castle, now in Prague (fig. 3), invites comparison with the penitent Heraclius from Wolfegg Castle, now in Ulm (fig. 5), which is from more than six decades earlier, although the former faces right and the latter left (but both faced the center of the altar) and although there are other differences in composition. Had Strigel perhaps seen this altar? The facts of geography would not preclude it, especially since Strigel is known to have done a fair amount of traveling.

The penitent Constantine from the Kynžwart Castle panel even more closely resembles another, slightly later penitent Heraclius also in the Ulm Museum: this one is found in a painted panel on the back of the central shrine of a triptych from Hagnau (near Meersburg on Lake Constance), painted in 1517 by two masters who identified themselves by their initials, HG and HHS respectively (fig. 6). The former signed the back panel, the latter the outside of the right wing.\footnote{Marie Schuette, Der schwäbische Schnitzaltar (Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte) (Strassburg, 1907), 212, not very accurate.} HG has been convincingly identified as Hans Goldschmid, Strigel’s son-in-law, who for a time was active in Strigel’s shop and often imitated Strigel’s style.\footnote{Gertrud Otto, Die Ulmer Plastik der Spätgotik (Reutlingen, 1927), 273–75 with ill. 314.} The resemblance of the two figures in details of stance and dress is so striking that in fact one has been mistaken for the other and the dependency of the one in Ulm on the one in Prague

\footnote{Julius Baum, Führer durch das Museum der Stadt Ulm (Ulm, 1930), 57.}
\footnote{Gerald Jasbar and Erwin Treu, eds., Ulmer Museum: Bildbauerei und Malerei vom 13. Jahrhundert bis 1600 (Ulm, 1981), 196 and 200, cat. no. 129.}
\footnote{Günther Bayer, Memmingen in historischen Bildern (Memmingen, 1983), 81.}
\footnote{Günther Bayer, letter of December 30, 1997.}
Fig. 6: Penitent Heraclius,
Back panel of the shrine of a triptych by the master HG and HHS

Courtesy of Ulmer Museum, Ulm
becomes readily apparent. Only one difficulty remains: Strigel’s altar was sent to Rome upon its completion. When and where did Goldschmid have opportunity to examine it? In the carved shrine of this altar Constantine and Helena join Mary and John at the feet of the crucified Christ, establishing a thematic link between the front and the back of the altar.

In the last of the four panels from Kynžvart Castle (fig. 7) Constantine lies on his deathbed, still wearing his crown, his hands in prayer. An angel shows him a cross, and a priest attends him. His mother is at his side, weeping and wearing a crown awkwardly on top of her headdress. We have another anachronism: there is no account, ancient or medieval, which claims that Helena outlived her son. Modern scholarly consensus, based on numismatical as well as literary evidence, holds that Helena predeceased her son by at least seven years.

In both the first and the fourth of the four Kynžvart panels Strigel introduced a person extraneous to the event portrayed. In the case of the first, there was a precedent for doing so; in the case of the fourth there was not. In the second and third panel he ventured far beyond that: here Constantine actually assumes a stance and a role normally associated with Heraclius; that is, the two are conflated into a single.

Gertrud Otto (Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 84, n. 31) erroneously identifies the central figure as Constantine rather than Heraclius. Seeing a “literal repetition,” she thinks that the painter must have known Strigel’s panel. Edeltraud Rettich (“Bernhard Strigel: Ergänzungen und Berichtigungen” [n. 2], 163) recognizes in Strigel’s panel the “immediate model” for the panel from Hagnau. Both Otto and Rettich credit Bruno Bushart with having first suggested the dependency of the one panel on the other.

Eusebius (Vita Const. 3.46) says specifically that Constantine was at his mother’s side when she died. Altmann of Hautvillers, in the sixth chapter of his vita of St. Helena [n. 7], imagines that Helena on her deathbed encouraged Constantine in the faith.

Barnes [n. 6], 36.
Drijvers [n. 4], 73.
Pohlsander, Helena [n. 4], 145–48.
Fig. 7:
Constantine on His Deathbed, Altar panel by Bernhard Strige
person. This is unique and quite unexpected, since Heraclius is commonly associated with Helena, not with Constantine, except indirectly as he accompanies Helena. Furthermore, other ways of depicting Constantine prevailed in the arts of Western Europe. Thus sometimes we find Constantine and Helena flanking a cross, in the manner so often encountered in the arts of Byzantium. More common are narrative sequences that tell of Constantine’s vision, his victory in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, or his baptism. The Emperor Window in the choir of Nuremberg’s Church of St. Lawrence gives

Examples from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century:

a. The so-called Altar of Gertrude, a small portable altar that was once part of the famous Guelph Treasure and dates from ca. 1030–1045; Cleveland Museum of Art, CMA 31.462.

b. A book of pericopes from the Monastery of St. Erentrud in Salzburg, dating from ca. 1150, folio 58v; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 15,903.

c. An antiphonary from the Petersstift in Salzburg, dating from ca. 1160, p. (not folio) 338; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, series nova 2700.

d. A fresco in the small Romanesque church of Santa Maria de Barbá in Catalonia, dating from the thirteenth century.

e. A retable of St. Helena painted in the early fifteenth century by Jaime Ferrer I; in the chapel of the hospital of Benabarre in Catalonia.


Examples from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century:

a. Frescoes in the eleventh- or twelfth-century Church of San Severo in Bardolino on the eastern shore of Lake Garda.

b. The decorative enamels of the left wing of the Stavelot Triptych, dating from the middle of the twelfth century; New York City, Pierpont Morgan Library.

c. A triptych, dating from ca. 1170–1180, in the treasury of the Church of Notre Dame in Tongres (Tongeren), Belgium.

d. Two panels of the left wing of an altar of the Holy Cross, attributed to Pere Nicolau and dated to ca. 1405–1407; Museum of Fine Arts, Valencia, inv. no. 254.

e. An altar of St. Helena in the Church of St. Michael at Estella in Navarre, the work of an unknown artist and dating from the first quarter of the fifteenth century.
one scene in which Constantine victoriously enters the city of Rome after his victory, but he is not carrying a cross. A manuscript illumination of the final years of the fifteenth century shows Constantine carrying a part of the True Cross to Constantinople, which is a different matter altogether. Together the four extant panels of Strigel’s altar tell us that it served an ideological as well as a religious program. The Cross provides a unifying religious theme, but Constantine provides a unifying ideological theme.

It has been observed that “putting himself in the place of his imperial forebears strengthened Maximilian’s self-esteem.” Also that

f. The famous frescoes completed in 1466 by Piero della Francesca in the choir of the Church of S. Francesco in Arezzo.

g. The Emperor Window of the lower story of the choir of Nuremberg’s Church of St. Lawrence, donated by Emperor Frederick III and dating from 1476–1477.

h. The central panel of an altar from the workshop of the Master of Liesborn, from the last third of the fifteenth century; Landesmuseum Münster, inv. no. 1293 LM.

i. Two of four bronze relief tablets remaining from an altar of the Holy Cross created ca. 1506–1507, or perhaps shortly after 1516, by Andrea Briosco (called Andrea Riccio) for the former Church of Santa Maria dei Servi in Venice; Venice, Ca’ D’Oro, D.-br. 181 and 182.

j. Frescoes, created by Italian painters in 1508–1516, in the Chapel of the Holy Cross of the cathedral of Albi in Languedoc.

k. A retable, perhaps from the beginning of the sixteenth century, now in the north transept of the cathedral of León.

49 [See n. 47g.]

Gottfried Frenzel, Die Farbverglasung aus St. Lorenz, Nürnberg (Augsburg, 1968), 31 and 39–42.


41 Peter Diederichs, Kaiser Maximilian I. als politischer Publizist (Dissertation Heidelberg, 1932), 79.
he "desired to be at the center of his predecessors in the imperial office, the ancient Roman emperors as well as the German emperors,"51 that he employed art in the service of his political aims,52 and that he aimed not at the establishment of a German national state, but at the restoration of the Roman empire, which he thought God himself had entrusted to the German nation.53 It can be shown that the imperial ideology of the aetas Maximileana readily employed the traditions of ancient Rome:

On Maximilian's coins we find such formulae as *Romanorum Rex semper Augustus* and *Romanorum Imperator semper Augustus.*54 In


Maximilian's ideas were quite in keeping with the mediaeval concept of *translatio* or *renovatio imperii.* The German version of this concept was not necessarily shared outside of Germany. (See Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, Geist und Geschichte des deutschen Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart [Munich and Salzburg, 1950], 1:56–57, and Alexander Demandt, Der Fall Roms [Munich, 1984], 97.)

54 Maximilian did not assume the title of emperor until 1508; hence the former formula was in use before 1508, the latter from 1508 on.

On Maximilian's coins and medals see the following:

Cat. Vienna 1959, pp. 231–37, nos. 625–66, and pls. 94–95.

Cat. Innsbruck 1969, pp. 77–81, nos. 305–17, and ills. 54–57.


the several portraits of him by Albrecht Dürer, Maximilian is styled
*Imperator Caesar Divus Maximilianus Pius Felix Augustus, Potentissimus
Maximus et Invictissimus Caesar Maximilianus*, or "Der Allergross-
mechtigist Unüberwindlichst Khayser Maximilian."55 In the first
of these three formulae we surely have an echo of Roman imperial
coin legends.56 Hans Burgkmair, in his portraits, calls the emperor

Erich Egg, *Die Münzen Kaiser Maximilians I.* (Innsbruck, 1971),
*passim.*
Günther Probszt, *Österreichische Münz- und Geldgeschichte von den
Baldass [n. 14], pl. 19.
Cat. Vienna 1959, p. 129, no. 419.
Vinzenz Oberhammer, *Great Paintings from the Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna* (New York, 1963), pl. 18.
Willi Kurth, ed., *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer* (New York,
1963), no. 318.
Heinrich Theodor Musper, *Der Holzschnitt in fünf Jahrhunderten*
(Stuttgart, 1964), 145.
250–54 and ills. 169 and 171.
Walter L. Strauss, *Albrecht Dürer: Woodcuts and Wood Blocks* (New York,
1980), 543–47.
Werner Schade in *Kunst der Reformationszeit* (exhibition catalogue
Berlin, 1983), 166, 168, and 200.
"So rightly Vinzenz Oberhammer, "Die vier Bildnisse Kaiser Maxi-
at 7.
The same formula was applied to Maximilian posthumously in a wood-
cut by Hans Springinklee; in this woodcut we see the emperor with
his patron saints before God the Father. (See Baldass [n. 14], pl. 100;
Cat. Vienna 1959, p. 135, no. 436, and pl. 64; Cat. Innsbruck 1969, pp. 67–68,
no. 265; and Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.* [n. 14], 5 [1986], ill. 33 facing
p. 401.)
Imp. Caes. Maximil. Aug.57 The original plans for Maximilian's tomb (actually a cenotaph) in the Hofkirche of Innsbruck included bronze portrait busts of thirty-four Roman emperors. Although these were never placed in their intended location, they reflect the emperor's sentiments and desires.58 There is room for a series of Roman emperors

57Baldass [n. 14], 24 and pls. 14 and 59.
Arthur Burkhard, Hans Burgkmair d. Ä. (Berlin, 1932), cat. no. 14 and pl. XII.
Cat. Vienna 1959, p. 125, nos. 404 and 406, and pls. 56–57.
Musper, Der Holzschnitt [n. 55], 177.
Tilman Frank, Hans Burgkmair: Studien zu Leben und Werk des Augsburger Malers (Munich, 1968), 71 and ills. 43 and 44.
Egg, Münzen [n. 54], 59.
Cat. Innsbruck 1969, pp. 48–49, no. 184, and ill. 27.
Schramm and Fillitz [n. 14], nos. 161–62.
Heinrich Hammer, Kunstgeschichte der Stadt Innsbruck (Innsbruck, 1952), 109–10, 113, and 133–34.
Bellot [n. 53], 175–76.
Cat. Innsbruck 1969, p. 161, no. 594, and ill. 133.
Buchner [n. 54], 99–100.
also in that monumental construct of 192 wood blocks that make up Maximilian's triumphal arch or "Ehrenpforte." The series, while incomplete, begins with Julius Caesar, includes some of the Byzantine emperors, leads by way of Charlemagne to the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, and ends with Emperor Sigismund, suggesting an unbroken tradition. 59

The renowned Humanist scholar Konrad Peutinger of Augsburg, who served Maximilian well in many capacities, at Maximilian's request planned, but never completed, a monumental "Kaiserbuch" (*Vitae Imperatorum*, consisting of two parts, the *Liber Augustalis* and

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Schramm and Fillitz [n. 14], no. 185.


Of the thirty-four busts only twenty-one are extant; twenty of these are now in Castle Ambras, Innsbruck, and one is in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum München.

Kurth [n. 55], 33-34 and ills. 273-92.

Egg, *Die Hofkirche* [n. 58], 52.

Strauss [n. 55], 500-507.


Werner Schade, in *Kunst der Reformationszeit* [n. 55], 156-57 and 199.
Altar Panels by Bernhard Strigel

the De Caesaribus), which was to demonstrate the continuity of Roman imperial rule from Julius Caesar to Maximilian and was to be illustrated with woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair.\textsuperscript{60} Another contemporary, Sebastian Brant, a native of Strassburg and best known as the author of Das Narrenschiff, wrote several poems, in Latin elegiac couplets, in praise of Maximilian. In one of these he claims that Maximilian excelled in virtue over Constantine, Justinian, and Charlemagne, among others.\textsuperscript{61} Another poet, Johannes Michael Nagonius or Johann

\textsuperscript{60}Srbik [n. 53], 59–60.
Lutz [n. 51], 43 and 143.
Bellott [n. 53], 173.
Falk [n. 57], 45–47 and ill. 21.
Falk and Biedermann [n. 57], ill. 95 and cat. no. 77.
Jan-Dirk Müller [n. 59], 87.
Cramer [n. 23], 396.
Brant and Maximilian admired each other. See the following:
Richard Newald, Elsässische Charakterköpfe aus dem Zeitalter des Humanismus (Kolmar, 1944), 106.
Michael Pingonius, dedicated a collection of Latin poems to Maximilian, whom he addresses as *Caesar semper Augustus Invictissimus* or *Caesar semper Augustus Imperator Electus Invictissimus*. A full-page illumination in this codex depicts a young Maximilian seated on a throne under a baldachin marked with the letters S. P. Q. R. Johannes Cuspinian, distinguished Humanist, rector of the University of Vienna, and diplomat in Maximilian’s service, wrote a historical study titled *De Caesaribus atque Imperatoribus Romanis*, which also sees in Maximilian the heir to the Caesars.63

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62 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 12750, fol. 4v.

Friedrich Winkler, *Die Islamische Buchmalerei des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1925), 207 and pl. 73.


The nationality of this poet and his name are subject to question.


Srbik [n. 53], 63.
Still another contemporary, Hartmann Schedel, a physician in Nuremberg, compiled a universal history from Adam to Maximilian. Schedel was not in Maximilian’s service, but he may have had contact with Maximilian during the latter’s prolonged stay in Nuremberg in 1491. He was in any event an enthusiastic supporter of Maximilian, as were all the German Humanists. While his work lacked originality he did voice the opinion that the German empire derived from Roman sources. In this he followed one of his major sources, the writings of the Italian Humanist Enea Silvio de Piccolomini, who for many years had been an advisor to Maximilian’s father and eventually ascended the papal throne as Pius II (1457–1464).

64 The Latin version, Liber Chronicarum, and a German translation by Georg Alt, Buch der Chroniken, both were printed in 1493 (in July and December respectively) by Anton Koberger in Nuremberg and are often referred to as the “Nürnbergische Chronik.” For these and later editions, see Elisabeth Rücker, Hartmann Schedels Weltchronik (Munich, 1988), 117. Both the Latin and the German version are valuable less for their text than for the 1809 woodcuts that accompany the text, especially the panoramic views of many cities.

65 Reynolds [n. 60], 33.
Rupprich [n. 60], 664.
Boeckh et al., [n. 60], 168.
In the case of the four altar panels here under discussion, it appears that Strigel's imperial patron wished, more specifically, to enhance the stature of one of the emperors, namely Constantine, even at the expense of historical veracity, and himself to be seen in the same tradition with him. Had he been an emperor of Byzantium he might have been formally hailed as “a new Constantine.” He was in fact “from infancy . . . looked upon as a ‘new Constantine’ who would save Christendom from Islam.” His mother, Eleonore of Portugal, had wanted to name him Constantine; instead he was named after the rather obscure Saint Maximilian, to whom his father, Frederick III, felt beholden. It may also be pertinent in this context that Maximilian had a sister named Helena, who died in

Pesina, Alt-deutsche Meister or German Painting [n. 2], no. 32.
Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 32.
“According to unreliable tradition this Maximilian was bishop of Lorch (now Enns) in Upper Austria and was martyred in 284. He became one of the patron saints of Passau.
Heinrich Fichtenau, Der junge Maximilian (1459–1482), 2d ed. (Vienna, 1965), 8.
Buchner [n. 54], 8.
infancy. Constantine is among the emperors whose images are found in Maximilian’s “Ehrenpforte,” but he receives no more attention than the other emperors. We may assume, but do not know for a fact, that a bust of Constantine was among the thirty-four imperial portrait busts that were to adorn Maximilian’s tomb; it is not among those we possess today.

We do not know, of course, to what extent Strigel was bound to follow specific instructions and to what extent he was free to develop his own ideas. In general, it has been observed that Maximilian “left his artists little room to display their own genius, since they were required to accommodate his personal desires.” Given his own keen interest in history, literature, the arts, and the cultivation of his “Gedechtnus,” this is not surprising. In one of the woodcuts Hans Burgkmair contributed to Maximilian’s autobiographical Weifikunig, the young “WeißKunig” is seen visiting an artist, namely Burgkmair himself, in his studio. The subscription is revealing: “Den lust und die geschicklichkeit so er in angebung des gemelds gehabt und bei

71 Fichtenau, Der junge Maximilian [n. 70], 10.
72 Hantsch [n. 58], 218.
Similarly the following:
Baldass [n. 14], 10, 12, and 20.
Burkhard, “Hans Burgkmair’s Work” [n. 57], 136.
Buchner [n. 54], 56.
Elisabeth Scheicher, Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Habsburger (Vienna, Munich, and Zürich, 1979), 57.
Karl Schmid [n. 58].
73 Baldass [n. 14], pl. 66.
Burkhard, Hans Burgkmair d. Ä. [n. 57], cat. no. 125 and pl. XLV.
Kaiser Maximilians Weißkunig, ed. Heinrich Theodor Musper et al. (Stuttgart, 1956), 1:107–8, no. 30, and pl. V; vol. 2, pl. 30; list of subscriptions at the end of both volumes.
Bellot [n. 53], 185–86.
Falk and Biedermann [n. 57], ills. 156–59 and cat. nos. 183–84.
Scheicher [n. 72], 54.
seinen ingeni die pesserung desselben." On one occasion Maximilian carefully examined the designs for his "Ehrenpforte" and voiced his displeasure. He gave critical editorial attention, not surprisingly, to Joseph Grünpeck's *Historia Friderici et Maximiliani*. In our case the altar Maximilian commissioned was not only a gift—it also served to remind a reluctant Pope Julius of the legitimacy of Maximilian's claims. The instructions given to Strigel, therefore, were probably rather specific as to theme and subject. Pope Julius must have understood Maximilian's message; certainly he chose in Rome's Basilica of S. Paolo fuori le mura, a Constantinian foundation, a very appropriate location for Maximilian's gift.

It is to be noted also that Maximilian was not the only European monarch of the sixteenth century to invoke Constantine in an effort to legitimize or enhance his rule. Henry VIII of England did so, exploiting at the same time the legend of the British birth of Constantine's mother, Helena. The idea was utilized during the reigns of

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74 Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien, Cod. 3033.
75 Strauss [n. 55], 500–502.
On Grünpeck and his *Historia*, see further:
Cat. Vienna 1959, pp. 115–17, no. 378.
Müller, *Gedechtnus* [n. 59], 58.
The tradition of a British Helena begins with Aldhelm in the seventh century and was employed by Polydore Vergil in his *Anglica Historia*; it is found in the works of William Camden, Edmund Spenser, and Richard Hakluyt. It must be rejected in its entirety. For a more detailed account, see Pohlsander, *Helena* [n. 4], 62–69.
Edward VI and Elizabeth I as well. Yet another aspect of Strigel’s four panels has, to my knowledge, never been examined: the Latin banderoles which are found at the bottom of the composition in each panel. Their content, poetic form, and grammatical features merit further examination.

These banderoles obviously are meant to help us in understanding the painting. They appear to have been part of the composition from the beginning, not added as an afterthought. They also provide convincing proof, if proof be necessary, that the four panels are part of the same altar and the same program. The banderole of the first panel partakes of the anti-Jewish bias that underlies the legend of the True Cross. In the case of the second and third panel the banderoles keep us from reversing their order and from identifying the emperor as Heraclius; they do not, unfortunately, identify the locale of the two scenes. The banderole of the second panel is syntactically a continuation of that of the first panel, while the banderole of the third panel

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78 Guy [n. 77], 372.
79 LP 2, nos. 1902, 1923, and 1931.
John Bowle, Henry VIII: A Biography (Boston, 1964), 89 and 95.
Scarisbrick, [n. 77], 97–99.
Buchner, [n. 54], 96–97.
155.
is thematically linked to that of the second panel. The banderole of the fourth panel simply reinforces the message of the painting: Constantine, at the moment of death, has found favor with God.

Each banderole is written in three lines, but in each line a diaeresis is observed in the middle, permitting us to adopt a scheme of six half-lines instead.

First panel:
1. Judas Iscarioth\(^{91}\) prodebat  
Judas Iscariot betrayed
2. Christum cruci; affigebat  
Christ to the cross; he gave him
3. perfide pacis osculum.  
treacherously a kiss of peace.
4. Iudas Simeonis natus  
Judas son of Simeon,
5. per Helenam castigatus  
when pressed by Helena,
6. crucis ostendit loculum.  
revealed the location of the cross

Second panel:
1. Qua inventa sancta cruce  
When this holy cross had been
2. Constantinus clara luce  
found
3. eam imponit humeris.  
Constantine, in broad daylight,
4. Nudo pede gradiendo\(^{92}\)  
placed it on his shoulders.
5. mortem Christi et\(^{93}\) deflendo  
Walking barefoot
6. portis propinquat humilis.  
and lamenting the death of
  
Christ,
  
he humbly approached the gates.

\(^{91}\)This is to be read as a word of three rather than four syllables.

\(^{92}\)The gerund in the ablative case has the force of a participle. See the following:


\(^{93}\)On the hiatus, see Rigg in Mantello and Rigg [n. 82], 108.
Third panel:
1. Equo sedens militari
2. fidem cepit gloriari\(^{84}\)
3. vexillo regis providi.
4. Quo potestas est destructa
5. et armati fortis lucta
6. saluti nostre\(^{85}\) perfidi.\(^{86}\)

Riding on a warhorse, he accepted the faith to glory in the standard of a prudent king. By it was destroyed and lamented the power of the armed and mighty infidel, for our salvation. (?)

Fourth panel:
1. Constantino moriente
2. defert angelus repente
3. crucis Christi signaculum,
4. ut malignos tunc terreret
5. et post ipse possideret
6. eternum tabernaculum.

When Constantine was dying an angel suddenly showed him the sign of Christ’s cross, so that he might now frighten the evil ones and later might himself possess an eternal home.

A rhyming pattern of aabccb becomes apparent, and rhyme is seen to be assonance of the last two or, sometimes, three syllables.\(^{87}\) In the second banderole a final long syllable in line 3 is rhymed with a final short syllable in line 6.\(^{88}\) Assonance is achieved more often than not by employing matching grammatical forms.

\(^{84}\)On the use of the infinitive in lieu of \textit{ad} with the gerund, see Blaise [n. 82], par. 328.

\(^{85}\)On the dative of interest, see Blaise [n. 82], par. 99.

\(^{86}\)The reference is clearly to the emperor Maxentius.

\(^{87}\)Rhyme in medieval Latin poetry may be monosyllabic, disyllabic, or trisyllabic (see Dag Norberg, \textit{Les vers latins iambiques et trocaires au moyen âge et leurs répliques rythmiques} [Stockholm, 1988], 59–63).

\(^{88}\)On the practice of rhyming long and short vowels, see Rigg in Mantello and Rigg [n. 82], 81.
But the poetic effect does not depend on rhyme only. Each banderole consists of six short lines of rhythmical rather than quantitative verse, that is, of verse based on the stress accent of prose speech rather than on syllabic quantity as in Latin poetry of the classical period. Lines 1, 2, 4, and 5 are "paroxytonic," that is, end in \( \text{-v} \), while lines 3 and 6 are "proparoxytonic," that is, end in \( \text{-vv} \). Lines 1, 2, 4, and 5 each consist of four trochaic feet, while lines 3 and 6, already different from the other lines in being "proparoxytonic," have only three accents each. The end of line 3 thus marks the midpoint of the poem; this is observed by a major syntactical division as well. To achieve the desired rhythm the poet may take a liberty with normal word order. Thus, in line 3 of the second banderole, we find mortem Christi et instead of et mortem Christi. And in the second half of the third banderole the unconventional word order certainly is a source of difficulty.

A very essential aspect of the rhythmical verse is that the number of syllables be strictly controlled. We count eight syllables in each of the six lines. Additionally, our poet aimed at having the same number of words, three, in each line. He succeeded perfectly in the first banderole but settled for minor departures in the other three.

89 Rigg in Mantello and Rigg [n. 82], 108–9.
8Lines 3 and 6 show some variation of rhythm, while lines 1, 2, 4, and 5 do not.
Elsewhere in mediæval trochaic verse one often finds a combination of two eight-syllable lines with one seven-syllable line, resulting in the so-called Victorine Sequence (after Adam of St. Victor, twelfth century):
Norberg, *Introduction* [this n.], 173.
Norberg, *Les vers latins* [n. 87], 111–12.
Rigg in Mantello and Rigg [n. 82], 108.
On "imitation du nombre de mots," see Norberg, *Introduction* [n. 91], 131–33.
The pattern for the four banderoles thus is the following:

1. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  a  8p (8 syllables, paroxytonic)
2. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  a  8p
3. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  b  8pp (8 syllables, proparoxytonic)
or \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\] (third banderole)
or \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\] (fourth banderole)
4. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  c  8p
5. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  c  8p
6. \[\text{-v-v-v-v}\]  b  8p

The same kind of verse can be found elsewhere in Strigel's work: in the banderole of a painting of the Crucifixion, also in the National Gallery in Prague. 93

The text of the banderole reads as follows:

1. En suavis cruci datur, Behold, the dear man is given to the cross,

93 Inv. no. DO 2102; on loan from the chapel of Zákup (Reichstadt) Castle near Česká Lípa in northern Bohemia.


Pešina, Alt-deutsche Meister or German Painting [n. 2], nos. 38–40.

Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 53, color pl.; 54; and 99, no. 42, with earlier literature.

Rettich, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 39.


Marie Kotrbová in Národní Galerie v Praze, Sbírka starého evropského umění—Sbírka starého českého umění (Prague, 1984), 194–95.

Sbírky Národní Galerie v Praze, Šternberský Palác, Staré evropské umění (Prague, 1988), 124 and 134, no. 319.
2. grossis clavis perforatur
3. tunc manibus et pedibus.
4. Quem sinister exprobavit
5. larro dexter adoravit.
6. Regnantur celi sedibus.

he is pierced by cruel nails,
both in his hands and in his
feet.
The robber on the left
reproached him,
but the one on the right
reverenced him.
They are judged in the abodes
of heaven.

And again in the banderoles of three frescoes in the Church of
St. Martin in Memmingen. The text of the three banderoles reads as
follows:

The Sacrifice of Isaac:
1. Quia, Abraham, fecisti
2. hanc rem et non pepercisti
3. puerum unigenito,
4. semen tuum sicut stelle
5. secundum divinum velle
6. multiplicatur merito.

Abraham, since you have done
this thing and have not saved
your only son,
your seed, like the stars,
according to the divine will,
will be multiplied, as you deserve.

These frescoes are among those discovered only in 1963 in the “Zang-
meisterkapelle” of the church. They are the Sacrifice of Isaac (at the west end
of the vault), the Visitation, and St. Eberhard Healing the Sick (both on the
south wall, flanking the window). They can be dated to ca. 1510 and were
commissioned by one Eberhard Zangmeister, said to be the wealthiest citi-
gen of Memmingen at the time, and his wife Elisabeth. See the following:
Gertrud Otto, “Die freigelegten Fresken in der Zangmeisterkapelle der
Hilde Miedel, “Die Inschriften in der Zangmeisterkapelle,” Memminger
Geschichtsblätter (1963), 21–24.
Otto, Bernhard Strigel [n. 2], 45–46; 97, nos. 35a–b; and ill. 92a–b.
Bayer, Memmingen [n. 42], 66–67.
Evang.-luth. Stadtpfarramt St. Martin, Memmingen, St. Martin und
Kinderlehrkirche, Memmingen (Memmingen, 1997), 45–47.
Altar Panels by Bernhard Strigel

The Visitation:
1. Ut salventur Loth et nate
2. uxor eius deo grate
3. iubentur montem scandere,
4. sic per montes salutavit
5. Maria cognatam pavit
6. valens virtutes pandere.

So that they might be saved,
Lot and his daughters
and his wife, pleasing in God's
sight,
were told to climb a mountain,
so Mary crossed the mountains
to visit
her kinswoman and was afraid
to display ??

St. Eberhard:
1. Eberhardus hic precellit
2. demones quos nunc expellit
3. cum cruce fortitudinis.
4. Dei verba predicavit,
5. surdos cecosque sanavit.
6. En signa sanctitudinis.

Eberhard here overcomes
the demons, whom he now
expels
by the strength of the cross.
He preached the words of
God
and healed the deaf and the
blind.
Behold the signs of holiness.

The banderoles in these paintings, whoever may have composed
them, demonstrate a good command of Latin. It would be interesting
to know who supplied them. One may imagine that someone at
Maximilian's court wrote the text for the altar of the Holy Cross; the
altar of the Crucifixion is of unknown provenience, leaving us without
a clue; the banderoles of the frescoes in Memmingen presumably were
written locally.

In quite a few more of Strigel's paintings, banderoles supplement
the narrative of the painting itself, and a fair number of them are written
in Latin verse. Did someone in Strigel's shop perhaps specialize in
writing these banderoles? An examination of all the Latin banderoles
in Strigel's paintings could, perhaps, provide valuable insights, but this
is not within the scope of this article.
## Abbreviations

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Amm. Marc.</td>
<td>Ammianus Marcellinus</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIHR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCO</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Paris and Louvain, 1903 ff.</td>
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<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1866 ff.</td>
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<td>DMG</td>
<td>Deutsche Malerei der Gotik</td>
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<td>Epist.</td>
<td>Epistulae</td>
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<td>Hist. Eccl.</td>
<td>Historia Ecclesiastica</td>
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<td>JbAC</td>
<td>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</td>
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<td>MGH, AA</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi, Hannover, 1877 ff.</td>
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<td>Münchner Jb. d. bild. Kunst</td>
<td>Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst</td>
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<td>Pan. Lat.</td>
<td><em>Panegyrici Latini</em></td>
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<td>REB</td>
<td><em>Revue des études byzantines</em></td>
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<td>Wiener Jb. f. Kunstgesch.</td>
<td><em>Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte</em></td>
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“Goodly Woods”:
Irish Forests, Georgic Trees
in Books 1 and 4 of
Edmund Spenser’s *Færie Queene*

Thomas Herron
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Whilst vital sapp did make me spring,
And leaf and bough did flourish brave,
I then was dumb and could not sing,
No had the voice which now I have:
But when the axe my life did end,
The Muses nine this voice did send.

—Verses upon the earl of Cork’s lute,
attributed (ca. 1633) to Edmund Spenser

By one estimate, Edmund Spenser’s Irish lands would be
worth £10,000,000 today, certainly enough money to write
home about—which is precisely what Spenser did. Spenser
wrote, officiated, and farmed as the queen’s troubled poet in Ireland.
He hoped to convert one corner of the recently ravaged province of

*C. Calculated by John Bradley in “Anglicization and Spenser,” a paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association’s Goodly Worlds: Places, Topoi, and Global Riches conference in Big Sky, Montana, 3–7 June 1998. Portions of this essay were first presented as “‘Horrid Munster’: Planting Adventure in Book 1 of The Færie Queene” at the same conference.*
Munster into a fruitful, newly ordered land. Despite his reservations about the vanities and corruptions of the London and Dublin govern­
ments, “Bryttane['s] Orpheus” looked to the English crown for martial and civic support, no more so than when under increasing military threat throughout the 1590s. At least in theory, the crown provided a

2 Compare Willy Maley’s argument that the Cambridge circle of intel­

3 From line four of the “Commendatory Verse” by R. S., published along with The Fcerie Queene in 1590. In Edmund Spenser, The Fcerie Queene, ed. A. C. Hamilton (New York: Longman, 1977), 739. All quotations from The Fcerie Queene herein are taken from this edition.

Recent criticism has deeply complicated the question as to whether or not Spenser was (to quote Karl Marx) Elizabeth’s “arse-kissing poet.” As Andrew Hadfield points out, the theoretical underpinnings of Spenser’s politi­
cal tract A View of the Present State of Ireland (1596) demonstrate a tension between a Jean Bodinesque reliance on absolute monarchical authority versus a Machiavellian flirtation with commonwealth ideals, a political querying enabled by Spenser’s far remove from London’s central authority and occa­sional disdain for it (Andrew Hadfield, Edmund Spenser’s Irish Experience [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], 51–84). One could, nonetheless, argue that while the thrifty “New English” (or Protestant newcomer, like Spenser) landowner tried to maximize profit on his own lands, negotiated with the (often absent) powers—that-be over policies and taxes, and dreamed of a commonwealth, he still relied on the English monarch as figurative sun-Jove, whose model of hierarchy and military strength helped ward off rebellion. Accordingly, Spenser’s criticism of government policy in his A View of the Present State of Ireland alternates with a promotion of increased military spending from the crown and even a willingness to entertain less profitable forms of husbandry (such as corn instead of pasture in Munster) for the sake of social order. Spenser’s concern in the 1580s and especially the ’90s was
pattern for harmonious, godly government that guided Spenser's highly personal struggle to rescue the land and culture around him from its own—and his own—"degenerative" tendencies. Inspired by Elizabeth, Spenser's epic consistently demonstrates an ethos of empire-building heroic labor with its roots in the Irish soil: a "georgic spirit." From the beginning of his epic Spenser's political and moral purpose was to rescue the Irish land from industrial neglect and redeem the Christian soul through a combined utilitarian, moral, political, and poetic struggle. Like the Scottish poet Gavin Douglas, whose translation of the Aeneid (in 1513) first introduced the Georgics into English poetry, Spenser also found along England's "celtic fringe" opportunities to enlarge and perfect his craft. This craft, in georgic fashion, was analogous to the mercantile ordering and exploitation of the Irish countryside, a process of turning chaotic energy into labor and land into the poetic-utilitarian

for controlling the restive polity as much as for making a quick return on his investment. In any case, this article will argue that his labor provided the foundation for an imperial ideology, a "georgic spirit," which sought to build an anglicized, hierarchical Protestant society out of the so-called "wasteland" of a chronically rebellious nation, be it kingly landlord, lord deputy, or queen at that revived nation's head.


landscape exemplified by the tree catalog in Book 1.1 of *The Faerie Queene*.

The opening invocation to Virgil’s *Georgics* combines the artifice of poetic learning with practical action in a complex “web of progress and cultural syncretism.” The invocation calls on gods, mythological characters, and the earth’s various riches for inspiration and success in writing the poem, before finally appealing to Octavian, the future Caesar Augustus, to “come forward” and help “smooth [the] path.” An equally complex web of earthly riches and myth is found in the tree catalog which soon follows Spenser’s initial invocation to Elizabeth, the Fairy Queen, whom he asks to “sharpen [his] dull tong” and shed light on his poetic enterprise (1.proem.2.9).

Both poets, after all, had similar enterprises ahead of them. Virgil wrote from Mantua, finishing the poem in 29 B.C. in the fearful hope that the land riven by civil war could be peacefully governed again under Augustus. Spenser wrote from Munster in the hope that Elizabeth’s rule might bring peace to a land recently wracked by rebellion. Both poets were fond of the analogy, found in the *Georgics* 2.541-42, of

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7 I use *landscape* in the early modern sense noted by Simon Schama: “The word . . . entered the English language . . . as a Dutch import at the end of the sixteenth century. And *landschap*, like its Germanic root, *Landschaft*, signified a unit of human occupation, indeed a jurisdiction, as much as anything that might be a pleasing object of depiction” (Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* [London: HarperCollins, 1995], 10).


