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ARTICLES
Hagiographical Parody in the *Ysengrimus*

by

Dennis J. Billy

Accademia Alfonsiana

Considered the first great expression of medieval Latin beast epic, the *Ysengrimus*, a mid-twelfth-century poem of 6,574 verses, has been hailed as a masterpiece of lampooning monastic parody and wit. Composed by an anonymous author (probably a monk of St. Peter's, Blandigny) in the environs of the then burgeoning Flemish city of Ghent, the poem follows the exploits of Ysengrimus, a ravenous wolf-monk of dubious intelligence whose unruly gastric and sexual appetites make him more often the prey than predator in his sundry endeavors. Until now, one area that has successfully eluded the attention of most *Ysengrimus* scholars is the poem's highly involved parody of hagiographical motifs. Even Jill Mann, the poem's acclaimed critical translator and the one scholar who comes closest to identifying the major components of this type of parody, overlooks the peculiar hagiographical context of such features as Ysengrimus's amazing regenerative powers, his strange mode of death, the semi-autonomous existence of his body parts, and the poem's inversion of predator-prey relationships. Rather than Mann's "anachronistic comparison with the world of animal cartoon," a more useful analogy would be relating these features to the medieval cult of the holy.
Hippolyte Delehaye, the Jesuit Bollandist considered by many to be the father of modern hagiographical studies, speaks of the tendency in hagiographical literature to amplify the torture of a martyr beyond the limits of human suffering. In his opinion, the best example in which the intervention of Divine Providence enables a saint to survive death-inflicting torture comes from *The Passion of SS. Clement of Ancyra and Agathangelus*:

To start with, Clement is hung up, his flesh torn with iron hooks, his mouth and cheeks bruised with stones; he is bound to the wheel, beaten with sticks and horribly mutilated with knives; his face is stabbed with stilettos, his jaws are broken and his teeth drawn while his feet are crushed in iron fetters. Then the two martyrs together are whipped with ox thongs and suspended from a beam; their bodies are scorched with flaring torches and they are flung to the wild beasts. Red-hot needles are run into their fingers under their nails and they are burned in quicklime and left there two whole days, after which strips of skin are torn from them and they are once more beaten with rods. They are stretched on iron bedsteads brought to a state of white heat, then thrown into a burning furnace; this last torment lasts a day and a night. After that they are again beaten with iron hooks, and a kind of harrow covered with iron points is set up and the martyrs are flung against it. For his part Agathangelus undergoes in addition the torture of having molten lead poured upon his head; he is dragged through town with a mill-stone round his neck and stoned. Clement alone has his ears pierced with redhot needles, he is burnt with torches and he receives more blows from a stick on his mouth and head. At last after having endured fifty strokes of the rod on several days in succession he has his head cut off at the same time as Agathangelus.³

Other less impressive but nonetheless imaginative examples of this motif appear in the Old French *The Sequence of St. Eulalia* (ca. 880),
in which the saint survives a blazing fire before she is executed by the sword; *The Life of St. Leger* (tenth century), whose plucked-out eyes and tongue cut clean from his mouth are restored before his head, too, is severed by the sword; and the *Life of St. Margaret*, who survives torture on the rack, an ordeal of flaming torches, and drowning in a vessel full of water before she, too, is beheaded. The purpose of such amplification was to emphasize the heroic nature of sanctity, to underscore the directive and intervening role of Providence, and to conform the saint’s death to the pattern of multiple tortures as found in the Gospel narratives of the passion of Christ.

Similarities between the above hagiographical motif and Ysengrimus’s sufferings abound. The tortures to which Ysengrimus is subjected go beyond the limits of human or animal suffering: Dominus Bovo’s congregation beats him (1.1039–64); Aldrada cuts off both the top of his head and his tail with her axe (2.35–38, 115); Joseph and his three brother rams batter him (2.531–606); Bruno flays him (3.951–52); the members of the animals’ pilgrimage smash him with cups of hospitality (4.615–49); the monks of Blandigny thrash him and even poke him with a red-hot iron (5.1042–1116); Corvigar kicks him with a newly shod hoof (5.1281–1292); Joseph batters him with his horns (6.99–106); Rufanus bestows a second flaying (6.203); a relic trap causes him to sever his foot (6.514–15, 550); Salaura and her progeny of slobbering swine devour him (7.433–42). While Ysengrimus displays throughout these trials the uncanny ability to revive both hide and flesh in true hagiographical fashion, the poem’s cyclical pattern of torture and regeneration emphasizes values contrary to traditional hagiographical intent. Thus, Ysengrimus’s fear of losing his pelt at court (3.477–78), his terror at the meal of wolf heads served on the animals’ pilgrimage (4.315–16), and his utter panic upon hearing the sound of Gerard’s cackling toot (4.799–802) all demonstrate the cowardly rather than heroic brand of his sanctity. He possesses neither the reverence for God nor the inner purity necessary for medieval sanctity. Moreover, Fortune rather than Providence assumes the directive and intervening role in the poem. Responsible for Ysengrimus’s longevity, Fortune prevents him from dying, makes him yearn for death (3.6), and does not allow him to be destroyed completely until, out of a pity born from cruelty, she spends her full force on his head (3.24–26). While the sacrificial nature of the Mass allows Ysengrimus’s death in the mock liturgy of book 7 to be
understood in terms of *imitatio Christi*, the wolf–monk’s role as the poem’s antihero transforms him, within the boundaries of this comparison, into a veritable Antichrist. When taken together, these examples confirm the existence in the poem of a well-executed parody of the hagiographical motif of multiple amplified tortures.

**MODE OF DEATH**

A particular subcategory of the above motif deserves special attention in the *Ysengrimus*, that is, death by decapitation. As seen in the various saints’ lives mentioned earlier and by countless other examples not mentioned here, the loss of one’s head to the sword represents more often than not the martyr’s final torture. Decapitation achieved this privileged position because it, more than any other manner of execution, symbolizes with concrete clarity the separation of body and soul that, according to traditional Christian belief, takes place at the moment of death. It is, moreover, the manner of death of John the Baptist, that Janus figure at the crossroads of salvation history, described by Christ himself as the greatest of men (Matt. 11:11), who represents both the last of the Hebrew prophets and the first of the Christian martyrs.

Given the hagiographical preeminence of decapitation, it should come as no surprise that decapitation plays an integral role in the author’s parody of hagiographical motifs. Aldrada’s unusual account of the suffering Pharaildis, whose kisses were scorned by the Baptist’s hissing head and who was blown forever into the emptiness of the windy sky (2.71–94), supplies the basic component for the parody. By referring directly to John’s decapitation (2.78) and by indicating that the saint’s anger plagued the poor girl even after his death (2.85–87), Ysengrimus is presented with a dismal foreboding of things both present and yet to come.

Aldrada represents Ysengrimus’s most immediate threat. To avenge his theft of Gerard and Teta she desperately desires to sever his head with her axe not once but countless times (2.11–19). She manages, unfortunately, to level in Ysengrimus’s direction but a single pair of blows: one succeeds in cutting off only the top of his head (2.35); another misses his head completely but severs his tail (2.114–15). Since the Pharaildis story comes from Aldrada’s own lips and occurs between these unsuccessful attempts, it seems likely to have had an inverse effect on the outcome of her attack.
Rather than losing his head, Ysengrimus loses his tail; rather than kissing his head on a plate, she winds up begging for mercy with her nose in his buttocks (2.124); rather than plaguing her after his death, he has, despite his unabashed ignorance, once again haunted her during life. The poem’s dramatic reorientation of Aldrada’s attention from Ysengrimus’s head to his posterior section also plays a significant role in the depiction of his ultimate demise.

About midway through the poem and in the first episode of the inner story, Ysengrimus encounters the decapitation motif for a second time. Here the author takes up with renewed interest Aldrada’s theme of multiple decapitations: Reynard and the other members of the animals’ pilgrimage disguise a single wolf’s head in various ways so as to give the impression that they are serving Ysengrimus a full-course meal (4.241–364); Gerard himself brags that he can blow off the heads of more than eight wolves at a time (4.325–26). Their well-planned hoax succeeds in frightening not only Ysengrimus (4.315–16) but an entire pack of wolves (4.797–802). If Aldrada’s attack in the fishing episode connects the decapitation motif with Ysengrimus’s nether hole, this section of the animals’ pilgrimage not only associates it with multiple head loss but also places it within the context of a meal. Already suspicions are mounting that Ysengrimus’s final torture will exceed the terror and pain of a single decapitation.

Salaura and her herd of swine verify these misgivings when they eat Ysengrimus in the mock liturgy of the poem’s final episode. From the perspective of the decapitation motif, the particular form and description of his demise represent a convergence of the Pharaildis story, Aldrada’s attack, and the meal served on the animals’ pilgrimage. The following schema should clarify the various strains at work in the author’s highly imaginative confluence of themes: (1) like John the Baptist, whose name even occurs on his epitaph (7.422), Ysengrimus is described as a prophet (7.363, 371); (2) like the Baptist, Ysengrimus plagues others after his death (7.369–70); (3) rather than the Baptist’s anger (‘‘ira Iohannis’’; 2.85), Ysengrimus’s demon, Agemundus, pursues the wolf–monk’s foes without relent (7.309); (4) through Aldrada’s attack, the Baptist’s hissing head is internalized and transformed into a farting posterior (7.313–24, 341–44); (5) the mock meal of the animals’ pilgrimage foreshadows the mock liturgy of book 7, the only difference being that Salaura has designs on more
than just Ysengrimus's head (7.441-42). The most convincing evidence of the author's intent to parody hagiographic decapitation comes earlier in the poem when the narrator describes Fortune's role in Ysengrimus's death in terms of decapitation:

Ysengrime miser, numquam tibi candida gratis;
   Pensauit colaphis oscula bina decem.
Nunc pellem scidit illa tuam, nunc prorsus ademit;
   Non tamen, ut penitus destruerere, tulit,
Donec continuos misere miserata labores
   Vitibus est totis in caput acta tuum.
(3.21-26)

[To you, poor Ysengrimus, she's never been favourable without exacting payment for it; she's balanced two kisses with ten blows. At one moment she split your skin, and the next, she took it away completely. But she didn't allow you to be utterly destroyed until, with a pitiable pity on your continual sufferings, she came down on your head with full force.]

Ysengrimus himself reiterates this theme just before his death: "Nunc pressere meum pessima fata caput" [Now the worst of fates presses upon my head (7.306, my translation)]. Such evidence demonstrates the author's desire to parody not only the hagiographic theme of surviving death-inflicting tortures, but even the traditional form of hagiographical death itself—decapitation. Ysengrimus's brand of sanctity, in other words, places him in a class by himself. He has moved beyond John the Baptist, the prototypical martyr, and deserves a more worthy ending to his earthly existence than decapitation can provide. Indeed, both the liturgical context of his death and his role as Salaura's food make a comparison with Christ and His presence in the Eucharist more than likely.

**BODY PARTS**

The most obvious example of the author's parody of a hagiographical theme comes in the attribution of an almost separate existence to various
parts of Ysengrimus's body. In doing so, he unavoidably associates them with medieval relics.

During the twelfth century the tombs and relics of the saints were still the most prominent sites of Europe's spiritual landscape. These sacred places and objects possessed the power of the saints whose presence they signified. They emitted, as one author states, "a kind of holy radioactivity which bombarded everything in the area" and represented but one of the ways in which medieval perceptions shaped the bounds of reality to make its unseen elements tangible. As a concrete link between the natural and supernatural, relics pointed to a dimension beyond time and space. Peter Brown, the well-known scholar of late Latin antiquity, describes this paradoxical linking of heaven and earth in an object whose physical dimensions are both tiny and compact as the effect of "inverted magnitudes." Here the unimaginable dimensions of an unseen world retained their infinite power and manifested their supernatural presence by means of their association with a visible but seemingly trivial amplitude of space. The dimensions of heaven, while inverted physically on earth, were nevertheless very much alive and at work in the relics or shrine of a saint.

Many points of comparison exist between Ysengrimus and this description of relics: Salaura characterizes him as already a saint (7.393); Reynard says that the saints have acknowledged him as their companion (6.539); his entrapped foot is becoming a relic (6.542); Reynard wants all of his body enshrined (6.543); Salaura and her swine make sure this wish comes true (7.415). Aldrada supplies the most vivid description of the semi-autonomous existence of his body parts:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Iam sursum senior plantas extenderat omnes,} \\
\text{Poscere diuinam more uolentis opem.} \\
\text{Vult, ubi subsidunt breuioribus ilia costis,} \\
\text{Partiri miserum rustica seu a senem,} \\
\text{Porro cohesurum nodo uiuace cadauer} \\
\text{Cogitat et prisco posse uigore frui;} \\
\text{Utque puer ruptum prudens intermeat anguem,} \\
\text{Ne coeant partes atque animentur item,} \\
\text{Sic reducem uitam coituris demere truncis} \\
\text{Trino intercursu prouida uersat anus.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(2.4958)
[At this point the old man had all his feet raised in the air, in the manner of one who wishes to beg for divine assistance. The furious peasant-woman intended to split the wretched old man in two, just where his ribs narrowed down into his groin, but she thought the corpse would reunite in a living bond, and be able to enjoy its former vigour, and so, as a clever child walks between the severed halves of a snake to stop the parts joining together and coming to life again, this far-sighted granny thought to hold off the returning life from his limbs before they recombined, by stepping between them three times.]

The powers of this living nucleus of flesh are also demonstrated in the curative nature of Ysengrimus’s pelt (3.1180) as well as in its extraordinary ability to revivify (6.133, 163–64). The most conspicuous parts of Ysengrimus’s anatomy to exhibit a separate existence are his jaws and teeth. While his jaws are likened at various places in the poem to a pair of weaver’s combs banging against each other (6.8), to a metal sheet of rings beaten on an anvil (1.80), and to a forester felling a tree (6.9–22); his teeth are variously described as mattocks (1.81) and scythes (2.405–6) able to cut through bones as though they were butter (2.394). Ysengrimus’s mouth can open wider than an oven (6.100) and swallow a plateful of pies with a single gulp (5.360–69). His mouth possesses a life of its own and lives beyond the bounds of normal control.

If we suspend the dimensions of normality, these hyperbolic descriptions come close to the “inverted magnitudes” at work in the relics and shrines of saints. The power and presence in these parts of the wolf-monk’s anatomy, however, spring from a diabolical rather than a heavenly source. Ysengrimus’s jaws burn with their own inborn flame (1.637); his cavernous belly is an infernal and bottomless pit (1.733; 2.548; 5.361–90); his maw has an untrusty, ferocious character (1.629–32). If the author’s aim in accentuating the semi-autonomous existence of Ysengrimus’s body parts is to present him as a walking reliquary, he does so by emphasizing his thoroughly perverted nature. A “dirty” power dominates Ysengrimus’s living bones and flesh. Agemundus alone can be his demon; his relics are of a living but satanic sort.
Hagiographical Parody

PREDATOR-PREY RELATIONSHIPS

Even the poem's inverted predator-prey relationships can be understood as a parody of a particular hagiographical motif. Brown outlines the sensitive psychic and social forces at work near the shrines of the saints in late antiquity and sees "a stable grammar of the impingement of the supernatural in society that stretches from the New Testament deep into the middle ages." In his judgment these forces expressed themselves in an "imaginative dialectic" based on various forms of reversal: the act of the unclean power responsible for the saint's execution was transmuted into its reverse; through the drama of ritual exorcism the possessed discarded their demonic haunts and were reintegrated into the human community; the sick were cured through miracles wrought by the _potentia_ of the saints they implored; women were joined by the poor in finding at the shrines the respite and protection they failed to find elsewhere. Such reversals demonstrated how heaven suspended the categories of normality whenever the divine deemed to touch the sphere of earthly space. At the shrine of a saint this heavenly power made the weak strong, reclaimed the possessed, and invested the martyr with more than earthly strength. Through the effect of "inverted magnitudes" it accomplished for a temporary and sometimes extended period of time a suspended world of inverted relationships.