10 This image is intriguingly complicated by an *OED* entry, from 1592, which notes that the term *tong* was applied to the head of a plough. If Spenser intends such a pun, it can claim ancestry in *Georgics* Book 1. There, Virgil tells us, in our imperfect world
the pen performing the plough’s labor (Latin *versus* could mean “verse” or “furrow”). Both poets wrote with this metaphor in mind, as their poems helped to rebuild a recently shaken empire. In the proem to Book 3, Virgil imagines himself as master of ceremonies

\[
\ldots \text{pater ipse colendi} \\
\text{haud facilis esse viam voluit, primusque per artem} \\
\text{movit agros curis acuems mortalia corda,} \\
\text{nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.} \\
(1.121-24)
\]

[Jove] willed that the path of tillage be not smooth,  
And first ordained that skill should cultivate  
The land, by care sharpening the wits of mortals,  
Nor let his kingdom laze in torpid sloth.  
(Wilkinson 60)

The adverse world “sharpens” (*acuems*) the wits of man thanks in part to the will (*voluit*) of Jove himself; this image is soon echoed when ploughmen use their spare time in winter to “beat sharp [literally, “into teeth”] the blunted ploughshare point” (“arator / vomeris obtunsi dentem”) (*Georgics* 1.261-62; Wilkinson 65). Once combined into one image, that of “sharpening the plough” as if it were the “wits” or “tongue” of the poet, these passages become central to an overarching idea in *The Fittle Queene*: the ploughman-poet owes his sharpened “tongue” to the monarch, but with a price: the Jovian, fallen world given to him is full of adversity and itself challenges him to individually sharpen his tongue/pen/plough in opposition to it. The monarch gives the poet an initial opportunity and continuing guidance in his work; without adverse labor, however, wit cannot hone itself, nor the poet properly glorify his own effort.

Along similar lines, Andrew V. Ettin discusses in depth the influence of the ending of Virgil’s poem (4.559-66) on Spenser’s proem to Book 1, arguing that Spenser’s invocation “deepen[s] Vergil’s contrasts, emphasizing both the poet’s humble preparations and the ruler’s magnificence.” Ettin then concentrates his analysis primarily on Book 6 of *The Fittle Queene* (Andrew V. Ettin, “The Georgics in *The Fittle Queene*,” *Spenser Studies* 3 [1982]: 59, 57-71).

11Spenser first uses it in *The Fittle Queene* to conclude the 1590 edition of Book 3.
leading a procession of the muses not to Rome, but to his native Mantua, and building there a temple to Caesar. The passage not only commemorates Octavian’s triple victory at Illyricum, Actium, and Alexandria, but also the poet’s own musical art, since the temple is by analogy that of his own poetry. Spenser (who in his earlier Shepheardes Calender envisions a similar temple built to Elizabeth, with his alter-ego, the poet Colin Clout, ascending towards it) builds his “temple,” The Faerie Queene, out of poetic materials found partly near Kilcolman, Co. Cork, his Munster home by the late 1580s.

After a Jovian storm drives our heroes into the dark wood, the poet takes pains to catalog the trees obscuring Una and Red Cross Knight’s progress through the world:

The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop Elme, the Poplar neuer dry,
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,
The Aspine good for staues, the Cypresse funerall.

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours,
And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth still,
The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,
The Eugh obedient to the benders will,

For this interpretation, see Wilkinson’s “Introduction” to his translation of the Georgics, 25.


For an analysis of the formal nature of The Faerie Queene as a “temple,” see Angus Fletcher, The Prophetic Moment (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 14–23. See also his chapter “The Vergilian Matrix,” 76–90, which (unlike my conclusion here) finds Spenser’s “geopolitical questing” in Book 2 of The Faerie Queene, rather than Book 1 (Fletcher, 79).
September.

vrest, and through great plenty was fallen into great pernici. This poete I
know, to have bene much vied of the author, and to tuche like efte, as syrte
Natifus spake it.

October.

Ægloga decima.

ARGUMENT.

IN Cudde is set out the perfeete paterue of a Poete, whois finding no
maintenaunce of his Rate and Studie, compleyneth of the contempe of
Poetrie, and the causes thereof: Specially baying bene in all ages, and even
amongst the most barbarous aways of singular accounts & houres, being
indeed so worthy and commendable an arte: or rather no arte, but a divine
gift and heavenly instinet not to be gotten by labore and learning, but a-
dorned with both: and poured into the wite by a certaine simonype, and ce-
lestiall inspiration, as the Author bencye of els where at large discoursed,
in his books called the English Poete. Which books being lately come to
my hands, I mynde also by Gods grace upon further advisement to publish.

Pierce. Cudde.

Cudde, soe shame bold vp thy heaue head,
And let vs cast with what delight to chace

K.4.

"October" woodcut in The Shepheardes Calender
The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill,
The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful Oliue, and the Platane round,
The caruer Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound.

(1.1.8-9)

Spenser carves an identifiable catalog out of the intractable, labyrinthine forest, Dante's *selva oscura* which is “an emblem of man's life within society.” Spenser's tree catalog demonstrates the harmonizing effect of the poet's verse in this chaotic society: it echoes the workings of an organizing principle in nature traditionally manifest in such poetic catalogs and in opposition to the Lucretian mutability surrounding George and Red Cross Knight. This organizing principle in the text reflects the firm hierarchy of Gloriana's beneficent rule, as the trees are figuratively dragged one by one into imperial scrutiny and named, just as it demonstrates the poet's own ability to imperfectly figure forth new worlds.

According to Richard Helgerson, Spenser's authoritarian power of imagination creates an idealized faerieland: “Like a king, the Spenserian mythopoeic artist creates another nature, gathers the Ganges, the Tagus, and the Thames in a single imagined space as easily as he gathers their names in a single sentence.” Spenser's sentences display a “cultural syncretism” that intertwines mythical, ritual, and practical uses for the trees into a cosmic order hoped for on earth. To write the faerie landscape is a poetic-imperial activity that reflects past, present, and future change in that landscape. Such change can be for the worse (the duplicitous maple of the catalog, for example, foreshadows Duessa's “wrizled skin as rough, as maple rind” [1.8.47.8]), but the

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virtuoso artificiality of the poet's imaginative effort reflects a royal, spiritualized order underlying nature and guiding the poet's labor. In the "Laurell" especially, "meed of mightie Conquerours," the poet magnifies his own poetic laurels. The catalog suggests, in short, a conquering expansion across the landscape by the planter-poet.

Virgil guides Dante through a similar dark forest, and Virgil's tree catalog in the Georgics 2.343–53 guides Spenser's art;\(^{18}\) the Georgics helps provide the utilitarian–imperial direction of Spenser's thought. Though not as directly inspirational as the arboreal list in Chaucer's Parliament of Fowls (176–82), which—besides Spenser's translation of the pseudo-Virgilian Culex—Marillene Allen calls the "only" direct source, it still should be considered as primary. It also describes the "fruitful Oliue,"\(^ {19} \) the pine for ships, and the yew for bows; the vine-propping elm is mentioned, moreover, eighty lines previously (2.262). Compare with Chaucer's Parliament, which is shorter than Virgil's list but clearly dictates Spenser's word choice in three cases (Chaucer's "byldere ok" becomes Spenser's "builder Oake"; "saylynge fyr," the

18 Critics seem to have ignored this source. Jeffrey Knapp cites it, but only to argue (opposite my own point) that "the trees are not used, only admired; or rather, the only use to which they are put represents a devolution even from georgic poetry" (Jeffrey Knapp, "Error as a Means of Empire in The Faerie Queene 1," ELH 54.4 [Winter 1987]: 804, 801–34). I can't find it glossed in either Hamilton's edition of The Faerie Queene or in Thomas P. Roche's The Faerie Queene (New York: Penguin, 1978); nor does Marillene Allen mention it in her entry "trees" in The Spenser Encyclopedia, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 697–98. The Variorum cites one brief connection by John Upton, wherein he cites Georgics 2.448 ("Iturœs taxi torquentur in arcus"; "yews are bent for Iturœan bows," trans. Wilkinson 91) as the source for 1.1.9.4 (Frederick Morgan Padelford, ed., The Faerie Queene: Book One. The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932], 181).

19 Virgil stresses the fruitfulness of the "plump" olive while also conventionally calling it the "pride of Peace": "hoc pinguem et placitam Paci nutritor olivam" (2.425; trans. Wilkinson, 90). Compare Spenser's Muiopotmos, the mock-Virgilian epic that praises the "fruitfull Olyve tree, with berries spredd, / That all the Gods admir'd" (326–27).
"sayling Pine"; "asp for shaftes," the "Birch for shaftes"); its matching uses of trees with Spenser's catalog, however, occurs only three times (Chaucer's oak, cypress, and yew perform the same functions as do Spenser's): fewer matches than between Spenser's catalog and the Georgics (four, if one includes the "vine-prop Elme"). This count also outdoes the Culex connection, whose pine, cypress, and poplar have identical uses with those in The Faerie Queene.

Spenser also borrowed to a lesser extent from the Sibyl's grove in the Aeneid (6.176–82); here, Virgil catalogs trees among the "antiquam silvam" which compose a funeral pyre at the burial of Misenus, a quasi-sacrificial rite that helps enable Aeneas' journey to the underworld. Upon Aeneas' arrival, his father tells him of his future homeland won by war and built by industry. Aeneas' last-born son, Silvius, will be nobly raised in forests and his descendants will wear oak leaves on their rugged brows, as (before the arrival of Romulus permanently establishes Rome) they found town after town, "Pometii, Fort Inuus, Bola, Cora— / Names to be heard for places nameless now" (6.756+). Towns are founded then disappear but nonetheless prophetically point towards an ongoing civilizing project. In Spenser's tree catalog the images reminiscent of destructive warfare (the yew bow, the arrow shaft) grow side by side with the peaceful (the olive). Some (like the "builder Oake,") connote both the commercial value of domestic industry and naval warfare. If we read the trees as representative of an Irish world of fallen forests and soldiers, like Virgil's Misenus, who provide a vision of an empire to come—a Munster plantation—then we can conclude that warfare and personal sacrifice must exist side-by-side with industry, as both struggle to carve a more

20 Translated by Spenser as Virgil's Gnat. For its tree catalog, see Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, ed. Oram et al., 293–326, lines 190–224. See also Book 10.86–105 of Ovid's Metamorphoses for a catalog of trees that respond to the poet Orpheus' song.

21 Hamilton, ed., The Faerie Queene, 32n.

peaceful, more permanent civilization out of the “wilderness” of an inferior society. Virgil’s *Georgics*, as a companion source to the *Aeneid*, demonstrates how the still-rugged Romans continued to plow towards this end.

Virgil’s focus in the *Georgics* is mythologically inventive and geographically scattered, but he also describes his native Mantua in detail (2.198–99), and the forests, fields, streams, and vines of Italy famously gain the greatest praise in his poem (2.136–76). Spenser’s tree catalog also integrates Irish realities into his faerie vision of rugged imperial harmony. Victor I. Scherb has noted how worldly catalogs in medieval English dramas (such as the *Castle of Perseverance*) could often signify covetousness in a ruler who proudly lords over his corner of the world. Spenser’s tree catalog demonstrates a similar drive to control worldly property in his own neighborhood, although with less medieval moral opprobrium and more of a renaissance poet’s delight in “wrapping” himself in knowledge of the natural world, a delight Sir Philip Sidney

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23 Compare Sir John Davies’s description of King James’s circuit court’s entry into Ulster, “where the wild inhabitants wondered as much to see the King’s Deputy as the ghosts in Virgil wondered to see Aeneas alive in hell.” In discussing this quotation (taken from Margaret MacCurtain), Maley stresses the ghostliness of the Lord Deputy’s authority in Ireland as symbolic of a similar “absent centre” regarding the queen’s authority in *The Faerie Queene* (Maley, *Salvaging Spenser*, 116–17). In this particular case, at least, I would instead stress Aeneas-Mountjoy’s very real accomplishments in promulgating the future English empire in Ireland, as cleverly foreshadowed by this passage and the tree catalog from *The Faerie Queene*. As MacCurtain notes, with the entry of the circuit court into Ulster “the shift in emphasis from settlement to colonization [i.e., in the form of the Ulster Plantation] took place” (Margaret MacCurtain, “The Roots of Irish Nationalism,” in *The Celtic Consciousness*, ed. Robert O’Driscol [New York: George Braziller, 1981], 377, 371–82).

identifies as one of the key pleasures of the georgic mode of writing. Spenser, nonetheless, escapes from Sidney’s censure of those who remain inertly content in this georgic mode, since he also uses the georgic spirit to figure forth new “golden” worlds in his poetry; in so doing, however, he alludes more significantly to that natural world of his adopted landscape in Book 1 than critics have heretofore seen.

When one reads *The Faerie Queene* with Irish politics in mind, it becomes increasingly difficult to disassociate Spenser’s idealized pastoral visions—to choose one type of landscape involved—from the tamed Irish landscape ideally under New English control. Plantation

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27 Critics such as Robert Stillman, Julia Lupton, and Joanne Woolway have suggestively discussed Spenser’s georgic themes in relation to Ireland and *The Faerie Queene*, but my main contention is that they underplay the importance of Virgil’s *Georgics* specifically, and the “georgic spirit” generally, especially in relation to the supposedly less-politically oriented books 1–3 of *The Faerie Queene*. See Robert Stillman, “Spenserian Autonomy and the Trial of New Historicism: Book Six of *The Faerie Queene*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 22.3 (Fall 1992): 299–314; Julia Reinhardt Lupton, “Mapping Mutability: or, Spenser’s Irish Plot,” in *Representing Ireland*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 93–115; Joanne Woolway, “Spenser and the Culture of Place” (paper presented as guest lecturer at the University of Oslo, 17 April 1996, and circulated over the internet). Critical attention is gradually turning towards Irish signifiers in Book 1. For an insightful discussion of Ireland’s significance to the “salvage nation” episode of 1.6, see Hadfield, *Spenser’s Irish Experience*, 130–34.
28 In the terminology of the day, the “New English” were the waves of predominantly Protestant settlers, including Spenser, who arrived in the latter half of the sixteenth century to take advantage of ongoing plantation
creation in Munster encouraged Spenser’s Virgilian, poetic justification of a warfaring destruction for the sake of the nationalistic, godly (i.e., Protestant) reconstruction of society. The plantation was first enabled by the highly destructive Desmond rebellion (1579–83), which left desolate much of southwest Munster. The resulting empty land and fallow growth allowed increased surveying and whet the appetite of the incoming colonists.29 (This process would repeat itself when Spenser’s aptly named first son, Sylvanus, would eventually inherit Kilcolman, but only after the plantation’s violent inception, destruction [in 1598], and reconstitution.)30

Spenser’s poetry, accordingly, shows a fondness for idyllic Irish forests around Kilcolman, like those in the Mutability Cantos that Cynthia once ruled, hunted, and played in (7.6.38). But he also saw the wisdom of cutting them down, so as to creatively channel destruction and build a more civilized political landscape. Once Diana’s world had degenerated, thanks to Mutability, it became a place that harbored “Wolves and Thieves” (7.6.55.8), hostile “wood-kernes,” and other Irish rebels.31 These forests were subsequently cleared for security reasons as well as for profit. One group of prospective Munster planters, in a 1583 requisition for land there, declared that “nothing was ‘more fitting to bridle that idle and filching people than the cutting down of their projects that favored their ethnic group. They often conflicted with the so-called “mere” or “wild” Irish, who were the native Irish-speaking descendants of those who ruled Ireland before the Anglo-Norman conquest of the country in the twelfth century. Caught between the two factions were the “Old English,” who were the descendents of the Anglo-Norman families, many of whom from the time of the conquest had married into Irish families, adopted Irish customs, and thereby “degenerated” in the minds of successive English administrations.

29 Compare Maley, “Planting a New Culture beyond the Pale,” chap. 3 of Salvaging Spenser.


"Goodly Woods": Georgic Trees in The Faerie Queene

woods, which are their chiefest source of strength." Soon after, in 1584, the first survey of the rebellious Earl of Desmond's confiscated lands (which formed the basis of the Munster plantation) made special note of corn production and prices and also cataloged "the minerals available, timber and stock.

Even prior to the Munster plantation, and roughly contemporary with the initial date of composition of The Faerie Queene, Spenser briefly owned (in December 1580) well-timbered lands at Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. A fiant from 1566 reveals that these lands provided "boards, timber," and "laths"; and a letter from a successive owner (the powerful Sir Henry Wallop) in 1586 describes the "greate store of Shipp planks and Shipp tymber, Pipe Boards and Barrell boords, and all other kynds of cloven tymber" to be found in the area. Spenser logically would have known the value of Irish timber when he began his epic in the 1580s, a situation confirmed by his later Irish experience.

 Plenty of forest remained in Ireland at the time. Unlike long-denuded England, one-eighth of Ireland was forest-covered in 1600 (as opposed to 1/50 ca. 1800), most of it in Ulster and West Munster. Much of Spenser's grant of 3,000 acres at Kilcolman contained forest land, some of it among the hills but some in the "champaign country" and thus readily extracted. An idealization of Ireland's timber potential

32 MacCarthy-Morrogh, 23.
33 MacCarthy-Morrogh, 5.
34 Philip Herbert Hore, History of the Town and County of Wexford (London, 1911), 6:370, 408, 411.
under sovereign rule is found in Spenser's political tract *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596). Says Irenius, describing the lands around the Pale,

> And sure it is yet a most beautifull and sweet countrey as any is under heaven, being . . . adorned with goodly woods even fit for building of houses and ships, so commodiously, as that if some Princes in the world had them, they would soon hope to be lords of all the seas, and ere long of all the world. 37

The description not only follows contemporary convention of describing Ireland in such “commodious” terms for the delectation of prospective planters, but it also brings Spenser's own wooded Munster to mind, as well as *The Faerie Queene* catalog. 38 Spenser's catalog describes exotic trees, like the maple, which never took root in Ireland until the eighteenth century, 39 and the olive, which won't grow there; not to mention the absurdity (if potential popularity) of propping up grapes in Ireland. Even the “sayling pine,” used for masts, was (by 1611) to come out of Scotland, not Ireland. 40 Nonetheless, Ireland's “goodly woods even fit for building of houses and ships” in the *View* may help explain the catalog's “builder Oake.” After 1600, as the Irish timber export industry grew rapidly (thanks to the seeds of industry planted earlier), many of the hulls of England's ships were built out of Irish oak; more would have been “if the English government had been able to carry out its intentions,” which were often frustrated by political

38Pauline Henley first mentions how “the wonderful luxuriance of growth in the south-west of Ireland could have suggested [the tree catalog] description to Spenser.” In her mind, though, the connection remains minor, a “little picture taken from Irish scenery” (Pauline Henley, in *Spenser in Ireland* [Cork: Cork University Press, 1928], 128).
39McCracken, 136.
40McCracken, 65.
unrest or local demands. Earlier, Irish oak was used in widespread fashion for building half-timbered Tudor houses, especially in English-held Irish towns. The presence of such houses on the Irish landscape was a potent symbol of the English civility envisioned by the View.

A further comparison with Spenser's sources, moreover, reveals two usages unique to Spenser, both of which shed new light on the material reality intended by his catalog: the "Aspine good for staues" and the "Sallow for the mill." The "Sallow for the mill" has an Irish plantation resonance. A. C. Hamilton suggests that sallow, which E. K. in *The Shepheardes Calender* glosses as "a kind of woodde like Wyllow, fit to wreath and bynde," may have been used for making mill wheels. Virgil's *Georgics*, which lists fences and osiers as appropriate uses for the willow (2.440+), supports this guess by stressing the wood's pliable nature. One could, accordingly, find such a use in an Irish landscape: mills were common along the Blackwater River, which coursed south of Spenser's estate and served as the area's main drainage route to the sea. Youghal alone, lying at the end of the Blackwater, had four water mills in operation in its burgesses by the late thirteenth century.

Nonetheless, this explanation for "Sallow for the mill" is further complicated by Hamilton's citation of the blacksmith Care passage in *The Faerie Queene* Book 4 (5.32-46) (ca. 1596) as supporting evidence. Hamilton notes that sallow grows by stagnant water near Care's smithy (5.33.4-5). The poet may not, however, be imagining the sallow as material for mill wheels alone (while the water may bring mill use to mind, certainly its stagnant nature does not), but also (or instead) as fuel for an *iron* "mill," work not unrelated to the blacksmith Care's

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41 McCracken, 63.
42 McCracken, 73-79.
manufacture of iron wedges (5.35.8). The word *mill* in the sixteenth century could connote any industrial process, a smithy included (*OED*). The *OED* also lists examples of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century burning of sallow, which made especially good charcoal. While we know nothing of the blacksmith's fuel of choice, the poem subtly hints at the sallow's use as such; the sallow trees that "grew in ranke" by the blacksmith's stream echo the clang of the hammers "beating ranke" in the same stanza (33.5-7). The repetition of "ranke" indicates a phonetic absorption of the trees by the blacksmith's cacophonous industry; perhaps these "few" remaining sallow trees (in "ranke" as if planted for the purpose?) provide the blacksmith with the fuel to keep his hammers banging.

Spenser strengthens the Irish relevance of the episode in his physical depiction of Care, who has "hoarie shagged heare," a "Full blacke and griesly" face, ragged clothes, and "hollow eyes and rawbone cheekees forespent, / As if he had in prison long bene pent" (4.5.34). A Willy Horton to the edgy, racist planter, Care resembles the rude, glibbed, starving, villainous Irish churl that Spenser so graphically describes in the *View* and elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*. Pauline Henley notes a possible source for Care's forge in the early Irish *Book of Munster*. The Irish word *ceir* (pronounced "care") meant a "metal-smith" (if not a blacksmith) in medieval literature; even the word *griesly* has Irish resonances: Spenser the multilingual poet may be punning on Irish *gris*, "fire," as well as "pimple" due to heat inflammation.


"Henley, *Spenser in Ireland*, 125.

(appropriate enough for a blacksmith’s face “Besmeard with smoke” [4.5.34-7]), and/or the related verb griosaigh (pron. “greasy”), to “excite, stir, provoke, kindle, inflame.” No wonder Care’s annoyance weakens our hero. Like drums in the forest or an Irish hubbub, his continual noise and red-hot prodding keep the jealous Scudamore fitfully awake and unable to rest, as Scudamour in a simile is reduced to a “heauie lumpe of lead” (4.5.45.6). In Spenser’s market economy of moral virtues, Care’s abuse of labor produces the basest material, lead, from the most heroic material, Scudamour (whose name, derived from French écu and d’amour, connotes a “shield of love”).

On the other hand, lead had a supreme value in early modern Ireland, since its import was forbidden to the Irish for fear of arms manufacture. In a famous episode, Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, the rumored grandson of a Dundalk blacksmith, convinced William Cecil to let him import lead under the pretext of building an English-style country manor at Dungannon, following his elopement with Mabel Bagenal in 1591. After openly rebelling in 1594 he had his smithies melt the lead into bullets, which he used to rake his former brother-in-law Henry Bagenal’s troops (killing Bagenal himself) at

48For historical uses of the Irish words, see the Dictionary of the Irish Language (DIL) as well as Edward O’Reilly, Irish–English Dictionary (Dublin, 1817). Compare with the “griesly foster” chasing Florimell (p.71.2). His lust, correspondent with the symbolism inherent in the smithy’s flames, may refer to the chaotic generative power found within his habitat, the (Irishesque) forest.

49Hamilton, ed., The Faerie Queene 402n.

50Hugh O’Neill’s father, Feardocha, or Matthew, was widely thought to be the illegitimate son of a blacksmith’s family (Ciaran Brady, Shane O’Neill [Dublin: Historical Association of Ireland, 1996], 22). Hugh O’Neill was hence dubbed a “base Bastard of Ulster, blown out of a Smithes forge” in New English propaganda during the Nine Years’ War (the anonymous The Supplication of the blood of the English most lamentably murdered in Ireland, Cryeng out of the yearth for revenge [1598], ed. Willy Maley, Analecta Hibernica 36 [1995], 3–77, esp. 20, 75).
the Battle of the Yellow Ford in 1598. As if mocking the principle behind Spenser’s “builder Oake,” O’Neill successfully turned an emblem of English civility in the Ulster “wilderness” into a violent means of rebellion. Similarly, Scudamour has had his identity per- 
versely abused as he is figuratively reduced from a protective power (a hero’s shield with the strength of chivalric love behind it) into an illicit, dangerous metal thanks to the efforts of a manic blacksmith who resembles an Irishman (perhaps an allegorical echo of O’Neill, who would eventually instigate the ruin of the Munster plantation during the Nine Years’ War, ca. 1594–1603).

Scudamour must therefore have care that his own future labors aren’t reduced to fruitless, violent ends thanks to the vice of jealousy; just as the poet must be careful his own labor isn’t wasted, or even worse, perverted. Spenser’s earlier, repeated pun on “ranke” jars the senses not only in its loud sound and blatant rhyme with “stanke,” but in its plodding repetition: the poet’s belabored pun is itself “ranke” and reflects the blacksmith’s destructive labor. The poem plods because the labor it describes plods, as the blacksmith follows the poet’s advice laid out in his catalog, to bring the sallow to the mill, but in a never-ending, spiralling circle of diminished returns: he “to small purpose yron wedges made” (4.5.35.8).

One can, in fact, imagine little other use for Care’s wedges except to cut down more trees. As Spenser writes earlier in his translation of Du Bellay, lamenting the fall of the “faire Dodonian tree” associated with Rome at its “stately” height of power, “When barbarous villaines

51Richard Berleth, *The Twilight Lords: An Irish Chronicle* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), 251. Compare this episode with the fate of a Munster lead mine described by Gerard Boate. Its first use, ca. 1605, was by the Lord President of Munster, the earl of Thomond, to roof his house at Bunratty. It was subsequently destroyed by Irish rebels in the 1640s (Gerard Boate, *Ireland’s Naturall History* [1625]. *A Collection of Tracts and Treatises Illustrative of the Naturall History, Antiquities, and the Political and Social State of Ireland, At Various Periods Prior to the Present Century* (Dublin: Alex. Thom & Sons, 1860), 111-148, esp. 115-17.
in disordred heape, / Outraged the honour of these noble bowes. / I hearde the tronke to grone under the wedge. Care’s labor will be self-defeating once his “few” remaining sallows have been cut down by his wedges and consumed by his jealous fire. The blacksmith Care, like the Irish and O’Neill, are the later reincarnations of the “barbarous villaines” who spite themselves by uselessly chopping down the Dodonian tree of civil empire in Ulster and Munster, which Spenser must painstakingly try to rebuild . . . beginning, in Book 1, with a catalog that includes proper uses for trees.

If not by smithies, many of the trees of Ireland were devoured by iron mills, which were another significant part of the plantation economy. The first iron mill in Ireland was built in Enniscoorthy in North Wexford in 1560, and as the practice grew in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Munster saw more than its fair share of them, including one at Dingle (in 1600) in Co. Kerry, and Minehead (in 1591) and Tallow (in 1588) in Co. Waterford. The most mills in any one county, twenty-two, were built in Co. Cork, most in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Iron mills tended to operate in places with sufficient timber fuel, and these were often locales with difficult access to transport routes, as in the hilly ravines of West Munster (a landscape reflected, perhaps, by Care’s smithy, located “Vnder a steepe hilles side” [4.5.33.1]). Mills simply burned the timber on the


53 The OED records frequent use of the term iron mill in the sixteenth century, including one from William Cecil in 1559. Gerard Boate refers to “All the Mills, Melting-houses, Refining-houses, and other necessary Work-houses” which stand near the lead and silver mine in County Tipperary, Munster (Boate, 117). On iron mills in Ireland generally and Munster particularly, see McCracken, 46, 90–96.
raw iron ore and smelted pig iron were easier to transport in and out of the ravines than the trees themselves. Otherwise,

From the [Munster] woods a continuous stream of timber flowed out—trunks from good, large trees for ships and houses, branches from these trees and smaller trees for barrel staves, and lop and top and all other woods for charcoal for iron and glass works.  

Though the best charcoal for smelting was from five-year-old coppice oak, in practice “all other woods” left over from other uses would be thrown into the fire, including the charcoal-rich sallow.

Like the “builder Oake,” the iron mill was also a symbol of social control used by the New English Protestant planters: “forges, like towns and bridges, were accepted as symbols of the new civil order.” Mills became symbols of an efficiently wasteful management of the land’s resources, an example of the bursting georgic fertility of the land which encouraged excessive and destructive use, yet only for a larger, carefully controlled gain. Sustainable woods were deliberately clear-cut to feed the mills, which often closed once the wood source was exhausted; such forest clearance in Ireland functioned as a transitional step to a fully pastoral society more profitable than the mills themselves. Hence Spenser’s pastoral vision of Mt. Acidale, a possible allegory for an idealized Ireland, shows a delightful green space with dancing nymphs.

55 MacCracken, 92. The Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape mentions oak and ash as primary fuel for ore-smelting furnaces, and willow for “wattle and basketry”; it doesn’t, however, exclude the latter type of tree from furnace use (F. H. Aalen, Kevin Whelan, and Matthew Stout, Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape [Cork: Cork University Press, 1997], 123, fig. 2).
57 McCracken, 95–96.
58 Stillman, 311–12.
surrounded by a wood, as if cut out of the "stately" forest surrounding it (6.10.5-28). The "Maple seeldom inward sound" no longer exists in that idealized world but has already been weeded out and consigned to ashes.

Spenser's "sallow for the mill" and rich description of trees may therefore have been predicting (and encouraging) future success for smithies and/or iron mills in his own neighborhood. For we mustn't forget Spenser's audience in Ireland and among English investors; timber work, mines, and mills enabled the newcomer Richard Boyle (the eventual earl of Cork and Spenser's distant relative by his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle) to make a large portion of his great wealth in the early seventeenth century. To this day, the motto above the entrance to Boyle's sumptuous and painstakingly English castle at Lismore, Co. Waterford, reads God's Providence Is Our Inheritance. His dark, providential mills operated primarily on Cork lands sold to him by Sir Walter Raleigh, the dedicatee of The Faerie Queene's famous prefatory letter. This letter, which catalogs the gentlemanly virtues found in the poem, titles Raleigh "Lo. Wardein of the Stanneryes." These Stannaries were comprised of the tin mines and smelting works of Cornwall and Devon. Raleigh was steeped in the profits of metalurgy. As a consequence, he created some of the first iron mills in Waterford, "mills" suggested by the tree catalog in The Faerie Queene.

Raleigh was also one of the first New English settlers to develop the timber trade in Ireland. His "extreme desire to find out new and rapid paths to wealth" led to "a passion for Irish land," and when Raleigh had his newly granted Munster estates surveyed in 1587, he complained about the physical difficulty involved in clearing its secondary growth, which had sprouted in the wake of the Desmond uprising (an uprising which had depopulated much of the area of its

9Nicholas Canny, The Upstart Earl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 72.
10McCracken, 94.
He soon imported 200 timber workers from England, and in 1601 secured a monopoly for exporting pipe staves out of the country to the continent, despite a ban on such exports forced into law by English merchants in 1596. The ban, and its flouting, indicate the magnitude of the perceived threat to those factions opposed to it; pipe staves (cf. the “Pipe Boards” found at Enniscorthy, above) of oak or soft woods, such as aspen, were one of the main exports from Ireland, with southern Cork a primary source. Civility benefited from the process, since both the towns of Tallow and Killarney owed their rapid growth chiefly to timber processing. Thanks in part to Raleigh’s efforts, in the early seventeenth century, French, Spanish, and Italian wine was imported into England almost exclusively in Irish wood. Spenser’s “Aspine good for staves” was good for Raleigh, too.

Another meaning of stave, that is, “a staff-like weapon,” appears in The Ferie Queene. Here, too, an Irish connection surfaces. An angry crowd of stereotypically Irish-looking rabble (compared, famously, to gnats on the Irish Bog of Allen in stanza 16), led by the villain Maleger, assaults the House of Temperance. Among the many weapons the “thousand villeins” carry are “staves in fire warmd” (2.9.13-7), in order to harden them. The term stave in the tree catalog therefore has an ambiguous Irish significance. Like the iron wedges of Care, also fired for a fruitless purpose, staves can be used or abused, depending on the purpose and virtue of the user. How we read the tree catalog therefore challenges us to turn what could be a weapon in the hands of an uncivilized, Irish power—the fire-hardened stave—into a weapon in the

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62 Pope Hennessy, 56.  
63 McCracken, 99.  
64 Pope Hennessy, 76. A “pipe” is a size of barrel.  
65 On the stave industry in Ireland, see McCracken, 59–62, 99; Aidan Clarke, “The Irish Economy, 1600–60,” in A New History of Ireland, 3:68–86, esp. 180–81. Canny, in Kingdom and Colony, states that staves were made from soft woods such as aspen (52), although McCracken states that oak was used.  
66 McCracken, 100; Pope Hennessy, 76.
hands of the virtuous reader, or even better, into a product of industrial advancement on behalf of the New English—the barrel stave.

Control of the plantation came not by destroying its native element, but by reharnessing the energy latent in the land and its peoples. Raleigh became frustrated at the unwillingness of the Irish natives to labor for him, because he badly needed their labor to supplement that of his own migrant workers. To overcome the paucity of labor in Munster following the Desmond rebellion, Spenser envisions the remaining rebel Irish controlled and “driven” to power industry:

therefore are those Kearne, Stocaghes, and Horse-boyes, to bee driven and made to impoy that ablenesse of bodie, which they were wont to use to theft and villainy, hencefoorth to labour and industry. . . . To which end there is a Statute in Ireland already well provided . . . but it is (God wot) very slenderly executed.

Spenser employs the language of draught animals and refers to the necessity of strengthening laws (with a chilly pun on “executed”) to make such labor happen. He hopes to harness a chaotic Irish energy, freshly roiled from civil war, which will spur on his poetry as well. Accordingly, Spenser reinvokes the georgic equation of the ploughing poet at the end of the blacksmith Care canto as, exhausted, he unyokes the horses of his energetic inspiration (4.5.46.8–9). He nonetheless continues on to the next canto, just as jealous Care keeps Scudamour painfully awake with his red-hot iron tongs: the chaotic sexual desires symbolized by the tools of his trade help spur Scudamour on his quest. Wanton labor, fueled by destructive desires (such as jealousy or

Pope Hennessy, 56.
Spenser, A View of the [Present] State of Ireland, 149.
and found reflected in the Irish landscape, its native inhabitants, and the new planters, can be productive if properly harnessed. 69 Labor omnia vicit (Georgics 1.145): under proper, long-term management, Care's iron wedges cutting down trees can clear the land for pastoral or agricultural purposes. Weapon staves can be replaced by pipe staves. When seen in this clever light, Spenser's own Care-ful continuous labor, driven by georgic fires and desires, yet also guided by the Apollo-Elizabeth of the poem's opening invocation, with each written word exhaustively enacts the noble purpose of controlling the Irish landscape.

Spenser's art sought to transform the material, spiritual, and civic well-being of the planter in Ireland. It continually stressed that planter's agricultural identity by encouraging and predicting his future success in specific industries. Perhaps, as in his portrayal of the destruction of the Bower of Bliss (2.7.69–87), Spenser's puritanical distrust of worldly show is increasingly exacerbated by his creative side, which chooses to linger over the world's verdant beauty. Such a scenario leads, perhaps inevitably, to Guyon gate-crashing, locking the liquor cabinet, and telling everyone to go home. But Verdant isn't particularly industrious when Guyon intrudes, nor does Guyon cut down the Bower to make ships out of it. There may, therefore, be a third way to conceive of Spenser's relationship to the physical world which partially excludes

69See also Anthony Esolen's argument concerning Lucretian influences in The Fairie Queene, especially Book 4: "for Spenser chaos is not the guiding principle of nature, but it has its place. Like undifferentiated sexual energy, chaos is created and restrained and used by God so that despite itself it becomes an agent of God's plan" (Anthony Esolen, "Spenserian Chaos: Lucretius in The Fairie Queene," Spenser Studies 11 [1994]: 31–51, esp. 44). Care's lustful cacophony certainly captures the spirit of Lucretian chaos, which must be managed by Spenser for socially harmonious effect. For a relevant, in-depth discussion of Lucretian influence on Virgil's nationalist sentiment in the Georgics and the Aeneid, including the argument that Lucretian metaphors "of fertility and flowering will be used to bind civilization to the land in the Aeneid," see Richard Jenkyns, Virgil's Experience: Nature and History: Times, Names and Places (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 247 and passim.
both Guyon and Verdant: the georgic. The more we see Spenser’s material side as a reflection of Ireland’s history, the more we must stress the poet’s active force of creation physically bending the world to its plan of plantation.70

The poem is literally the “fruit of savage soil.” 71 Robert Welch has his fictive Spenser fantasize about Irish timber pressed into the poem’s pages, “Ireland’s woody fastnesses brought to book.” 72 In the same vein, Willy Maley speculates that “clout” could mean the rags with which a page is pressed together: “if Colin echoes Coloni and Clout resonates with ‘clowte,’ or cloth, which is also the very fabric of the text, then one rendering of ‘Colin Clout’ would be ‘colonial text.’” 73 Such a clout-text demonstrates the riches of a worldly productivity envisioned for Ireland. Like St. George’s “booke, wherein his Saveours testament / Was writ with golden letters rich and brave,” given in return for Arthur’s “Boxe of Diamond sure” (1.9.19), Spenser’s gift to his patron Elizabeth (and to his more local Maecenas, Arthur, Lord Grey) is a spiritualized worldly good from “goodly woods.” Like a renaissance painting, The Faerie Queene is both a source of aesthetic delight and a commercial property that advertises the constructed wealth of both the skilled craftsman and his patrons, all the while pointing towards God.74

70C. S. Lewis describes Spenser as “‘the glad creator,’ the fashioner of flower and forest and river, of excellent trout and pike, of months and seasons, of beautiful women and ‘lovely knights,’ of love and marriage, of sun, moon, and planets, of angels, above all of light. . . . His universe dances with energy” (C. S. Lewis, “Neoplatonism in Spenser’s Poetry,” in Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, ed. Walter Hooper [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966], 149–63, esp. 162).