In the context of reliquary anatomy, Ysengrimus's perverted sanctity changes the character of these reversals. Satan rather than a saint—hell rather than heaven—touches ground within the contours of his flesh (1.567; 2.660; 3.1115-1116, 1135; 4.633; 5.981). Ysengrimus forfeits rather than gains the _potentia_ of a saint at his shrine. Once the devil's predator, he has now become the devil's prey. A twisted version of the normally healthy inversion of relationships at a shrine manifests itself throughout the poem: Rufanus's restoration to health (the only cure in the poem) is performed against Ysengrimus's will and without his cooperation (3.1169-1170); feminine characters such as Aldrada and Salaura attack Ysengrimus rather than adore him (2.35, 114-19); 7.423-26); weaker animals such as Gerard and Sprotin pledge to him their hatred rather than their love (4.641). Even the particular form of the wolf-monk's death, when likened to the exorcism of Mark 5:1-20, favors slow and tortuous death rather than communal reintegration. Such inverted
predator–prey relationships reflect the author’s parody of what took effect most often on pilgrimages and at the shrines of the saints. The animals’ pilgrimage in book 4 has such prominence in Bruno’s tale for the precise reason of intimating to the reader that this particular hagiographical motif is at work in the poem. In this episode, the traditional medieval principle of free hospitality to pilgrims is turned into a vengeful free-for-all (4.443-583). The pilgrimage itself, moreover, is never even completed (4.821-24). When taken together, these deficiencies indicate the extent to which relationships formed on the pilgrimage (e.g., Reynard and Sprotin) and at the shrines themselves (e.g., the circumstances of Ysengrimus’s epitaph) have gone awry. Like the pillar of Saint Gereon, they too appear differently to the wicked and the good (4.25-26). They confirm the Ysengrimus as the literary antithesis (a veritable antistructure) to the well-established traditions of medieval pilgrimage and veneration at the shrines of the saints.

CONCLUSION

Written at a time that has been dubbed “the golden age of Latin medieval satire,” the Ysengrimus mixes uncanny sarcastic wit with amusing parody to achieve its peculiarly offensive, bittersweet appeal. This essay has demonstrated that at least part of this effect comes from the poem’s consistent parody of hagiographical motifs, which the author uses to depict a world devoid of the sacred, where things “spiritual” no longer have a place in even the most traditional bastions of medieval Catholicism. Given such sobering remarks, the reader must still beware of that “overestimation of satire” that prevents him or her from appreciating the more humorous side of the Middle Ages. The poem’s irreligious posture toward some of the most sacred symbols of the medieval West takes place in a cultural milieu that allowed its inhabitants to profane the holy, amusing themselves therewith, without satirizing it. For this reason, the medieval wit—which combines biting and humorous parody, mixes invective with frivolity, and blends amusement with contempt—is not always immediately accessible to modern tastes. In what for its time was an experimental literary genre, a Latin beast epic of the quality of the Ysengrimus could easily embrace criticism and joke, ridicule and friendliness, irony and sincerity and disperse them measuredly throughout.
its lines in a series of complex parodies of the type I have represented. If such is the case, the poem can be thought to celebrate at the same time it deflates various motifs of the medieval cult of the holy that it adopts with conscious exaggeration in the fated exploits of Ysengrimus, its wolfish protagonist.

NOTES


6. Ysengrimus's reference to his suffering the same fate as Mohammed (7.295) supports this view, since the prophet of Islam was often referred to as the Antichrist by Christians during the period of the Crusades (see R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962], 42 n.).

7. In volume one of *Butler's Lives* alone more than thirty-four saints suffer death by decapitation: Concordius (Jan. 1), Barbasymas (Jan. 14), Agnes (Jan. 21), Anastasius the Persian (Jan. 22), Juventinus and Maximinus (Jan. 25), Sabinian (Jan. 29), Cyrus and John (Jan. 31), Phileas (Feb. 4), Soterus (Feb. 10), Polyeuctus (Feb. 13), Valentine (Feb. 14), Juliana (Feb. 16), Elias and Jeremy (Feb. 16), Sadoth (Feb. 20), Serenus the Gardener (Feb. 23), Montanus and Lucius (Feb. 24), Victorinus (Feb. 25), Adrian and Eubulus (March 5), Perpetua and Felicity
DENNIS J. BILLY


8. Medieval theology preserved the Baptist’s privileged role in salvation history by stating that he was cleansed from sin while still in his mother’s womb, being thus among the first to reap the fruits of redemption. In some instances the imputation of innocence to the Baptist was extended to original sin itself (see Edward Dennis O’Connor, ed., The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: History and Significance [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958], 77–84).

12. Ibid., 44–45, 80, 109, 112.
13. The other major character in the poem referred to consistently (usually by Ysengrimus) as Satan or the devil is Reynard (1.21, 190, 227, 344, 748; 5.28, 349, 416; 6.162).
14. While the exorcism in this gospel pericope involves both a casting out of a legion of demons from a man into a herd of swine and his subsequent reintegration into human society (Jesus commands the man to return to his family, Mark 5:19), the final episode of the poem relates only the one-sided consumption of Ysengrimus’s flesh by swine.

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Mythological Lovers in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*
by
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CHAUCER'S *Troilus and Criseyde* is often criticized by modern scholars for the abruptness of its epilogue rejecting earthly love. Paull Baum objects that the moral of the epilogue is not, in fact, the moral of the tale and suggests that Chaucer might better have concluded in the manner of the *stilnovisti*, with Criseyde as a transfigured "'gloriosa donna.'"¹ J. S. P. Tatlock protests that "'the feeling of the Epilog is in no way foreshadowed at the beginning or elsewhere; it does not illumine or modify; it contradicts. The heartfelt worldly tale is interpreted in an unworldey sense.'"² He is joined in that opinion by Elizabeth Salter, Dieter Mehl, E. T. Donaldson, and others, including Aldous Huxley, who refers to the "'hurried and boggled conclusion’" of the *Troilus*.³ B. L. Jefferson, D. W. Robertson, and Chauncey Wood, among others, have presented evidence that the message of the epilogue is, indeed, anticipated within the tale itself,⁴ but no one has mentioned the foreshadowing provided by Chaucer’s allusions to the classical tales of love. These allusions—to Oenone, Tereus and Procne, Orpheus and Eurydice, and Myrrha—do not occur in Chaucer’s main source for the *Troilus*, the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio. In light of the medieval use and interpretation of these myths, it seems likely that Chaucer added them not just for "'local color’" but for a purpose: to remind the reader that the love of Troilus and Criseyde must ultimately take its place among the "'feynede loves’" of pagan history.
Chaucer takes his reference to Oenone from the *Heroïdes* of Ovid, from which he quotes at some length. Attempting to assure the lovesick Troilus that he himself, although unsuccessful in love, can help him to win his lady, Pandarus recalls the letter of Oenone to Paris:

"I woot wel that it fareth thus be me
As to thi brother, Paris, an herdesse,
Which that icleped was Oenone,
Wrot in a compleynte of hir hevynesse.
Yee say the lettre that she wrot, I gesse."
"Nay nevere yet, ywys," quod Troilus.
"Now," quod Pandare, "herkne, it was thus:

"'Phebus, that first kond art of medicyne,"
Quod she, 'and couthe in every wightes care
Remedye and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to hymself his konnyng was ful bare;
For love hadde hym so bounden in a snare,
Al for the daugther of the kyng Amete,
That al his craft ne koude his sorwes bete.'"

Oenone is like Phoebus, of whom she speaks in her letter, in being a skilled physician who cannot heal herself of love; Pandarus, as he claims, is like them both, in being a skilled go-between who cannot attain his own ends. He uses the *exemplum* of Oenone in an attempt to recommend his services to Troilus, but in fact the story of Oenone had a well-established traditional meaning that would have been familiar to a medieval reader or auditor: in the Middle Ages, Oenone was an example of *amor stultus*, foolish love.