73Maley, Salvaging Spenser, 33.

John Skelton's 1514 flyting "Agenst Garneche" has been subject to little critical scrutiny. This neglect can perhaps be attributed to the fact that Christopher Garnesche's contribution is missing, but it is also characteristic of the relative neglect accorded to the flyting as a genre, a neglect that has also colored the interpretation of many of Skelton's more abusive poems.1 One critic, for example, has dismissed the poem as being "nothing but personal abuse of a particularly virulent type... adorned with a singular collection of epithets and incomprehensible allusions, which serve only to befog and irritate the reader."2 One way others have defended Skelton from such charges


Skelton's "Agent Garnesche" has been by appealing to the generic constraints of the flying and its possible relationships to the French tenson or the humanist invectiva. But while these considerations are important to any informed interpretation of the poem, they threaten to reduce it to a merely literary exercise, instead of seeing these traditions as part of the complex court contexts that produced the poem. A more profitable line of approach is to locate the poem within the courtly environment and within the context of Skelton's poetic career.

A flying, as a public contest between rival poets, acts to affirm poetic identity much as public combat acts to reaffirm chivalric and heroic identity. Ward Parks has observed that the "flying, in heroic epic and many other settings, seems to be associated with fighting." With formal rules and often occurring under the immediate supervision of the king, it ritualizes social violence and intergroup rivalry in much the

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6 H. L. R. Edwards, Skelton: The Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), 151: "The flying had at this time quite definite rules. It was a literary duel, in four rounds, between a challenger and a defender. Each had the right to appoint a second. The challenger began by reciting his first piece; his object being to overwhelm his antagonist with every conceivable insult that came to hand. They did not need to be true, provided only they were pungent enough. The defender then replied in kind. The duel continued in this way until each of them had taken the floor four times. Finally the audience was invited to decide, in the Scots phrase, ‘quha got the war.'"
same way that tournaments—themselves an important fixture at both James IV’s and Henry VIII’s courts—or the courtly love games do. It is, despite its ludic element, at once an individualistic and public enterprise, and Skelton’s flying represents his attempt to respond to and define himself in opposition to a wide array of personal and cultural currents at court in 1514.

Being a dialogue, a flying requires two speakers directing their attacks at one another, usually in a public place such as a hall. In a broad sense, flytings signify noisy quarrels or arguments, “a flyter” being “roughly synonymous with a scold.” According to Priscilla Bawcutt, Dunbar and his Scottish contemporaries “coupled flying with other forms of ‘bad language,’ such as cursing and swearing, and associated it with fishwives and ‘carlines’ on the streets of Edinburgh.” In their more formal, courtly form, flytings were contests, rhetorical games whose purpose was to determine who was most worthy of being the court’s poetic spokesman. The setting of court flytings could be portentous, for they were sometimes performed in the king’s presence, as was the 1579 flying between Alexander Montgomerie and Hume of Polwarth. This contest—with young King James VI of Scotland as judge—had as its symbolic prize the bardic chair in the “chimnaye nuike.” Such contests could thus literally define a poet’s spatial and social relationship to the center of courtly power—to the monarch himself.

3Parks, 45, 39.
5Bawcutt, *Dunbar*, 223.
Studies by H.L.R. Edwards and Greg Walker suggest that Skelton's position at court was an unusually precarious one, especially given Skelton's prickly personality.\textsuperscript{14} Repeated attempts to ingratiate himself with his former pupil, Henry VIII, had met with only qualified success and some criticism, which had prompted Skelton's energetic poetic defenses of himself and further attempts to attract royal attention. Seen from this perspective, the flyting "Agenst Garnesche" suggestively reveals Skelton's situation in 1514 as he defends himself from charges that he is a lowly born outsider, and as he attempts to position himself near the center of court power.\textsuperscript{15} To reassert his position, Skelton repeatedly insists on the ties between himself and Henry, flaunts his nationalism by naturalizing the flyting, and urges his own education and poetic calling, while at the same time emphasizing the threat that Garnesche represents to the moral environment of the court and to the ideal of true poetry itself. When examined as a product of its courtly environment, Skelton's flyting becomes a forceful attempt by the laureate poet to articulate and defend his poetic territory.\textsuperscript{16}

It would be reductive, however, to see Skelton as responding to Garnesche in a crude court power struggle. To do so ignores the


\textsuperscript{16}Richard Halpern has explored territorialism in Skelton's poetry, especially as it relates to "Ware the Hawk" and \textit{Phyllip Sparowe: The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation} (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1991), 112–13, 123.
generic constraints of the flying and its national and international aspects. The flying is by definition a poetic exchange of invective, but it is not necessarily a serious one. In other words, the actual insults hurled at one another by the opposing poets might bear only a slight or skewed relation to objective reality. Nevertheless, a real struggle for social and poetic prestige may underlie an exchange of what Bawcutt calls "aggressive play," even if the poets are on friendly terms. The voicing of "strong animosities, cultural and personal," seems particularly likely in the courtly, social, and politicized arena of Skelton's poem.\(^{17}\)

Skelton's primary interlocutor in the poem is a man whose poetic productions are unfortunately lost to us—Christopher Garnesche himself. Skelton figures him as the "Challenger" in this verbal combat, but the historical Christopher Garnesche was hardly an upstart. His family had a long pedigree, by Henry VIII's reign having been settled in Norfolk and Suffolk for more than two centuries. The offspring of the union between Edmund Garnys and the daughter of the mayor of Norwich, Christopher would have spent his childhood in the household of his father at Roos hall in Suffolk or at Hasketon hall in the care of the Brewes family.\(^{18}\) His family was thus of moderate importance, and his fortunes rose rapidly under Henry VIII; Garnesche appeared first as a Gentleman Usher at court in 1509, and he quickly received a profitable wardship, a marriage to a rich widow, an appointment as the sergeant of the King's Tents during the siege of Tournai, and, finally, a knighthood in September 1513.\(^{19}\) In 1514 he was involved in preparations for Princess Mary's short-lived marriage to the elderly Louis XII, and he was, in fact, probably already preparing to go abroad (which he did on 29 August) when the flying occurred in the late summer of 1514.\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\)Bawcutt, *Dunbar*, 226.
\(^{18}\)Stearns, 519–22.
\(^{19}\)Edwards, 147.
\(^{20}\)Edwards, 147–51.
Skelton admits the steady upward arc of Garnesche's career when he warns the younger man that “Thowth it be now ful tyde with the, / Yet ther may falle soche caswelte / Er thaw beware” (5.120-22). Such an acknowledgment highlights the frustration that Skelton may have felt with his own career, even as it also invokes the world of precarious court politics that characterizes some of Skelton’s other works, such as The Bowge of Court and Magnyfycence. Garnesche’s relations with the royal household, in fact, were rather more intimate than Skelton’s. Although Skelton had been Prince Henry’s tutor from 1498 until 1502, after Prince Arthur’s death and Henry’s rise in status to heir apparent, Skelton no longer had a position at court. Skelton had resided in his rectorship at Diss from about 1504 to 1512, and even his 1513 poem on Flodden field, “Against the Scots,” was probably composed there. While Garnesche had accompanied Henry and his royal poet, Carmeliano, to France, Skelton had remained at home. Skelton’s styling of himself as the queen’s (rather than the king’s) orator in early editions of “Against the Scots” as well as his repeated defenses of himself illustrate his uncertainty about his relation to Henry at this time. In his 1512 poem Calliope Skelton boasts of his Tudor livery and golden embroidery, but, as Walker observes, by 1513 there seem to have been people at court who “were now openly critical of his verses.” His attacks on King James (who was Henry’s brother-in-law) caused some “waywardly to wrangle / Against this my making.” As Walker insists, by 1514, while “the major Court commissions were passing elsewhere, the ‘King’s Orator’ was being called on to enter into an undignified bout of name-calling with a Court officer.” Thus although Skelton

22Edwards, 140-42.
23Edwards, 137-40.
24Walker, Politics, 46.
25Skelton, “Unto Divers People.”
26Walker, Politics, 47.
had succeeded in being recalled to court, his situation was anything but secure and called for Skelton to assert himself strongly as a royal, patriotic, and scholarly poet.

Garnesche’s success and the precariousness of Skeleton’s own position may explain some of the poetic strategies that Skelton employs in “Agenst Garnesche.” Skelton himself seems conscious of the flying’s indignity, aware that “My study myght be better spynt” (5.176) on other activities, but it was just such uncertainty that made it particularly pressing for Skelton to defend his position as a “laureate” poet, one who naturally belongs near the king.  

In order to occupy his position there, however, Skelton had to defend himself from attack. The poet’s most vulnerable point was his comparative lack of social status. Although Garnesche’s sections of the flying have been lost, we can detect many echoes of it in Skelton’s defense of himself. Garnesche had apparently accused Skelton of being mad, “scallyd” (5.116), worthy of Tyburn, “overthwart” (5.136), and a “lorell” (3.14), but the most insistently repeated charge (or at least the one that Skelton seems to have felt the most keenly) was that Skelton was, socially and poetically, a knave. Even in the tonally dignified first section of the poem, Skelton repeatedly asks Garnesche about his authority “to cale me knave” (1.7, 14, 21, 28, 35). Skelton further accuses Garnesche of “beknaving” him (1.9) and of disparaging his ancestry (5.63). According to Skelton, Garnesche shows little

27 Occasionally, literal territory could be involved in the rise and fall of poetic fortunes. After the death of James IV at Flodden, Skelton exults over how Dunbar lost both his poetic subject and his estate at a stroke:

Pardy, ye were his homager,
And suter to his parlyament.
For your untruth now are ye shent
Ye bore yourselfe somewhat to bold;
Therefore ye lost your copyehold.
Ye were bonde tenet to his estate;
Lost is your game; ye are checkmate.

(“Against the Scottes,” 122–28)
imagination beyond this one charge: “Wyth, ‘Knave, syr, knave, and knave agenne’, / To cal me knave thou takyst gret Payne” (5.19–20). Skelton’s defensive, reiterated focus upon this particular line of attack suggests that it was a sore spot for Skelton, who was not of noble birth, but anxious for court preferment. 28 Although attacking the ancestry and background of one’s opponent was a conventional gambit in the flyting, we can see that it was also an approach Garnesche was quite right to belabor. 29

Garnesche’s manifest success and relatively high social position made it necessary for Skelton to couch his attacks in the formula, “By the King’s Most Noble Commandment,” a statement with which he ends four of the five sections of the poem. As part of his careful strategy of self-presentation, Skelton here insists on his proximity to a king who is seen as the fount of linguistic authority, even as the poet transfers the ultimate responsibility for the potentially dangerous invective of his satire to Henry. The poem becomes a means of reidentifying himself with King Henry and his inner circle, a group that Skelton may have felt increasingly alienated from following his attacks on King James. Skelton thus partly bases his claim to poetic authority on King Henry himself and on the privileged access of the orator regis to the king.

While we cannot be sure of the personal relationship between the two, one epithet hurled by Skelton at Garnesche suggests that, at the very least, Skelton saw Garnesche as a representative of a dangerous court type, an accusation that the laureate poet could use to reassert his ties to Henry. If Garnesche could call him a knave, Skelton could respond with the cry “Huf, a galante, Garnesche” (2.16). Furthermore, Skelton accuses Garnesche of “haftynge” (3.38) and, in the closing lines of the last bout, Skelton addresses Garnesche by the name “Harvy Haftar” (5.164). Skelton here assumes his audience’s knowledge of one of his earlier poems (ca. 1502) by aligning Garnesche with the vicious, 28 On Skelton’s possible ancestry, see Maurice Pollet, John Skelton: Poet of Tudor England (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1971), 6–7.
riotous lout from the *Bowge of Court.*° The character from the earlier poem is an interesting one: he is the only vicious character who immediately recognizes Drede—the protagonist—as a poet, and the only one implicitly to compete with Drede at his poetic profession, as Harvy sings snatches from a number of popular songs. He acts, in effect, as the inversion of the true laureate court poet.°° A liar and flatterer rather than a truth-teller and prophet, as a moral guide he is the opposite of what Skelton felt a court poet should be.

There may be some historical basis for Skelton's abusive characterization of Garnesche. Edwards, for example, calls Garnesche "a finished specimen of the Early Tudor rutterkin—the contemporary gallant" and classes him among the group of "minions" who surrounded Henry VIII from 1515 to 1519 when they were unceremoniously removed from court."°° Walker has recently argued that Magnyfycence chronicled just these events."°° Drede's description of Hafter as "leaping, light as lynde" and one whose "throat was clear and [who] lustily could fayne" prefigures the description of Garnesche in the later flyting if only by providing a social and poetic category in which to place


°° Dickey, 245–46. For Dickey, *The Bowge of Courte* is essentially a meditation on the acquisition of poetic authority.

°° Edwards, 147. Garnesche, however, does not seem to have suffered the same fate as the other minions. We find his house at Greenwich being occupied by the entourage of Charles V during the emperor's visit to England in 1522 (see Albert Rey, *Skelton's Satirical Poems in Their Relations to Lydgate's Order of Fools, Cock Lorell's Bote and Barclay's Ship of Fools* [Bern, 1899], 10).

Garnesche. Although Garnesche does not quite qualify as one of the Frenchified courtiers described by Edward Hall, Skelton accuses Garnesche of having gotten

... of Gorge with gaudry
Crimsin velvet for your bawdry.
Ye have a fantasy to Fanchyrche strete,
With Lumbardes lemmanns for to mete, ...

(5.39–42)

Garnesche’s ostentatious and even grotesque finery, his whoring, and his riotous living indicate that Skelton saw Garnesche as similar to those who, a few years later, would be the king’s wasteful and destructive minions. It may be no accident that we find Hafter among a list of court vices in “Why Come Ye Nat to Court?” dating from 1522. The continuity is suggestive, for it implies that Skelton consistently presented himself as the king’s bulwark against shifting groups of riotous and dissolute courtiers, a poetic strategy that here seems designed to reinforce the ties between himself and Henry.

The continuity also suggests that throughout his career Skelton struggled with the problem—particularly pressing for one who claims to be divinely inspired—of how to speak the truth at court. The conspiratorial, threatening atmosphere of the Bowge of Court, where characters continually turn words into a means of obscuring their self-serving ambition and rampaging jealousy of other, more successful courtiers, is turned inside out by Skelton in “Agenst Garnesche.” Skelton’s language brings aggression to the surface and the drama of courtier jealousy is explicitly played out, authorized not only by the “Most Noble Commandment,” but also by the flying’s generic conventions. Billingsgate language, descriptions of venereal disease,

34Edward Hall, Chronicle, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1809), 597–98, quoted in Walker, Plays, 67; on Frenchified courtiers, see Walker, Persuasive Fictions, 47–49.
35Skelton, “Why Come Ye Not to Court,” line 97.
physical ugliness, and mental and physical debility have their natural home in the flying, which effectually inverts the more dignified presentation of courtly power in other activities associated with the aristocracy. It might be seen as analogous to the noble mock tournament, such as the one held in Edinburgh in 1507 and again in 1508 in which contestants vied for the favors of a Negress. Although marked by scatology, mockery, and inverted versions of contemporary courtly prizes, the flying nevertheless remained a field where honor could be won. Inversion, far from undermining the display of courtly power in the Scottish tournaments, reinforced it and acted as an emblem of its secure possession. Similarly, in the 1514 flying, Garnesche's participation in this relatively undignified form of aristocratic entertainment may well suggest the solidity of his court position, a position that the laureate poet could only hope to attain for himself. In opposition to Garnesche, Skelton attempts to reclaim courtly authority by displaying his ties to Henry, his patriotism, and his learning—strategies that to some degree allow him to make serious points even within what is essentially a mock-form.

The flying's verbal weapons provide Skelton with a rich arsenal in his battle over poetic territory and, in particular, over intimacy with the king. The territorial imperative especially marks the first section of Skelton's flying even as the social world of the poetic contest is evoked:

Sithe ye have me chalyngyd, Master Garnesche,
Rudely revilyng me in the kynges noble hall,
Soche an odyr chalyngyr cowde me no man wysch.

(1.1–3)


Skelton implicitly takes the moral high ground—he defends the sanctity of both himself and “the kynges noble hall.” Garnesche’s crime is to “beknave” Skelton “in the kynges place” (1.9). Garnesche thus acts as a kind of mock king, but where Henry acts as the fount of nobility, Garnesche is merely the fount of knavery. Just as the hunting priest had violated Skelton’s church territory in “Ware the Hawk,” chivalric and even sacred space have been violated by this upstart knight who threatens to corrupt both the linguistic and social power tied to proximity to the king. Skelton can thus portray himself as the “Lauriate Defender” of the inviolate and quasi-sacred space surrounding the king, a space where he naturally belongs as the king’s chosen poet and, furthermore, as Henry’s former tutor.  

Because Garnesche had a more conventionally defensible claim to nobility than Skelton did, Skelton had to deny Garnesche’s claim even as he had to defend his own. He does this by admitting his adversary’s knighthood, but redefining it as a literary fiction. Garnesche is “Syr Dugles the dowty” (1.8), “Sir Terry of Trace” (1.11), “Syr Lybyus” (1.17), and “Syr Topas” (1.40). These, as Robert S. Kinsman has demonstrated, are romance knights, boastful, brutish, comic, and even monstrous. Sometimes they are pagans, such as “Syr Ferumbras the ffreke” (1.15) and “Syr Tyrmagant” (1.4). Discounting Garnesche’s real genealogy, Skelton gives him a morally bankrupt literary one. Such figures divorce the social position of knighthood from its attendant ethos, a divorce, Skelton suggests, which merely articulates that already made in knighting so unworthy a knight as Garnesche.

But if Garnesche’s real knighthood can in part be seen as a fiction—that is, as a social position that fortune has thrust upon him that does

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38 On “Ware the Hawk,” see Halpern, 112–13.
not correspond to his interior merit—then his poetic prowess is wholly fictive. Skelton repeatedly insists on Garnesche’s reliance on a literary second, Gorbellied Godfrey, to aid or ghostwrite Garnesche’s part in the flyting. Although quite within generic constraints, for Skelton, Godfrey’s necessity points to Garnesche’s poetic and chivalric inadequacy. The gross materialism implicit in Godfrey’s nickname serves further to draw a boundary between his scurrilous verses and Skelton’s more transcendent poetic powers:

Lytyll wyt in your scrybys nolle
That scrybblyd your fonde scrolle,
Upon hym for to take
Agennst me for to make,
Lyke a doctor dawpate,
A lauryate poyete for to rate.
Yower termys ar to grose,
To far from the porpose,
To contaminate
And to violate
The dygnyte lauryate.

(3.90–100)

The description of Garnesche’s “scrybe” acts as a mirror image of Skelton’s own self-portrayal. Lacking Skelton’s university learning, he is merely a “Doctor dawpate” who is unable to ascend to the realms of philosophy and poetry of the inspired Skelton. The language of pollution also figures prominently in the passage. The words “contaminate” and “violate” assert Skelton’s exalted role as the defender of the sacred space surrounding the king, a territory Skelton protects from the spatial and linguistic contamination Garnesche represents.

Against this carefully constructed, hyperbolically demonized figure of Garnesche, Skelton presents himself, the true poet. The source of Skelton’s poetic authority does not lie in mere titles, however, and in this sense Skelton assumes the title of laureate merely as the external sign and recognition of an intrinsic worth that makes him a fitting
orator regis. Skelton has other sources to vouch for his claim to the poetic
territory surrounding the king and to validate his self-presentation:

What eylythe the, rebawde, on me to rave?
A kynge to me myn habyte gave
At Oxforth, the universyte,
Avaunsid I was to that degre;
By hole consent of theyr senate,
I was made poete lawreate.
To cal me lorell ye ar to lewde;
Lythe and lystyn, all bechrewde!
Of the Musys nyne, Calliope
Hath pointyd me to rayle on the.
(5.79-88)

The passage conflates university degrees with royal and heavenly
appointments. All are parts of Skelton's carefully constructed literary
persona and designate him as worthy to defend the king's royal hall against
a poetic interloper such as Garnesche. Poetic language, royal language,
and classical and divine learning are linked in the relation between
Skelton and Henry. As Skelton boasts, "The honor of England I lernyd
to spelle, / In dygnyte roiall that doth excelle" (5.95-96). The king learned
not only language from Skelton, but the poet also

... yave hym drynke of the sugryd welle
Of Eliconyss waters crystallyne,
Aqueintynge hym with the Musys nyne.
(5.98-100)

Thus the king's own poetic voice, even his own language, is inextricably
bound up with Skelton's own career and poetic voice. Divinity, royalty,
and rhetoric all stake Skelton's claim of access to the king's person and
his language.

41 McGoldrick, 70.
If Skelton uses the flyting specifically to interrogate his position at court and fashion himself in opposition to Garnesche, it is equally true that the laureate also addresses the literary genre in which he writes—the flyting itself. Critics have suggested that this flyting is a conscious attempt by Skelton, made at Henry VIII’s initiative, to imitate the Scottish “Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie.” Whether Henry suggested the contest with this motive in mind or not, Skelton seems to have been familiar with the earlier poem. Friedrich Brie has listed numerous parallels that suggest, at the very least, the Scottish poem was on Skelton’s mind in 1514. Skelton thus not only had to respond to Garnesche in order to solidify his own court position, but also to surpass and appropriate his literary model.

Skelton does this by employing a strategy of self-conscious Anglicization and, furthermore, by emphasizing the social threat Garnesche represents. Rather than Galloway, Ireland, Berwick, and Edinburgh—locales that figure in the series of charges and counter-charges that the two Scottish poets hurl at one another—Skelton locates Garnesche in Suffolk, Calais, and London. Rather than locate himself—as Walter Kennedy does—as related by blood to King James, Skelton instead insists on his own linguistic and poetic relationship to the

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42 Edwards, 150; Walker, Politics, 47.
44 Such a desire may well explain the rather provincial character of the flyting, with its few non-native allusions and its sparse use of Latin. Skelton, after all, had another alternative available to him to answer Garnesche: the humanistic invectiva, but Skelton does not seem to have availed himself of the opportunity it offered (see A. R. Heiserman, Skelton and Satire [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], 285; Laurentius Valla, Opera Omnia, ed. Eugenio Garin, 2 vols. [Torino: Bottega d’Erasmo, 1962], 1: 366–89).
true fount of nobility: Henry VIII. Skelton in fact avoids attacking Garnesche’s ancestry (as Kennedy attacks William Dunbar’s and Garnesche apparently attacks Skelton’s) and instead attempts to empty Garnesche out of noble authority by pointing to his childhood sojourn as a kitchen page. Surpassing the crude account Kennedy supplies of Dunbar’s seasickness, Skelton associates Garnesche’s mouth with the anus and excrement (3.54, 62, 5.46). In Skelton’s portrayal of him, Garnesche represents more of a threat to King Henry’s moral and physical health than ever Dunbar or Kennedy did to King James. For Skelton, Garnesche’s mere presence is potentially dangerous and defiling. Kennedy’s account of Dunbar’s seasickness is refigured in Garnesche’s stinking breath, which, instead of being a product of his own vomit, makes others evacuate their stomachs:

When Garnyche cummyth yow amonge
With hys brethe so stronge,
Withowte ye have a confectioun
Agenst hys poysond infeccioun,
Els with hys stynkyng jawys
He wyl cause yow caste your crawes,
And make yourer stomake seke
Ovyr the perke to pryk.

(3.150–57; cf. 2.78–84)

Garnesche’s poisonous words are reduced to literally noxious air, their physical and semiotic significance precisely complementing one another. The mocking tone of the charges cannot quite mask the seriousness of what is at stake for Skelton. Bad breath was in fact considered both a carrier and sign of disease, and the king’s health, both physical and moral, had direct consequences for the body politic. Being orator regis meant access to the king and—at least in Skelton’s mind—the power to speak

for the king as his authorized voice, using the power that inheres in the
king’s English. Garnesche’s “poetry,” Skelton suggests, is the product of
a diseased body and mind that represents a danger to King Henry, to his
subjects, and to the King’s English.

The depravity with which Skelton associates Garnesche is thus
potentially treacherous and destructive: “Your sworde ye swere, I
wene, / So tranchaunt and so kene, / Xall kyt both wyght and grene”
(3.137-39). These are more than personal threats, however, for where
Kennedy and Dunbar had been mere court poets, Garnesche had real
military and diplomatic responsibilities. In France the preceding year
he had been keeper of the king’s tents and thus responsible for the
maintenance of the king’s insignia and his colors of white and green.
Those tents housed the bodies of the king’s subjects as well as of the
king himself. The tents were each nominated by a separate name, fre­
quently an aristocratic or royal symbol. Thus we find names like “The
Flowerdelyce,” “The Whytehart,” “The Lyon,” and “The Reederoose
and the Whyte” alongside the names of other tents less poetically
related to the king’s household such as “The King’s Master-cook’s hall
for stoore for the Kynges mowthe.”

Garnesche was in a very real
sense responsible for the maintenance of the king’s dignity and person.
The danger Garnesche represented was also significant to Skelton
because Skelton himself wore the king’s livery of white and green.

The destruction of the king’s livery hurts not only the royal person, but
also all those maintained by it including the laureate poet himself.

Skelton engages many different adversaries in “Agenst Garnesche”:
Garnesche himself, Skelton’s own precarious position at court, and
the earlier Scottish flying. In doing so he tries to force into being
his own eminently defensible poetic territory, one marked by talent,
education, and access to royal authority and language. Such an endeavor
was, inevitably, a tricky business as Garnesche was Skelton’s social
superior and one in some ways responsible for the very royal body that Skelton posits himself as defending. To the extent that this poem did not (as far as I know) increase the number of Skelton's court commissions or halt the rise of Christopher Garnesche at court, Skelton's poem must be judged a pyrrhic victory at best. For the modern reader, however, "Agenst Garnesche" provides an intriguing entry into the world of court politics and poetry early in Henry VIII's reign, one that resonates with something of the vigor of Skelton's most powerful court poems.*

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REFERENCES


Living in the Palaces of Love:
Love and the Soul in a Vision of
St. Aldegund of Maubeuge (ca. 635–684)

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Abess Aldegund of Maubeuge, in dictating her visions to the cleric Subnius in her later years, recalled a vision she had experienced in her youth. She saw herself entering a heavenly mansion, richly bejeweled and "steeped" with Christ's "sweet odor." The vision had made a great impression on her. She accredited it with having matured her spiritual understanding, for having first misunderstood the vision's meaning, she now understood it, "the scales having fallen from her eyes." Yet as historians we are not as fortunate

1Vita Aldegundis 1.5. “Dum vero sub carnali conditione maneret, atque in domatibus parentum versaretur, audivit Beatissima per visum quodammodo altitudinem divitiarum se habituram. Cuius visionis ostensionem insolitam mens puellaris supra quam credi potest admirans, quidnam vellet visio aenigmatica ignorabat. Ipsa quoque arcana Christi considerans, quae iam ducta stetit ad ostium domus magnae septem columnis sigillatim subnixae, clara cuncta ornamenta aromatum fragrantia introspexit, miro vapore suavissimoque odore Christi imbuta. Quapropter coepit clarius videre iam solutis squamis ab oculis, donum caeleste sibi promissum percipere ab illo qui dicit: Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”

I refer to the earliest extant version of her vita (the vita prima) in J. Mabillon, Acta Sanctorum O.S.B. (Paris, 1668), 2:806–15. The text and introduction by Cornelius Smet were reprinted by J. Ghesquière in his
A Vision of St. Aldegund of Maubeuge

as Aldegund claimed to be. Many centuries removed from the events of the seventh century, the scales of subsequently imposed interpretation obscure our own vision of the abbess's experience. For between Aldegund’s recollection of her formative vision and the written account that has come down to us, much time elapsed in which there was both opportunity and pious motive for revisiting and recasting the vision’s meaning and for interpreting its potent central image. Yet Aldegund’s description of her celestial mansion is like a pentimento: we can glimpse beneath later editing and sensibilities underlying images that are the remnant of earlier ways of thinking and earlier associations from a time when what passed for a “Christian” image was not rigorously defined. Aldegund’s vision exposes the great cultural richness that the image of the celestial mansion held both for classical writers and Christians in late antiquity.

But first let me introduce the visionary. Aldegund of Maubeuge came from the highest Frankish nobility.² Her father and uncles held

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² Acta Sanctorum Belgii selecta (1787), 4:291–324. Wilhelm Levison’s abbreviated edition in MGH, SRM (Hanover, 1913), 6:79–90 did not include Aldegund’s visions. The vita was composed in the early eighth-century drawing on Subnius of Nivelles’s record of Aldegund’s visions. On the dating of the vita prima, see Léon van der Essen, Étude critique et littéraire sur les vitae des saints mérovingiens de l’ancienne Belgique (Louvain/Paris: Bureau de Recueil, 1907), 220–31, esp. 222, and most recently Anne-Marie Helvétius, Abbayes, évêques et laïques. Une politique du pouvoir en Hainaut au Moyen Âge (VIIe–XIe siècle) (Brussels: Crédit Communval, 1994), who dates it between 715 and 718. Helvétius also proposes that the vita’s author was not from Nivelles but from a monastery farther afield, perhaps Hautmont (“Sainte Aldegonde et les origines du monastère de Maubeuge,” Revue du Nord 74, no. 295 [1992]: 221–37). Aldegund’s vita is translated in Sainted Women of the Dark Ages, ed. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whately (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1992), 235–63, but it must be used with caution. All translations from the Vita Aldegonidis in this article are my own.

³ On Aldegund’s family and her religious and cultural environment, see, in addition to the works cited above, Alain Dierkens, Abbayes et Chapitres
powerful positions at the Merovingian courts of Chlothar II and Dagobert I. However, when Aldegund was young, her father, Walde-bert, retired from court to pursue the ascetic life. Soon his whole family followed in his footsteps. Aldegund’s older sister married but then retired to a convent. As the youngest, Aldegund was left at home but on her sister’s prompting she too conceived the desire to enter the religious life. Even before she renounced the world, however, Aldegund was unusual. She had constant dreams and visions. Many decades later when Subniius of Nivelles investigated her and recorded her visions, she told him of a vision experienced in her earliest youth. Subniius recorded it as follows:

While she was still in her carnal condition, and still in her parents’ home, the blessed girl learned in a vision of the high measure of riches which she would have. Marveling at the vision’s showing, an unaccustomed vision beyond what could be believed, she did not know its [the enigmatic vision’s] meaning. Then, reflecting on Christ’s secrets, she found herself led to the gate of a great house supported on seven columns ornamented with writing, and she looked inside at the bright ornaments and the fragrant aroma, wonderfully steeped in the sweetness of Christ’s odor. Thereafter she began to see more clearly, the scales now having fallen from her eyes, and she began to know that a celestial gift was promised to her by him who says: “Come to me all ye who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.”


1 Vita Aldegundis 1.5. See n. 1.
As presented in her earliest *vita*, Aldegund’s vision expressed a moment of personal and intellectual transformation. A girl who at first understood the riches in her vision as literal came to understand those riches as metaphorical: she was to have a celestial not a terrestrial gift. This transformed understanding occurred as she entered Christ’s palace, smelled Christ’s odor, and meditated on Christ’s secrets. This was clearly the palace of Aldegund’s heavenly bridegroom, Christ. Yet other elements in the palace’s description suggested other, interconnected meanings to the reader. The palace had seven columns, which a Christian audience would have immediately recognized as an allusion to the house of Wisdom. Proverbs 9:1 states: “Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars” (RSV). It was appropriate to the overall significance of the vision that Aldegund’s newfound spiritual understanding came in the house of Wisdom. In medieval representations Wisdom’s palace was generally presented from an external rather than internal perspective. The personification of Wisdom, Sophia, sat enthroned atop her columns with a confluence of rivers at her feet.

Yet the celestial palace Aldegund entered was far more detailed, one might say far more symbolically furnished, than the terse scriptural and medieval iconography of Wisdom’s house. Aldegund’s vision of the palace encompassed sensations beyond the purely visual. She registered a sense of space, an awareness of emotion, a sensation of familiarity, and a level of comfort. She did not simply see the mansion; she experienced it, participating in its space by entering into it. As Aldegund entered through the great gate, she encountered a space shining with fine ornaments and fragrant with Christ’s odor. In the shining interior she smelled masculine, not feminine perfume: Christ the bridegroom, not Sophia. While Christ and Sophia were theologically

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4Wisdom’s house was also described in Sirach 24.4: “I dwelt in high places, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud” (RSV). On later medieval visions of heavenly Wisdom as Sophia, see Ernst Benz, *Die Vision: Erfahrungsformen und Bilderwelt* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1969), 574–90.
associated even at this early date, the masculinity of Christ was an essential element in the vision's overall meaning. Aldegund's entry into Christ's palace suggested a connubial relationship. Aldegund's celestial home was the metaphorical substitute for the riches and security of a terrestrial marriage. Thus while Aldegund's vision presented to the reader an explicit reference to Wisdom's abode, there was clearly a greater complexity to Aldegund's experience of her mansion than is discernible at first glance. In this article, I argue that Aldegund's vision of the celestial mansion is not drawn from scriptural images of the mansions of the afterlife, but rather the philosophic palace of Love. In this palace we witness a confluence of images of Christ. For while Christ's palace is represented as Wisdom's house, Christ's palace is also the palace of the God of Love. The inspiration for this palace is found in Hellenistic literary depictions of Cupid's abode.

THE CELESTIAL MANSION

The celestial mansion was a common image in early medieval visions. Medieval and modern scholars typically consider the image


Other popular tropes for heaven included the paradisum (garden), influenced by descriptions of the classical locus amoenus (pleasance), and the bejeweled city-scape of the heavenly Jerusalem as described in the Book of Revelation. On the locus amoenus, see Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), 192-200; on the heavenly garden, see Benz, 371ff., and Claude Carozzi,
of the heavenly mansion in the light of John 14:2: "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (RSV). Originally these Johannine mansions were indebted to an eschatological understanding of the temple of Jerusalem, but in late antiquity the image was most commonly read as the celestial abode of the righteous. In the Gallican liturgy, prayers for the dead expressed the hope that the soul would reach the heavenly mansions in the afterlife. In some recensions of the liturgy, the inhabitants of the mansions included Moses, Elijah, and Lazarus. An important feature of this tradition was the plurality of mansions; the Gospel of John asserts that there are many mansions. Later commentators indicated that having many mansions reflected degrees of spiritual merit in heaven. Pope Gregory commented that "if there were no distinction of rewards in that blessed abode, there


8The Te Domine Sancete prayer as preserved by Caesarius of Arles solicits "maneatque in mansionibus sanctorum" (Damien Sicard, La liturgie de la mort dans l'église latine des origines à la réforme carolingienne, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 63 [Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1978], 266. On Moses, Elijah, and Lazarus as inhabitants, see variants of the prayer cited by Sicard, 268–69. Later in the Gelasian V (Verona) variant, the Suscipe prayer associated the mansions with the heavenly Jerusalem: "Suscipe domine servum tuum illum in aeternum habitaculum et da ei requiem et regnum id est hierusalem caelestem" (Sicard, 316).
should be but one dwelling-place, not many. As it is, the dwelling-
places in heaven are numerous in order to keep the ranks of good 
souls distinct and allow them to enjoy the companionship of those of 
like merits. 9 Since mansions were assigned according to spiritual 
merit, Gregory surmised that holy men of equal merit who died on 
the same day would dwell together in the same mansion. 10 Indeed, the 
righteous were bundled into mansions just as sinners were bundled 
with like-sinners into tares to be burned in hellfire. 11 
Whether these mansions are viewed as single dwellings or com-
munal, whether constructed of real bricks or metaphorical ones, the 
overriding similarity in all these accounts is the perspective from which 
these mansions were viewed by the visionary and presented to the 
reader. The mansions of the afterlife were seen from afar: from across 
a burning river, as in Pope Gregory’s famous account of a soldier’s 
vision, or at a distance, as in the vision of the sixth-century Sunniulf 
of Randan. 12 The visionary does not see what is inside. The mansion 
seen in Aldegund’s vision, however, presents an interior view. She 
enters through a great gate to view the splendors within. Aldegund is 
not the only one to have had a vision of this type. In the sixth century, 
Abbot Salvius (later bishop of Albi) reported being led “through a door 
of very great light into that dwelling place (illud habitaculum) in which 
all the floors shone like gold and silver and with an indescribable
light."\textsuperscript{13} The dwelling was huge and crowded with holy people, and Salvius remembered a sweet scent wafting through the interior that nourished and sustained him. In another case, Valerius of Bierzo described the vision of a seventh-century Spanish monk named Bonellus who was awestruck when he was lead to “a little cell constructed from the purest gold and shining precious stones and gems and pearls with various brilliants.”\textsuperscript{14} We should not be misled by his calling this place a little cell, for the wonder of its interior construction inspired awe and amazement. The closed, secret little cell bespoke intimacy in a place that was otherwise overwhelming. In these examples we have a very particular type of vision, one in which the visionary enters into a marvelous interior. Yet scholars have generally linked these descriptions of splendid interiors with mansions seen exteriorly. For example, in her study of Gregory of Tours’s contribution to the literature of medieval visions, Maria Pia Ciccarese draws attention to the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch) as a previously unnoticed source for Salvius’s vision.\textsuperscript{15} The cited passage in Enoch describes

\textsuperscript{13}Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks 7.1: “Deinde per portam luce ista clariorem introductus sum in illud habitaculum, in quo omne pavimentum erat quasi aurum argentunque renitens, lux ineffabilis.”

\textsuperscript{14}Cellulum ex auro purissimo lapidibusque pretiosis atque diversis coruscantibus gemis et margaritis constructam.” Valerius of Bierzo’s account of the vision of the monk Bonellus is discussed by Manuel C. Diaz y Diaz, Visiones del Mas Alla en Galicia durante la Alta Edad Media (Santiago de Compostella: Biblioteca da Galicia, 1985), 33–39, with Latin text and Spanish translation, 53–57.

mansions seen exteriorly with tongues of fire springing from open doors—it does not help us understand the motif of entering into a bejeweled interior. As Gregory described it, Salvius's vision embraced an interior perspective as he was led ever inward. Similarly Bonellus's visionary entry into a gem-filled cell, although likewise presented to him as his promised habitation in the afterlife, was influenced by sources other than the strictly scriptural.16

The problem with cross-referencing scripturally inspired mansions of the afterlife with visions in which the visionary takes possession of the celestial mansion is that the sources of inspiration are confused. In Latin there are no clear terminological distinctions between celestial residences and earthly ones: they are variously described as mansiones, habitacula, and cellula. However, mansions seen in early medieval visions do hold to a rigorous distinction. Mansions viewed from the exterior are the abodes of the deceased assigned according to merit. These mansions are the destination: the goal of the soul. As yet, they are generally seen only from afar and they are inhabited only when the Christian passes into the afterlife. The Book of Enoch and the Book of Revelation describe these mansions and, mediated through Gregory's Dialogues, they became a commonplace in medieval visions. By contrast, the mansion into which one enters through a door, the mansion viewed from within, is the mystic's lifetime abode. This celestial mansion, while certainly the anticipated destination in the afterlife, was also a present habitation the spiritually minded must experience in order to better understand themselves.17 For both Aldegund and

16Diaz y Diaz cross-references the bejeweled interior of Bonellus's cell to descriptions of the mansions of the afterlife in hagiographic works known in Spain, Visiones, 53 n. 64. Interestingly, one of the works cited by Diaz y Diaz, the Passion of St. Sebastian, described the bejeweled interior as a dining room (triclinium), which along with the vestibule was the most opulent room in a Roman house.

17Salvius learned that he had duties yet to perform, Bonellus learned that his abandonment of the ascetic life would cause him to lose his promised prize, and Aldegund learned that she would be wedded to the God of Love.
Salvius, their mansions were pervaded by a sweet scent. Aldegund identified the scent as Christ's own odor; for Salvius it was a scent that nourished and sustained him many days after his vision. Scriptural sources lacked the intimacy and sense of homecoming that characterized these envisioned interiors. The inspiration for the abodes of Salvius, Aldegund, and Bonellus was far removed from the hard, shiny metals that flashed out from the heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation.

Since scriptural references are inadequate, we must look to other sources to find the warm associations early medieval visionaries found in these interiors. The interior design of this palace owed its inspiration to more contemporary ideas than it did to Scripture's futuristic imagination, for Aldegund, Salvius, and Bonellus were not entering mansions of the righteous at the end of their lives, but the palace of Love. To fully appreciate its design we must first examine the architecture of real houses owned by the élite in late antiquity.

Entering the Palace of Love

Many descriptions of home interiors and examples of domestic architecture have survived from Roman times.¹⁸ Avid builders, the Hellenistic Greeks and the Romans lavished particular care on their homes, and as is still the case today, domestic ornamentation in the Mediterranean world privileged interiors over exteriors. Among the wealthier classes these opulent interiors can be described only as gaudy. For while Roman civic architecture emphasized proportion and

clean-cut design, residential architecture was a different matter. The desire for opulence was served less by architectural line than by richly colored paintings in hallways and colorful mosaics in public areas such as the vestibule and dining room (triclinium). Statuary cluttered the central spaces of the home, providing middle-distance vistas as one looked through the length of the house. The interior was a jumble of deep, rich colors, and ornaments of silver, gold, bronze, and painted stone.

Although it is possible that something of this style of interior survived in Gaul in the villas owned by Aldegund's family, we can say more confidently that details of such splendid interiors were communicated through written sources. Dating from second-century North Africa, Apuleius of Madaura's description of Cupid's palace in his *Metamorphoses* is a significant example of an imagined Roman interior. Apuleius adapted an ancient folktale to tell the story of a beautiful maiden named Psyche (the soul), who was secretly married to the young god Cupid (Love). Rapt up to his palace, she was attended in her every need by invisible servants. The palace's marvelous interior, "fashioned as if for a god," was clearly modeled after the Hellenized architecture of Apuleius's North Africa. Apuleius described it as follows:

"In many cities, Roman law confined the homes of even the rich to a cramped urban space. When city boundaries could be circumvented, Romans built oversized monstrosities similar to those marring today's suburban landscapes. Aesthetics of proportion, however, were achieved by trompe-d'oeils and other illusory means (see Thébert, 313-409).

"Apuleius of Madaura, a second-century "middle" Platonist, wrote a number of philosophical works. His *Metamorphoses*, often known as *The Golden Ass*, was superficially a ribald tale about a young man's transformation into an ass, but was essentially a religious tale in disguise (Rudolph Helm, ed., *Apulei Platonici Madaurensis Metamorphoseon libri XI* [Leipzig, 1931]). Modern scholarship on Apuleius's work and its influence on later literature is immense (see the bibliography in P. G. Walsh's introduction and translation [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994] and James Tatum's *Apuleius and the Golden Ass* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979]."
a princely edifice, wrought and built, not by the art or hand of
man, but by the mighty power of a god: and you would judge
at the first entry therein that it were some pleasant and worthy
mansion for the powers of heaven. For the vaults above were
curiously carved out of cedar and ivory, propped and under-
mined with pillars of gold; the walls covered and sealed with
silver; divers sorts of beasts were graven and carved, that
seemed to encounter with those who entered in: all things
were so curiously and finely wrought that it seemed either to
be the work of some demigod, or God himself, that put all
these beasts into silver. The pavement was all of precious
stone, divided and cut from one another, whereon was carved
divers kinds of pictures . . . every part and angle of the house
was so well adorned by precious stones and inestimable trea-
sure there and the walls were so solidly built up with great
blocks of gold, that glittered and shone in such sort that the
chambers, porches, and doors gave out the light of day as it
had been the sun. 21

Apuleius did not describe Cupid's palace from its exterior but noted
the splendor of its interior "on first entry." Modeled on the entryway
of a Roman villa, the entrance to Cupid's palace was described by
Apuleius as a vestibule, one of the two most splendid rooms in a
Roman house (the other being the dining room, the triclinium). One
of the purposes of the vestibule was to awe the Roman aristocrat's
clients who, in all likelihood, would never penetrate the house beyond
that first gaze. The realism and movement of the animal statuary

21Cupid's palace is described in book 5 of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. The
translations of Walsh and of J. Arthur Hanson, *Apuleius, Metamorphoses*,
2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 44, 453 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University
Press, 1989) are generally to be preferred. However, I quote William Adling-
ton's 1566 translation over more modern translations for its poetic properties,
Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977),
although I have modernized it in a few places for readability.
encountered by Psyche reminds us of the mythological scenes so popular in Hellenistic and Roman statuary. The pavement or floors adorned with precious stones echo the mosaics found in particularly elegant Roman vestibules. The homes of the well-to-do also included fine wooden vaulting and columns as standard features. Apuleius wrote that the openings in the house, the porticos and doors gave out light "as it had been the sun," an image so standard in Hellenistic literature that it made its way into the Book of Revelation.

For Psyche, this was the palace of her bridegroom Cupid, the god of Love. The allegorical love story was popular in Christian as well as pagan culture and the description of Cupid's celestial mansion had many imitators in late imperial court literature.

THE WEDDING-SONG: PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN EPITHALAMIA

Cupid made his most effortless transition into Christian culture through court poetry. In late antiquity, marriage poems (epithalamia) accompanied the nuptial celebration of prominent Romans, pagan and Christian alike. That these marriages cemented political alliances between hardly nubile partners stretched poets to saccharine heights of fancy.22 Perhaps the best known in Gaul was the marriage song prepared by Claudian to celebrate the union of the adolescent Emperor Honorius with Maria, the daughter of his general Stilicho.23 In terms entirely conventional to the genre, Claudian assembled for this Christian


wedding the Roman deities who presided over marriage: Venus, Cupid, and various other mythological attendants. In this poem, it was Cupid’s mission to “wing it” over to Venus’ palace, the palace of Love, to inform her of the impending love-match. Venus’ palace (situated on the island of Cyprus) was a fabulous construction: “Vulcan built this too of precious stones and gold, wedding their costliness to art. Columns cut from rock of hyacinth support emerald beams; the walls of beryl, the high-built thresholds of polished jasper, the floor of agate trodden as dirt beneath the foot. In the midst is a courtyard rich with fragrant turf that yields a harvest of perfume.” From thence a celestial procession accompanied Venus to attend the royal couple’s nuptials. Her presence at the wedding of the exalted Christian couple betokened that in the world of high culture, Venus and Cupid belonged to all.

Christian poets continued to sing of Love and pomp at Christian weddings in the Claudian tradition. There are numerous examples from Gaul. Furthermore Claudian’s epitalamium clearly inspired the Christian poet Prudentius to include a palace of Love along similar lines in his extended allegory on the soul, the Psychomachia. Significantly,

24 “Procul atria divae / permutant radios silvaque obstante virescunt. / Lemnius haec etiam gemmis extruxit et auro / admiscens artem pretiosibusque smaragdi / supposuit caesas hyacinthi rupe columnas. / berylloparies et iaspide lubrifica surgunt / limina despectusque solo calcatur achates. / in medio glæbis redolentibus arca dives / praebet odoratas messes; hic mitis amomii, / hic casiae matura seges, Panchaeaque turgent / cinnama, nee sicco frondescunt vimina costo / tardaque sudanti prorepunt balsama rivo” (Platnauer, 248-49).

Prudentius associated the palace of Love with the temple of Wisdom. Thus the palace of Love as the temple of Wisdom demonstrably entered the Christian tradition.

Yet in *epithalamia* we are only halfway to Aldegund’s palace of Love. In celebrations of mortal marriages, the gods merely observed. Venus attended as the goddess of Love and her child Cupid clung fondly around his mother’s neck. Yet for a marriage in which the visionary participated, a marriage between a mortal and a god, between a Christian virgin and Christ, between the Soul and Love, we must seek a closer parallel in late antique literature. This brings us back to the mortal Psyche’s marriage to her celestial bridegroom, Cupid. What evidence is there that this specific story had a place in Christian religious culture and influenced its celestial mansion iconography?

**The Making of a Christian Allegory**

From its inception, the story of Cupid and Psyche was a story, a “fabled narrative.” Apuleius’s intention was to compose allegory, not allegoresis. Cupid and Psyche’s story was not presented as an

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27 The term is from Macrobius, who distinguishes two types of fable: that which gratifies the ear and the *narratio fabulosa*, which presents “a decent and dignified conception of holy truths . . . presented beneath a modest veil of allegory” (*Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by Macrobius*, trans. William Harris Stahl [New York: Columbia University Press, 1952], 85). See also the important study by Peter Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 9 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974).
ancient myth in need of philosophic explication, but as an allegorical cipher for Middle Platonism. In short, it was a philosophic not a religious myth. Christians familiar with the philosophic writings of Apuleius considered this distinction significant, and we know that many read his work. From the fifth-century Christian mythographer Fulgentius we know that elaborate philosophic interpretations of Apuleius's story existed in late antiquity. His contemporary Sidonius Apollinaris advised one young man that if he could not put his mind to more serious works of devotion, he should at least apply himself to the study of Apuleius's works (unspecified) as an exercise in solving “problems.” Thus Apuleius's writings had a Christian audience in Gaul, suggesting that Christian and pagan shared a


29 Fulgentius, Mythography 6, trans. Leslie George Whitbread, Fulgentius the Mythographer (Columbus, Ohio: State University Press, 1971), 88–90. Fulgentius, who disapproved of such indulgence, did not resist a Christian interpretation of his own. He likened Psyche to Adam, who was unaware of his nakedness until he ate from the tree of covetousness, that is, greed. Fulgentius repeats as a falsehood the interpretation of Aristophontes of Athens’s Disarestia (no longer extant) in which, among other characters who are interpreted allegorically, Venus represents lust and Cupid represents greed (cupiditatem). (See also Barry Baldwin, “Fulgentius and His Sources,” Traditio 44 [1988]: 37–57, esp. 41, “Aristophontes.”) At first Psyche does not yield to the pleasure of greed, but then looks upon it, conceives a hot desire for it, and is punished.

30 Sidonius Ep. 9.13 to Tonantius: “At least borrow from the Platonist of Madaura his patterns of convivial problems, and (to improve your education) solve these when propounded, and propound these to be solved; and busy yourself with such pursuits even in your free time” (Anderson, Sidonius 2:569).
common "allegorical mentality." Since Christians would have understood Apuleius's story as a secular rather than religious myth, there was no need to impose on the story the censorship of an alternative Christian allegory "to disarm the gods." Thus an ancient folk story reinterpreted by Apuleius as the divinity's love for the soul slipped into Christian consciousness with barely a ripple of resistance.

In late antiquity, the plastic arts witnessed the immediate and exuberant popularity of the story. The amorous couple are a common motif on decorative reliefs and in garden statuary. The fact that they appear even on sarcophagi is particularly significant. In a funerary context Cupid and Psyche could have been associated only with their allegorical meaning in which the soul reunited with the god of Love and thereby achieved immortality. According to Janet Huskinson's work on children's sarcophagi in Rome and Ostia, artists commonly depicted Cupid and Psyche on children's tombs. Sculptors also decorated the tombs of adults with scenes from the Cupid and Psyche story. Indeed, women may have designedly chosen this representation for their tombs and those of their children.

In the Eastern empire Cupid lived on as Eros, with rather different and distinct attributes to those in the West. As Paul Magdalino has shown, sculpted images of Eros were still visible on ancient public...
buildings in eleventh-century Byzantium depicting the god as a king, enthroned and carrying bow, arrows, and fire. It was by means of a torch that Psyche discovered and then lost the god of Love. In court literature Cupid was depicted as falling victim to Love, pricked by his own arrows, suggesting that in the East, memory of Cupid’s associations with Psyche had been preserved. This Mediterranean evidence may serve as a clue to Cupid’s survival in Gallic sources prior to the Carolingian age. We have evidence that Cupid was depicted in the homes of the rich in Northern Gaul. In the fifth century a domestic mural in a villa at Trier inspired Ausonius of Bordeaux’s poem “The Crucifixion of Cupid.” Regardless of whether the mural’s imagery was intended to be religiously ambivalent, it could certainly have been interpreted that way by subsequent viewers. With all these examples, we should not be surprised that images of Cupid and Psyche crossed over into dreams. As Jean-Claude Schmitt notes of a later age, “Can one see such images without wanting to dream them? Can one see them other than in a kind of dream? Must one not dream them in order to see them truly?”

Let us return to Aldegund’s palace and her vision. As a young woman, still in the secular life, Aldegund saw a vision of a heavenly

35 Paul Magdalino, “Eros the King and the King of the Amours: Some Observations on Hysmine and Hysminias,” Dumbarton Oaks Papers 46 (1992), 197–204. Paul Magdalino, following Carolina Cupane, notes the transformation of Cupid from a little boy to a grown youth in the eleventh-century poem of the title as an innovation. However, Cupid is already a sexualized youthful adult in Apuleius’s second-century tale.

36 Ausonius of Bordeaux, “The Crucifixion of Cupid,” in Harold Isbell, trans., The Last Poets of Imperial Rome, 65–68. Almost no domestic architecture has survived from the Romano-Gallic or the Merovingian period. Ausonius’s poem is a rare reference to a specific mural depiction in a domestic setting.

mansion. At some point her desires changed from the girlish dreams of an earthly husband and earthly riches to desire for a heavenly bridegroom. Like Psyche, she crossed the threshold into the palace of Love, with its bright ornaments and the fragrant aroma of its celestial inhabitant. There Aldegund realized her true calling: to marry Christ, the God of Love. The bright, close warmth of the mythological palace of Love held powerful associations for Aldegund many decades later. In Christian poetry the interior space of Cupid's palace of Love had already begun to be fused with the biblical house of Wisdom and its seven pillars. For Christ, who was Cupid, the god of Love, was also Sophia, holy Wisdom. Christ, Cupid, and Wisdom were all deities who were enthroned in subsequent tradition, and it was perhaps this tradition that brought to the imagination of one young Western visionary a new means of expressing her mystical union and sapiential transformation.

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References


Reading the Material World Metaphysically in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptaméron*

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Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(Matthew 6:19–21)

Until Gary Ferguson’s groundbreaking study *Mirroring Belief: Marguerite de Navarre’s Devotional Poetry*, Marguerite de Navarre’s evangelical theology was viewed as more Catholic than Protestant. However, Ferguson definitively shows an evolution away from traditional Catholicism toward a pronounced Protestant perspective. He demonstrates that, even in her early works, “Marguerite employs many of the ideas and images emphasised by the Reformers and in particular by Luther.”

\(^1\) Gary Ferguson, *Mirroring Belief: Marguerite de Navarre’s Devotional Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 41. Such borrowing is especially apparent in discussions of the problem of sin and “when it comes to articulating ideas about the state of fallen man deprived of grace.”
criticize Catholic practice directly, her views are certainly "contrary to the prevailing ideological climate within the University of Paris at the time [she] was writing." In addition, she occasionally uses a Reformed vocabulary, as in the expression _vive foy._

Ferguson examines only Marguerite's devotional poetry to trace her trajectory, regarding the _Heptameron_ as primarily a secular work. However, I believe that this transformation also had a direct impact on her crafting of the _Heptameron_, which shows a more developed and programmatic pro-Protestant perspective than many of her other writings and could stand as a theological document in its own right. Indeed, as Gérard Defaux's recent work attests, Marguerite intends the _nouvelles_ of her œuvre to be vehicles for the _Bonne Nouvelle_, the

_Ferguson, Mirroring Belief, 63. Particularly as concerned the issue of justification—whether by faith (Calvin's and Luther's perspective: _sola fidei_) or through works (the Catholic stance)—Marguerite took some time to move from the customary reliance on saints, intercession, and works of charity to the Protestant position of reliance on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as atonement for all sins and proof of salvation. Nonetheless, shift she eventually did._

_Ferguson, Mirroring Belief, 153. "[Vive foy] is [an expression] associated primarily with the evangelicals, and though not eschewed by certain Catholics, it yet comes to be linked more and more firmly with Protestant writers." Marguerite's change of position reveals itself sometimes more through an awareness of absences than through deliberate and overt lexically coded stance-taking; such omissions as the refusal to include any portrayal or discussion of sacraments, for instance, during a fraught time-period in which the Catholic church was insisting on their affirmation, cannot fail to signal a turning-away from a thoroughly orthodox position. The mention of sacraments is conspicuously lacking from the _Heptameron_, although priests—many portrayed in all their depravity and corruption—are not._

"I have been constrained to exclude almost entirely Marguerite's great prose work, the _Heptameron_. Although this work does not contain religious comment, it is governed by a set of generic conventions which are wholly different from those I propose to examine here and its literary ancestry lies elsewhere" (Ferguson, _Mirroring Belief_, xviii–xix).
 Once we recognize the metaphysical orientation of the *Heptamérion*, the elements of terrestrial experience in and through which the spiritual dimension moves become significant in a new way. Given that Marguerite penned narratives deeply embedded in the material culture of her time, the *nouvelles* also say something important about how her metaphysical awareness works itself out in relation explicitly to the things of the world. Finally, the *Heptamérion* maintains a tension between body and soul, physical world and metaphysical realm. Textual materialism, an object-laden mode of writing of which Marguerite developed her own version in response to innovations in contemporaneous painting, translates between the two realms.

The vibrant artistic panoply of the court of François I also was formative for Marguerite’s literary project. François compiled a cabinet of curiosities in 1527, to which he added throughout his life, a treasure trove of medals, silverplate, figurines, “de petites pièces curieuses & une infinité de petites gentillesses.” The curiosity cabinet reinforced innovations in contemporaneous media, especially that of genre painting. This richly materialist school of painting, collected by François I, constituted, in my view, the second most significant influence on the *Heptamérion* after that of theology. Marguerite’s metaphysical perspective led her to interpret the gorgeous world of the genre painters as desirable yet fallen. She perceived both the lure, and the trap, of...

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5See his article “De la Bonne Nouvelle aux novelles: Remarques sur la structure de *Heptamérion*,” to appear in *French Forum*. I had not had the opportunity to read this compelling essay prior to receiving proofs of my own article but want to acknowledge Gérard Defaux’s significant contribution—and felicitous accord with my thesis here.


7Schnapper, 180.

8Le Père Dan (speaking in 1642), cited in Schnapper, 182.
earthly treasures. “The man enlightened by grace and regenerate in Christ sees in the whole of the creation nothing but the hand of God, while the worldly see only a series of superficial distractions, a shiny surface of diverting images from which they seek only pleasure and profit. Yet the more they enjoy the more they seek, and the more they seek the more what they enjoy falls short of their desires, so that for them the creation is a source of ultimate frustration.”

As Marguerite drafted the nouvelles, her eyes met the exterior display of sumptuous robes meant to proclaim a courtier, the thick curtains and wall-hangings of a wealthy man’s chambers; books bound in leather and gilded, more for show than for use. The Heptameron’s own glittering materiality thus functions both as deception and disguise as well as its own metaphysical indictment. Nouvelle after nouvelle seem intentionally structured around things, objects that both define and damn. Her selection of material objects as vehicle for her criticism of the illusion of terrestrial self-sufficiency is distinctly Protestant. While she focuses on images and things, their meaning is

9Ferguson, Mirroring Belief, 68–69.

10Jean Clouet’s painting of the reformer Guillaume Budé is a case in point. Budé’s introspective expression complements his careful penmanship in the book in which he is writing. He has slightly turned the book so that the viewer may read from it. The book is presented as a precious object, with gilded edges and a pink cover, stacked on top of another book (Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession number 46.68).


12Such a textual approach is consonant with the description of otherworldliness that contemporaries have provided of Marguerite: “He saw in the Queen’s eyes, even from a distance, that fervent spirit and the light which God has given her, so clear that it can lead one to the blessedness of eternal life, without being detained in the impediments of immorality” (Pier Paolo Vercerio, cited in Karen Pinkus, Picturing Silence: Emblem, Language, Counter-Reformation Materiality [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996], emphasis added).
Illustration from the *Heptameron*
only in their narrative role; no immanence inheres in their physical presence. She uses images dually: to describe a material attitude and to offer a metaphysical corrective to the problems of that perspective. Earthly treasures compose both the obstruction of, and the arrow to, metaphysical understanding. Similarly,

13 An unexpected effect of this object-based treatment is that the gender issues that are usually so problematic for Renaissance culture can be resolved, in a transmutative way, by Marguerite's text: men and women possess gender differences, it is true; yet ultimately their significance lies in their personhood as it is, or is not, oriented metaphysically. Objects paradoxically enable troubling issues of subjectivity to be pushed into the background, once the focus on God is made clear. This is certainly not the customary view of most Marguerite scholars. Patricia Cholakian, in Rape and Writing in the Heptaméron of Marguerite de Navarre (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), emphasizes the dynamics of rape and scopic violence, stressing the embeddedness of gender issues. But I believe that a larger perspective, and design, can be discerned in this text. Natalie Zemon Davis remarks in her Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) that "in the sexual adventures that are the subject of many a tale, Marguerite treats men and women with symmetry, cutting through the topoi of insatiable female appetite and modesty. Both sexes can be chaste, resisting unwanted sexual overtures; both sexes initiate love affairs and deceive their mates." (106). The explanation for such a disregard may be precisely the metaphysical perspective, which Davis does not examine.

14 In this way, Marguerite's textual materialism is "essentially paradoxical, since its ultimate objective is to proclaim the obsoleteness of literature in the face of the absolute Non-Being" (Jan Miernowski, "Literature and Metaphysics," Études rabelaisiennes 35 [1998]: 131-51).

15 Miernowski, 149. Miernowski makes this point in reference to Marguerite's third book of Les Prisons. He describes the scenario as a movement through, then an elimination of, things become dross: "Blinded by la libido scienti, Ami locks himself in a library embracing all the disciplines of learning. After years spent in the illusion of knowledge and self-importance, he hears a word, a voice, a 'parolle vive': 'Je suis qui suys,' the fundamental assertion of God's Being which opens to him the understanding of the letter of the texts he had been reading without ever fully understanding them (3, 459 and sq.). This sudden illumination burns down his prison of books and makes him see the 'word,' 'Je suys.'"
Protestant thought sees history as “impressed” and “defined” by “the creator’s own stamp.” The investment of [aspects of] nature [and culture] with unprecedented spiritual [weight] could be undertaken with piety because God was understood to have accomplished his most intimate internalization of the spirit within these apparently profane realms of the phenomenal.16

A discussion of quotidian objects accords well with Reformed doctrine. While Protestant theologians did not bring secular knowledge to bear on their interpretation of Scripture, in their expository techniques, the application of Scripture to daily life, secular and material objects were not only permissible, but widely referred to.17 Just so, in the Héptaméron, Marguerite uses artifactual witness to create a theological depth that reorients traditional narrative.18 Genre painting selects and situates objects within the frame of a private room or domestic space to create a narrative about those objects, their possessor, and the meaning of life. Genre painters use things in a new way; moving away from the stylized universe of late medieval art, where things are used


17Debora Kuller Shuger, The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice and Subjectivity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 42. This materialist dimension was typical of the age, and particularly of Protestant historiography. Protestant Bible scholars tended to concentrate on excavating the material culture of antiquity. “While the largest number of entries in Renaissance biblical commentaries discuss philological matters, antiquities form the second-most popular category; miniature essays on such topics as Mary's alabaster box, the nature of hyssop . . . Pilate's atrium . . . a scholarly fascination with the materials culture of antiquity: the detailed explanations of clothing, pots and pans, burial customs, coinage, table manners, and other such ephemera” (290).

18In so doing, Marguerite avoids the pitfall that Protestant theologians (particularly the Puritans, later) worried about: that of art as an end in itself (something that would never have concerned a Renaissance artist). She set art, and objects, to do the Lord's work.
symbolically, they now use objects ironically: things of the world voice a criticism of the world. This stance of cynicism may encourage the viewer to look away from earthly objects and desires, to focus on a metaphysical ideal.

Marguerite began to draw on the genre painters’ techniques for treating objects, applying their approach textually. She used words in the way that they used images, deriving from their thing-studded paintings a new form of textual materiality: the stuff of earthly existence, at one and the same time the world’s very substance, and the dross hindering its salvation. Marguerite’s strategy constitutes a theorizing of the use of material culture and its translation to a textual domain, with a spiritual reorientation. Her innovation performs an interdisciplinary collusion among visual arts, literature, and theology and shows how new strides in different cultural and intellectual domains were integrated and reapplied in creative ways in other venues.

An example of illustrated books that Marguerite collected may demonstrate the influence of her artistic milieu, as well as show the marriage of art and theology in the new treatment of word and image. The *Initiaitio instruction en la Religion chrestienne pour les enfans*, a Lutheran children’s catechism produced for and dedicated to Marguerite, was probably brought into France by refugees from persecution in Strasbourg and possibly penned by the Württemberg reformer

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19 Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 251. “In a society adjusting to literacy, print was not just print, but was incorporated into daily life by allying itself with other methods of communication—be it the tactile language of gloves and garters, or the oral activities of prayer, proverb and song.”

20 Richard W. F. Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 39. While these interests and foci are distinctively Marguerite’s, it should be noted that it was not unusual during this time period to find literature functioning as a sort of laboratory within which to experiment with social or cultural issues. “Literary genre [is treated by the time period] as . . . an experimental space within [which] to test wider discursive issues.”
Johannes Brenz, whose work Marguerite studied. The *Initiatoire* shows a transitional artistic moment between the Limbourg frères style of ornate, cerulean blue background illumination and the genre painting style that features an imbricated series of enclosures, boxes, classical arches as in this image's frame, pavilions, gateways, checkerboard patterns and increasingly confined, interior, domestic spaces—consonant with the Reformed emphasis on the significance of the inner man and the disposition of the heart. This painting begins to use detail and objects much as do genre painters: encrusting with material objects the worldliness of the subject as a statement about the nature of life and the afterlife. The figure's sword, his jewelry, the bystanders' luxurious garments, the gilded statue in the background, the book one woman holds—all combine in a tactile, sensual, seemingly very real space into which the viewer enters.

A glance at a few paintings from the period sketches an etiology of the evolution of this new perspective on material objects and situates Marguerite within that approach. In *Girl Making a Garland*, by Hans Suess von Kulmbach, German, ca. 1508, a young woman plaits a crown of forget-me-nots to send to her lover. The forget-me-nots function only as the symbols of remembrance; they send the message to the absent young man not to forget his mistress. Things lack heft and substance; they are the ephemeral media of communication. In a roughly contemporaneous painting, however, things already begin to assume a material presence and convey cultural critique.

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21The provenance is the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 5069, folios A-v. The image is also reproduced in Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie, ed., *Creating French Culture: Treasures from the Bibliothèque national de France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 195, illus. 71. Along with her coat of arms to the left, Marguerite herself has been identified in the features of one of the women to the right, and Henri d'Albret holds a daisy, or marguerite, a signature of subjectivity that stylistically seems to prefigure the introspective, thoughtful features of Van Eyck or Holbein's subjects somewhat later.

22Provenance is the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, accession number 17.190.21.
Girl Making a Garland, by Hans Suess von Kulmbach, ca, 1508
In *Saint Eligius*, by Petrus Christus, ca. 1449, religious objects and relics arrayed on the shelf in a shop symbolize aspects of the saint's existence, retaining the symbolic function noted in the previous painting. However, a mirror in the bottom right corner introduces a problematic, unclear dimension. Within the shop a young pair consults the jeweler; outside the shop, another pair peers in, the juxtaposition of the two couples forcing a comparison and an assessment of their possible interrelationships. Is the viewpoint exaggerated? Commentary? Criticism? Does it reflect privileged knowledge or foreknowledge on the part of the saint? Twinned with the dangling scale—a jeweler's scale, in daily life, but, read theologically, a Last Judgment motif—the mirror suggests a judgment rendered on one or both of the pairs. A window for cultural commentary opens: things both signify in and of themselves, possess traditional symbolic valences, and also revise themselves, in a critical or even cynical perspective on earthly pleasures. Marguerite's application of visual technique to a literary medium situates itself at this juncture between sheer sensual description of materiality and the incorporation of metaphysical critique, through techniques such as the canny narrative arrangement and juxtaposition of objects, as in this painting.

Provenance is the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, accession number 1975.1.110.

Marguerite already knew that an assemblage of objects could compose a narrative. She also recognized what John Locke later phrased so well: that objects are incredibly useful in making concrete the viewer's perspective and in eliciting a mood or a response; they act as visual shorthand: “Well-chosen similes, metaphors, and allegories being taken from objects already known, and familiar to the understanding are conceived as fast as spoken; and the correspondence being concluded, the thing they are brought to explain and elucidate is thought to be understood too” (*Of the Conduct of the Understanding* [1706], cited in Kroll, 275). Marguerite's technique of translating material treasures to the textual realm confers a three-dimensionality and a quotidian, lived quality, rendering her thesis even more compelling. Her innovation was to shape stories, through the medium of earthly things, in a parable-like way, adding a metaphysical message.
Saint Eligius, by Petrus Christus, 1449
Pieter Boel, the Flemish master of *An Allegory of Worldly Vanity*, ca. 1640, makes this hermeneutic innovation explicit; his title clearly conveys the notion that earthly objects are inadequate, deceitful receptacles unfit for human trust. This painter weds his theology to his art, decrying Catholic reliance on things, images and emblems of worldly status; a bishop's mitre perches near the top of a heap of worldly goods and treasures that, contrary to their possessor's belief, retain no intrinsic value. The painter's palette bravely but futilely flourishes bright colors near the lower right-hand corner of the painting, instructing us that even his artwork will go the way of all flesh.

If genre painting already seems to display a proto-Protestant or even explicitly Protestant perspective, this may derive from the movement of the locus of piety during this period from the church to the home—culminating in the Protestant paterfamilias and family devotional practice. In response to this shift, Protestants had to come to terms with a desacralized world, a world in which the former clear compartments between holy objects and worldly things are blurred, and decide what to do with its bits and pieces of material detritus. By reinforcing these with a metaphysical role, Marguerite offers earthly treasures a brief moment in the spotlight before interrogating and jettisoning them.

Finally, around 1660, Gerard ter Borch, a Dutch genre painter, flattens out critical perspective; now things not only do not have worth in themselves but are incapable of focusing our eyes on a redemptive horizon beyond them; the pen, desk, dog, and inkwell serve only as props to describe yet another mundane event: the painting represents "Curiosity" and aims no higher than that. Significantly, the elaborate chandelier dangles from the ceiling, but sheds no light. This secularized viewpoint indirectly conveys an early modern theology of despair, suggesting that human experience will not—*can not*—be redeemed.

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25Provenance is the Musée des beaux-arts, Lille, France.
26Provenance is the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, accession number 49.7.38.
Curiosity, by Gerard ter Borch, ca. 1660
During the era of the Counter-Reformation, we also find a phenomenon that runs counter to that just described: a resurgence of value accorded to worldly things and sensuality, as the Catholic church seeks to counteract the effectiveness of Calvinist preaching, oriented toward the exposition of the word—sola scriptura—alone. A quintessentially Catholic treatment of objects, wherein relics are believed in an almost magical way to possess sacred capacities, this focus is very different from Marguerite's, and the second stage we have described, in that things are lifted up as effective material markers of metaphysical transcendence in a naive and triumphalist way.

Marguerite's textual treatment is innovative and makes a great contribution to the literary shift from the allegorical understanding of the world typical of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance to a more modern, individual-focused treatment typical of the proto-existential crisis of the Reformers. In allegory, things stand as elements in a semantic structure and must be deciphered in relation to each other so that the message's significance is revealed. With Marguerite, however, the juxtaposition and relationships among things does not grant value to those things; they possess merit only in and as they are surpassed, worked through, as iconic markers to a higher significance that, unlike allegory, is not limited to their designated roles as cryptograms in a sentence to be decoded. The message is not found in earth; it signifies hierarchically, from Word to word, from Logos to Marguerite's reflection of it in her narratives. Allegory is a self-contained symbolization technique; contrarily, Marguerite's earthly treasures shimmer with the deceptive luster of apparent self-containment but are soon emptied out.

Jesuit emblem books of this later period, developed through Ignation response to Calvinism in France, display a very different treatment and interpretation of objects from that of Marguerite de Navarre. The *Imago primiae-culti societatis Jesu a Provincia Flando-Belgica*, Antwerp, 1640, housed in the Newberry Library in Chicago, for instance, used objects as sacral repositories. A contrastive study between Protestant and Catholic emblem books would offer considerable documentation about how different theologies influence the use of material culture.
Glass baubles, silk gloves, embroidered stockings, flagons of beer and casks of wine, mullioned windowpanes and convex mirrors, lapdogs, velvety fabrics and leather-bound books—these form the stuff and substance of the genre painting, as well as the texture of Marguerite’s text. “Dutch still life paintings . . . not only reflect[s] but [also] reflect[s] on wealth by a society transformed through a rising tide of capital. They remind[d] their owners of the transitory nature of earthly pleasures and the vanity of their own newly acquired riches . . . in a visual language that [is] itself a tour de force of sensuousness . . . that intensifies] the very appeal of the objects they warn[n] against.”

Textual materialist criticism, which is instructive in studying the *Heptaméron*, examines the presence of objects within texts by scrutinizing their relationships. This school of thought proclaims the need “for studies that will reveal to us the ways in which the mass consumption of objects of commerce and high culture meet . . . the specific psychological and cultural needs of dynamic social groups . . . providing them with a sense of identity.” Spiritual considerations lie beyond psychological and cultural factors, visually informing them. The *Heptaméron*’s textual treasure trove functions this way: through a movement from object to subject, Marguerite limns a material map in the direction of metaphysical salvation. Such an itinerary, through text, transmutes materiality into metaphor as things become valuable through the new spiritual message with which they are infused. Earthly treasures become the transitory storehouse of the soul.

The textual materialist interpretation of the collection of objects views them as textual nodal points. Marguerite’s spiritually oriented, thing-studded narrative finds a concrete manifestation in the

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29Bermingham and Brewer, eds., 4.
predominantly Protestant phenomenon\textsuperscript{30} of the \textit{Wunderkammer}\textsuperscript{31} or collector's cabinet, constructed as a "résumé du monde."\textsuperscript{32} A spatial and materialist representation of the Protestant ramification of knowledge, the collector's cabinet aptly employs a Protestant approach to Scripture: an ordering approach involving the collection of scriptural \textit{loïc} (construed concretely as space or place). Calvin's systematic theology discerned through pattern the significance of worldly things in God's plan for history: a metaphysical treatment of terrestrial objects that fits well with Marguerite's textual technique. Antoine Schnapper, specialist on the practice of collecting, observes that the role of such objects,\textsuperscript{33} dependent on their arrangement,\textsuperscript{34} was to act as what he calls "sémiophores,"\textsuperscript{35} referring to the invisible reality of which they are signs. Protestants like the consummate collector Bernard Palissy sought to confer order on the chaos and fragmentation of the postlapsarian world through his collections. For him, shells, fossils, odd rock

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{30}Schnapper, 220. "Notons aussi que, comme bon nombre de leurs confrères, ils sont protestants: on a souvent observé que la curiosité scientifique était plus répandue et plus active chez les protestants, plus libres vis-à-vis de la tradition religieuse." He cites such noted Protestants as Jules-Raymond de Solier (d. 1594), François Gaverol (1636–94), Pierre Borel (b. 1615).