We may see this, first of all, in medieval glosses on the *Heroïdes* of Ovid. Nogara, Przychocki, Sedlmayer, Huygens, Alton, Ghisalberti, Judson B. Allen, and others print *accessus*, or introductions, to the *Heroïdes* that show that, from the twelfth century through the time of Chaucer and beyond, the epistolary laments of Ovid’s heroines were read as a collection of *exempla* offered for the instruction of medieval Christian
readers, who were to abhor the evil and imitate the good. If one may judge by the surviving *accessus*, it seems that the only heroine generally regarded as virtuous was Penelope; all of the others supply negative *exempla*. A typical *accessus* (ca. 1180) comments:

> Actoris *sic* intentio restat condemnare
> Amores illicitos, fatuos culpare
> Et recte ferventium mentes commendare:
> Utilitas nostra sit iustum pignus amare.

> Nobis quis sit titulus, satis declaratur:
> Publius de publica fama nuncupatur
> naso vel Ovidius satis declaratur,
> Si nasi species vel visere nomen agatur.

> Ethicae supponitur res libri praesentis
> Notetur intentio duplex: nam monentis
> Una manec, alia restat componentis
> Penelopes Naso commendat facta querentis.7

[The intention of the poet is to condemn illicit love, to blame the foolish, and to applaud the right-thinking. It should be to our advantage to love justly. Now I will tell you what my name means: I am called Publius, as if from "public repute," and Naso or Ovid is well explained from the shape of the nose, or the word "seeing." This book deals with ethics, and it has two intentions: one is to warn and the other is to commend the complaint of Penelope.]

This early *accessus* treats the conventional *topoi*—*intentio, utilitas, parte philosophiae*—in a way that was apparently widely accepted at least through the end of the fourteenth century; also echoed over hundreds of years was its condemnation of all the heroines except Penelope. When Oenone is cited by name in the *accessus*, it is a representative of *amor stultus*. An *accessus* from MS. Berol. Lat. 219, given by Alton, tells us:
Materia ipsius est amor licitus et illicitus et stultus. Intentio sua commendare quasdam a licito amore sicut penelope, alias reprehendere ab illicito sicut phedram, que dilexit ypolitum priuignum suum, alias etiam reprehendere a stulto amore, sicut phillidam et oenonem; stultitia enim est amare hospites sicut phillis, unde illud: certus in hospitibus non est amor; vel pueros diligere sicut oenone, quia solent esse inconstantes secundum etatis variationem. Hec est principalis intentio. 

[The subject matter of this (book) is licit, illicit, and foolish love. Its intention is to praise certain women like Penelope for their licit love, to blame others like Phaedra, who loved Hippolytus, her stepson, for their illicit love, and to rebuke others, like Phyllis and Oenone, for foolish love. For it is folly to love guests as Phyllis did, whence the saying, “with guests no love is certain,” or to love boys, as Oenone did, because they are generally inconstant, in accordance with the variability of their age. This is the first intention.]

This is perhaps not as simpleminded as it first appears, since at bottom the admonitions against loving guests or young boys address the unstable nature of sudden love and the newefangelness of passion, carnal love—matters with which Chaucer is deeply concerned in the Troilus. Bellorini’s discussion of the Filippo Ceffi translation of the Heroides, probably used by Chaucer in composing this passage of the Troilus, quotes from the gloss on Oenone with which Ceffi introduces her epistle: “la ‘ntenzione dell’ autore fu di trattare di folle amare per suo insegnamento” [the intention of the author was to treat of foolish love by her example].

Such accessus were widely used by historians, commentators, and poets, and indeed it can be shown that the interpretation given to the tale of Oenone by Chaucer’s thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sources was the same as that of the writers of the accessus. In Petrarch’s Trionfi, Oenone appears in the “Triumph of Love” in the company of the other
Ovidian heroines: Phyllis, Medea, Hypsipyle, Helen, Laodamia. In this, the lowest in the hierarchy of Triumphs (Chastity triumphs over Love, Death over Chastity, Fame over Death, Time over Fame, and Eternity over Time), the condition of the lovers is pitiable. Petrarch's narrator speaks as a mature man looking back upon the experience of his life; he shows us the young Petrarch, in his Dantean situation as visitor to the Elysian Fields, assuring his guide that "... the toils of love / Dismayed me so that I abandoned them, / My garments and my heart already rent." Warned of the "flame [that] is lit for [him]," he does not understand that love for Laura, still in the future, will bind him in lifelong servitude on earth and will eventually show him the way to Heaven. His guide deplores the power of Cupid, "who rives us thus of life and liberty," and says of Oenone and the rest of Cupid's retinue: "Hark to the sighs and weeping, hark to the cries / Of these poor loving ones, who gave their souls / Into the power of him who leads them thus." That Petrarch's attitude toward the classical lovers is consistent may be seen in the sixth book of the *Africa*, in which Oenone appears among the shades near Byblis, Myrrha, and Orpheus. Petrarch says of her: "... as if still fearful of his foe's pursuit / Paris in silence trod, and on his heels / imploring him, Oenone came in tears, / But he turned from her." The moral that interprets her experience is the same one Petrarch pronounces on the tale of Sophonisba: "She died for love; she was cast forth from light / By force." Oenone appears similarly moralized in the *Amorosa visione* of Boccaccio, in which a celestial guide (Robert Hollander believes she may be identified with the Uranic Venus) leads the rather foolish and distractible narrator through the triumphs of Wisdom, Glory, Wealth, and Love in the hope that he will eventually abandon the pursuit of these things in favor of the "bene eterne." (He never does.) In his Triumph of Love, Boccaccio makes use of no fewer than fifty-three famous couples of classical antiquity; Oenone, "weeping sadly for her lost husband" and "with pitiful words... vainly calling him back to her," is accompanied by Paris and Helen, Ianthe and Iphis, and Laodamia. When the narrator expresses to his wise guide his pleasure in the vision—"Oh how worthwhile / it has been, seeing these various things, / which You said were full of great evil! / Now what could ever be more worthy than they, / what more wondrous to have / or to consider or to hear about?"—she responds:
The good which you sought, does it seem to you that you see it painted here?
And yet these things are fallacious and without truth.
To me it seems that such looking has goaded your mind into false opinion, extinguishing all sense of duty in you.

You should seek no other good than that to which the strait way leads us, where you did not wish to go, hastening here instead.
Oh, how greatly does it delight the wise, gracious and eternal as it is! And I told you so, when you were in such a hurry to enter this place.
Now see that your eyes are no longer fixed on such joys; for if you were to study well whichever one you pleased with clear sight, it would be obvious to you that whoever puts his hope, unwisely, in such things as these has for company burdensome tribulations.
You blind yourself in much error with your false imagining of these present things; they are but ostentatious show.

Both the Trionfi and the Amorosa visione are concerned with the problem of spiritual allegiance; in both, the exemplum of Oenone is monitory, intended to illustrate the danger of pursuing temporalia and the superiority of higher goals. The exemplum is used in the same way in the Echecs amoureux, a fourteenth-century French love-allegory, which remains unedited today but was partially translated by Lydgate as Reson and Sensuallyte. In this poem of spiritual pilgrimage, the narrator begins by straying westward from the eastern road to virtue on which he has set out under the guidance of Nature. He soon finds himself in a locus amoenus with four startlingly beautiful strangers, whom he discovers to be the goddesses Minerva, Juno, and Venus, escorted by Mercury. Mercury explains to him that he must lead the goddesses to Paris and give his own opinion of the correctness
of Paris's judgment. Unaware of the significance of the test and eager to offer his opinion, the narrator seeks out Paris—whom he finds reclining with Oenone in a valley of Mount Ida—elicits his judgment, and immediately ratifies it: ‘‘For I wolde ha do the same / Of equyte and no fauour, / Yf I hadde be arbitrour; / For she semys, shortly for to telle, / Al the tother doth excelle.’’ 16 This untutored reaction identifies him as under the unmediated domination of the ‘‘lawe of kynde,’’ and Venus welcomes him warmly as her servant, a status he retains despite the warnings of Diana to the end of the fragment. Lest we miss the moral significance of the action, there is supplied before the judgment what amounts to a long gloss on this portion of the Echecs, describing the attributes of the three goddesses and identifying them with three ‘‘lustes’’: wisdom, riches, sensuality. Venus, of course, is associated with the last. Her power is so great that she can draw into her service ‘‘by violence’’ all who look upon her; ‘‘no diffence may avaylle’’ against her. The narrator, who has already been warned by Nature that sensuality ‘‘causeth men, who that can se, / Of wilfulnes euer amonge, / To go the weye that is wronge,’’ accounts for his choice, from his present perspective of greater experience, by explaining that the dazzling beauty of the world made him forget Nature’s admonitions: the ‘‘false, veyn pleasaunce / Of thy wordly vanyte’’ made him ‘‘dul of mynde.’’ 17 The poet of the Echecs probably derived his identification of the three goddesses with three ways of life from Fulgentius and the Vatican Mythographers, but it was of course conventional by his time; for the medieval reader, this gloss had become the accepted meaning of the judgment of Paris. No explicit moralization is attached here to the figure of Oenone, and she appears (as she does rarely, but occasionally) without her Ovidian sisters. But the context within which she appears is clear; she is associated with the locus amoenus whose beauty leads the pilgrim astray, and with Paris, whom the Echecs-poet uses in the conventional way as a classical exemplum of servitude to sensuality. The task of the pilgrim in the poem is the election of a way of life. Oenone is clearly ‘‘framed’’ by images of the sensual life, within whose context her tragedy is to be understood.