\textsuperscript{31}"WUNDERKAMMER: a wonder-cabinet: a form of collection peculiar to the late Renaissance, characterized primarily by its encyclopedic appetite for the marvelous, or the strange, and by an exceptionally brief historical career. For perhaps 100 years such collections flourished, but by the middle of the seventeenth century they were rapidly vanishing" (Stephen Mullaney, "Strange Things," in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., \textit{Representing the English Renaissance} [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 65).

\textsuperscript{32}Mullaney, 8.

\textsuperscript{33}Schnapper states that the project of theorizing the collector's cabinet has yet to be undertaken; he constructs a historical perspective.

\textsuperscript{34}Mullaney, 67. "The objects thus displayed [are] maintained as 'extraneous,' in the Latin sense of the word, lodg[ed] beyond the bounds of cultural hierarchies or definitions, at least for the time being. No system determines the organization of the objects on display."

\textsuperscript{35}Schnapper, 7.}
formations documented God's plan for humanity. For instance, on a lead-glazed earthenware dish from his workshop in Paris, ca. 1565, Palissy invented ceramic *rustiques figulines*, his neologism for the assemblage of miniature animals, shells, snakes, lizards, ferns—elements of the natural world rendered in the creation colors of green, gray, brown, and blue—which he encrusted in collage fashion over all available surface, with the result that he returned nature to the original state of chaos, a second chance for a fallen world.36

As with Calvin and Palissy, things provided Marguerite with a way to reorder the universe and to align it with metaphysical mandates. Protestant curiosity cabinets, then, differ from those of other Renaissance humanists in that they not only aimed to summarize the world and its treasures, but also to go beyond the world, to seek a hidden significance in a higher sphere unconfined by the box, desk, or room of the curiosity collector. Marguerite's particular contribution thus theorizes a new genre, a sort of textual *Wunderkammer*, in which the narrative is both built upon and contains earthly treasures but interrogates those to undermine the self-sufficiency of that trove, to turn elsewhere for meaning. Her exhibit of these objects has a self-consuming end.

Similar to genre painters, she weaves a textual fabric so sensual as to approximate the concrete and tactile through the proliferation of material objects in the *nouvelles*: silken hose and beaded gloves, heavy coffers and mahogany placards, pieces of bone, golden goblets, mislaid letters, crowns and cuckold's horns, tapestries and canopies. The extraordinary wealth and emphasis on things as tools for cultural display, reinforcement of social difference and hierarchy that characterizes the court of François I°, offer an alluring field of possibilities for Marguerite's revision of the role of objects.37 A contemporary observer

36 The provenance is the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, accession number 53.225.52.
37 John Brewer, "Attitudes towards Culture as a Commodity, 1600–1800," in Bermingham and Brewer, eds., 346. "This cultural site was characterized by an emphasis upon social display: cultural sites were places of self-presentation
described the court environment as being “like a store, in which our tongues shop for a quantity of beautiful expressions.” This accumulative attitude, the jumbling of things without an interpretive schema, leaves a signifying void from which a narrative may arise organically from the juxtaposition and contrast of disparate objects. For unlike Montaigne in “Des cannibales,” in which exotic objects and references, as Debora Shuger has shown, strew the text with an encyclopedic but unrelated heap, Marguerite does wield narrative tools of selection, discrimination, and analysis. She chooses each thing deliberately to convey a particular aspect of her evangelical perspective, of her relationship to God and to the world and, at the diegetical level, to express their possessor’s relationship and their recipient’s terrestrial standing and metaphysical orientation. Marguerite uses her writing ideologically rather than as sheer representation, compelling “a significant shift [that] occurs in representational codes from the early humanist ethics as practical reason to a highly spiritualized faith.”

She rehearses the compendium of earthly things in order to rid them of their dross so that materiality may be rehabilitated as the paradoxical marker of its metaphysical origin. For this reason, objects crop up in her nouvelles as an evangelical polemic against relics. “The in which audiences made publicly visible their wealth, status, social and sexual charms. This was a culture steeped in hedonism and sexual intrigue.”

Claude de Vaugelas, Remarques sur la langue française (1647), preface to II, cited in Fragonard, La plume et l’épée, 105. My translation of “Il est certain que la Cour est comme un magazin, d’où notre langue tire quantité de beaux termes pour exprimer nos pensées.”

Shuger, 50. “Montaigne fashions a litany of the variety and strangeness of things found in culture. The methodology is aggregative and paratactic, an encyclopedic ‘heaping’ of unrelated exotic details. This pack-rat accumulation of curiosities and broken pieces of knowledge characterizes empirical and humanistic studies throughout the sixteenth century. It is endemic to the topical organization recommended in Renaissance rhetoric.”

Pinkus, 176.
symbol [in Lutheran thought] was perceived as a materialization, a
reification of spirituality, the death of faith itself." Sacral presence
does not in-dwell things, but rather resides beyond, in some trans­
formed sphere of which they are scantily reminiscent. Through her
reading of Luther, Marguerite learned to decipher the wo rld in
Pauline terms. St. Paul called worldly things, the things of the earth,
sarks, a Greek term meaning flesh in all its fallenness, flesh as prey to
sin—as distinct from a neutral evocation of the skin that covers our
bones. In Galatians 5:16–26, Paul explains the dichotomy yet inter­
twinedness of fallen flesh and unsullied spirit which the Heptamérion
programmatically illustrates: “The sinful nature desires what is con­
trary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.
They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you
want. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful
nature with its passions and desires.”

For Marguerite, textual material presence provides a witness­
ing function: objects are témoins to a truth that surpasses them. In
qintessential Protestant formulation, objects ultimately are mere
images, while the text is word, aiming at the transcendent truth-value
of the Logos.

For Marguerite, ultimate truth always inhabits the word, the
human word that testifies to the divine Word (“verbum tuum veritas
est”). Unlike Catholics who, in their understanding of relics, believe
that they can perceive some small evidence of the divine within the
human—the veneration of a saint’s bone, for instance, as capable of
effecting miracles by the believer’s pilgrimage to, and contact with,
the holy object, works this way—and seek to find the divine within
things, evangelicals move closer to Protestants who feel that things
may recall, or designate, the divine, but may never contain (and there­
by limit) it. In this, they follow St. Paul, who instructed the faithful to
put on the whole armor of God, referring not to literal armor, but

"Pinkus, 45."
to spiritual weapons, yet mentioning in detail all the components of military garb—breastplate, buckler, helmet—so as first to display them in their materiality. The Protestant evocation and surpassing of things also recalls Augustine’s instruction to put on saintliness like a cape or cloak. He uses the simile, constructed through the reference to the object, to point to a higher, abstract concept: one’s ability to reconfigure one’s spiritual being in accordance with God’s will, to vest appropriately for such a metaphysical investment. Still Catholic, yet informed by evangelical teaching, Marguerite can incorporate this variety of perspectives on objects, while affirming and illustrating 1 Peter: 18–19: “You were not saved by corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.” Marguerite offers her nouvelles not only as stories, but also as reflections of the Good News, the gospel. Objects in her narrative witness textually to their own transformation and redemption. The proliferation of objects in Marguerite’s narrative, then, suggests that we, as creatures of God, have moved away from him, have ourselves become objectified, that we need to work through and beyond those things, emblems of our own obtuseness and lust for the world, to experience a conversion, a turning toward Christ, a redemption through the resumption of subjectivity. We need, Marguerite tells us, to fight the culture of commodity, which includes the Catholic notion of containment in things, for objects obstruct spirituality.42

Marguerite’s storytellers would never have had the opportunity to construct their collection of stories had it not been for the destruction of an object at the very beginning of the storytelling process. The reason the travelers change their destination to that of the Abbey is that the bridge that had formerly spanned the river leading to their original destination has washed away in a flood:

42Bermingham and Brewer, eds., 3. “Consumption [can be] figured as the exchange of money for luxury goods but [also] as an occasion for the psychological dynamics of fantasy and narcissistic self-absorption.”
And when they were about to cross the Gave Bearnosy, which when they'd first crossed it, had only been about two feet deep. Now, they found that the river was so big and so wild that they turned away from it in search of a bridge which, having been made only of wood, had been washed away by the force of the water.  

This "pont" acts as mise-en-abyme for the goal of Marguerite's narrative project: through the elimination of its material presence, it forms the metaphoric bridge between man and God. Indeed, emblematizing the significance of her text as the site where objects mutate into subjects and materiality metamorphoses into redemptive spirituality, Marguerite's devisants decide that their stories will perform the same purpose:

Each person will tell a story that s/he has either personally seen, or one told by a reliable source. We'll make a present of these stories when we return from this trip, instead of bringing back images or mass cards.

Their book—Word, text, and spirit—will supplant images, rosaries, material things. The disappearance of the bridge, a human construction, is necessary in a symbolic way, too, for it shows what consequences ensue if Christ is not accepted as the bridge between man and God, heaven and earth. By suggesting that the stories that her devisants tell will now act as intermediaries between tellers and hearers, as the gospel

43Marguerite de Navarre, l'Heptaméron. Ed. M.-François (Paris: Garnier, 1967), 1. prologue, 1. "Et, quant se vint à passer le Gave Bearnosy qui, en allant, n'avoit poinct deux piedz de profondeur, le trouverent tant grand et impetueux qu'ilz se destourneront pour sercher les pontz, lesquels, pour n'estre que de boys, furent emportez par la vehemence de l'eaue."

44de Navarre 1, i, 10. "dira chascun quelque histoire qu'il aura veue ou bien oy dire à quelque homme digne de foy nous leur en ferons present au retour de ce voyiage, en lieu d'ymaiges ou de patenostres."
does, Marguerite accepts that, while not all have "ears to hear" or eyes to read the Logos, her texts may be able to perform, in however limited a capacity, a proselytizing function.

Other objects disappear, are destroyed, or are otherwise discredited in the first nouvelle. Here, a lovely woman of loose morals and bad character sleeps with three men: her husband, a bishop (the character most explicitly linked to materiality: the woman allows him to touch her for "avarice [rather] than out of love in order to make a profit"), and a young lover, du Mesnil, to whom she also commodifies: she sleeps with him "for [her own] pleasure."46

While the husband is away, du Mesnil arrives at the woman's house for an assignation. However, a servant discloses to him that his place is already taken by the bishop. Furious, du Mesnil later tells his lover that he is unworthy of her favors, since he knows she's been touching choses sacrées (the episcopal phallus) and that her cas [a sixteenth-century slang word for vagina] is now exposed [descouvert]. Effectively, du Mesnil reveals the value he had assigned to the woman's body as unwarranted, a salacious criticism of the veneration of relics, which also makes Marguerite's point that both men and women are treated as things in a spurious sexual economy of exchange.

Fearing that du Mesnil will vilify her, the woman and her husband hire an assassin, kill the young man, grind his bones, and incorporate them into the mortar of their house.47 They also suborn the two witnesses to the crime. The text nevertheless discloses their deed.48 Here again, Marguerite uses the text to surpass its objects: du Mesnil's bones, a structuring conceit that both uses yet also changes objects into new relationships, as does narrative. The authorities eventually learn of the

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45 de Navarre, i, i, 12. "avarice [plutôt] que par amour pour son proffict."
46 de Navarre, i, i, 12. "Pour plaisir."
47 de Navarre, i, i, 15. "Et, pour celer son meurdre, feit brusler le corps du pauvre trespasse. Les os qui ne furent pas consommez par le feu, les feit mettre dans du mortier là où il faisoit bastir sa maison."
48 de Navarre, i, i, 15. "Le plus seur temsoin."
crime because of the fragments of bone extruding from the foundations, just as shoals of objects rise out of Marguerite's text to signal her intentions. Her new textual materialism uses things to represent beyond themselves, so that the text itself becomes the effective material presence. Absolute materiality is an unreliable witness, because of its impermanence and perishability; only the word remains. And yet how material, paradoxically, the murder has become: it surrounds the murderers in their house, the mortar being made from their victim's bones. Marguerite uses this form of materiality to point to the consequences of sin, how it haunts us with damning evidence ever present before the eyes of the guilty. By anchoring the guilty in the material consequences and productions of their crime, Marguerite denies to them the transcendent, redemptive metaphysical capacities that her nouvelles elsewhere offer.

In the story of the mule-driver's wife, Marguerite refers to two objects, both of which functionally surpass their description. A virtuous wife, pursued by her husband's lustful servant, refuses to surrender to his desire, and is raped and killed. In this nouvelle, as in the first, clues to the perpetrator of the crime seem absent from the scene: the rapist flees, taking with him his sword, and there were no witnesses. Only the woman's body remains. The way in which the crime is solved transforms the woman's body from object of the servant's desire—to which he denied the status of subjectivity by ignoring her pleas for mercy—to text, one that signifies and tells the truth about what has transpired. The body on the ground gapes with twenty-five wounds; the woman, near death, no longer can speak. Nevertheless, using hand gestures and eye movements as well as indicating her wounds, constituting an alphabet of agony on the parchment of her flesh, she succeeds in miming the rape, her resistance, and the mortal blow. There are twenty-six letters in the alphabet; the woman's painstakingly enumerated twenty-five wounds signify that the last letter will be the Omega: God's version of what has happened.

They found that she had 25 mortal wounds on her body, and they did what they could for her, but all efforts were in vain.
Nevertheless, she hung on for yet another hour without speaking, making signs with her eyes and hands, through which she showed that she had not yet lost her senses. Being queried, by a man of the church, concerning her faith as she lay dying, and of her hope in *salvation through Jesus Christ only*, she answered with signs so clear that words could not have better communicated her intentions; and thus, with a joyful mien, eyes raised to heaven, this chaste body gave its soul up to its creator such a martyr of chastity [was she].

The body's message is an explicitly evangelical credal statement: “son salut par Jhesucrist seul,” a watchword of the Reformed faith, not a customary formulation of the Catholic understanding of ecclesiology and doctrine. Marguerite surpasses the understanding of saint's body as an image of holiness by creating a hieroglyphic text, a layering of wound on word, more closely consonant with Protestant martyrologies in which the recollection of the martyr's verbal testimony predominates over the graphic effects of torture. One of the *devisants* underscores the point: objects cannot be construed as ends in themselves, but only as they fit with God's soteric purposes. Marguerite states that “for God's grace is not granted to humanity for its nobility or riches, but because it so pleases God in His goodness to do so and

“Marguerite de Navarre, *l’Heptaméron*, i, ii, 20–21. All translations are mine; emphasis added: “trouverent qu’elle avoit vingt-cinq plaies mortelles sur son corps, et feirent ce qu’ilz peurent pour luy, mais il leur fut impossible. Toutefois, elle languit encore une heure sans parler, faisant signe des oeilz et des mains; en quoi elle monstroit n’avoir perdu l’entendement. Estant interrogé par ung homme d’esglise de la foy en quoy elle mouroit, de l’esperance de son salut par Jhesucrist seul, respondoit par signes si evidens, que la parole n’eut sceu mieux monstrer son intention; et ainsy, avecq un visage joyeux, les oeilz eslevez au ciel, rendit ce chaste corps son ame à son creator · · · cette martire de chasteté.”

he often chooses lowly things, to confound those things that the world may esteem as superior or worthy.”

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world . . .

we were by nature objects of wrath.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead with transgressions—by grace you have been saved . . .

and God raised us up that he might show the incomparable riches of his grace.

(Ephesians 2:1–7; emphasis added)

Earthly treasures, objects of terrestrial desire, stand in this text as markers of their own undoing. Their capacity to signify is bounded by their impermanence: in order to convey their message, they must be erased to make way for true significance. Marguerite’s metaphysical “elsewhere” constitutes the originating point, the textual pivot, as well as the destination of her narrative project: a new, textual “genre painting” that gives flesh to the illusory nature of this earthly existence, the deceptive and evanescent sarks of the evangelical, Pauline perspective. In many cases in Marguerite’s narratives, while some things are destroyed, others come to stand in their stead. But those things destroyed are invariably the fabrications of human hands and viewed as such exclusively, even reductively, while replacement objects always have a deeper, thoroughly symbolic function. The things of the spirit supplant the things of the flesh, elevating the what-may-be-saved from the terrestrial realm to the celestial sphere.

51 de Navarre, 1, ii, 21. “car les graces de Dieu ne se donnent point aux hommes pour leurs noblesses et richesses, mais selon qu’il plaist à sa bonté et souvent eslit les choses basses, pour confondre celles que le monde estime hautes et honorables.”
REFERENCES


Objects of Desire in de Navarre’s Heptameron


During the thirteenth century, preachers considered sermons to be among the most important methods of communicating written material to the unlettered. Within a sermon, the use of *exempla*—short stories used to illustrate a moral point—was a primary means of disseminating theological information, and throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the number of *exempla* compilations intended as preaching aids increased markedly. Collectors such as Caesarius of Heisterbach and Stephen of Bourbon shared and re-used stories to disseminate theological knowledge. Despite the communal nature of *exempla*, individual stories were more than unidirectional theological transmissions or stock tales repeated

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1Different versions of this paper were presented at Goodly Worlds: Places, Topoi, and Global Riches Symposium (Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association), June 1998, Big Sky, Montana, and at the “Thirteenth-Century Europe” conference in St. Andrews, 2–4 July 1998.

with inconsequential variations. The ways in which each author presented individual stories changed according to audience, intent, the specific theological principle each author wished to illustrate, or the place that a particular *exemplum* filled in a thematic compilation. Understanding these nuances is crucial for understanding the ways in which *exempla* functioned as dialogue among clerics, and between clerics and the laity. Variations of *exempla* among individual collectors not only reflect order-specific interests and goals, but also reveal the elements of communication and negotiation by which *exempla* collectors built up a shared vision of the church. These *exempla* suggest how members of the Dominican Order “imagined” communities and how the practices associated with those ideas would affect the ideal community of the church. Preaching and the shared use of *exempla* created religious communities linked by a common theology and the beginnings of a network of shared associations—the embodiment of theological principles on a Europe-wide scale.

To illustrate this point, I will focus on several *exempla* concerning daily religious issues and practices, in particular those surrounding the concept of *superstitio*. Most of these stories are taken from Book Four of the *Tractatus de diversiis materiis praedicabilibus*, compiled by the Dominican friar Stephen of Bourbon (d. 1261). I will compare them with versions of the same tales told by Caesarius of Heisterbach

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(d. 1240) in his *Dialogus Miraculorum* and his *Libri viii miraculorum*, and with *exempla* found in the sermons of Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240). A comparison of these stories highlights the ways that rewritten and retold existing *exempla* embodied and disseminated order-specific emphases. In the case of Stephen of Bourbon, his stories were crafted to reflect the Dominican Order’s theology of education and perfectibility.


Stephen of Bourbon’s *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus* has not been printed in its entirety. The most authentic manuscript is MS. Lat 15,970 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, from which A. Lecoy de la Marche printed excerpts (Paris, 1877). Also see Etienne de Bourbon, *Le *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus* d’Etienne de Bourbon. Deuxième partie: *De dono pietatis. Étude et édition par Denise Ogilvie-David,*” in *École Nationale des Chartes, Positions des thèses soutenues par les élèves de la promotion de 1978 pour obtenir le diplôme d’archiviste paléographe* (Paris, 1978), 133–36; and Etienne de Bourbon, *Le *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus* d’Etienne de Bourbon. Troisième partie: *De dono scientie. Étude et édition par Jacques M.-A. Berlitz,*” in *École Nationale des Chartes, Positions des thèses soutenues par les élèves de la promotion de 1977 pour obtenir le diplôme d’archiviste paléographe* (Paris, 1977), 25–33. For the place of these collections at the wellspring of *exempla* compilation, see J.-Th. Welter, *L’Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Âge* (E.-H. Guitard, 1927, 66ff., 110ff. See also Jean-Claude Schmitt, “Recueils Franciscains d’«<Exempla>» et perfectionnement des techniques intellectuelles du XIIIᵉ au XVᵉ siècle,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 135 (1977): 5–23, esp. 23. There are numerous manuscripts and sources for Jacques de Vitry’s *exempla*, although unfortunately they are often taken out of the context of the sermon or treatise in which they appeared. Thomas Frederick Crane collected de Vitry’s *exempla* from sermons in *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry* (London: Folklore Society, 1890). G. Frenken and J. Greven also collected stories. All of these, however, present the *exempla* out of context. R. B. C. Huygens has edited and printed de Vitry’s letters, including *Exempla: Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, Edition Critique (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960). Mendicant authors played a major role in *exempla* compilation. Following Welter, Schmitt noted that between the thirteenth and
As a genre, *exempla* had their origins in the works of Aristotle as a rhetorical device. Early Christian writers also used *exempla*, in the form of parables. However, only in the twelfth century did preachers and monastic writers such as Honorius d’Autun and Jacques de Vitry consider *exempla* a defined, separate literary genre and discuss their function and elaborate rules for their use and assign them a prominent place within sermon structure. Preachers emphasized the religious function of *exempla* and associated their use with a number of spiritual benefits among both lay and monastic audiences. *Exempla* delivered religious precepts in a memorable form comprehensible to most audiences. In the early thirteenth century, the Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach told of an abbot who chided his monks for listening with greater enthusiasm to a story about King Arthur than to unadorned theological treatises. Humbert of Romans, fifth master general of the Dominican Order, argued in *De dono timoris* that while lectures alone might easily be forgotten by the preacher’s audience, the use of *exempla* helped the audience remember his words and moved them along the path of spiritual education and health. The Dominican inquisitor Stephen of Bourbon claimed a long list of virtues that fifteen centuries, thirty-eight surviving *exempla* collections out of forty-six had named authors or compilers. Of these, sixteen were Dominican, thirteen Franciscan, seven Cistercian, and two were secular clerics. For a recent extended treatment of Dominican educational practices, see M. Michèle Mulchahey, who notes that education and preaching were inextricably linked for Dominicans (M. Michèle Mulchahey, “First the Bow Is Bent in Study . . .,” in *Dominican Education before 1350*, Studies and Texts 132 [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998], 11).

1 Mulchahey, 414–15. In the same place the author comments that *exempla* are “perhaps the single most common form of medieval narrative.”


3 Humbert of Romans, *De Dono Timoris*, 188–212 ff., qtd. in Welter, 72.
resulted from the use of *exempla*, including the audience's detestation of vice in all forms and its willingness to have recourse to penance—and the church—as a means of correcting spiritual problems. Exempla, he argued, were the most effective means of imprinting proper theology on the minds of the preacher's congregation; not only were they memorable stories, but they were actual embodiments of theological understanding:

The highest wisdom of God, Jesus Christ taught in deeds before words and he rendered the subtlety of preaching and doctrine almost corporeal, thick, and visible, fortifying and clothing it with different comparisons, parables, miracles, and exempla, so that his doctrine would be more quickly grasped, more easily understood, more strongly retained in the memory, and more effectively put into action.9

Humbert of Romans argued that *exempla* were not only a congenial means for transmitting ideas but could also serve to further bolster the preacher's authority. To that end, the preacher ought never to use *exempla* unless he personally knew them to be true.10

By the thirteenth century, mendicant preachers found *exempla* so useful that they paid far more attention to their collection and use

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8Stephen of Bourbon, 13.
10Mulchahey, 462.
than had previous authors of preaching aids. Within the Dominican Order, conventual libraries were expected to make preaching aids, including exempla collections, available to preachers. Stephen of Bourbon's Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus (1250) is the first Dominican collection specifically of exempla, as opposed to the occasional exemplum found in a sermon. However, the organization of the two works reveals some significant differences in environment, presentation, and goals. The most immediate difference is the intended audience of each piece. Originally intended as a calendar of saints, Caesarius's Dialogus is somewhat more limited in its intended audience and its scope than is Stephen's Tractatus. The Dialogus was designed for the education of other Cistercians and is written as an extended conversation between a Cistercian novice and an older monk. Most of the exempla pertaining to monks or the monastic life were drawn from Cistercian settings or experience. Despite this focus, Caesarius did not exclude laypeople from the Dialogus, and he related numerous exempla about them as well. The stories about the laity were mostly drawn from urban sources; there were few exempla concerning rural people. This use of urban settings might reflect the areas where the monks made, or expected to make, contact with the laity. In contrast, the Cistercians presented the stories about themselves within a rural setting of "withdrawal" from the world, although they were in fact highly integrated into thirteenth-century society.

By contrast, Stephen's Tractatus had no explicit framework that might limit it to a particular area or group. Stephen's intent was to
organize existing stories and make them accessible for preachers and scholars, and his context of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit aimed his exemplarium at preacher and audience alike. Unlike the Dialogus, Stephen's exempla drawn from religious life did not overtly favor any one order: representatives of mendicants and older orders alike appear in the Tractatus. Naturally, it is quite possible that many of Stephen's unattributed monastic exempla, such as that of a novice tempted to steal an item seen in a vision, came from stories told about members of the Dominican Order, but they were not labeled as such.\textsuperscript{14} Stephen's exempla concerning laypeople were similarly broad in scope, and many were either unique to the Tractatus or were the earliest version of a particular tale.\textsuperscript{15} Both traits allowed the collection to be applicable to a wide audience.

Stephen drew many of his exempla from his work as an inquisitor in the Dombes. Not only his activities, but also his location associated him with the papal reform movement and with concerns for the dissemination of uniform religious practices. During the thirteenth century, Lyon saw two major councils, in 1245 (the thirteenth general council) and in 1274 (the fourteenth). The Dominican priory at Lyon was involved in papal politics, as well as figuring centrally in the growth and organization of the Dominican Order; the priory counted as members not only Stephen of Bourbon, but William Peraldus, Masters General Humbert of Romans and Raymon of Penafort, and the future Pope Innocent V, Peter of Tarentaise. This context indicates that Stephen's collection was clearly meant to be used by the Order of Preachers as a whole, in situations far beyond the boundaries of his priory or his immediate region, whereas Caesarius of Heisterbach's

\footnote{Stephen of Bourbon, Tractatus 226, esp. 195–96.}

\footnote{Frederic C. Tubach, Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales (Helsinki, 1969).}
collection had a more regional flavor (although clearly it, too, was used well beyond monastic or regional boundaries). Stephen’s collection served as a model for several others, including Humbert of Romans (d. ca. 1277), William Peraldus (d. 1271), Martin le Polonais (d. 1279), and Nicolas de Hanapes (d. 1291). 16

Although both exempla collections spoke to ongoing changes in the meaning of piety, the variations in their intended audience resulted in a concurrent difference in underlying assumptions, shown by the organizational structure of the tales in question. Caesarius of Heisterbach arranged his subjects in terms of the stages of the Christian life, ranging from conversion (the first chapter) to the afterlife (the last chapter). 17 Within this framework, many of his subjects, such as contrition, confession, or the sacraments, were discussions of the practices necessary for the Christian to maintain his or her spiritual state. Other topics, such as temptation, devils, and retribution, were discussions of problems individual Christians might face on a daily basis and the punishments meted out to those who strayed from those practices. Finally, Caesarius wrote about the components of the “mental frameworks” fundamental to the Christian life—for example, holy simplicity—and other elements of a Christian’s life, such as visions, miracles, and the Virgin Mary.

Like the Dialogus Miraculorum, the Tractatus is a thematically oriented compilation based on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. As Alan Bernstein has demonstrated, this collection is not merely a random gathering of stories, but a carefully crafted treatise in which each exemplum is specifically placed within a broader framework for

16 Welter, 215–31. Humbert of Romans followed Stephen’s organization while compiling Liber de dono timoris, although he added many exempla and removed location-specific information from many others. This work was once attributed to Albertus Magnus under the title De habundancia exemplorum (Ulm, 1480).

17 His subject headings are conversion, contrition, confession, temptation, devils, simplicity, Holy Mary, visions, the Eucharist, miracles, dying, and “retribution in the hereafter.”
maximum theological benefit for both clerical and lay audiences. In contrast to the focus of the *Dialogus*, Stephen's *Tractatus* centered on the spiritual attributes that formed part of the Christian's mental framework—the foundation of a Christian life—rather than on a chronological progression through the stages of that life. Nevertheless, by no means did Stephen ignore the more practical aspects of Christian life and theology. Each chapter presented a series of the problems a Christian might encounter on a daily basis (demons, superstition, temptation) and denoted a range of the specific remedies associated with those problems (confession, penance). For example, in his first chapter ("The Gift of Fear") Stephen presented several types of Christian fear, from fear of God to fear of a future punishment. Within each section, Stephen provided *exempla* illustrating the practices Christians might engage in to achieve the appropriate frame of mind (or, as in the case of Purgatory, to avoid punishment). Stephen's death in 1261 left the *Tractatus* incomplete—he had finished only four of his intended seven parts (fear, piety, knowledge, and strength [fortitude]; a fifth section on counsel remains unfinished). However, Stephen's focus on the habits of mind and behavior and their correlation to concrete practices gave his work greater flexibility for the use of both preacher and lay audience alike and created a common framework of theological practice and understanding with which preachers could build an image of the church.

**Negotiation**

Building up a community is a long-term process, and part of that process is negotiation—overt and subtle—over norms and behavior. *Exempla* can reflect that process of negotiation, both among clerics and between clerics and laity. For example, in one anecdote Stephen described a Dominican friar who had once been a wealthy banker and who possessed a beautiful voice. The friar was tempted by the devil to

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18 Bernstein, 84.
leave the order and become a priest so he might have a higher status and sing his own Mass. After long debate and struggle, Stephen concluded, the friar conquered his vocal pride and remained content as a friar. With variations of detail, this story also appeared in Caesarius of Heisterbach, who used it to explore the questions and fears of Cistercian novices.

Both stories indicated that their authors were attempting to deal with clerical dissatisfaction in very order-specific ways. The protagonist of Caesarius's story was unhappy with the austerities of his order, and the Dominican friar felt keenly the humility caused by his mendicant status. Both stories reflected a dialogue about the options open to their protagonists, as well. The conversation, although overt in Caesarius's anecdote while only reported in Stephen's version, recorded the manner in which authority was debated even within the various monastic orders. The commonality of the story and the order-specific changes made to it by each author reflect the existence of such debate among clerics. They also show how generic tales could be changed by specific clerical compilers to reflect order-specific interests and goals, evidence of a conversation between clerics about the beliefs and practices of the church community.

**Comparisons: Theology**

Part of the negotiation of religiosity involved the way exemplum compilers coordinated audience, interests, and theological necessities within their stories. Reconstructing their strategies can help lay bare the "mental map" of exemplum compilers. The Dominican Order was founded specifically as an order of educated preachers. Only spiritual knowledge and theologically trained preachers could combat the disease

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19Stephen of Bourbon, 190–91 [#219]. Stephen told a similar story about a cleric who, on the strength of a dream, wanted to become a bishop—a position for which he was unsuited [#268].

of heresy, and as a result Dominicans paid extensive attention to the processes involved in education. The Dominicans recruited from the universities educated men, already trained in the liberal arts, although the liberal arts themselves did not form part of specifically Dominican education. Throughout the thirteenth century the Dominicans refined an elaborate educational system aimed at perfecting their own preaching and theological skills in order better to serve the spiritual needs of the laity. Hence they also paid particular attention to the tools, methods, and rhetorical strategies that would best serve those goals. Among these were sermon structure, preaching methodology, and the appropriate use of *exempla.*

More than most clerics, the Dominicans showed their concern for education and teaching by underscoring new or reiterated theological stances. For example, Stephen related an *exemplum* in his chapter on the *Gift of Piety* that concerned a hermit who yearly on the eighth of September heard heavenly choirs praising God on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. The hermit revealed this occurrence to the pope, who decreed that the Nativity of the Virgin be observed.

The story of the celestial choirs is a common one. Ecclesiastics at Angers in France reported that in the early fifth century a man heard the angels sing on the eighth of September and, asking the reason, was told that it was the Nativity of the Virgin. Although no historical basis exists for the events of the story, the story was commonly known. The commemoration of Mary’s Nativity actually began around the year 650, although the observance did not enjoy regular and popular use until the twelfth century. In relating the story, however, Stephen made explicit reference to new theological dictates, namely those of

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21See Mulchahey, 3–70, for an extensive discussion of the goals of early Dominican educational practices and rhetoric. Mulchahey also considers the formation of a “Dominican interior life” and provides a detailed survey of specific Dominican scholarly subjects.

22Stephen of Bourbon, [107].

Innocent IV, who instituted the regular observance of the Octave in 1245 at the Council of Lyon. As a member of an order dedicated to Mary, and ever sensitive to new devotional practices, Stephen took the opportunity of a well-known Marian miracle to educate both cleric and laity in a recent reiteration of proper observance and to underscore the regularization of a devotional practice.

Dominican concerns for education coupled with sensitivity to current theology appear throughout Stephen of Bourbon's practical use and arrangement of exempla. Taken together, these exempla show a range of behaviors and appropriate responses available to the preacher, and they demonstrate Stephen's ability to rewrite them as needed to suit and reflect the needs of the locality. His pedagogy provided the preacher with a template that was quite clear, thus encouraging its application to a wide set of audiences. Although this strategy is clear throughout Stephen's work, it can be seen especially well in his discussion of superstitio.

Stephen's sequence of stories on superstitio geared toward various audiences began with a basic story intended to illustrate the fundamental inefficacy of divination. In this story, a fairly standard tale found in several collections of exempla, the soldiers of a king of Castile wanted to stop their campaign because they had seen an augury—a flight of crows—and felt that this boded ill for their campaign against the Muslims. The king told his troops that they should not put faith in crows but that instead they should trust in his experience, which was far greater than that of the crows. The king then proceeded to

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24 The octave was instituted by Innocent IV in accordance with a vow made by the cardinals in the conclave in the autumn of 1241, when Frederick II kept them prisoners for three months (Catholic Encyclopedia, "Feast of the Nativity of the BVM" [The Encyclopedia Press, 1913]).

25 Tubach, 109, motif #1356. The version told by Stephen is found only in his account and that of Jacques de Vitry (motif #1366), but it is similar to an earlier story told of Herod Agrippa (motif #1475). Another version adapted from Aesop is found in numerous manuscripts (motif #1360).
conquer the Muslims, proving the augury false. Stephen's immediate point was that augury was ineffective and that those who could claim the ability to foretell the future by any method were exerting unfair and illegitimate power over their contemporaries. Moreover, the story pointed out that not only was augury a deception, but it could also detract men from their Christian duty to withstand and attack the “infidel.”

Stephen placed this particular exemplum first in his collection and used it as a general introduction to the subject of augury, rather than providing, as did his contemporary and co-religionist William Peraldus, an exhaustive scholarly list of the various types of divination and diviners. His usage is underscored by a comparison of this story with a nearly identical version told by Jacques de Vitry, whom Stephen claimed as his source. De Vitry added a short coda to the story, which directly drew the standard moral that not only are those who practice all forms of divination “miserable,” but so too are those who listen to diviners. Stephen, however, left out this coda, which his organization rendered unnecessary: through variation in his subsequent text


he demonstrated concretely what de Vitry was forced to comment on abstractly.

It should be remembered that de Vitry was writing individual sermons in which each story needed to have its moral clearly drawn. The sermons were to be used as a model collection for other preachers, but they might also be addressed directly to layfolk. Stephen, on the other hand, was creating a compilation of exempla primarily for the use of other preachers in their sermons and for their edification when they met new circumstances and needed to contact new audiences or confronted new heretical practices. Hence he arranged his material in terms of the preacher’s need to perfect his preaching. Stephen also provided a range of possible stories that illustrated a single theme to be added by individual preachers in their actual sermon, suggesting that the preacher ought to choose according to his audience’s requirements—and its need for perfection. To this end, Stephen organized his stories about divination from the most general—this story, which attacks the basic premises of augury—to more specific tales. Through this arrangement he included many of the potential forms of communication between preacher and audience, covering forms likely to be understood by country folk, by market-goers, and by urban dwellers alike. Hence the moral for this borrowed story is self-evident to its reader and can be assumed from its context; the preacher would draw out the moral for a listening audience.

The tale of the king of Castile illustrated an error committed by the nonliterate who nonetheless “knew” how to read the “text” of signs. It was followed by two stories that concerned the same underlying error, augury, but that targeted more specific audiences. In the first story, a man wished that a friend of his, a Spanish scholar, would stay longer at his house. Knowing that the scholar believed in augury,

28Stephen of Bourbon, 314 [353]. Stephen took this story from Jacques de Vitry (Greven #34, 24–25). This is a common story found in exempla literature; Tubach lists several examples of it. Stephen’s story is listed as #1357, “Crow and King” (109). The de Vitry version is #1366 (109), “Crows as Bad Omen”; see also #1360 (“Crow in Borrowed Feathers”) and #1475 (119–20) (“Hawk as Death-Omen”).
one night his host climbed the roof and imitated a crow's calls. Believing the cries to be genuine and a bad omen, the scholar felt constrained to remain in his friend’s house. The second story was very similar and developed the same theme in a more rural area. This tale revolved around a sharp innkeeper who had rented his room to a rustic. The innkeeper had no other guests and wanted the man to stay on for several more days to increase the innkeeper's own profits. To scare the rustic into staying, the host used a mooseblower to deceive his guest, telling him that it was a bad omen. When other guests arrived, the host told the rustic that the omens had changed and that he could go.

The same theological themes—the intrinsic inefficacy of augury and its fundamentally deceptive nature—are illustrated in all three stories. However, they speak to different groups. The story about the scholar might be expected to appeal to the urban and the educated, who might not empathize with a story about an easily deceived rustic or about uneducated soldiers and therefore might not apply the moral of those tales to themselves. A story about a better-educated man in such a situation, however, would drive home Stephen's lesson. Yet in all the stories, different types of people are led to improper action because of the same set of assumptions. The structure of the error and the beliefs behind it, although not the particular practices, are identical across all social classes, and Stephen provided a means for the preacher to address each group.

Having told these and other tales, Stephen then tackled what he presented as the real, personal, and theological consequences of belief.

29Stephen of Bourbon, 315 [354]. “Item audivi quod quidam scholaris hispanus, credens in auguriis, cum parasset iter suum ut rediret ad terram suam, quidam suus socius, super ostium domus ad modum corvi crochitans, diu eum retinuit, malum omen credentem hoc.”

30Stephen of Bourbon, 315. “Item idem magister Jacobus dicebat quod quidam hospes recerperat in nundinis unum provincialem in hospicio; qui, credens cum sibi utilem, cum voluerat recedere, sonitum cum vesica faciebat; quo audito, provincialis, dicens malum omen, redibat. Tandem, advenien­tibus alis hospitibus, eum dimisit.”
in divination, thereby moving his readers and their audiences on to more sophisticated theological issues. For example, false beliefs could result in the growth of spiritual blindness—another category of sin gathered under divination and superstition. Stephen presented a commonly known exemplum about an old woman who was admonished to go to confession. She replied that confession was, for her, an unnecessary precaution: she knew that she would live for five more years because she heard a cuckoo crow five times on the first day of May, implying that she did not need to confess until just prior to her death. Stephen commented that the woman's belief cost her dearly, for she died "thus deceived . . . without last rites or confession."¹¹ A variant of this common tale was related by Caesarius of Heisterbach and concerned a laybrother who thought he would live for twenty-two more years because he heard a cuckoo crow that number of times. He decided to leave his monastery and to live in pleasure for twenty years, reserving the final two years of his supposed span for penance. Caesarius tells us that he died after two years, the length he had allotted for penance, without the possibility of redemption.¹²

¹¹Stephen of Bourbon, 315 [56]. "Item refert de quadam vetula quod, cum graviter egrotaret et moneretur ad confessionem, dicebat se certam quod viveret per quinque annos adhuc, quia quinquies audiverat prima die maii le cucu quasi sibi respondentem. Cum autem jam non posset loqui, commonebatur: clamabat cucu, ostendendo quinque digitos; et sic decepta, mortua est sine viatico et confessione."

¹²For the version told of a laybrother, see Caesarius of Heisterbach, Dialogue on Miracles, 3.1, Book 5, #17, 337–38. Wright provides samples of both versions (#41 and #84) in his collection of exempla, which were drawn from twelfth- through the early fourteenth-century sources. Wright does not attribute specific tales to specific sources, so it is impossible to determine whether Stephen's version represented a time-specific break with the more monastic tradition shown by Caesarius, whether it merely represented a variant tradition, or whether his tales represented abridgments of the same stories found in the Tractatus and the Dialogus. Wright does cite general sources, ranging from the twelfth-century Cistercian Odo de Cerinton to the fourteenth-century Dominican John Bromyard, both English (Thomas Wright, Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages, A Selection of Latin Stories [London, 1843], 8:42, 74).
Although both stories are clearly variants of the same motif, a superstitious individual deceived by the cries of a cuckoo or other bird, they differ both in significant details and in their underlying assumptions. Stephen's tale emphasizes the problems caused by the avoidance of confession, whereas Caesarius's story focuses on the problems caused by the pursuit of pleasure and the evasion of monastic discipline. However, Stephen's broader topic was not only easily applicable to lay and cleric alike, but it also reflected his social environment, namely increased Dominican contact with the secular world, as well as the new requirement for yearly confession stated in Canon twenty-one of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. As well, it emphasized implicitly a particularly Dominican concern: the need to educate the laity about changes in official religious practices as well as in fundamental theological principles.

The Dominican interest in perfection and education is reflected in a second difference between the two versions, their assumptions about augury. Caesarius's story reflects the traditional ecclesiastical position that all augury was demonic in origin. Not only is this clear from the text itself but also from Caesarius's textual organization: he surrounded this anecdote with other stories about the danger and power of demons. For Stephen, on the other hand, augury was merely a mistaken belief. It might place the believer into danger of trafficking with demons, but it was not *ipso facto* demonic in character. Hence Stephen placed this story together with other *exempla* about the mistaken nature of augury, not with *exempla* about demons. As a mistaken belief, superstition was something for which each individual was spiritually responsible. The underlying theological basis of this set of *exempla* was an improper individual and local assessment of permissible human knowledge. Within the community of the church, individuals should not have knowledge of their life spans. Preaching and education, however, could remedy this presumption.

Education was needed not merely to reinforce a common concept of theology, but also to reinforce consensus about the growing legal influence of the church. Stephen recounted a story concerning a Bretonnaise woman who had lost two of her young children. Her neighbors were convinced that there was a witch in the region who
killed children every year. When the woman’s third child was a year old, the woman set a trap for the supposed witch. Watching through the night, she saw an old woman trying to enter the house and was able to capture her in a large pot. In the morning the citizens, now convinced that the old woman was a witch, broke down her doors and dragged her out of her house. They then forced her to undergo the ordeal of hot iron and, when she failed, were ready to burn her. The old woman denied everything, saying that she was not aware of having committed any crimes. The local bishop, hearing of the case and knowing the woman, was able to show that the woman was not a witch. Instead, the criminal was a demon, who manifested himself in the form of the old woman. When ordered by the bishop, it withdrew from the old woman’s shape and burned. The bishop therefore was able to demonstrate to the townsfolk the real cause of the woman’s apparently fraudulent appearance and actions.

33Stephen does not say how the villagers thought she got home after having been trapped in a pot that night.
34Stephen of Bourbon, 319–21. “Audivi quod in Britannia Armorica minore accidit quod quedam mulier amisiset pueros duos, postquam complevissent quilibet annum suum. Dixerunt ei mulieres quod hoc facerent striges, sanguinem eorum bibentes. Cum autem illa eis crederet, dixit eis quod, cum tercius quem habebat annum compleret, vigilaret tota nocte anni completi, super puerum ponens operculum ferreum do quo operiebatur ollam suam in igne, ut, cum veniret strix, ferrum calidum in eius, faciem imprimere ut facto mane, vidit intrantem per ostium suum clausam vetulam quandam sibi vicinam, lupum equitantem, accedentem ad cunabulum pueri; et mulier, simulans se dormientem, arrepto [ferro]. Impressit illud in faciem eius, que cum ajulato maximo recessit. Jam facto mane, convocatis vicinis et ballivis ville, deposit quieronomiam apud eos. Illi autem, venientes ad ostium vetule, invententes cun seratum et neminem inventientes qui eum aperiaret, frangentes ea, rapuerunt dictam vetulam, habentem exustam genam ad indicem. Ferrum vulneri appositum criminis imposicionem probabat ex veritate procedere. Vetula autem dicta cuncta negabat, dicens non esse se impositi criminis consciam. Episcopus, hoc audiens, conscienciam dicte mulieris noscens, adjuravit illam demonem qui huius facti actor fuerat, ut se et factum manifestaret. Tunc demon, in similitudinem vetule se transmutans, urgente episcopo, pelliculam combustam a facie vetule removit coram omnibus et sibi imposuit, et fraudam suam et causam eius omnibus verbo et facto patefecit.”
The story underscored several things. First was the by-now familiar theme of the deceptive nature of demonic powers, even when those powers had a tangible result, in this case, dead or missing children. The problem did not rest, however, where superstitious neighbors thought it had, in the supposed power of witches, as the old woman had no genuine power. Not only that, but her apparent participation in demonic activity was also an illusion or fraud on the part of the demon, who used her as a cover. Even the demon’s power to kill could be banished by a representative of approved religion, namely the bishop. Finally, belief in the powers of striges, and like superstitions, nearly led the village to exacerbate their mistake by murdering the old woman.

Stephen emphasized the need for local education about proper beliefs by pointing out that the demon’s powers were possible only through the permission of God (a standard caveat) combined with the negligence of the murdered children’s mother—a statement of individual, this-worldly improper action and belief. The heroine of the story had lost two of her children through her own negligence as well as through her willingness to believe in witches. However, the tale contains several social resonances. The figure of a cannibalistic woman who in the form of an owl who preyed on children at night is, of course, very old. Norman Cohn cited two versions of this fable. One is found in Greek sources, although Cohn pointed out that the tone of these sources makes it highly unlikely that the authors took the story as anything other than a rhetorical device. A variant found throughout Western Europe eliminated the cannibalistic aspect and retained only the otherworldly powers and the ability to fly. This version focused on the “good women” who traveled wide distances at night, helping the good and hindering the bad. No cleric who wrote about this narrative considered it as anything other than a dream. Unlike his other exempla about the “wild hunt,” however, Stephen did not pass this tale off as a dream. But he did join in another trend. By the thirteenth century, the story had become associated with demonic activity. The women the anecdote represented had become normal.

and neighborly in appearance, and the story was set in a daily life, not in dreams or collective fantasies, where children did disappear or die for no apparent reason. This change gave the tale a greater sense of reality and validity at least among scholars, and quite possibly among audiences as well. By the fifteenth century, this story had become conflated with the legend of the beneficent night-women and the “wild hunt” and formed part of the constellation of beliefs labeled “witchcraft.”

In light of the issue of Dominican education, however, the story displays another instance of the need for education—the mingling of sacral and religious understanding, witnessed by the villagers’ willingness to invoke an older form of communal justice, the ordeal. Ordeals allowed the village to take communal action while concomitantly placing judicial responsibility on God. By the thirteenth century, with the growing influence of canon law and judicial procedure and an increasingly authoritarian model of government, ordeals had become less useful as sources of community justice. Justice was no longer spiritual in origin, but a product of human behavior. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 forbade clerical participation in ordeals. Stephen’s exemplum served to reiterate this proscription and expanded it to include the entire community. In doing so, he crafted subtle links between belief in the efficacy of an ordeal and superstitious beliefs. Like the supposed powers of diviners, witches, and demons, the ordeal neither worked nor provided justice. It was another example of genuine religious belief used for an inappropriate purpose, by inappropriate people. In the story, the bishop was a designated religious representative who succeeded in discerning not only the demon’s fraud, but also the community’s error.

36Cohn, 206–7.
Despite his foray into a more Augustinian framework, in which superstitio was inexorably related to demonic influence, Stephen continued to reiterate the theme of individual responsibility for errors with a series of anecdotes cataloguing the various forms of superstitious beliefs. Again, his stories fell into very traditional and recognizable categories, although some of his variants were often unique to his Tractatus, and might have reflected some actual thirteenth-century local beliefs. Of these tales, the first set included simple reiterations of local beliefs ranging from visions and wild tales to heresy. While some of these beliefs could make individuals susceptible to demonic influence, not all did. In these stories, Stephen did not draw specific conclusions, although he did use the stories to contrast acceptable and nonacceptable beliefs. In the latter four stories, which discuss magical dream journeys and serious theological misunderstandings, Stephen reiterated both the traditional perspective that divination and other superstitions were ineffective and invalid, and the concept that individuals were educable and hence in some fashion responsible for their beliefs.

Stephen's first story was actually a general list of the varieties of superstitious belief that he thought existed, had existed, or could exist, drawn from his reading of classical or theological sources or from his travels through the Lyon countryside. Preachers could easily use his collection to vary their exempla as needed: to criticize those people who claimed to be able to transform themselves into beings that emitted light from pinholes in their bodies, to refute people who believed that they could travel in dreams with Arthur or other beings, or to dismiss people who said that they saw fairy women in rings. Even in a list, the
element of superstition as not just false but as a willful deception of others and of self was evident. Throughout, Stephen used the verb *ludo*, which means both “to play” and “to deceive” or “ridicule,” to describe these beliefs. People “played that they transformed themselves” or “similar to this fiction.” Subsequent *exempla* provide fuller illustrations of some of these beliefs.

Stephen claimed to have drawn two of these more richly described tales from his own experience as an inquisitor. However, Stephen merely gave fuller versions of two types of superstitious belief, first as they related to heresy and second as they related to magical beliefs. In the first *exemplum* Stephen showed how heresy and superstition were intimately linked together. His informant related that he had been staying at a particular house and was led to a large, empty table. Several well-known people from his village as well as from surrounding villages were also there. Although it is unclear whether the man himself held heretical beliefs, his host and the other guests did. Stephen’s informant claimed that he had seen a black dog jump onto a table, run around it, and magically produce food. Stephen doubted this story and spoke to another man “of good character,” who confirmed it; finally, Stephen concluded that the diners’ prideful heretical beliefs had allowed a demon to delude them into concurrent superstitious beliefs. One form of pride had transformed itself into another, and both manifested the error that humans could know or control more than they legitimately—or naturally—could in actuality.

infinitam multitudinem canum venaticorum quasi post predam latrancium, post infinitatem multitudinem peditum et equitum; et cum quereret ab uno illorum qui essent, respondit quod essent de familia regis Arturi, ad cuius curiam propinquam venirent, ut ibi bene sibi esset. . . . Simile videntur facere mulieres compte in choreis.”

“Stephen of Bourbon, “aliquando ludificant transmutando se in species.”
In his hunt for heresy, Stephen encountered another odd story. The bishop of Clermont told Stephen how he had captured a heretical woman, who in turn accused her accusers of having participated in a ceremony in which they called up a devil and of having taken part in an orgy. Originally doubtful, the bishop and Stephen arrested the alleged participants, who denied everything, although the woman had been able to identify them by name.

Except for his literary presence within the exempla, Stephen did not provide more than cursory real-world results. In neither story did he refute the allegations by reference to trickery, nor did he present a particularly scornful tone. His conclusions were stereotypical in their reliance on demonic agency. However, in both exempla he displayed doubt and skepticism about the anecdotes he heard, only attributing them to demonic agency after he could not explain them himself. The tales did provide preachers with a balance to stories dealing with willful trickery—these demonstrated the same errors when actively linked with demonic activity. Important for this argument, however, Stephen's exempla continued his practice of providing several variants of the same story.

“Stephen of Bourbon, 322–23 [367]. This story is cited in Tubach’s Index Exemplorum, no. 1363. “Item quasi simile accidit in Alvernia, ubi multi fuerunt capti apud Sanctum Porcianum [Saint-Pourçain] et deducti apud Claremontem, ubi convocaverat me episcopus eiusdem loci, dominus Hugo de Turre. Quedam mulier, capta in quibusdam maleficiis, accusavit plures et illos qui capi detinebantur, dicens cum lacrimis quod magistram quamdam [habuerat] que eam frequenter duxerat ad quendam locum subterraneum, ubi conveniebat multitudo hominum et mulierum cum luminibus torticiorum et candelarum, circumdantes quamdam cusam plenam aqua que erat in medio, in cuius medio erat hasta affixa: et magister eorum adjurabat Luciferum per barbam suam et per potenciam quod veniret ad eos, et per multa alia; ad quam adjurationem descendebat catus tetrerrimus per lanceam, et aqua cum cauda sua, vadens in circuitu, omnes aspergebat, et luminaria omnia extinguebat; quo facto, quilibet eorum accipiebat illum vel illam qui ei primo occurrebat, et cum eo turpiter admisciebatur. Propter hoc dicti homines erant capti, qui hic omnia negabant, licet dicta mulier dicaret eos ibi sepe vidisse convenisse.”
basic error, this time by gender: in the first tale, the protagonist was a man; and in the second, a woman. In both tales people of all levels within the community were involved in heretical practices and were susceptible to interpreting their world in a superstitious fashion.

Education remained a theme in a final set of *exempla*, a comparison of one of Stephen’s journey stories with one related by Jacques de Vitry. The story concerned a woman who believed that she could travel magically, as well as walk through closed walls and windows. Because of this alleged power, she claimed to have saved a sleeping priest from molestation by nocturnal beings. When she told the priest her belief, he trapped her inside the church and beat her, telling her that if she really could travel magically, then she could also escape his beating. Since she could not, her belief was false.

Neither Stephen nor Jacques de Vitry claimed that the woman was practicing any form of magic, but merely that she subscribed to a false belief. However, the two versions diverge concerning the source of her belief and in the moral each author draws from it. Jacques de Vitry made the contemporary association of such activity with demonic delusion. For him, the woman was the victim of deception by an outside agency, namely a demon, who showed the woman visions in her dreams. The woman herself was weak willed. Stephen’s

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42 The story is also found in Bromyard’s sermons and in Vincent of Beauvais’s *Speculum morale*. Stephen of Bourbon, *Tractatus* 324 n. 2.

43 Textually, neither author used any standard word for magic (*sortilegium*, *maleficia*, etc.) save for the priest’s sarcastic comment in Stephen’s exemplum: “Exit from here, witch.”

44 Crane, ed., ii2–13. The text of de Vitry’s *exemplum* is as follows: “Audivi de quadam muliere qui dicebat se cum quibusdam dominabus de nocte super bestias quasdam equitare, et multa terrarum spacia una hora pertransire. Demones enim in somnis illi illudebant, et talia ostendebant. Cum autem mulier illa quadam die in ecclesia, sacerdoti suo diceret, ‘Domine, hac nocte multum vobis profui, et a magna molestia vobis liberavi; nam, domine, ille cum quibus de nocte soleo ire cameram nostram intraverunt, et nisi avvertisses et ipsas pro vobis rogasses, multa mala vobis fecissent.’ Cui sacerdos ait: ‘Ostium camere me clausum erat et seratum, quomodo intrare potuistis?’
version presented an older version of the night-rider folktale and argued that the woman had not been deceived by demons but rather wished to deceive the priest. She had had a silly dream, which she would not have believed had she known her catechism better. Therefore she was responsible for her belief. Moreover, she was using it to directly challenge the church hierarchy by taking on powers that properly belonged only to religious specialists. She was also willfully exercising her desires on another local inhabitant who was as well a representative of accepted religion—a serious trespass of ecclesiastical hierarchy into which she was led by a superstitious belief. This placed the responsibility for the sin on the woman herself and on her lack of practical theological education, and by extension placed similar responsibility on the audience who heard the story. By pointing out individual (not demonic) responsibility for sin, Stephen’s variation of this exemplum underscored the necessity for educating local inhabitants of both genders and bringing them closer to perfection by eradicating

Cui vetula dixit: ‘Domine, nec ostium nec sera potest nos retinere vel impedire quin libere ingrediamur et exeamus.’ Cui sacerdos: ‘Volo probare si verum est, ut de tanto beneficio te valeam remunerare.’ Et clauso ostio ecclesie ac fortiter serato, arrepto crucis baculo, cepit vetulam fortiter percutere. Cumque illa clamaret et misericordiam imploraret, ait sacerdos: ‘Exi ab ecclesia, et fuge, si potes ex quo sera vel ostium non potest te retinere.’ Et ita vetulam corripuit, et a falsa credulitate liberavit.”

“Stephen of Bourbon, 323–24 [368]. The text of Stephen’s version reads, “Audivi quod, cum quedam vetula, volens blandiri suo sacerdoti, diceret ei in ecclesia: ‘Domine, multum debetis me diligere, quia liberavi vos a morte; cum enim ego vaderem cum bonis rebus, media nocte intravimus domum vestram cum luminaribus; ego, videns dormientem et nudum, cooperui vos velociter, ne domine nostre viderent nuditatem vestram, quam si vidisset, ad mortem flagellari vos fecisset.’ Cumque sacerdos quereret quomodo intraverant domum eius et cameram, cum ostia essent fortiter serata, ait quod bene intrabant domum januis clausis. Tunc eam invocans sacerdos intra cancellam, clauso ostio, verberavit eam cum crucis baculo, dicens: ‘Exite hinc, domine sortilega.’ Cum autem non posset, emisit eam sacerdos, [dicens]: ‘Modo videtis quod fatua estis, que sompnium vertitatem creditis.’”
their errors. Stephen took a generally commonplace, stereotypical story and altered it to address the perceived needs of a specific local area and thus allowed the specific behavior of a smaller area, such as women's extra-ecclesiastical devotions falling under a broad heading, not only to be seen and observed, but to enter the repertoire of any preacher who then read his text—a true negotiation of theological presentation.

The source materials for these stock ideas are important in this context. In *exempla* compilations, these versions of the "wild hunt" motif are often dismissed by historians attempting to reconstruct the actual beliefs or behavior of "the folk." These stories are among the most obviously stereotyped copies of classical myths or motifs, as can be seen by the number of their variations and by their use of figures from classical mythology. When considered as sermon material, they seem at first unlikely stories for conveying theological information in a comprehensible fashion. Diana is a pagan goddess, unlikely to be known to the average thirteenth-century villager. The "wild hunt" is perhaps more accessible; as both a Roman and a Germanic mythological motif, it is plausible that it remained part of the folk tradition. Herodiade, the second wife of Herod Agrippas, stepped straight from biblical stories, in which she is credited with telling her daughter Salome to ask for the head of John the Baptist as her reward.

"This story should not be taken to mean that Stephen did not believe in demons or their powers. Demonic stories are, in fact, abundantly cited in his text. That he appears to have taken a demonic story and eliminated its magical element underscores this reading of his text. The issue of the willfully deceptive nature of superstition, and its explicit challenge to a centralized hierarchy, is underscored by Humbert of Romans. Humbert notes that one superstitious person often leads others into the same error (*De modo*, 2, 98, 503F–G). In addition, it can lead women into a more prosaic error, namely illegitimate sexuality, which is (of course) far more damning if conducted with a priest (*De modo*, 2, 99, 505G).
for her dance. Yet the potential accessibility of these images to an audience or their stereotypic (and hence suspect) nature was not really the issue for Dominican sermon literature, for none of the authors in this study, in particular Stephen of Bourbon, focused on the details of their stories. In fact, by separating the demonic and nondemonic stories and by presenting both as originating in fallacious beliefs or dreams, the Dominicans were admitting that the specific details really mattered less than the particular instance of the privileging of local ideas, practices, and volition over centralized concepts. This was reinforced by the implication that the individual was responsible for the state of his or her spiritual health and must be educated in order to meet that responsibility—women, too, although, as always, not formally. Furthermore, in the story of the woman who claimed she entered the priest’s house at night, Stephen took a generally commonplace story and altered it to address the perceived needs of a specific local area and thus allowed the specific behavior of a smaller area, such as women’s extra-ecclesiastical pseudo-religious devotions not only to be seen and observed, but to enter the repertoire of any preacher who then read his text.

This apparent responsiveness to local ideas and requirements appears in Stephen’s related exempla in yet another way. Stephen did not limit his repertoire of dream or magical traveling tales solely to the idea of a woman traveling with the “wild hunt,” although he did separate it out into the category of “general mistaken beliefs.” While Humbert of Romans textually associated this version of dream travel

**These sources for the motif of this exemplum correspond nicely to the sources for the various magical traditions in medieval Europe. (See Cohn, especially Chapter 11, “The Night-Witch in Popular Imagination,” for a detailed discussion of the “wild hunt” motif.) Cohn argued that this story represented an actual, persistent peasant belief. However, he distinguished between theologians, who in general held the position that these stories represented dreams, and individuals who apparently believed that these occurrences actually happened. The experiences were not, however, actually physical occurrences (Cohn, Europe’s Inner Demons, 206–24).**
exclusively with women (especially older women), William Peraldus and Stephen of Bourbon did not. Peraldus's extension was, as usual, rather mild. He used the standard story about women who felt that they rode at night with Herodiade as an introduction, much as Stephen used the anecdote about the king of Castile as a general format for his section on divination, but he did not mention the gender of the protagonist. In comparison, in his earlier catalogue of superstitious beliefs, Stephen went so far as to note two magical travel dream episodes with male protagonists—again, he seemed unwilling to condemn a gender out-of-hand, just as he was unwilling to make a blanket condemnation of a class. In an exemplum he described how he had heard of a man who claimed to see hunters riding along a road of moonbeams; asking the hunters who they were, the man was told that they were of Arthur's court. He tried to join them but fell down from the moonbeam road. In the same exemplum, he also reported that another man had seen similar riders, who seemed to be members of the same family. One of the riders had drawn the dreamer into the group, saying, “Stay close to me.” Stephen said that the man claimed to “go there [i.e., with the riders] often.”

Again, the ways in which Stephen widened the common exemplum indicate his strategy of providing the same lesson in a number of different guises, intended for different audiences, this time for men. Despite the gender of the protagonist, the underlying message remained the same. The Dominicans did not go so far, however, as to eliminate completely the rural bias of such tales, although they did mitigate them. Traditionally such tales were told of the unlettered. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury noted that only the “rude” were susceptible to this form of error. The Dominicans in this study probably shared a

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48 Peraldus, Summa de vitiiis, 2, 3.36, 315b.
Andrea L. Winkler

sirnilar view, for none of them told versions of this tale located in "educated" or urban settings. They did not, however, make an explicit statement to that effect. In all probability, the linkage between social group and sin was already clear, and they did not have to draw it out further. It is possible, however, that the omission of such a limiting statement was deliberate.

Regardless of gender or social group, in every exemplum in this section of his work Stephen made it clear that he did not believe for a moment that these nocturnal dreams and visions were real. They might be remnants of older beliefs, or they might merely be foolish dreams. The specific acts described by the exempla were not Stephen's concern. He was interested in the form of the fundamental error—the claim that these individuals knew more than what they could legitimately or actually know and the resulting behavior that removed these individuals from their proper place in the spiritual hierarchy—and in presenting the different forms this same error might take, in order that his audience might then learn to avoid the error.

Conclusion

The exempla I have cited are standard types and do not tell us anything specific about particular individuals. They cannot be used as reliable indicators about the propensity of old women to be superstitious or novices to be dissatisfied and argumentative. However, it is precisely the variations of standard stories—stories that form part of the familiar mental repertoire of preacher and audience—that allow us to begin to delineate the communication strategies used by members of different orders to try to negotiate consensus about the community of the church. The changes each author made reflected his "habits of mind": in the case of the Dominicans, the emphasis on perfectibility, education, and responsibility, supporting the centralizing process of the thirteenth-century papal reform movement. Within the formulaic genre of exempla, therefore, I argue that individual manipulations of the genre can be identified, corresponding to each writer's probable goal in writing and experience. The genre of exempla collections, in
the hands of the Dominicans, took a new direction. The texts reflect not merely the Dominicans' shifting understanding of superstition, but their growing sense of audience and mission, their self-definition as preachers, perfecters, and theologians, and their self-defined place as both active and contemplative mendicants. Moreover, the texts reflect a dialogue both among preachers and between preachers and the laity, which allows us to see the creation of centralized power as represented by an increasingly uniform theology. The negotiation glimpsed through these *exempla*, and their use in promoting orderspecific goals, was one strategy for building an “imagined” community of belief.
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ALLEN D. BRECK
AWARD WINNER
"The city’s usuries":
Commerce and Cymbeline

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Scholarship on early modern masculinity and male sexuality has not considered Cymbeline at any great length. Yet Cymbeline is jammed with men embroiled with the difficulties of the quest for national identity, a quest connected with the complications of shaping man’s erotic identity. In Cymbeline the construction of masculinity depends upon one man’s measuring of himself against another man, for example, Posthumus against Iachimo, Cloten against Posthumus; of one male community against another, of Romans against Britons. It has been a traditional tendency of gender-oriented criticism to interpret male subjectivity in Cymbeline as part of the process of forging British national identity. Recently, however, in a study of gender in Shakespeare’s Roman plays, Coppelia Kahn has moved away from what I would call a conceptualization of the powerful and stable masculinity in its public sphere of the battlefield and politics into the private sphere of sexuality and marriage. Kahn discusses the extent to which heroic masculinity is fractured in Cymbeline, insofar as its frequent association with wounds suggests that "virtus remains an open wound in the sense of a persistent but unsuccessful attempt to fix, stabilize, delimit masculinity as a self-consistent autonomy." Kahn’s acute observation brings

me to my subject: that is, the association of the male anxieties in Cymbeline for the stability of masculinity, and the construction of male erotic identity within the public sphere of economy, which conflicts with the imperial and heroic aspects of the play. I argue that the simultaneous negotiation of male subjectivity in both heroic and commercial spheres in Cymbeline already signals the shift from a chivalric to civic form of masculinity in Jacobean drama.

Unlike the critics who associate masculinity with politics and empire, I propose, however, a radically different approach to this intersection of times and sexuality, one that involves commerce, the exchange of commodities, and financial transactions. What has not been noticed yet in the criticism of Cymbeline is the centrality of commerce, commodity, and the circulation of money and gold to the plot and the motivation of male agency in the play. The discourse of value and exchange, which exclusively belongs to and is generated by men, opens up a possibility to examine male bonds in materialistic terms, enabling the representation of male sexuality within the new material relationships between individuals. Those terms are not only germane to Shakespeare's play but they are also central to the historical moment that coincides with the writing of the play in early 1610. This moment also marks the rapid expansion of the Jacobean market and the circulation of capital (mostly foreign) within it, signalling the growth of capitalism in seventeenth-century England. One of the most striking features of Cymbeline is the association of masculinity and male sexuality with the commercial exchange and the ability of men to estimate the value of other men, or of Imogen, the only main female character within the male-centered plot of the play.

What I would like to argue about Cymbeline is that the objects of trade that enable bonds between characters, that the activities typical

of the early modern commerce and finance, and that the uncertainties
at the heart of the materialist construction of subjectivity emerge out of
the historical conditions of the early modern mercantile economy
in the prebanking era rather than out of the ahistorical nature of
the incredulous in romance. I am concerned with the relationships
between commodities as signs of identity and, generally, with the
commercial inscription of identity, especially sexual. The characters'
obsession with the material world opens up a possibility to think about
how subjectivity can be represented in a world where traditional points
of reference became increasingly subject to the market’s rule of evalu­
ating reality. Throughout the play, tropes of circulation and exchange
converge with the ones of consumption, between men and between
men and Imogen.

Repeatedly in *Cymbeline*, alliances between men are established
through an exchange of valuable objects—masculinity is associated
with the rhetoric of credit, effeminacy is linked with usury and debt,
and women’s oaths of chastity are evaluated by men. Objects such as
diamonds, rings, shirts, sheets, handkerchiefs, linen, bracelets, gloves,
hats, cloak-bags, doublets, hoses, and needles, that are either ex­
changed between characters or that circulate in the language of the
play, were also means and objects of exchange and circulation within
the early modern English market. The actions that enable the trans­
action of these objects in the play involve praising and evaluating,
venturing and voyaging, measuring and eyeing, giving credit and
causing debt. Those activities are typically associated with the issues
of power and value, loss and gain, self and sexuality.

The material objects in Jacobean drama—drama increasingly fas­
cinated by and to some extent dependent upon the market and its
munificence—are no longer metaphors for communicating meaning.
Such objects in fact establish or attribute meaning to those concerned
with the exchange of the objects of value. What is, then, the signifi­
cance of a linen handkerchief or a glove for male bonds in a scene
in which Posthumus parts from Pisanio? What is the implication of
the exchange of a golden ring for the nature of the private bond
established between Iachimo and Posthumus? And what does Iachimo
and Posthumus's exchange of Imogen tell us about the position of woman in the play and about woman's role in the construction of male sexuality?

The issues of exchange and commodity are closely connected with the concept of value, and value is one of the play's central themes. Michel Foucault suggests in *The Order of Things* that in the seventeenth century value was associated with objects that had real marks of value, such as gold and money. These objects had an "assignable reality that can be compared to the diversity of things that one wishes to measure."3 The exchange of commodities or of gold among the characters on the stage signals the value of the private and social bond established between characters. In this process of the exchange of value, both the object that is exchanged and the subjects that are involved in the exchange shape the meaning of this social and private activity.

Following are examples of several moments in the play in which Shakespeare turns the commerce and materialist interests of his world into the subject of his play.

In act 1, scene 4, Pisanio tells Imogen about the parting with his master, Posthumus. Pisanio answers affirmatively Imogen's question whether Posthumus "wav'd his handkerchief" (6), adds that Posthumus also "kiss'd it [the handkerchief]" (7), and proceeds to tell her that

As he [Posthumus] could make me with this eye, or ear,
Distinguish him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of's mind
Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,
How swift his ship.

(1.4.9–14)


The departure scene evokes the motif of Ceyx’s parting from Alcyone in Book II of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, and it also recalls Aeneas’s looking back at Carthage and his abandoning of Dido in Book 4 of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. In both Ovid and Virgil, the parting is of a mythical male character from a female one. In Shakespeare, however, two men are parting. Posthumus waves with the object of his garments, suggesting the difficulty of parting (“... how slow his soul sail’d on”). Somewhat angrily, Imogen reports that she did not part with him but only had time to utter an oath of chastity, telling us that she would “not betray / Mine interest, and his honour” (29–30). There was no time for the parting kiss because her father burst onto the scene and Posthumus left without kissing her. The departure scene, therefore, suggests the privileging of male bonds over other bonds and makes a point about the patriarchal intervention in the clandestine bond. To clarify my claim about the value of the link between Posthumus and Pisanio and the market, I need a brief detour into the history of the early modern mercantile economy in England.

Roughly at the same time that The King’s Men performed *Cymbeline* at the Globe in 1611, the early modern English economy underwent a series of the so-called “projects,” that is, rapid shifts “towards setting up and promoting new domestic industries, aimed at administering the price increases in foreign imports,” which included, among other items, linen, cloth, and pins. Joan Thirsk calls this process the second “scandalous phase,” which lasted between 1601–1624 (the first one lasted between 1580–1601), because it caused a profound disruption on the market, with domestic merchants competing with the foreign ones for a dominance of the market. The result of this competition was a crisis in the textile market, which became unstable. The increases and decreases in production and employment affected the textile market, which in turn was influenced by trade activities abroad and by the oscillations of foreign markets. At this historical moment, cloth features as both a valuable commodity and

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6 Thirsk, 51ff.
also as a cause of commercial instability. This market condition underlies the symbolical exchange between Posthumus and Pisanio, insofar as both the value and the socio-commercial instability are inscribed in cloth—in Posthumus's handkerchief—as Imogen says, in his "senseless linen." Thus the object becomes an index of the preciousness and anxiety that describes the bond between the master and the servant. Often in the early modern drama (especially in the seventeenth-century city comedies) and nondramatic literature (prose fiction, for example), servitude potentially converges with sexual subordination. Both feminist scholars and those who study the economic basis of early modern drama and literature have already commented on the erotic symbolism of the handkerchief and of its association with the wedding sheets and virginity in Othello, for example. 7 The value, the meaning, of Posthumus and Pisanio's bond is potentially erotic, and this is further implied in the reference to the glove, an object that has sexual connotation through its association with the vagina, here and elsewhere in Jacobean drama. For example, in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's play The Changeling, in act 1, scene 1, when De Flores returns the glove to Beatrice-Joanna, he accompanies his return by a short soliloquy that associates his putting on the glove with vaginal penetration: "I should thrust my fingers / Into her socks here" (1.1.231–32). 8

The wager scene (1.4), in which Posthumus tests the chastity oath of his wife (he appraises her "interest") by receiving from Iachimo ten thousand ducats in exchange for the ring he gave to Imogen, tells both about Iachimo's shrewdness in conducting business and about the male sexual anxiety in the play. The route to our understanding of the shaping of masculinity in Cymbeline leads through the language of financial

7 See Douglas Bruster, Drama and Market in the Age of Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 82.

8 Quoted from Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, The Changeling, ed. Joost Daalder (London: A & C Black; New York: W. W. Norton, 1990). Glossing this line, Daalder suggests that "sockets" means "fingers of her glove" but that it could also mean vagina, according to the OED.
transaction. Early in 1.5, we hear that Posthumus is a debtor to a Frenchman, and, by that very fact, one might say, he is a man not fully in control of his destiny. As Posthumus says: “Since I have been debtor to you for courtesies / which I will be ever to pay, and yet pay still” (34–35). And Philario suggests that Posthumus is an ambitious and skillful trader who has with time grown wealthier (“You [Iachimo] speak of him when he was less furnish’d than now he is with that which makes him both without and within” [5.1.7–8]). Posthumus’s interest in money may partially be motivated by the fact that he, a gentleman, feels less worthy than his wife, Imogen, who is a princess. Yet while the Jacobean world measures Posthumus’s suitability as a husband against Imogen’s value, he views Imogen as a commodity whose value can be measured and, consequently, exchanged, just as he would handle a gem. So Posthumus says: “I prais’d her as I rated her: so do I my stone” (1.5.74–75). This equation may be a rhetorical ploy, however, because Posthumus adds that Imogen, seen here as commodity, “is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods” (1.5.81–82), but the entire scene centers around money talk. The scene brims with the language of estimations, negotiations, and the binding conditions established between trading partners; and in the same scene Posthumus becomes a debtor; Iachimo, a creditor. Iachimo has just suggested to Posthumus a test of Imogen’s chastity:

I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring, that, commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honour of hers, which you imagine so reserv’d. (1.5.124–28)

Here is hidden one of the signs of Posthumus’s weakness, which Iachimo exploits for its own erotic interest, as I will show later. The early mercantile banking history again provides the context for my analysis of the male erotic anxiety in the play. The subject of Iachimo’s speech is usury, whereby money is lent for the sole purpose of making an interest (“advantage”) and without a paper record (bill of credit) of the transaction.
This form of a money lending practice was forbidden in England though not many usurers were actually put on trial. But while usury implies gaining interest in a forbidden way, what Iachimo asks of Posthumus (to meet with Imogen more than once ["opportunity of a second conference"]) does not violate legality; it does, however, suggest that through the language of finance, Iachimo acts out of his own, private interest.