As I have tried to demonstrate in my book, The Myths of Love: Classical Lovers in Medieval Literature, 18 the best-known classical tales of illicit, betrayed, or unrequited love (including the tales of the gods as
lovers, to whom Troilus appeals for help at the beginning of the third book) were moralized in the Middle Ages in essentially the same way, as monitory *exempla* of foolish love. They were glossed in other ways only for purposes of characterization. In the *Roman de la rose*, for instance, La Vieille employs the *exemplum* of Oenone’s betrayal by Paris as a prop to her argument that women should expect to be deceived by men and should be prepared to deceive them in turn (13215–29). The argument, and the moralization, are perverse; they serve not to instruct the reader in the generally accepted meaning of the classical tale but to expose the point of view of La Vieille as carnal, indeed corrupt. To medieval readers, who were thoroughly familiar with these very commonplace myths and their traditional interpretations, the Old Whore’s perverse gloss on Oenone would have appeared both humorous and pointed. In the same way, Pandarus’s attempt in the *Troilus* to convert the traditional *exemplum* to his own purposes would have alerted Chaucer’s readers or auditors to the nature of Troilus’s predicament and of Pandarus’s proffered “help.” In terms of the fiction of the poem, Pandarus’s evocation of misguided love and betrayal is unintentional; it is Chaucer’s learned joke on him. A similar joke is implicit in his attempt to reassure Troilus by means of the *exemplum* of Oenone, for the generally accepted medieval understanding of the classical tales of tragic love was anything but reassuring to lovers *paramours*. Troilus, however, is “nat textueel” and accepts Pandarus’s perverse mythography at face value; in fact Chaucer is at pains to establish Troilus’s ignorance of the moral significance of the myths. Having heard Pandarus out, Troilus objects peevishly that “‘thi proverbes may me naught availle’” (1.756); “‘Lat be thyne old ensaumples, I the prey’” (1.760). At length, of course, he accepts Pandarus’s arguments and his assistance.

The Ovidian lovers Tereus and Procne appear, like Oenone, in apparently fortuitous fashion at the beginning of the second book of the *Troilus*. Procne, the swallow, awakens Pandarus on the day he is to speak with Criseyde on Troilus’s behalf. The narrator, however, goes into far more detail than necessary for such an apparently casual allusion:

The swalowe Proigne, with a sorowful lay,
Whan morwen com, gan make hire waymentynge,
Whi she forshapen was; and ever lay
Today it may strike us as bizarre that, in the Middle Ages, the Ovidian story of abduction, mutilation, murder, gory dismemberment, trickery, and cannibalism should have been referred principally to matters of love, but in fact the tale of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela was moralized in much the same way as that of Oenone. The mythographer Giovanni del Virgilio offers the meter:

Naso per historiam incestum condemnat amorem
Et notat obscenus quam male finit amor. . . .
Et veteram renovat cantu Phylomena querelam
Quodque latens coluit pergemit illa nemus.¹⁹

[In this tale, Naso condemns sinful love and takes note of how badly an impure love ends. . . . And Philomela renews her ancient plaint in song, filling whatever grove she secretly inhabits with her laments.]

The *Ovide Moralisé* similarly identifies Procne and Philomela with “amour decevable et faillie.”²⁰ Bersuire, who likewise uses the myth to condemn illicit love, like many medieval poets and commentators appears not to make the (to moderns) crucial distinction between the degree of Procne’s and Philomela’s guilt and that of Tereus. He glosses Tereus’s
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victims as "malae mulieres" who are said to have been transformed into birds because, in their confusion, they learned to fly, and specifically into swallow and nightingale (birds with sweet voices) because such bad women are accustomed to occupy themselves in singing and playing instruments. 21

J. L. Baird protests against the insensitivity of the mythographers, who impose reductionist interpretations upon the beautiful, tragic tale, but in fact such interpretations are even more plentiful in the general literary culture. 22 The earliest example may occur in the Old French romance *Yder* (ca. 1220), in which the maiden Guenloiens, stricken with love for Yder, laments her condition by recalling the poor "cheitives qui o toi [i.e., Cupid] sunt, / Qui s’occistrent par druerie" [wretches of your company, who killed themselves for love]: Dejanira, Canace, Echo, Scylla, Phyllis, Hero, Byblis, Dido, Myrrha, Procne, Thisbe, Hypermnestra, "et des autres mil e cinc cenz." 23 Reproaching Cupid, she asks why he does not repent the harm he does; of all the gods, he alone sins. She concludes from these *exempla* that "N’est pas [bien] seins qui d’amer fole" [It is not (good) sense ro love madly] (2608), a conclusion that does not prevent her from continuing to do so. In a similar speech against the destructive power of love *par amours*, the Fiammetta of Boccaccio’s *Filocolo* uses the myth of Procne and Philomela, among others, to refute the claim of the young lover Galeon that love increases virtue. Defining the love of which he speaks, she calls it "love for pleasure":

And in truth, nobody who wants to lead a virtuous life ought to submit to this, since it takes away honor, brings troubles, awakens vices, abundantly provides vain worries, and unjustly steals the liberty of the other person, which ought to be treasured more than anything else. Who then, for his own good, if he would be wise, would not flee such a master? Live free of him if you can, following those things which in every respect increase liberty; and let vicious servants follow vicious lords. 24

Over Galeon’s protests, Fiammetta continues by turning the *exempla* of the classical lovers (which he had adduced as proof that lovers grow in virtue) back against him: Mars acted unjustly in taking to himself the wife of another, Medea came to a vile end, Hercules was rendered
effeminate by love, and the actions of Tereus show that love knows no 
law and is capable of the greatest enormities. Cupid “leads every one 
of his followers to every evil”; “the beginning of this love is nothing 
other than fear, the middle is sin and the end grief and sorrow.”