There was, however, another tolerated and widely practised form of usury in early modern England. This was the so-called fictitious or dry exchange (cambio fittizio or cambio secco). It was typical of early seventeenth-century banking and of the period "prior to the Stuart revolution in England [that] bills of exchange were always foreign bills . . . and always involved an exchange transaction."9 In a nutshell, the fictitious or dry exchange was typically practised by either Italian or Dutch merchant-bankers "who had accumulated a large capital in the course of a successful business career."10 They would prefer to invest their "stocks" in the purchase of bills. (For example, this is what Shylock did.) More often, though, they would invest money in something that was not trade. For example, they might help finance a commercial sea-voyage, as do Marlowe's Barabas in The Jew of Malta and Shakespeare's Antonio in The Merchant of Venice.11 Or they might lend money in exchange for something else besides money and wares. Iachimo comments on the subject: "I will lay ten thousand ducats to your ring" (124). In other words, Iachimo becomes a usurer at the moment he conflates the forbidden with the tolerated form of money-lending practice. But even dry exchange "had to be concealed

10de Roover, 184.
by resorting to various subterfuges, which the merchants justified by all kinds of sophisticated or fallacious arguments.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, the practice of dry exchange implied a surreptitious form of credit, one that could easily be manipulated. And this is what Iachimo, a sly merchant-banker orator, does when he “lays” ten thousand ducats “with no more advantage” (126, that is, “interest”) but for the “sweet shortness” (2.4.44) of his eyeing of Imogen in an act of visual evaluation that associates praise with power. Iachimo’s gaze is a gaze of a subject consuming an erotic object—Imogen. Thus Shakespeare turns the potentiality for commercial manipulation into a theatrical manipulation with erotic meaning. In fictitious exchange, because it did not define interest in monetary value, the nature of the interest was quite important to the lender. And at this point in the plot it is not Imogen’s chastity, her “interest” as she herself refers to it, that Iachimo really preys on, but it is Posthumus’s ring that he desires. The ring is an object of bonding, and Iachimo’s insistence on possessing the ring emphasizes the value Iachimo places on his bond with Posthumus. This value, I would argue, is an intimate one, and it is enabled here through the ambivalent erotic implication of “ring” as both vagina and anus (whose literal translation from Latin \textit{anneau} is “ring”). This double erotic meaning of “ring” introduces illicit desire in the private agreement between Iachimo and Posthumus. The queer meaning of this scene, in which ring features as a site of crisis, associates the silent agreement over an invalid contract with privacy in which an improper erotic exchange between men takes place. What Iachimo does in the wager scene in which he plays “dry usurer” is what Renaissance men did on their route to power: they negotiated their access to power by creating strategies that would disrupt the order, order which in \textit{Cymbeline} is represented in male bonding and structured through the exchange of women and promotion of marriage. When Iachimo wins the wager, he closes the deal by calling Imogen a “bargain” (164) and thus devalues her chastity, reminding us once again that for him woman is a commodity, and not an expensive one either. Risk and gain, parts of any exchange of power, are significant both as economic and erotic signs

\textsuperscript{12} de Roover, 185.
in this scene. But I need again a brief detour into the history of foreign trade in early modern England to clarify the point I am making.

According to Fernand Braudel, by the end of the sixteenth and well into the seventeenth century, the foreign trading network, especially Italian, was running into difficulties and it was losing its prominent positions in Europe. Foreign merchants and their goods were perceived as a threat to the domestic market and industry and, consequently, to the commonwealth. Merchant-bankers caused quite a bit of instability in the domestic marketplace through the lack of balance in trade. For example, Gerrard de Malynes, an English merchant, wrote in 1601 that the

ouerbalancing of forraine commodities with our home commodities, which to supply or counteruaile draweth away our treasure and readie money, to the great losse of the commonweale . . . our merchants, perceiving and a small gaine and sometimes none at all to be had vpon our home commodities, do buy and seek their gaines vpon forraine commodities . . . wherein although they may be gainers, yet the Realme generally beareth the loss.

Italian merchants were considered particularly threatening to the economy of early modern England and even to the civil order in London because they controlled much of the foreign exchange in London and were known as creditors who sought high interests. When, for example, the Elizabethan state imposed a rigorous control over their exchange business, a large group of Italian merchants based in London complained to the queen, reminding her that their "lyvynge and maytenaunce that [they]
have is upon the commissions” and warning that if their living were affected by the state’s control of the interests incurred in exchange, the intermediary role they played in the English trade with Venice, Antwerp, and Lyon would be jeopardized. Further, they would be driven out of London, and, consequently, English economy would deteriorate.

In the light of this historical situation, to see how an Italian merchant pushes a British trader into agony represents a moment at which the anxiety in the domestic markets has entered the public theatre. At this point the plot dramatizes the instability within the foreign money-exchange circuit and the impact of that instability on masculinity and, potentially, on the Renaissance state, whose power depended on stable masculinity. The semantic richness of the play’s language implies that, early in the play, the anxiety over Iachimo’s foreignness also extends into the realm of violent sexuality. During her first conference with Iachimo, for example, Imogen questions Iachimo’s emotional state, “What, dear sir, Thus raps you?” (r.7.50, emphasis added). She uses raps here in the sense in which it is commonly glossed, as “transports.” But rap also implies rape, as it might be suggested in the form rap’s, which is how the First Folio reads at this point. The larger reference is to Imogen’s bedside reading: the story of Philomel, with “the leaf turn’d down / Where Philomel gave up” (2.2.45-46). The juxtaposition of Iachimo’s gaze of Imogen asleep, with the reference to the moment in Ovid’s story when Philomel is raped, makes Iachimo an ocular violator of Imogen’s body. Seeing how Imogen’s body has temporarily become a commodity of Iachimo’s erotic gaze, we witness the destabilizing and predatory power of the foreign merchant that threatens to destroy domestic wealth and ultimately ruin the country, typically gendered feminine. Thus Iachimo plays de Malynes’s foreign merchant to Imogen’s realm. And the question posed in the wager scene—the question “Who shall posses Imogen?”—links the problem of masculine virtue with that of chastity, for, as Kahn suggests, “Imogen’s chastity isn’t merely her own: it is a national treasure, that is state property.”

15Tudor Economic Documents, 3:167–70.
16Kahn, 160.
Yet what Iachimo's ploy suggests is that debt emasculates. In his vivid recollection of Imogen's bedchamber, Iachimo evokes the story of "proud Cleopatra" (2.4.70) and the Roman (that is, Anthony), which is, philologically speaking, the story of emasculation. The debtor's loss is a source of masculine anxiety about effeminacy, as Posthumus says,

Could I find out
The woman's part in me—for there's no motion
That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
It is the woman's part.

(2.4.171–75)

The cuckolded or emasculated man is one who has lost a vital part of his public honor. But usury also converges with the denigration of manhood, as Iachimo suggests: "The heaviness and guilt within my bosom / Takes off my manhood" (5.2.1–2). The belief that usury posits threat to masculinity was not uncommon to the Renaissance, which often associated usury with the masculine anxiety over effeminization. Thus, for example, writing against the negative effects of usury, Thomas Wilson warns, in *A treatise vppon usurie* (1538), that too much profit would eventually induce all Englishmen to abandon their vocations and, as a consequence, their manliness (71). The only way for Posthumus to restore his masculinity lost to debt is to engage in a real masculine pursuit, combat. He envisages taking up a sword, a conventional symbol of male prowess and sexuality, and fighting with Iachimo.

The ring that Iachimo pretends to have stolen from Imogen, however, is counterfeited; it is "simular proo£" Thus what underlies the process of the ring exchange is, on the one hand, man's instability to estimate, to *know*, woman's worth and the implication that the real worth of a woman cannot be measured. On the other hand, however, the fake ring devalues the nature of the bond established between two men. And I suggest that the male sexual anxiety is here circumscribed by the fear of sodomy effected by the anus–vagina symbolism of the ring, symbolism that destabilizes the normativity of marriage when
the ring is used as a token of bonding in the discourses of marriage and male friendship.

In early modern England, sodomy was commonly seen as a foreign condition. I recall here Simonds D'Ewes’s description of Francis Bacon, once lord chancellor to King James I. D'Ewes slanders Bacon, saying that Bacon, apparently quite regularly, was "deserting the bed of his wife" and would go to perform with his servants the "unnatural crime [of sodomy] which he accounted as the taliens and turks do, a poor and mean pleasure in respect of the other." In the Renaissance anal sex was sodomy, but "sodomy" also referred to various other sins (heresy, for example) or transgressions, and it was also rendered as a language of denigration, suggesting a kind of personal conduct that functions disruptively within any normative system of relationships. In Cymbeline, this system includes both trade and marriage. In Jacobean England, when power was felt ideologically to be growingly exercised by merchants and traders, the threat to the stability of the state and domestic economy was conveniently constructed as sodomy, considered a foreign sin, as when D'Ewes appears to know what Italians and Turks do in bed. And it seems that the traders, Posthumus and Iachimo, become focal points of the anxiety of Jacobean England for the stability of its market and, by extension, for its state, destabilized by Italian traders and the merchants from Levant. The Posthumus-Iachimo bond, centered around the figure of the Italian sodomite-merchant, suggests both the economic and sexual anxieties of the early modern society and theatre.

Once the romance world is stripped of its mystical force and incredible fantasies by the bulging purses of the "progressive forces in Renaissance culture," the angst in and of the marketplace and of its professional elites, merchants, and "bankers" became the source

of anxiety that extended beyond the public sphere and entered the private one. Thus the rhetoric of financial exchange, which enables erotic bonds between characters in a pragmatic world, becomes a vehicle for freeing desire from the often fantastic turns of the plots of romances.

The problem remains, however, as to how to interpret the marriage of Imogen and Posthumus at the end of the play. The reconstituted family of act 5 is a corporate and not a personalized entity, for Imogen's marriage with Posthumus suggests the restoration of the symbolic order. The rehabilitation of Posthumus fully restores that masculinity he lost in the surreptitious exchange with Iachimo in the wager scene. Part of my discussion of the Posthumus-Pisanio and the Posthumus-Iachimo bonds, with Imogen featuring in between as a some kind of scale that enables the measuring of masculine bonds, evokes Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's concept of homosociality, which involves a woman but only as a "perfunctory detour on the way to a closer, but homophobically proscribed, bonding with another man." 19

But what about Pisanio? If the homosocial bond between Pisanio and Posthumus has been the site for the construction of Posthumus's masculinity, it seems odd that Pisanio should hardly figure in the final scenes. Or perhaps he has to disappear so that Posthumus's masculinity can reign unchallenged. Pisanio's status as a servant helps to explain why he is absent from Posthumus's erotic economy at the end of the play. His social status, of one below Posthumus, also explains why, earlier in the play, he was central to the construction of Posthumus's subjectivity. In that period, as Alan Bray has shown, class structure tacitly allowed homoerotic bonds between men, making the lower-class man sexually available to the one of the higher class. 20 Thus in the culture in which sodomy and servitude frequently converged,

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Pisanio's close link with Posthumus could enable homoerotic desire. Yet Pisanio remains a part of the action only as Imogen's servant, and no longer as Posthumus's man or boy. Thus Posthumus's masculinity is compromised at the end of the play in ways similar to Imogen's regal authority, which has been passed on to Posthumus, who, earlier in the play, left Imogen without a kiss. Instead, silent, he looked back and, kissing the handkerchief (another token of bonding and sexual purity), waved longingly to Pisanio abandoned on the shore of Italy.

Another text by Sedgwick sheds a particularly important light on my discussion of the intersection of economy and male sexuality in Cymbeline. In her semi-autobiographical essay, “A Poem Is Being Written,” Sedgwick says that “man's anal eroticism . . . is not only an important and meaningful theme in Judaeo-Christian culture but arguably inextricable from modern Western processes of meaning (social and economic as well as gender meaning) through and through.” And this, she says, “never means good news for men’s anal eroticism.” Thus a link both horrifying and titillating, which combines economy and eroticism, depends in Cymbeline on the economic dynamics that conditions the value of the commercial sphere run by men and within which men measure their power, evaluate alliances among each other, and assign worth to women.

21 I thank Bradin Cormack for his insightful comments on this part of my argument.

22 Sedgwick, 203. Italics in the original.
References


BOOK REVIEWS

It's true, as Marcia Jenneth Epstein points out, that vernacular devotional songs have not received the attention they deserve from scholars. The challenge of unraveling the complexities of amorous lyrics and establishing their relation to ritual, social practices, and patronage still exerts a strong pull. In *Prions en chantant: Devotional Songs of the Trouvères*, Epstein counters many of the preconceptions one might have about working on devotional lyrics and fills several lacunae in scholarship by showing us just how complex and rooted in social practice these same devotional songs were. She has written an accessible, erudite, and entertaining volume that should attract new scholars and performers to the material she presents. While not exhaustive, Epstein's volume offers a broad and representative view of devotional song in northern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Her careful attention to the musical as well as poetic text and her interest in performance practice, both past and present, make this a timely and rewarding addition to scholarship on the medieval lyric.

Her samples are taken from two late thirteenth-century manuscripts found in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. MS X is an exquisitely produced presentation copy compiled for a noble patron; MS V is less fastidious, abounding in omissions and metric irregularities. Epstein uses the differences between the two to make several points about
aural–visual transmission: (a) performers could be scribes; (b) not all scribes were trained in new mensural styles; (c) variants and discrepancies like the ones found in these devotional songs were allowed and are found also in transcriptions of well-known folk material. Many of the songs she studies are contrafacta and either substitute new lyrics for old melodies (usually secular) or incorporate citations from well-known melodies within the new song’s structure, a common feature of today’s popular hip-hop music. Epstein concludes that the musical notation of monophonic songs may have served as a sort of lingua franca that allowed for great flexibility in interpretation. The manuscripts preserved these songs in a visual medium at a time in which the songs were experienced (learned and listened to) largely as an aural phenomenon.

The songs found in MSS X and V are largely anonymous and, while included in manuscripts of secular music, they are grouped together, in a separate section—identified in MS X as songs to the Mother of God. It is their almost exclusive emphasis on Mary as virgin mother and protector that marks them as distinct from extant liturgical songs of the same period. This attention to the Virgin also distinguishes them from secular trouvère songs, which they often closely resemble in form and content, and especially in their focus on a feminine Other. Epstein speculates that the audience for these songs consisted of the urban bourgeoisie and nobility, local and court clergy, and professional entertainers. Such songs are as likely to have been composed by jongleurs as by court clerics, for entertainment as well as edification. Her introductory chapters offer the broadest possible view of secular composition and are refreshingly open to considering the influence of the audience and its beliefs and tastes on the production of the artwork.

Epstein’s overt purpose in presenting the texts along with musical notation is to encourage the reader to produce the music, to make it audible. Hers is not a definitive critical edition of the texts. She is not interested in seeking out a putative base text but rather in respecting the “delicate accord of text and with music,” even when a source such as her MS V shows signs of having been copied hastily or carelessly. Her justification makes good sense: the manuscript was used as it is and therefore has its own logic and integrity. We, like the medieval user, should make accommodations as required. Epstein’s section on editorial decisions is a model of clarity and concision that allows her to justify her choices while emphasizing flexibility. The lyrics themselves are well presented—a complete text followed by a partial text under musical notation. Her volume actually resembles the manuscripts she has studied. It is a modern medieval production that collects and classifies the lyrics but can itself also be used in performance. Each of the songs is classified by text
category (courtly, laudatory, catechetical, political, or personal) and music category (chanson-style, through-composed, round-chanson, or serpentine) as well as by the rhyme scheme and source number, and contrafacta are identified when appropriate.

Her translations are faithful and elegant and allow the songs themselves to shine—and what lyrics! Along with some well-worn metaphorical conceits on virginity and motherhood, spring and budding flowers, we find great attention paid to the body of the mother and child and to popularization of more learned references to light and impregnation (#34), as well as a menagerie of symbolic animals (#37) and literary heroines (#25). Some of the songs have been anthologized before but none conveys the collective force of these lovely lyrics as well as Epstein's anthology. Anyone interested in medieval lyric will find it an invaluable addition. Epstein's attention to the interplay between genres, rhetorical registers, court and church, lady and virgin leads us toward new areas of inquiry and to reevaluation of others.

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Not merely “a stage history,” this beautifully produced book sets out to identify the cultural contexts in which A Midsummer Night's Dream has been produced (or in which it has not seemed worth producing). Beginning with the hypothetical first performance (which, Gary Jay Williams argues firmly, was not intended for an aristocratic wedding) and working up to productions as recent as 1996, Williams goes on to describe a remarkable range of interpretations: the Purcell Fairy Queen (with orange trees appearing in the final scene as a tribute to Queen Mary II and her husband, William of Orange); the nineteenth-century habit of casting Oberon as a woman and Puck as a child; the radical experiments of the twentieth century, from Granville Barker's “aesthetic” interpretation and Reinhardt's explorations of folklore to Peter Brook's gymnasium setting—which, Williams notes, seems an unconscious fulfillment of Barker's 1915 statement that “What is really needed is a great
white box” (152). Even as the stage was beginning to make the Dream into something much more problematical, and many editors were becoming interested in theories of the destabilized text, opera and ballet versions provided a continuation of the “neoromantic” tradition. Moreover, as Williams points out, this was precisely when the BBC Shakespeare series began to appear, offering conservative productions intended for schools, with a “timeless” international appeal. There is no end to the war between those who want Shakespeare to transcend contemporary culture and those who recognize that directing Shakespeare always means an encounter with contemporary culture; rather, each side has found new worlds to conquer. But in the end there is no conquest. Professor Williams’s thesis, like that of the series in which his book appears, is that no one production is truer than another to the spirit of Shakespeare’s play; all productions are mediated in some way, and “we do not go to definitive theatres; we go to the theatres of our times” (159).

_A Midsummer Night’s Dream_, on the face of it one of Shakespeare’s most lightweight works, seems to lend itself admirably to pretty, comic productions, often aimed at children. But, like other fairy tales, it also offers dark undertones. Twentieth-century readers may be disturbed by, for instance, the treatment of the working-class actors at the hands of the aristocrats, the subservient role of Hippolyta with her husband and conqueror Theseus, the treatment of Hermia by her father and Theseus, and the sexual implications of Oberon’s treatment of Titania and his desire for the changeling boy. Productions from an earlier era which do not confront these issues may seem incomplete, reduced in description to a series of visual effects like Charles Kean’s view of Periclean Athens or Beerbohm Tree’s rabbits. Inevitably, as a cultural critic himself, Williams is more sympathetic to the post-modern than to what preceded it and sometimes falls into the trap of representing pre-postmodernist theatre as somehow “lacking.” The unarguable fact that productions are a combination of circumstances suggests that productions are a conscious conspiracy. He describes Garrick’s adaptations as “naturalizing and nationalizing” Shakespeare (66), Samuel Phelps’s highly praised version as “bourgeois,” Beerbohm Tree’s as “imperialist” (110–11). In particular, I feel that he is unfair to Garrick, who may have been the object of immense admiration in his lifetime but was also on the receiving end of a good deal of vilification and envy. While Archer in _The Beaux’ Stratagem_ was indeed Garrick’s “signature” role (65), Williams weakens his argument about Garrick’s sentimentality by confusing this character with Aimwell, the play’s sentimental hero. In fact, Archer is a charming scoundrel in the Restoration tradition; Garrick’s achievement was in making the audience take him for a gentleman.
That the nineteenth-century theatre offered spectacle for its own sake (at least to the extent that it was advertised as an attraction in itself and described by sympathetic audiences as hypnotic or enchanting) is something that a modern critic finds difficult to understand without falling back on Brecht. I suspect we need something besides contemptuous references to Disney to explain the kind of pleasure given by technology, or indeed to understand pleasure at all. Williams is critical of productions that are merely "a rite of reassurance" (110), but also of those, like Granville Barker’s controversial 1914 *Dream*, that are ahistorical and elitist. Undoubtedly, audiences like spectacular and beautiful productions, but wasn’t Peter Brook’s equally spectacular in its own way, and equally reassuring, though about different things?

Earlier stage historians used to make fun of the scenic effects of previous generations in the name of fidelity to Shakespeare’s text. Though Williams does not believe that such fidelity is possible, his indications of the amount of text cut from different productions suggest that he would agree in this as a basic measure of how far the director intended, at any rate, to respect the original work. It’s worth considering the fact that, in England at any rate, a production emphasizing words rather than spectacle is probably more generally intelligible now than it would have been in the nineteenth century: actors have access to much more thoroughly annotated editions; audiences have studied the plays as part of an A-level course, which emphasizes the close reading of single texts. By contrast, of course, productions in modern foreign-language translations will be still clearer than those in English, sometimes ironing out ambiguities that cannot be preserved in translation. Karin Beier’s Dusseldorf production of 1995–96, with actors playing in nine languages and often “resorting to pantomime” in an attempt to communicate, sounds like an attempt to give the audience an equivalent sense of difficulty, but in the end was “seldom subtle,” emphasizing only the “cruel sexuality” which is evidently the play’s lowest common denominator at present (154).

Ironically, in view of Williams’s distrust of spectacle, the book will be enjoyed, in part at least, for its own wealth of illustrations (57 in black and white and 17 in color). But of course it also offers much more fascinating information and speculation. Here are a few items chosen almost at random. Williams remains open on the question of whether Theseus and Hippolyta were meant to double as Oberon and Titania, but suggests that possibly the Folio’s replacement of Philostrate by Egeus and Lysander in Act V was a creative comic response to a shortage of actors. The Indian boy gets a surprising amount of attention: we learn that Queen Mary II actually had a Javanese
dwarf among her servants (54) and that the role was equally interesting to nineteenth-century audiences, when their queen was also Empress of India. The treatment of the amateur actors of Athens has ranged from farcical, to picturesque (authentic Athenian tools in Quince's shop), to a reading emphasizing Bottom's class sensitivity almost as much as his sexuality. I am intrigued by the theatrical association of high voices with the nonhuman, as shown in the use of a female voice for Oberon in the nineteenth century and a counter-tenor in Benjamin Britten's 1960 opera. Usually associated with a homoerotic subtext, this device would be worth exploring further, and outside the Western tradition. In Japanese kabuki theater, the romantic male lead is sometimes played by an actor traditionally associated with female roles, because such androgynous figures are thought to convey a softer, more romantic image. Williams's ideological approach may be dated, but the information he provides will be useful and pleasurable for a long time.

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Even though the editors of *Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England* claim that "bits and pieces of their [authors'] poetry, fiction, and drama have been in print continuously for the last three hundred years" (i), it is always exciting and gratifying to see the appearance of yet another volume devoted to women writers of the early modern period. The very fact that I am able to say "yet another" volume shows both that there were many women writing during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England and there are now many (mostly women) scholars working to bring these writers' texts into print in modern scholarly editions. *Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England* takes its place among an important body of texts whose overt political purpose—bringing to light previously un- or little-known women-authored texts—is at least as important as its literary or scholarly one. But this anthology also serves an important pedagogical purpose. Anyone who has ever tried to construct a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century literature
course that includes work by women authors knows that it cannot be done without doing a fair amount of standing on one's head and running up substantial copying bills. Therefore, this textbook will be welcomed by many instructors—including myself—who can show their students that women authors did hold an important position in the landscape of early modern England.

The anthology consists of substantial selections of works by Amelia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, and Anne Finch and brief ones by Rachel Speght and Ester Sowernam. The introductory material clearly states the editorial position, and the chosen texts are annotated well so undergraduate readers will not have problems with archaic usage. Each author has her own introduction, bibliography, and textual notes. The introductions are adequate and the bibliographies solid and comprehensive and quite useful for anyone wanting to begin—or even continue—work on the women anthologized. The textual notes are very full, perhaps more suited to graduate students than to undergraduates. Yet while it is not difficult to argue that this anthology is needed, its construction and philosophy raises many difficult and important questions regarding the nature of anthologies, the gender-marking of literary texts and genres, the creation of a "female canon," and the place of feminist theory/criticism of women-authored texts within early modern studies generally.

My first three points are encapsulated within the title of the anthology, especially in the words "women" and "major." The inclusion of the word "women" in the title of an anthology dealing with a century that some (many?) still think had "few" women writers recalls the publication in the 1980s of The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. While the heftiness of that Norton volume "proved" that there really were very many texts by very many women writers that spanned the chronology of literature in English and deserved collection, the publication of a separate anthology of literature "by women" raised as many questions as it answered. For example: why did women need a separate anthology? Were their works ineligible—for whatever reason(s)—for inclusion within the "basic" Norton anthologies of canonical male authors (which, to be fair, by this time did include more women-authored texts)? Was it better for literature classes to consider women-authored texts as necessarily "different" from male-authored ones? Why? Did gender, or biology, make so much difference to the "creative spirit" that scholars now needed two canonical yardsticks—a male one and a female one?

The editors of Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England covertly address many of these questions in their preliminary material, the
“Introduction” and “Feminist Criticism and Seventeenth-Century Women Writers.” While they make an excellent case for the study of seventeenth-century women writers, they make less of a case for the production of a separate anthology rather than radically revising a “standard” anthology to include more women authors among the men. Most of the justification for this single-sex move comes in their “Feminist Criticism” section, which presents a mini-lecture on the history of Anglo-American feminist criticism and gynocriticism—which, despite some dated sources, will probably be very helpful for the undergraduates and general readers who are the target audience for this volume—and sees feminist work in the early modern period as dealing primarily with the resurrection of texts by women and secondarily/concurrently with “the interpretation of the literary and historical value of these works” (14). As a means to achieving the latter goal, the editors suggest that “personal biography—and especially that part of the biography that is specifically affected by the writer’s sex, such as marriage and motherhood—infuses the essays on many of these writers, providing a map by which to read their works” (14). The editors do point out how this methodology does go against post-structuralist assertions of the “death of the author,” yet they do not indicate how their methodology does not engage with many of the current theoretical explorations in early modern studies generally. Similarly, the editors mention recent works that deal with issues of female subjectivity and historical contextualization—works by Marilyn L. Williamson, Hilda Smith, Mary Ellen Lamb to name just a few—no specific mention is made of the more recent, highly theorized work of Dympna Callaghan (on Elizabeth Cary), Kim Hall (on Mary Wroth and issues of race), Margo Hendricks (on Aphra Behn), Rosemary Kegel (on Cavendish), Gwynne Kennedy (on Cary), and Wendy Wall (on female authorship). Nor do the editors consider how current work in early modern studies on class, various marginalized groups (sodomites, tribades, virgins, racial and religious others, the poor), and non-elite genres (antitheatrical tracts, homilies, scaffold speeches, etc.) impacts upon feminist work in the early centuries generally and work on women-authored texts in particular. While articles and books on some of these issues by the above-mentioned scholars are listed in the various bibliographies in the anthology, the fact that such names and issues rarely appear in the introductory matter to each author suggests that the editors see the discussion of female-authored texts as operating in a sort of gendered vacuum, removed from other work being done in early modern studies.

My feeling is reinforced by the second word in the title I wish to consider: “major.” The word “major” works in at least two ways. It signals both that
this anthology is not meant to be a comprehensive study of all women writers of the period and that the editors are making a value judgment about the authors they have chosen. With the exception of the pamphlet authors, whom I will discuss separately, the authors chosen can best be described as “elite”—either because of their social positions (Cavendish, Wroth, Cary, Finch), the genres in which they work (Wroth, Lanyer, Philips), or their current popularity (Behn). Few students of the early modern period will be surprised by this list; few will not have heard of all of these women. Thus by choosing these authors, the editors have made a decision to help canonize certain women authors at the expense of others. This decision has the unfortunate tendency to replicate the patriarchal goal of anthologizing only the “greatest” of literary texts. I am surprised to see such a move in a volume that uses feminist criticism as one of its basic political/philosophical principles. I would have liked to see selections by women authors who have not already emerged as “leaders” of the field, especially when work by these leaders is often available in other editions.

The editors do seem to challenge their use of the term “major” in their inclusion of selections from Rachel Speght’s and Esther Sowernam’s pamphlets on the Swetnam controversy. However, they include only very brief selections from each pamphlet and place these selections at the very end of the volume, suggesting that they are either an “afterthought” or a reluctant inclusion of “dubiously” literary texts among the obviously literary. It is this odd treatment of the pamphlets that reinforces what I see as the disturbingly elitist focus of this anthology. One of the important considerations to come out of work on female authors of the earlier centuries is that women often, and usually of necessity, wrote in genres not employed by men and considered, therefore, nonelite or nonliterary. Recent work in early modern studies has validated such nonelite “female” genres as translations, testament poems, scaffold speeches, letters, etc., as it has similarly validated such nonelite “male” genres as sermons and homilies, tracts, discovery narratives, wardrobe lists, and political and legal treatises. Similarly, recent important critical work has focused on male authors who would, fifty years ago, have been considered “minor” and unworthy of critical regard. Thus despite the “newness” of this anthology’s focus on women writers, its refusal seriously to consider nonelite writers or genres as being worthy of serious study points out a latent “dated” aspect of the volume. The introduction mentions that the period after 1640 could be viewed as “a century of revolution for women writers, whose numbers vastly increased” (2). It was a time in which “Quaker women . . . published numerous religious pamphlets, prophetic and mystical
discourses, and personal testimonies,” which are not considered in this anthology because they “do not fit in the customary literary categories” (5). But isn’t the fact the women often wrote—or had to write—in genres that were not customarily literary the point? Why are Cavendish’s Sociable Letters—“arguably her best book” (6)—acceptably “literary” while pamphlets by Speght, Sowernam, and numerous (often anonymous) Puritan and Quaker women that deal with contemporary religious, political, and social issues not? I must admit that I fail to understand the distinction made here between “literary” letters and “nonliterary” pamphlets (and other genres).

Everyone who considers an anthology has her own ideas about what she would include if she were making such decisions. Naturally, no one can really agree on anthology selections, so the following constitute my own personal “wish list” for what I would change in this anthology. My general preference in anthologies is to include complete works rather than selections. Thus I am glad the editors chose to include two complete plays, Cary’s The Tragedy of Mariam and Behn’s The Rover. Yet as I say this, I also want to add a quibble. Both texts are available in other editions. Current publishing trends in both academic and commercial houses to bring out “what sells” rather than “what needs to be available” means that it is often impossible to find a reasonably priced teaching edition of texts by authors who are not considered “canonical”—and therefore “marketable.” To anthologize texts that are readily available elsewhere is to limit the range of texts generally available. I hate to seem to be “restricting” the freedom of choice of editors, but the sad reality is that such duplication can ultimately restrict what is taught and studied. If Cary’s only play is eliminated from consideration, we are left with her history of Edward II. This text would make a marvelous inclusion, though perhaps the editors did not think it sufficiently literary. While on the subject of plays, I would lobby for the inclusion of one of Cavendish’s plays. The Convent of Pleasure seems to be the one that is taught most, though I would be happy to have a modern edition of a complete text of any Cavendish play readily available. Also, the inclusion of a play would—with the Cary and Behn plays—allow students to get some sense of the range of plays—a genre rarely employed—by women authors as well as the vast difference between the plays of these three authors, partially explained by the fact that only Behn wrote for public production.

Vast texts like the Urania must be the bane of anthologizers. Obviously, the entire Urania could not be included in this anthology. But I question why such disembodied sections were chosen? I would suggest, as an alternative, the inclusion of one whole book. While it is true that anthology
of sixteenth-century literature tend to produce a student body that thinks
The Faerie Queene is only about Redcrosse, Una, and Duessa, at least such
students have a sense of how an entire book of Spenser's epic works. They
know how maddening and exciting all the digressions can be and do get at
least some sense of how the narrative progresses. I would like them to get the
same sense of the Urania. And if it is indeed true, as I also believe, that Wroth
radically "revises" the conventions of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence (5), why
not provide the whole Pamphilus to Amphilanthus to allow instructors and
students the opportunity to compare the sequence to those of Shakespeare,
Spenser, or Sidney?

I think it is really difficult to produce an anthology. People—from review­
ers to colleagues to students—will always find fault with it. While I may dis­
agree with the editors of this text for several reasons, I do agree with them that
anthologies of early modern women authors are necessary. I hope to see many
more such anthologies in the years to come.

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Lyons, John D. The Tragedy of Origins: Pierre Corneille and Historical Per­
0-804-72616-7.

In recent years, scholars have paid increasing attention to the question of
Corneille and Historical Perspective provides a very important and illuminating
historical dimension to this issue. While some scholars view national identity
narrowly as a uniquely modern concern brought about by the French Revolu­
tion, other scholars see national identity in a larger context that dates back
several centuries. Lyons shows that many seventeenth-century historians
sought to define France's identity by establishing a national history. In their
efforts to trace that history, these historians were primarily concerned with
fixing the origin of the French nation since that would shape France's histori­
cal narrative and hence its self-image as a nation.

Lyons convincingly demonstrates how Corneille's plays were deeply
informed by the seventeenth-century historical debates about the origins of
the French nation. Lyons offers close textual readings of five Corneille plays,
showing that if analyzed in sequence they form an account of the origin of
France. Lyons first examines three of Corneille’s major canonical texts—*Horace*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte*, which dramatize respectively the formation of the Roman royal identity, Rome’s transition from a republic to an empire, and the transformation of the Roman Empire into Romania. One of the original insights of this book is to situate the two least read of Corneille’s thirty-two plays—*Sertorius* and *Attila*, within this sequence, for they both dramatize, Lyons argues, the historical link between the Roman Empire and France, portraying France as born out of the merger of the Frankish and Roman Imperial legacies. Analyzing these last two plays as part of a larger sequence in order to understand the origin of France, Lyons makes a striking case for studying these plays in context.

In these plays, as in all his tragedies, Corneille takes his plots from history. However, this observation in and of itself is not necessarily meaningful since French dramatic convention dictated that the only subject matter worthy of tragedy came from history. But Lyons pushes beyond the dramatic convention to search for the deeper connections between history and tragedy. Lyons finds those connections in the concept of origins.

The book begins with a very probing analysis of the paradox raised by the problem of origins. Although an origin is the source of something new, it can be perceived as originating something new only when it has already passed, as historians of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries acknowledged. For example, Corneille situates his play *Polyeucte* at the origin of Christianity. Central to this story is the moment when Polyeucte acts in the name of a new Christian God and defies the pagan order by publicly destroying the pagan idols in the temple. We, the audience, with our retrospective vision, can clearly see that this moment represents the origin of a whole new order. However, the play’s characters, who are deprived of that retrospective vision, do not have that same clarity. Most of the characters do not know how to interpret Polyeucte’s actions. For them, his behavior constitutes a vile and violent transgression of the accepted order. However, Polyeucte himself sees his behavior as marking the origin of a new order. What is it then that determines whether Polyeucte’s break from paganism represents the origin of a new order? The status of an event as “originary” cannot inhere in the event itself and thus cannot be decided in the present. Rather its status results from the subsequent acts of history that reflect back on that past event to determine whether it gave rise to important consequences persisting over time. Thus a retrospective vision endows the initial event with a meaning it did not and could not have had when it first occurred.
Because the retrospective nature of origins creates a distance between the moment of an event and its subsequent fate, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to determine whether an origin has initiated a new order. Because later groups of individuals “map” or define the past according to their own needs and value systems, the interpretation of that past with its corresponding points of origin can become the battleground of warring factions. In the five plays Lyons analyzes, he shows how each Corneillian tragedy represents the origin of a new cultural institution that provokes different kinds of battles between opposing factions. As tragedies of origin, each play dramatizes the contrast between one group of characters who perceive that a new origin has occurred and now adhere to the new order, such as Christianity, which is replacing the old. In the opposing camp are those who are blinded to the importance of a given event because they remain fixed on their traditional views of the past. Their views are constructed around an older origin that legitimizes their values and actions.

The characters’ blindness is always of a particular sort—they are blind to historic transformation. Each play dramatizes a confrontation between two different origins to important historic eras. Not surprisingly, the retrospective nature of origins helps us better understand Corneille’s view of history, for both are retrospective structurings of human experience. However, Lyons argues, this understanding of origins and history also holds the key to understanding the nature of Corneillian tragedy. The tragic hero first acts based on a lack of information or wisdom, but in time comes to see retrospectively a new historical narrative that would change the meaning and wisdom of his act. For Corneille, tragedy is linked to history in that the tragic comes from a blindness to the new turn of historic events, a blindness to what counts as an origin.