Such moralizations of the tale of Procne and Philomela are ubiquitous 
in medieval literature. Boccaccio alludes to it again in the excursus 
“Against Women” that follows the story of Samson in the De Casibus; 
in this case, Procne (along with Delilah, Eriphyle, Arachne, Amata, 
Phyllis, Scylla, Cleopatra, and Medea, among others) illustrates that “the 
female of the species is very greedy, quick to anger, unfaithful, oversexed, 
truculent, desirous more of frivolity than of wisdom.” Its conclusion 
is a sermon much like Fiammetta’s on the control of unrestrained passion. 
Procne, Philomela, or both appear in similar moralized contexts in the 
lyrics of the late fourteenth-century Italian poet Simone da Siena and in 
Lydgate’s Reson and Sensuallyte. Invoking Cerberus as his muse (one 
thinks of Chaucer’s invocation to Tisiphone in the Troilus), Simone 
complains of the yoke “d’amor crudel, che me fa tanto torto” [of cruel 
love that does me so much wrong]. Such love caused the mulberry to 
change color, made murderers of Medea and Phaedra, converted Daphne 
to a laurel; it caused Aristotle to be ridden like a horse by a young girl, 
and Philomela to lament the cruelty of Tereus. On the basis of many 
such exempla, Simone concludes, much like Fiammetta: “chi prende 
questo Amor falso a seguire, / uccide il corpo e l’alma va all’inferno” 
[he who undertakes to follow this false love kills his body, and his soul 
goes to hell]. The names of the same tragic heroines of mythology occur 
to him whenever he thinks of the pains of love; in the lyric “O magnanime 
donne,” the lament of a young girl deceived by her lover, the fates of 
Thisbe, Byblis, Dido, Philomela, and Medea foreshadow the ultimate fate 
of the speaker, who dies in the end. She reflects that Philomela, at 
least, had her revenge, whereas she sees no way to avenge herself 
upon the faithless nobleman who has abandoned her. In Lydgate’s 
Reson and Sensuallyte the goddess Diana, who attempts to reason the 
erring lover out of his determination to serve Venus, uses the classical 
exempla to demonstrate “the sorowes and mysaventures, / The meschef, 
and the violences, / And the inconvenyences / That loves folkys han 
suffred”: Narcissus was drowned at the “mortal welle”; Pygmalion fell 
into “swich a rage” that he loved a statue, and Pasiphae a goat [sic];
Myrrha loved her father "vn-to hir confusion"; Phaedra, her son-in-law; Tereus, his wife's sister; and Scylla, her father's enemy. The mournful catalogue continues, but after every few items Diana reminds the lover to whom she speaks of the point of all these examples: recalling the folly of the lovers of antiquity, he should be instructed to "be war and come no nere" to the Garden of Deduit. The gloss on the *Echecs amoureux*, the French love-allegory upon which Lydgate's poem is based, says of this passage: "One can also say that Tereus was gross and base for indulging thus in the vice of lust, which is a stinking, excremental, and abominable thing." (The lover does not, of course, take Diana's advice.)

In the *Troilus*, Chaucer neither comments upon nor openly moralizes the song of the swallow, but his placement of the lines "How Tereus gan forth hire suster take" (2.69) and "Remembryng hym his erand was to doone" (2.72) hints at the underlying nature of Pandarus's "erand," recalling the suggestions made by the moralizations of the myth of Procne and Philomela that love has dangerous potential for violence and the breaking of oaths. The real nature of the "erand" is suggested, also, by the narrator's astrological allusion only fifteen lines above to the rape of Europa ("Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede, / Right in the white Bole" [2.54-55]) and by his (apparently uninflected) appeal to Janus, "god of entree." The presence of Procne in such a context places us unequivocally in the realm of irrational love; we see Troilus as a foolish sufferer like the young Fiammetta, the maiden Guenloiens, or the lover of the *Echecs amoureux*, who will not be instructed by the experience of others but who will serve Cupid until death or disaster overtakes him. Chaucer's narrator, who is clearly deaf to the warnings he gives his readers, will remain "the servant of the servants of love" until the spirit of Troilus teaches him a different sense of those words. Neither he, Pandarus, nor Troilus himself wishes to heed the implications of violence and betrayal conveyed by the old tales of love. To a medieval reader, they would have conveyed as well the nature of Troilus's passion; it is *amor stultus*, the "blynde lust" condemned by the epilogue.

Of all the classical tales of love to which Chaucer alludes in the *Troilus*, the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice is the best known and most widely glossed. The history of its appearances in medieval literature has already been written; I will confine myself here to providing some indication of its conventional significance in medieval love poems. It is
Criseyde who evokes the myth of Orpheus in her first sorrowful speech after the announcement of her impending deportation:

though in erthe ytwynned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pite, out of peyne,
That hight Elisos, shal we ben yfeere,
As Orpheus with Erudice, his fere.

(4.788–91)

Clearly, we are meant to recall the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, in which the ghost of Orpheus seeks and finds his Eurydice in the fields of the blessed: ‘‘There they stroll together, side by side; or sometimes Orpheus follows, while his wife goes before, sometimes he leads the way and looks back, as he can safely do now, at his Eurydice.’’\(^2\) This is the successful Orpheus, whom we will meet again in other persuasive speeches of lovers; but the name of Orpheus was not, in general, reassuring to lovers. Medieval allusions to the myth were most often based, not upon the vignette of the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, the happy lovers in the Elysian Fields, but upon the remarkable tale of the tenth book, Orpheus’s harrowing of hell. Criseyde chooses her words carefully, but the medieval reader would have evaluated her intended meaning in the light of his or her own knowledge of the double signification of Orpheus; like the other allusions to the classical lovers, this one carries within it clues to the meaning of the poem’s action, a meaning inaccessible to its actors. Like those allusions, too, this one tends ultimately to subvert the rhetorical purpose the speaker means it to advance.

The Orpheus of medieval glossators was not a happy lover. He grew out of medieval interpretations, retellings, and elaborations of the story in Ovid’s tenth book. In the Ovidian account, Orpheus’s marriage to his beloved Eurydice is accompanied by ill omens; shortly after, while wandering in the meadows, she dies from a snakebite. Unable to overcome his grief, Orpheus descends to the underworld in search of her and addresses to Pluto and Proserpine a musical plea for her return. So sweet are his words and the music of his lyre that the ghosts weep and infernal activity ceases: Tantalus forgets to reach for the water, Ixion’s wheel stands still, the vultures leave off gnawing the liver of Tityus, Sisyphus sits idle on his stone, and the Furies are in tears.\(^3\) Touched by his plea, the king and
queen of the underworld grant it on condition that Orpheus not look behind him as he leads Eurydice out of Hades. He joyfully consents, but his love for her and his anxiety for her safety make him forget his promise. He looks back, and Eurydice disappears forever.

The interpretation given to this myth by generations of medieval writers, beginning with Boethius, centers upon the question of spiritual allegiance, precisely the central issue of the *Troilus*. Orpheus represents a man who aspires to the *summum bonum*. Eurydice is his soul (or, sometimes, his concupiscible faculty or even “sensuality” itself) that leads him into servitude to *temporalia*, or Hades. He can still raise his eyes to celestial things, but if he then looks back upon the things of the world, his soul is lost. This gloss on the myth is ubiquitous in the Middle Ages; versions of it are given by Remi of Auxerre, Arnulf of Orleans, Guillaume de Conches, Giovanni del Virgilio, Bernardus Silvestris, Coluccio Salutati, Raoul de Longchamp, the *Ovide Moralisé*, Boccaccio, and even Robert Henryson in a long moralization attached to his *Tale of Orpheus and Erudices his Quene*. It is so widely abroad in the general literary culture that it is simply assumed as the meaning of the myth of Orpheus as early as the eleventh century; the German preacher Amarcius, admonishing his readers to “flee the blind commerce of the world” and hurry to the place of true joy, does not even bother to explain his allusion to Orpheus:

Ne dicas “Cras incipiam bene vivere,” sed nunc
Incipe, ne tardes. . . .
Qui presbitero nunc
Crimina, que gessit, profiteri negligit et qui
Nunc ex corde suos non vult deflere reatus,
Post obitum supplex poscet nec habebit.
Occidit Euridice, postquam respexit, et Orpheus
In cassum flevit.35

[Do not say, “I will begin to live well tomorrow,” but begin now, do not delay. . . . Who neglects to confess the crimes he has committed now and who does not weep about his offenses from the bottom of his heart? After death, the suppliant will neither ask nor possess anything. Eurydice fell back into death after Orpheus looked back, and he wept to no purpose.]
The understanding of the myth that would have been shared by Chaucer’s first readers is explained in this way by Henryson, whose source is Nicholas Trivet’s gloss on the Consolation of Philosophy:

Fair Phebus is the god of sapiens;  
Calliope his wyf is eloquens:  
Thir twa mariit gat Orpheus belyf,  
Quhilk callit is the part intellectif  
Of mannis saull, in understanding fre,  
And separate fra sensualite.  
Erudices is our effectioun,  
Be fantasye oft movit up and doun—  
Quhilis to resoun it castis the delyte,  
Quhilis to the flesche settis the appetit.  
Aristyus, this herd that couth persewe  
Erudices, is nocht bot gud vertewe,  
Quhilk besy is aye to kepe our myndis clene;  
Both quhen we fle out throu the medowe grene  
Fra vertewe to this warldis vane plesans,  
Mengit with caire and full of varians,  
The serpent stangis—that is dedly syn  
That poysonis the saule bath without and in;  
And than is it deid and eike oppressit doun  
To warldly lust—all our effectioun.  
Than perfyte resoun wepis wounder saire,  
Seand our appetit thus-gate misfaire,  
And passis up to the hevin belyf,  
Schawand till us the lyf contemplatif,  
The parfyt will and als the fervent luf  
We suld have allway to the hevin abuf;  
Bot seldyn thare our appetit is fund—  
It is so fast unto the body bund;  
Tharfure downwart we cast our myndis e,  
Blyndit with lust, and may nocht upwart fle;  
Suld our desyre be soucht up in the speris,  
Quhen it is tedderit on this warldis breiris,  
Quhile on the flesche, quhile on this warldis wrak,  
And to the hevin small entent we tak.
In the poems of love, lovers and their spokesmen ignore this traditionally accepted interpretation of the myth in order to construct a "lovers' Orpheus," a character who typifies the successful lover. This is Criseyde’s rhetorical strategy in the _Troilus_, but it may equally well be seen in any number of medieval poems of love. Simone da Siena, in a verse to a pitiless lady to whom his heart is "suggetto," protests that Orpheus found mercy even in the realm of Pluto; why, then, does his beloved remain unmoved by his song? Similarly, Froissart’s narrator in the _Paradis d'Amour_ humorously compares himself, the unsuccessful poet-lover, to Orpheus. He mourns:

Je ne sui pas Orpheüs
Qui par ses cancons
Et ses douls melodieus sons
Endormi les dieus de la jus,
Mais sui li las Tantalus,
De qui li mentons
Joint a l’aige et voit jusqu’au fons
Et n'en puet estre repeüs.

[I am not Orpheus, who with his songs and his sweet, melodious sounds lulled to sleep the gods below, but I am the weary Tantalus, whose chin touches the water, and who can see to the bottom, and yet cannot satisfy himself.]

In Boccaccio’s _Amorosa visione_ the narrator, a lover, prays to Venus that his song may be as sweet as that of Orpheus; later he meets Orpheus as one of the figures in the triumph of Venus, among such others as Jason, Ariadne, Phaedra, Pasiphae, Myrrha, and Cephalus and Procris. Seeing the great poet-lover, the narrator takes heart and imagines that the song of Orpheus—a song in praise of Love, in the style of the _stilnovisti_—is his own (Am. Vis. 2.8 and 23.7). Elsewhere, of course, Boccaccio moralizes Orpheus in conventional fashion; so does Petrarch, who, however, also makes use of the successful “lovers’ Orpheus” in a lament for Laura: "Would that I had so sorrowful a style / That I could win my Laura back from death / As Orpheus won his Eurydice without rhymes, /
For then I would live more glad than ever!" And Machaut, assuming the voice of a lover for humorous purposes in the *Confort d'amis*, retells feelingly and at length the tragic tales of the classical lovers, in each instance concluding illogically with an exhortation to his friend to take hope: If Orpheus had known that he could not win Eurydice, would he have undertaken so perilous an adventure? Never! He was led into it by Hope, the friend of lovers. Therefore let us serve Love in the hope of success (see *Confort* 2277-2762).

The Orpheus invoked by Chaucer’s Criseyde is of course this happy and successful “lovers’ Orpheus,” who really exists for only an instant in the myth itself. We cannot know with certainty whether Criseyde is deceiving both herself and her lover, or only Troilus, but it is certain that readers of the Middle Ages would have recognized her allusion to Orpheus as the foolish utterance of a vainly hopeful lover *par amours*. The common element in medieval treatments of the myth of Orpheus is the emphasis upon misplaced spiritual allegiance, which is also the central problem of the *Troylus*. Chaucer’s treatment of this theme, although pervasive, is oblique, so that his mythological additions to the poem constitute an important guide to its meaning. He does not set Troilus’ choice explicitly within a framework of philosophical options, as Jean de Meun does for his lover, but his allusions to the classical tales of love help to establish the *Troylus* as what Monica McAlpine would call a tragedy of the will. It is in the loss of his Eurydice, in the permanent and indeed stubborn misdirection of concupiscible appetite, that Troilus’s tragedy consists. The allusion to Orpheus anticipates the epilogue’s message on spiritual choice: “Repeyreth hom fro worldly vanye” (5.1837).

Myrrha, the last of the classical lovers I will address, is evoked by the narrator in the fourth book, as Troilus and Criseyde embrace in the knowledge that they are soon to be separated:

The woful teeris that they leten falle  
As bittre weren, out of teris kynde,  
For peyne, as is legne aloes or galle.  
So bittre teeris weep nought, as I fynde,  
The woful Mirra thorugh the bark and rynde;  
That is this world ther nys so hard an herte,  
That nolde han rewed on hire peynes smerte.  

(4.1135-41)
Again, I believe that the fictional speaker’s intention in making this allusion—to gain the reader’s sympathy for his lovers—is quite different from Chaucer’s intention in putting the allusion into the speaker’s mouth. Like Oenone, Procne, and Orpheus, Myrrha was one of a group of classical lovers whose significance in medieval thought was well established. We have seen her in passing as one of the chief attendants in Cupid’s train, the troop of ill-fated classical lovers who are consistently moralized as exempla of amor stultus. In Ovid’s telling, Myrrha is the daughter of King Cinyras of Panchaia, desired by many suitors but herself desiring only her father. In an agonized psychomachia, which Ovid describes minutely, she tries to persuade herself to abandon any thought of lying with her father, but when the opportunity arises—the festival of Ceres, when her mother must sleep for nine days apart from her husband—Myrrha has her old nurse introduce her, disguised as a courtesan, into her father’s bedchamber. Several nights the two lie together, until at length Cinyras brings a lamp into the room, discovers her identity, and, enraged, pursues her with his sword. Myrrha flees, pregnant with his child, and after nine months of wandering prays to the gods to be changed into another form, “in case I should contaminate the living by my presence if I live, or the dead if I die.” They hear her prayer and transform her into the tree that bears her name, the weeping myrrh. The tale ends with the birth of her child, Adonis, through a fissure in the bark.

Logically enough, the tale of Myrrha came to be associated in the Middle Ages with perverse or unnatural love; her example furnished rhetorical ammunition to many a preacher on the wicked woman. Petrus Pictor, an early twelfth-century pious poet, seeks in his long misogynist poem De mala muliere to prove by exempla from classical and biblical history that women are fundamentally wicked. Of course he makes use of the medieval commonplace that Samson, Solomon, David, and other biblical heroes were brought low by trusting in women, and in addition he enumerates the crimes of Phaedra, Byblis, and Myrrha in support of the proposition that “Femina mors mundi, mala femina fabula mundi, / Exitium, reges, insontes, federa, leges, / Attulit, orbuit, straut, soluit, uioluit” [Woman, the death of the world, evil woman, the talk of the world, brings destruction, breaks up kingdoms, ruins the innocent, dissolves harmony, violates the laws].\(^\text{42}\) Similarly, Bernard of Cluny, in one of many passages in the De contemptu mundi
on the viciousness of women, uses Myrrha—with Jocasta, Phaedra, and Lycissa—as *exempla*:

> Debita s exibus inferioribus heu! sibi dantes,  
> Haec nimis effera crimina caetera justificarunt,  
> Myrrha, Jocastaque, Phaedra, Lycissaque, jam sibi plaudunt.  

[Believing that things are owed to them as the weaker sex, Myrrha, Jocasta, Phaedra, and Lycissa have justified other excessively savage crimes, and even take pride in them.]

Later in the century, Alanus uses the example of Myrrha—this time in the company of Helen, Pasiphae, Medea, and Narcissus—to demonstrate the perversity of all humankind, as Nature laments the subversion of her great plan by inordinate lust:

> Myrrha, also, goaded by the sting of the myrrh-scented Cyprian, in her love for her father corrupted a daughter's affection and played a mother's role with her father. Medea, turning stepmother to her natural son, destroyed a beautiful little product of Venus to produce a work that brought Venus no glory. Narcissus, when his shadow faked a second Narcissus, was reflected in a reflection, believed himself to be a second self, and was involved in the destruction arising from himself loving himself. . . . This great multitude of men monsters are scattered hither and thither over the whole expanse of earth and from contact with their spell, chastity itself is bewitched.