If I had to recommend one book to understand Corneille, this would be it. The complex politics of Corneille’s historical plots clearly ask to be read within a political and historical context. Yet, surprisingly few studies have done this comprehensively or successfully. Until recently, the most common approach to Corneille has been to study the psychology of the characters in relation to the dilemmas posed by the heroic ethic or to study the more formal aspects of his classical style and structure. However, as Lyons shows, the psychologically nuanced relationship between, for example, Chimène and Rodrigue in Le Cid exemplifies the problems of adapting to rapid historical change. Chimène and Rodrigue fall into opposing categories regarding their view of the new, emerging political order. Both Chimène and her father,
Le Comte, clinging to the older feudal order whereas Rodrique and his father Don Diègue are partisans of the new monarchical political and historical stance. Rodrigue is quick to perceive that an important historical change has occurred whereas Chimène refuses that change and sees in it only a transgression from the old order. Lyons shows how the psychological dynamics among the characters are a function of their varying responses to the evolution of history.

While this book provides a remarkably insightful analysis of Corneille’s plays, it offers much more than that. It uses details of Corneille’s theater to raise some of the larger questions of seventeenth-century classical culture. It is ultimately a book about why the French were so obsessed with the history of Rome, how they used that history to understand their own history, and how these concerns were an integral part of their developing sense of nation. I feel that Lyons’s analysis provides the right framework to understand many parts of Corneille’s plays and of classical culture in general that have not previously made sense to me. In other words, I found myself frequently pausing to say, “Aha,” and then suddenly some other parts of the puzzle fell into place. Lyons’s book was a pleasure to read, not simply because of the “aha” factor but also because he has an uncommonly wonderful writing style that makes abstract concepts palpable and real. He has a gift for taking complex theoretical questions and unraveling them, thread by thread, to examine them in ways that make me remember why I chose to study French literature.

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Jonathan Goldberg’s *Desiring Women Writing*, as its title indicates, is motivated by a “double desire”—the “desire that there should be women writers in the Renaissance and that the desires articulated in their texts be acknowledged” (14). The object of Goldberg’s finely tuned polemic belongs to a critical tradition that celebrates female writers as Women Worthies, whose power derives from their conformity to an ongoing Legend of Good Women. Submission
to sexual censorship, Goldberg argues, has been the price paid by early women writers for admission to the literary canon. Goldberg wields two weapons in the good fight to acknowledge the illicit desires of these women writers: sophisticated close reading and an unflagging attention to the false rhetoric of other critics.

*Desiring Women Writing* is divided into three parts. Part one, “The Legend of Good Women,” pairs Aemelia Lanyer with Aphra Behn. “Canonizing Aemelia Lanyer” critiques the “received view” of Lanyer as a foremother of liberal feminism. Goldberg analyzes how Lanyer’s religious rhetoric preserves as well as challenges patriarchal hierarchies; he then offers a class-based analysis to show that Lanyer’s maneuvering among traditional categories of gender helps her reclaim as author a position she had lost by marrying down. Lanyer’s community of good women, based on a desire of “like for like” that puts Lanyer on an equal footing with her aristocratic patrons, makes possible not only same-sex desire but also the sale of sexual services within the female power structure. Lanyer’s community of women is scandalous, home to the tribade as well as the pious woman. “Aphra Behn’s Female Pen” sets out to reclaim Behn, a traditionally scandalous subject, from the androgynous identity Goldberg thinks has been imposed on her by contemporary feminist scholarship. Analyses of *The Rover* and *Oroonoko* demonstrate, by way of Behn’s shifting identifications with male and female subject positions, that her investment in female characters depends partly on their status as objects of male desire. The relation between Behn’s narrator and Imoinda in *Oroonoko*, although a form of female–female desire, implicates Behn’s female pen in the kind of violence and racial aggression that *Oroonoko* associates with masculinity. Same-sex desire is not always benign.

Part two, “Translating Women,” challenges the assumption that Renaissance women were permitted to do translation precisely because the female translator was subordinated to a male author. “Margaret Roper’s Daughterly Devotions: Unnatural Translations” makes the fascinating argument that Margaret Roper, whose father considered himself and Margaret’s husband as sufficient audience for her literary labors, participated in the humanist game of literary emulation with none other than Desiderius Erasmus. Margaret’s correspondence with Erasmus allows Goldberg to read *A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster*, her translation of Erasmus’s *Precatio Dominica*, as her response to a combined compliment and challenge issued by Erasmus in the previous year, when he dedicated to Margaret Roper his commentary on Prudentius’s Christmas and Epiphany hymns as a way of marking the birth of
her first child. Erasmus associates Margaret with the passive role of literal motherhood but reconstructs her marriage to John Roper as a nonhierarchical relation between siblings. Margaret responds with a complicated set of rhetorical moves that transform her from the daughter of both Thomas More and Erasmus, her adoptive father within the humanist paedieia, into Christ's (male) sibling. In a final move, Goldberg talks about how Thomas More, in his one documented miracle, prescribed the enema that saved Margaret Roper from a life-threatening fever. This becomes for Goldberg an emblem of incestuous rape. But even this construction of the daughter, Goldberg argues, has been prefigured by Margaret's own devotional rhetoric of the body, so that her participation in a discourse of pious subjection becomes a "way out" of traditional gender roles, an opportunity to claim for herself a place in humanist discourse by her very embrace of a self-abnegating piety.

"The Countess of Pembroke's Literal Translation" examines the literary filiation between Philip and Mary Sidney through Mary's translation of Petrarch's Trionfi della Morte. While Sidney has been praised for her fidelity to Petrarch's original, Goldberg examines patiently the ways in which Mary's manipulation of textual relations within the Petrarch poem allows her to figure first Philip, and then herself, in terms of same-sex erotics. The effect is finally an incestuous union of living sister and dead brother in a Petrarchan relationship that unites, rather than separates, them.

Part three, "Writing as a Woman," returns to a preoccupation of Goldberg's earlier work, the relation of writing to agency and authority. While male authors of the Renaissance often write "as" a woman—speak from the position of a female character—Goldberg argues that contemporary critics naturalize too readily gender identifications in English Renaissance poetry. "Mary Shelton's Hand" concerns a poem attributed by Tottel to Henry Howard, the earl of Surrey, but recorded in manuscript in Mary Shelton's hand. This chapter argues that because "authorship" is gendered male, Shelton has been treated as the scribe rather than the author of the poem "O Happy Dames," which appears in the Devonshire manuscript as well as Tottel's Miscellany. If we accept, even for a moment, a female author for this poem, we can get beyond the conventional assumption that a poem lamenting the absence of a male beloved must be spoken by a woman. In his characteristically painstaking way, Goldberg deconstructs this brief lyric to show that it simultaneously constructs female desire as active and offers male-male desire as an alternative to normative heterosexuality.

"Graphina's Mark," celebrating a minor character from Elizabeth Cary's
*Mariam,* argues that Graphina, although she stands allegorically for writing as silence and absence, is no mere cipher. Graphina echoes her lover Pheroras, but she also transgresses class and racial lines. The mutuality between Graphina and Pheroras, although superficially reinforcing compulsory heterosexuality, also has much in common with male-male relations in the play, particularly the bond of friendship that links Constarbus with the sons of Babus. As a sign for the female writer, Graphina is a displaced figure of male-male friendship, a suggested but unrealized model for relationships within the play *Mariam.*

*Desiring Women Writing* offers readers an elegant glimpse of one critic's struggle to free his subjects from confining sexual stereotypes. The book offers abundant examples of strenuous but subtle acts of close reading that acknowledge women writers as talented rhetors. Each chapter returns to one subject—the construction of same-sex desire in the early modern period—but Goldberg's careful attention to the complexities of this phenomenon prevents the argument from becoming monotonous. *Desiring Women Writing* is, however, sometimes compromised by its attitude toward the critical community with which the book engages. The Acknowledgments page is full of warm and specific thanks to individuals, including graduate and even undergraduate students. At the same time, Goldberg's use of other critics can be churlish. He enters the lists as a champion of desiring women against an institutionalized feminism tainted by the sexual puritanism of its Victorian origins. In the process, Goldberg attacks the women critics whose work provides a point of departure for his own and so replicates the process by which early women writers have been devalued. Such a disparity between preaching and practice becomes at times unnerving.

Readers who are thoroughly familiar with the feminist critics that Goldberg engages will follow the twists and turns of his argument most easily. On the other hand, the strength of this book lies finally in its ability to model the intellectual processes by which writers find their places in the critical conversation. For this reason, *Desiring Women Writing* will be of interest to students as well as academics. Goldberg offers readers at all stages a passionate and manageable introduction to major issues involved in reading and writing about Renaissance women writers. His argument in favor of acknowledging their illicit and transgressive desires is finally a winning argument.

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*The Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture* series aims to present New Historicism study that is informed by psychoanalytical, feminist, Marxist, and post-structuralist work. In these two books—*Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England*, and *Writing, Gender and State in Early Modern England: Identity Formation and the Female Subject*—such perspectives are represented indirectly and in certain brief theoretical passages (e.g., Matchinske, 9–17 and attendant notes, drawing on Paul Smith's *Discerning the Subject*), while the rest of the theoretical discussion is still Foucauldian. The two writers do engage profitably in the attempt lately noted as Michel Foucault's own in his late interviews, to make self-reflexivity or subject and selfhood a fourth dimension added to his previous triad of cultural constructions, namely of knowledge, truth, and power (see Deborah Cook, *The Subject Finds a Voice: Foucault's Turn toward Subjectivity*). The primary method is still thick description of sorts (now deployed in diachronic arguments spanning several decades of material), which generates much historical detail, sometimes at the price of wheel-spinning repetition and restating of what might have seemed obvious, but newly noted in the terms being considered.

Commentators have said before, for instance, that Anne Askew's martyrdom was not pure religious commitment systematically punished, that she was instead caught in factional battling between Queen Katherine Parr and her prelate-rivals for the king's policy consent. Matchinske states: "The debate over discursive interpretation operated within a multitude of cultural registers—religious, economic, punitive, personal—all of them, to some extent, contradictory. Accordingly, while Askew's accounts of her trial are no doubt religiously inspired and thus instrumental [in the Reformed cause], her involvement need not have been motivated solely to that end. For Askew, . . . interpretive and performative power may have . . . fulfilled additional subjective desires" (34). Matchinske has reason for putting things this way: she wants to bring agentive subjectivity into Foucauldian study, to break out of the subversion-containment bind. "Resistance . . . is never pure," she adds, "in terms either of its motivations or its outcomes. . . . This messiness is partly responsible for a general tendency to discount agency all together [sic]. Because resistance can never be traced back to a single source, because it never
succeeds in isolation or offers results that are absolute, mapping resistance in terms of straight lines, altruistic motives, or single-issue politics is impossible. . . Resistances are never simply 'contained'” (49–50).

Hanson also aims to “offer investigations toward a history of the subject” and to further Foucault's project of “denaturalizing the relations between the subject and the world” prevailing in the West since the eighteenth century. She notes that while in common law *nemo tenetur seipsum prodere* originally meant that the crown could question someone only through a proper indictment, it gradually was expanded into a right not to incriminate oneself. This happened against the backdrop of Elizabethan judicial torture to get secrets: “discovery,” a practice that created “the subject” as a masculine place of hidden inwardness. As the example of Jesuit equivocation (mental reservation about one’s untrue statements) indicates, the Catholic threat to Elizabeth’s rule was a major spur to the use of interrogatory torture, and in turn to a sense of the subject as private and alarmingly unknowable. Hanson qualifies her appeal to Foucault’s account of a broad epistemic shift in the early seventeenth century by saying that it is not “the way things were” but “an heuristic device” showing that “epistemic formations are . . . complex reweavings of conceptual resources rather than mental continents adrift from one another in time” (13). Yes, she maintains, there had been Augustinian inwardness for a thousand years, but it was not produced by the pressures of the bureaucratic state to construct and control the subject as male, private, secret, threatening to the state while at the same time being an agent of the state, paradoxically part of its own chain of command. Such is “the subject” of this book.

Hanson argues that “the epistemic anxiety driving discovery” of secrets, including judicial torture (not traditionally part of English jurisprudence), comes from a “play of differentiation and identification between hierarchically related men” (20): the discoverer and the discovered occupy reversible positions, existing as each other’s “confrère” to produce a self-reflexive subject inherently anxious about his or her own doubleness. Hanson’s Shakespeare chapter argues that *Measure for Measure* and *Othello* present wives’ bodies that “signify metadramatically” as vehicles through which relations between men construct this male “subject of the state” (33). Angelo is a dark shadow of the duke (“ourselves in Vienna”), Iago of Othello (“in following him I follow but myself”) (77). Women cannot be subjects in this construction: even though Desdemona began as a potential “soul to be known” (83) and Isabella with the potential to become a thawed, self-knowing female double of Angelo, they are instead sacrificed to “a sex-gender system that makes women a means through which men relate to one another”; and “the work the plays do
is to place the discovery of the subject” in this context (86). Thus Desdemona must die in baffled silence, and Isabella can have no voice in the end, being led off as the duke’s wife-trophy. He has made the same bargain Angelo attempted, her body for Claudio’s life.

The other chapters treat further problematics of “the discovering and discovered subject” (123). Chapter four on Thomas Harman’s and other cony-catching pamphlets portrays the scam-revealing commentators on shrewd thieves (from the displaced rural poor) as themselves professor-deceivers–plagiarists and self-professed wits making money from their exposés of canting rogues, sometimes while “folding their practices back into” an older ethos of country squires’ hospitality and neighborliness. This too creates a “discovering” male subject who is at the same time self-discovered. The final chapter on Bacon covers more familiar ground, the “discourse of discovery” (122), propounded by a discursive subject who however is seen not just as male conqueror of a female “nature.” Rather he is “a subject who marks a rupture with all previous discourse” and “makes a primary emptiness: ‘he that knows least [and is therefore] fittest to ask questions’” (122; New Atlantis, 221).

Hanson makes a useful contribution to cultural materialist study by further naturalizing concepts about subjectivity drawn unobtrusively from cultural semiotics (as Catherine Belsey began doing a decade earlier in The Subject of Tragedy): (1) “the subject” is viewed as a “site” within particular discourses, to be characterized as such; (2) discourse phenomena are seen as gendered in certain ways (91 and elsewhere); (3) each text is considered to have its own “semiotics” (i.e., its particular semantic universe, 69, 74, and 82); (4) the Lacanian transcendental subject as psychic/linguistic element of a discourse formation’s “subject position” is noted as a linguistic place-marker in discourses (in the sense of the linguist Benveniste, 22); and (5) the subject position can also be described as an “enunciating subject” (124), which begins to enable analysis that is textually as well as culturally sophisticated.

Matchinske’s argument is somewhat less theorized and more linear and chronological than Hanson’s, focusing almost entirely on texts representing four women: Askew’s Examinacions of 1546, the account of the Catholic martyr Margaret Clitherow written by her confessor John Mush (1586), the pseudonymous reply (1617) to the woman-hater Joseph Swetnam by “Ester Sowernam,” and the prophetic writings of the “ever so mad” Lady Eleanor Davies before and during the Civil War. Matchinske like Hanson aims to trace “the intersections between subject and state,” but she will do so in terms of women’s subjectivity, charting “a discursive shift from early sixteenth-
century understandings of private conscience as individually generated and spiritually motivated, to civil-war perceptions of interiority as state-inscribed and gender inflected—a site of civil and sexual invigilation and control” (5).

The witty evasions and rhetorical coups of Askew in her Examinations, as she plays cat and mouse with the interrogators who try to trap her into posing the blasphemous “mouse” argument (that if the host is Christ, then a mouse eating it would also “receive” Him)—these Matchinske reads as Askew’s assertion of, in equal parts, agentive private female subjectivity, religious conviction, and a proud intellectuality of a gentlewoman separated from her provincial husband. (It may be worth noting that Askew in her second or Other Examinacion after torture, realizing she will be executed, is more blunt and fearlessly declarative than in her first one, though this point also could fit Matchinske’s argument.) Askew has defined this subject position by having her marriage annulled and coming to London to profess reformist biblical interpretation as a “gospeller” and an influential thinker in the queen’s circle. Matchinske stresses the very different tone and textual subjectivity in Askew’s own low-keyed, rhetorically shrewd account, as opposed to the monolithic railing rhetoric of the polemicist John Bale, who published her text with his commentary abroad. For all that, the Henrician ecclesiastical apparatus executed her; hers is not a subjectivity “formed” by the state in the way that later women’s inwardness will be: Askew and others experience it as of “private” origin.

Matchinske reads Margaret Clitherow—pressed to death for harboring priests and refusing to enter a plea to the charges against her—as representing another step on the way to a later mode of subjectivity, because her case is part of the fear of Catholics in the 1580s, and this time the charge is not heresy but treason. One might have expected some treatment of the Edmund Campion mission here, but Matchinske is out to talk about the secretive Catholic household as a breeder of special female subjectivity, where wives were oddly freer than husbands because the latter were forced by fines and other punishments to be conforming. Clitherow “speaks” only at second hand through the priest who writes of her sayings and actions, yet like Askew, in her “active voicelessness” (70), she shows a sense of humor or at least irony before her torment began: according to John Mush, “her hat before she died she sent to her husband, in sign of her loving duty to him as her head” (“Life,” 432). Matchinske tries a bold experiment in imaginative reconstruction of a voice: in an imaginary anecdote, she portrays herself finding a fictive letter in Yorkshire dialect from Clitherow to her daughter, a nun in Flanders, interleaved in a water-marked Psalter. The letter is moving and well done,
and I for one like this kind of innovative tactic for "hearing" a vanished woman's voice. (We might wish, though, that this section had been clearly marked off, with its own subtitle, and perhaps the whole of it, not just the putative letter, in a different typeface; readers often skim scholarly books glancingly, which may mean that soon we will read in student essays of an extant letter from Margaret Clitheroe to her daughter.)

Matchinske's studies of "Ester Sowernam" (along with two further texts involving mentions of women as "neither maid, wife, nor widow" in Shakespeare and the anonymous Swetnam the Woman Hater play of 1620) and of Lady Eleanor Davies (wife of the poet John) may not offer such moving details. But Matchinske marshalls good evidence for her thesis about a major shift in English womanly identity through the reigns of James and Charles: domestically defined women of the "middling ranks" (as polemically celebrated by Sowernam) become upholders of their husbands' reputations and morality, and indeed take on the role of confessor in the household shrine to which they become confined, through making a tradeoff that Matchinske laments. For financial security through better-defined marriage arrangements, the adamantly chaste woman is encoded as victim and paragon "without agency," sexuality, or pleasure (110). The final chapter sees Lady Eleanor Davies's prophetic writing as a kind of cas limite for this new wifely subjectivity, tested in the furnace of the parliamentary wars. Study of Davies sharpens our perception of its character by revealing a woman who in a sense seemed to defy its defined subject position by alienating both first and second husbands and constantly threatening prominent men with her (usually accurate) prophecies of their deaths. Theorizing the womanly subject position of moralist and Davies's extreme of it in terms of Foucault's "dividing practices" or partage (a regulatory split between affirmation of the private and of the national is internalized), Matchinske studies Davies's syntactically bizarre and self-celebrating prose tellingly, to say that in Davies "contradictory female subject and state regulation is [sic] literalized in an unavoidable doubling of expectations and requirements: her writings construct a subject status that can never be fulfilled" (132). Study of Sowernam and Davies reveals "a culture that is beginning to recognize women as moral guardians and educators," specifically "within the secure confines of a patriarchal household" (153). This is not a radical thesis, but it is pursued here quite originally to illuminate the legal dimensions of the Swetnam controversy and the unique subjectivity of Davies's writings. There were many other women writers of the time whose evident subjectivity would not fit so well into Matchinske's straight line of development from Askew to Sowernam, but she says as much in her
conclusion and calls for more studies of female “state and subject” for the period.

The two books, appearing in 1998, do not represent engagement with much material published after 1993, so presumably they have been waiting awhile to appear. Still, each presents a thesis well worth considering, and they complement each other admirably. Hanson argues for a central strain of early modern English male subjectivity, emerging from increasingly bureaucratic state formation that requires a new kind of interiority—through-secrecy in men who become at once agents and potential torture victims of the state. Matchinske tracks a strain of emerging female subjectivity from the Reformation to the Civil War.

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*Women in Early Modern England* fills an important void in early modern studies today by providing a closely researched, extensive history of early modern English women. Rather than presenting a single overarching argument, Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford seek to explain what women’s experience of life and the world was in early modern England. As a whole, the book stands as a convincing argument that women’s experiences were different enough from men’s that they need to be studied and understood in more depth; and this book makes an important and ambitious contribution to that study. Mendelson and Crawford begin by arguing for a history of women rather than woman, “not as a simple linear description of female behavior, but as an intricate process of interactions” (2). They explain these processes of interactions by organizing the book around intersecting categories based primarily on life stages and social status. While their work is aimed at scholars of history, literary scholars will find it useful and illuminating, and a pleasure to read as well. The abundance of detailed explanation and information makes this an invaluable addition to the study of early modern women.

After explaining some of the basic contexts for understanding discourses about women in early modern England, Mendelson and Crawford follow with chapters on life stages, female culture, work and economics, and
politics. Organizing this vast array of material proves difficult; Mendelson and Crawford refer the reader from one chapter to another a bit too often for comfortable reading. For example, we learn about poor girls in service in the third chapter but have to make the connection to the economics and working lives of adult women several chapters later, and adult women servants find a place in both chapters. This difficulty comes with the complexity of early modern women's experience, however. Mendelson and Crawford provide a fine index, while the book's overall organization makes finding related information relatively easy.

Among the most exciting chapters are those on service, the economies of poverty, and female culture. Rather than bringing new material about service to light, Mendelson and Crawford largely draw on now familiar work by Ann Kussmaul, I. K. Ben-Amos, and others, but bring the information together to form a broader, more inclusive story, making sense of the effect of the 1563 Statute of Artificers on the poorest segments of society, especially on children of poor families, who could be forced into service. Having spent more time than I like to think trying to understand historical contexts for dramatic representations of women in service, I found myself nodding enthusiastically and wishing that Mendelson and Crawford had published *Women in Early Modern England* at least a decade earlier. They and other historians of women's history have spent that time well, though, for Mendelson and Crawford bring out both the benefits of service—training, safety, and networking (to use an anachronistic term)—as well as the contradictory problems—lack of training in marketable skills, exposure to sexual abuse from masters, their sons, and fellow servants, and other dangers—which are as two sides of a coin.

*Women in Early Modern England* argues that "historians' preoccupation with 'the family economy' has contributed to the invisibility of women's labour, subsuming all women within the household" (257), and tries to counter this attitude by viewing women as individuals. Further, they include in work, activities such as child-bearing, child-rearing, housekeeping, and cooking, activities which have too often been ignored in comparison with wage-earning activities (even by Alice Clark's pioneering work). Their discussion of the working lives of the poorest women, from early apprenticeships (to housewifery and bone-lace weaving) to adult service, through marriage and widowhood explains the benefits, difficulties, and contradictions to which poor women were subject. The analysis of the diet and cookery of poor households is fascinating and illuminating, especially for the attention given the historical changes in these practices through the early modern
period, ending in the eighteenth century, when many families bought their entire diet rather than producing it themselves (269). Mendelson and Crawford distinguish helpfully between rural and urban women, as the latter had fewer opportunities to scavenge and glean food, though more opportunities to scavenge cloth and profit from trading used clothing. Those of us interested in early modern drama will find the information on the clothing economy suggestive. Disappointingly, though, the authors fail to include a developed discussion of the economics of prostitution, an activity which seems important to the literature of the period.

In their chapter on female culture, Mendelson and Crawford open with a provocative section on space in which they explain that “the household was a female-dominated milieu, offering women a secure yet flexible base of operations for their forays into the outside world” (205). Later they note the special import of doorways in women’s experiences as a liminal space between the household and the community which enabled women to work (especially on needlework or lacemaking) while participating in the life of their community (208). Except for the childbirth, they don’t differentiate much between interior household spaces nor between households of women of different social status. Nor do they consider how material spaces contribute to cultural transmission. By opening the issue, Mendelson and Crawford suggest much, but they develop their analysis in less depth than they imply it deserves.

Mendelson and Crawford approach “Passionate Friends and Lesbian Relationships” cautiously, explaining that while “some women expressed passionate feelings for each other . . . there are difficulties in interpreting the evidence” (242). They rightly note that the meaning of “the term ‘lesbian’ . . . needs to be established in a particular historical context” (243). Rather than establishing a historical context, however, they use the term “to speculate about sexual activity between women, to distinguish this kind of relationship from a non-sexual or erotic friendship” (243). After relating and analyzing the fascinating story of Amy Poulter and Arabella Hunt, whose marriage was annulled after Hunt sued for annulment and a jury of midwives found the cross-dressing Poulter to be a woman (248–49), Mendelson and Crawford conclude that “in this and other popular narratives, phallic sexuality was represented as the universal feminine desideratum” although “clearly there was a discursive space, a silence, about the subject of lesbian relationships at this period” (251). It’s notoriously difficult to write about silence, even as a discursive space, but Women in Early Modern England provides some evidence of relationships that made it into popular and legal discourse. Disappointingly
but understandably, the authors do not venture analysis of literary representations between women, nor do they attempt to rethink or restructure dominant definitions of sexuality. Such rethinking is vital as the dominant psychoanalytic vocabulary for reading sexual affect and desire is a relatively ineffective frame of reference for grasping the modes of erotic connectedness among women.

Relative to its expansive discussions of economics and female community, *Women in Early Modern England* is weaker in relating women’s lives to religious belief and practice. This isn’t surprising since Patricia Crawford’s own *Women and Religion in England: 1500–1750* covers much of that ground. Still *Women in Early Modern England* makes a contribution to understanding the effects of gender in late seventeenth-century churching, the ritual through which post-partum women returned to the church community (62), even as it oversimplifies the significance of different practices in different religious communities. David Cressy’s *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* will provide a useful counterpoint for more in-depth information about religious practices, though it lacks the kind of serious interest in gender issues that makes Mendelson and Crawford’s work most exciting.

*Women in Early Modern England* will be a vital resource for scholars of early modern England, women’s history, culture, and literature, as it provides a coherent and diverse account of women’s lives in the period. I can well imagine asking advanced undergraduate literature students to read selections in a course in early modern literature, especially as a way of opening discussions of the canon and specific literary works, including *The Witch of Edmonton*, *The Adventures of Master Ff.*, and Aemelia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Graduate students, especially those interested in historical contexts, will probably find this among their most useful historical readings, vital for those working on women’s literature and representations of women alike.

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If, as Mary Douglas once observed, "the body is the central trope of culture," Jonathan Gil Harris has provided us with a book that explores the complex ways in which this "body" signifies according to the allied registers of medical and social thought in Tudor and Stuart England. Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic takes "organic political analogy" as its subject, "that is, the diverse ways in which writers of the period conceived of social structure and process through the prism of the human body" (i). But, as Harris's title makes clear, this book focuses less on the metaphor as an end in itself than on its failures, its pathology. "Its primary focus is not on how organic political analogy worked, but rather, on how it didn't work," Harris proclaims. Accordingly, the cast of pathological "characters" or cases he marshals to tell his story includes the familiar grouping of the sodomite, the Catholic, the Jewish doctor, and the witch—a grouping, I would argue, that Harris's revealing analysis makes legible differently, not as individual cases but as a cadre of infiltrating foreign bodies, some imminent fifth column whose arrival precipitates a crisis in the social and metaphorical body of a Reformed England.

Central to this project are two contrasting principles of social thought, says Harris, the "two most distinctive—and problematic—axioms of twentieth-century functionalist social pathology: first, that social illness has its origins exclusively in external factors; and second, that the social organism's pathologies can contribute to rather than undermine its health" (5). Harris elaborates on these twin axioms early in the book, focusing on the double strategy by which Durkheimian sociology "subscribes to the question-begging functionalist premise that every 'fundamental' component or product of the body is 'normal'" while endorsing "the exogenous explanation of illness formulated by nineteenth-century germ theory microbiologists such as Louis Pasteur and replicated by anthropologists like [A. R.] Radcliffe-Brown—namely, that disease originates . . . in an external invading pathogen" (8). Thus, Durkheimian sociology "figures the criminal as an invading pathogen" but does so in order to "disqualify the suggestion" because the "criminal is not foreign to the body but is produced by and in it." Harris's interest in twentieth-century social thought is not merely the prehistory of his own methodological impulses, however. One of the most refreshing and sustaining aspects of this book is the way he traces the genealogy of the concepts of pathology and disease that remain with us today, demonstrating a variety

of ways in which early moderns accessed the very axioms that would come to structure our own ideas of "organic political analogy." Undaunted by the very questions of alterity or historical distance that tend to hamstring much histori­cist writing, Harris takes the metaphoricity of the body as a trope for culture seriously and reveals the ways in which the emergence of the "anti-Galenic iatrochemical pharmacy of Paracelsus and others provided Elizabethan writers ... with a new and [he argues] mystificatory vocabulary for explaining the origins of social illness" (14).

As Harris’s use of the word mystificatory signals, all this talk of bodies and borders, of pathology and social organisms, cannot fail to register in terms of New Historicist and Cultural Materialist practice, and specifically in terms of those two bywords: subversion and containment. Pinpointing exactly where Harris falls on these scales is difficult, in part because both New Historicism and Cultural Materialism are treated in very much the same way as Durkheimian social thought and Paracelsian iatrochemistry—as configurations of thought that are themselves implicated in the evolution of the "organic political metaphor" rather than as supracritical accounts of its functioning. Reprising, for example, the argument of Steven Greenblatt’s essay “Invisible Bullets” about Thomas Harriot and the Algonquian Indians in the Virginia Colony, Harris notes Greenblatt’s famous formulation that “the apparent production of subversion is ... the very condition of power” (9), as an allegory of Durkheimian social thought. Reading these “invisible bullets” as “blanks or at least not to have any genuinely disruptive effect” (11), Harris recovers the ways in which Greenblatt’s argument replicates the “problematic double whammy of functionalist organicism—its displacement of the origins of social ‘illness’ and change to external agencies, coupled with its recuperation of deviance for the health of a largely homeostatic organism” (12). Trumping Greenblatt’s contained reading of the bullets with the Algonquian perspective (the phrase “invisible bullets,” as you will remember, is credited to the native observers) Harris notes that in microbiological terms “the harmless transgression initially suggested by Greenblatt’s title does ... have a genuinely disruptive pathological potential” (11). But crucially, this effect is projected onto the Other as Europe infects the New World. “The extent to which social ‘illness’ and transformation may afflict the English body politic itself as a consequence of factors within its structural organization,” notes Harris, “remains undisclosed” (12). And so Harris wishes to supplement the outward gaze with one that examines the English body politic itself, or rather that watches it examine itself, charting the strategies it develops to explain and explain away its failures, its lapses, its implosions.
Part one, "Pathologizing the body politic," charts the development of Paracelsian concepts of disease, their coexistence with the more traditional, medieval, and scholastic privileging of Galenic humoral models of bodily infection and their gradual influence on political and social body analogies. Harris notes that humoral conceptions of the body figured disease as the result of an "imbalance" (22) and notes how evolving explanations for the syphilis epidemic spread across Europe gave rise to a counter-argument based on infectious "seeds." Throughout, Harris insists upon the "palimpsestic quality of the body" (25) as the site of numerous, overlapping inscriptions and as a site simultaneously configured by the various vocabularies in circulation. Chapter two examines the "palimpsestic," or what we might call "hybrid," form that the body assumes in Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue Between Reginold Pole and Thomas Lupset* (ca. 1535) and William Averell's *Mervailous Combat of Contrareties* (1588). In both cases, Harris attends to the ideological consequences that each incarnation of the body metaphor produces. In Starkey, Harris finds a seemingly conventional humoral conception of the body's illnesses as based on internal imbalance, but by carefully reading the shift from "the religious body of Catholic Europe to the largely secular body of the English Nation state" (32), he discovers the shape of an argument for Absolutist monarchy. The "mutual interdependence of the body's many parts" is figured as "the unquestioning obedience of the body's subordinate members to the monarch" (33). There remains a "dissident potential" to Starkey's strategies, however, because they risk recognizing that "the body politic's afflictions can be generated by powerful elements inside the organism." Likewise, in Averell's various revisions to the famous fable of the Belly in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, Harris finds a writer "anxious to avert the potentially subversive consequences of a model that would present disease as originating inside the body" (42) and so pathologizing the Catholic threat in a Paracelsian fashion. Even here, there remains a "subversive counter-narrative" (41), however, that may lead readers to view Averell's demonization of the "tongue" as ideological scapegoating designed to protect his betters. Taking up the growing pathologization of Catholic subjects, chapter three reads Edward Forset's treatise on the Gunpowder Plot and Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* as two texts that anticipate Durkheimian sociology in their "committedly pathological vocabulary" (49) and in their figuration of disease as a social medicine. Again foregrounding the paradoxical Paracelsian formulation of poison as cure, Harris reads Forset as brokering a proto-functionalist political pathology and Dekker as offering a pointed critique of that very ideology (71). As a result, the lines between moral vigilance and
Machiavellian ideological management become blurred and authority itself risks becoming merely a version of the pathogen that it is said to seek to exclude.

As the title of Part two, "Handy-dandy, which is the justice which is the thief?" makes clear, it is this very instability of moral and ideological reference that drives the last half of the book. Chapter four offers an inspired reading of the Jew as "excremental other," as poison, cure, and anal-infiltrating toxin to the body politic, using Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* as the occasion for a reading of the contradictory identity of "Jewishness" as "pure performance" (98) that demonstrates the subversive potential of Marlowe's play. The Jew-as-Derridean Pharmakos becomes the focus of this analysis, and Harris surveys Elizabethan literary formulations of the Jew and accounts of the alleged conspiracy of one Dr. Lopez to poison the queen in 1594 to reconstruct the symbolic meanings of "Jewishness" as poison and imitation, turning then to Barabas as the embodiment of these poisonous and mimetic functions. Rather than seeing Barabas as merely a pathological externalization of internal antagonisms, Harris reads "his reappearance from the sewers [as] potentially styl[ing] him not as irreducibly alien, but as that which the city has produced but rejected, its cultural excrement" (105). Tracing out the lines of filiation between social toxins, Harris finds the figure of the Jew twinned with that of the Catholic, the Witch, and her synecdochical representative, the tongue. Chapter five centers on the dislocations that faced a patriarchal authority anxious to avoid the risk that its "medicinal tongue" might be "confused with the poisonous female tongue it sought to contain" (109). Harris uses Thomas Tomkis's play *Lingua, or the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses* (1607) as an occasion for disclosing the gender economy that predicates "the restoration of health to the body" on the scapegoated "female tongue" (114). Revealing the ideology that enabled contemporaries to associate this female tongue with the figure of the witch and the Catholic occupies the remainder of this chapter, which culminates in a reading of Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621). Setting this play's representation of Elizabeth Sawyer against the prose account of her real-life precursor, Agnes Ratcliffe, Harris sees the play as "locating and exposing many of the ideological faultlines" that structure the prose account's "perceptions of witchcraft" (132). That Harris hears in Elizabeth Sawyer's now famous observation "'Tis all one / To be a Witch as to be counted one'... a decidedly modern conception of identity as socially constructed or interpellated, rather than innate" (135) merely echoes the comments of earlier critics such as Jonathan Dollimore and Viviana Comensoli, but what he
contributes is a dynamic sense of the witch’s membership in a class of social pathogens in terms of whose existence the meaning of England’s overlapping social, religious, and political bodies was fashioned.

Harris ends this book with a short but closely argued account of the ways in which “the organic political analogy” shapes modern discussions of disease. But the real object of this conclusion is the rehabilitation of the anus as no more dirty a bodily site than any other in the writings of Tongan author Epeli Hau’ofa. In Hau’ofa’s dislocations of colonialist paradigms, Harris finds a model to describe both the dislocations he has found in early modern discourse of the body and in his own critical enterprise, which has been to “read against the grain of our culture’s discourses of social pathology . . . transform[ing them] into a vehicle for dissent and critique” (146). Harris is, finally then, a Cultural Materialist more than he is a New Historist: he values ideological faultlines and the interrogative dimensions of the drama over the perhaps more monological mode of the prose texts he analyzes. He succeeds in making “the organic political metaphor” a vehicle for critique, in discovering the points of tension within its rules of internal coherence. I have learned much about medical discourse, social theory, and most importantly, the symbolic logic that dictates why certain figures of social infection appear together in the Tudor and Stuart imaginary. Yet, though I may appear ungrateful, I am left with a series of nagging questions that lead me to wonder if Harris does not describe the symptomology of an even larger phenomenon, the semiotic fine edge of another set of changes. A number of questions remain unanswered. How exactly did Paracelsian ideas travel across and between discourses? Was the line of transmission unidirectional or did political theory shape medical discourses even as they were shaped by them? Should we not consider also models of parasitology as understood by Natural Histories of the period? Such questions do not reflect a desire on my part for a less ideologically focused mode of reading in favor of the traditional form of intellectual history. On the contrary, what I have in mind is an inquiry into scientific and social discourses that attends to the rules of their production more closely, that perhaps takes up the contributions of such writers as Bruno Latour and Steven Shapin in order to understand the narrative forms that inhere to


differing structures of knowledge. In conclusion then, Jonathan Gil Harris
has given us a book I value, a book I admire and shall use, but I wonder
what might have happened if he had subjected the medical origins of the
metaphors he describes to the same kinds of ideological critique that he so
skillfully uses to decode the meanings of those "co-mutineers," the "ex-
cremental or mimetic Jew," the witch, the Catholic, and the "unruly, female,
dissident Tongue."