It is worth noting that, although this passage from the *De planctu* retains in its discussion of the myth the emphasis on perversion established in the early Middle Ages, it also puts Myrrha into the company of Helen, a classical lover not ordinarily called perverse. Alanus explains her appearance here by linking adultery, a perversion of morality, with other forms of unnatural love. His linking of Myrrha with Helen is a harbinger of later medieval treatment of her tale, which will account her simply
as one led astray by love, often without particular attention to the unnaturalness of her acts. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Walter Map, in the letter to Rufinus “De non ducenda uxorí” included in the fourth part of the De nugis curialium, links his discussion of Myrrha to other myths of the love inspired by Cupid, both “natural” and “unnatural” in kind. Seeking to demonstrate that there are no longer any virtuous women (“Friend, there is no Lucretia, no Penelope, no Sabine left. Mistrust all”), he speaks of Myrrha as leading “an army of all the vices,” together with Europa, Leucothoe, and Venus as the deceiver of Vulcan. Petrarch in the Trionfi, at the same time that he places Myrrha in the company of the “unnatural” lovers Semiramis and Byblis, “oppressed with shame / for their unlawful and distorted love,” includes in the larger context all the passionate lovers of biblical and classical history. In the Africa, Myrrha is seen by Sophonisba in Hades in the company both of the “unnatural” Iphis and Byblis and the “natural” Orpheus and Eurydice.

For the most part, the Middle Ages identified Myrrha simply as a lover in thrall to Cupid; when her story was allegorized or moralized, it was usually seen as dramatizing the choice between chaste or Venerean love, between love of God and allegiance to Satan. Arnulf of Orleans and John of Garland both use the tale as the basis for moralizations on the bitterness of love; Arnulf notes that Myrrha’s son Adonis (identified with myrrh through the Greek adon, “sweet savor”) was transformed into a flower as a sign that amor caritativus has a sweeter savor than amor venereus (Allegoriae 10.10–11). John says simply: “Rem miram mirare novam Mirram per amorem / In mirram verci quam dat amarus amor” [It is a marvelous thing to see Myrrha changed by love to a myrrh tree, for love gives bitterness]. Throughout the Middle Ages, even among the poets, Myrrha almost never appears unmoralized—and the moralization most often may be summed up in that economical line from the early thirteenth-century romance Yder: “N’est pas [bien] sens qui d’amer folé.” We have seen that Myrrha appears in that work, along with Procris and others of the classical heroines, as one of the exempla of tragic love in the lament of the love-struck maiden Guenloiens. She appears again in the Roman de la rose, in the long speech of Amans just before the conflagration of Venus. The context is this: Genius has delivered his sermon in praise of generation and has thrown down his firebrand, whose flame
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"spread among everyone" (20668 ff.). The forces of Venus are heartened and ready to assail the castle, still guarded by Shame and Fear. Venus reviles these two guardians and aims her torch at the "narrow aperture" in the tower between the two pillars (an anatomical allegory that hardly requires a gloss). Considering the beauty of these pillars and of the image they support, the lover is moved to compare it to the image of Pygmalion, and he proceeds to tell the story of Pygmalion at great length, likening his desire for the inanimate statue to the desire of Narcissus for his own image in the fountain. The story of Pygmalion, of course, has a happy ending, and the lover finds that it augurs well for his own success; he appears otherwise oblivious to what the comparison between himself and Pygmalion (or Narcissus!) might signify and concentrates with relish only upon the delightful fulfillment of the sculptor's desire. Now the lover further recalls that Pygmalion's grandson was King Cynaras,

a good man except for one instance, whose happiness would have been complete if he had not been deceived by his daughter, the fair Myrrha, whom the old woman—may God confound her for having no fear of sin—brought to the king in his bed by night. The queen was at a feast and the king took the girl in haste, without knowing by any word that he was to lie with his daughter. It was a strange trick for the old woman to allow the king to lie with his daughter. After she brought them together, the beautiful Adonis was born of them and Myrrha was changed into a tree. Her father would have killed her if he had discovered the trick, but it could not happen so, for, when he had the candles brought, she who was no longer a virgin escaped in swift flight, since otherwise he would have destroyed her. But all this is very far from my matter, and I must draw back from it. By the time you have finished this work you will know what it means. 48

The medieval reader, of course, would not have had to finish the work to know that the traditional glosses on the tales of Pygmalion, Narcissus, and Myrrha all warn against idolatrous love; as often occurs in the Rose (and in Chaucer), the ancient tales refuse to cooperate with the intention of the teller. The lover rejoices gleefully with Pygmalion
and expresses self-righteous disapproval of Myrrha’s incestuous love, without perceiving that, in terms of Christian morality, the error of the two is at bottom the same. It is that fact which leads the poets to assort the classical lovers *paramours*—successful or unsuccessful, incestuous or not—together in Cupid’s train, and to moralize upon their common servitude to Love. It is to such use that the poets of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries put the myth of Myrrha. In the *Echecs amoureux* she appears as one of the monitory *exempla* in the speech of Diana, who seeks to dissuade the lover/narrator from following Venus. In Boccaccio’s *Amorosa visione*, another poem of spiritual pilgrimage, she appears in Cupid’s train, an exemplary group of sufferers whose moralization by the narrator’s celestial guide we have already seen. Examples might be multiplied: Myrrha is also to be found in Boccaccio’s *De casibus*, in “a gathering of the mournful” described as “examples to all the world of the overturn of Fortune,” and in the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*, in which the speaker, a young noblewoman tortured by desire for her faithless lover, seeks to “give examples to those who are happy, so that they will practice moderation in the use of their goods, and avoid becoming like me.” She appears, too, in a moralizing poem of Simone da Siena, who preaches “contra i giovani presi d’amore carnale, e seguitanlo in opere loro” [against young people seized by carnal love, and following it in their acts]. Simone ends his poem in much the same way that Chaucer ends the *Troilus*: “Know yourselves at last, foolish people, and teach your hearts to love truly, to abandon cupidity and the vanity of the world!”

The moralization traditionally attached to the tale of Myrrha is omitted by medieval writers only in the complaints of lovers or their spokesmen, uttered by speakers incapable of attaching moral significance to the tales of love because they have themselves rejected the counsel of reason to become servants of Venus. Simone da Siena, who as we have seen both knew and used the traditional *moralitas* on the tale, omits it in one of his poems, the complaint of a young girl enamored of a “pellegrino garzone.” She pleads for his love, protesting that no one has ever suffered as she does: Myrrha, Thisbe, Dido, Phaedra, Ariadne, and Phyllis are famed for their love-suffering, but her fame will be greater than theirs because her lover’s cruelty—like her own sorrow—is greater. She draws no other conclusion from the myths, and her speech ends when she feels the Furies clutch at her hair to draw her down
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into the inferno—a dramatic lover’s death. Lydgate’s speaker in the “Complaynte of a Louers Lyf” and the “Complaint, for Lack of Mercy” alludes to Myrrha in an attempt to reinforce the familiar lover’s moralitas on the ancient tales of love: none has suffered as I do. It is precisely the point of the narrator in the Troilus, who commiserates with his lovers as, threatened with separation, they weep tears more bitter than Myrrha’s. It is the voice of the lover—or, in this case, of the ami—who cannot see through the letter of the tales to their meaning.

It should by now be apparent both that Chaucer’s allusions to classical lovers in the Troilus are meaningful and that they are governed by conventions observed by medieval writers of all kinds. The lovers Oenone, Procne, Orpheus, and Myrrha, as well as certain of their companions from the Heroïdes, Metamorphoses, and Aeneid, were interpreted throughout the Middle Ages as exempla of amor stultus, foolish and socially destructive love. It is certainly not the case that they were interpreted in that way by mythographers and not by poets; we have seen a number of examples in which the poets moralize them in one context and leave them unmoralized (or moralize them perversely) in another. The meaning of these myths was always the same, and it was known to the mythographers, to the poets (groups which, in any case, overlapped a good deal), and to all their educated readers. Whenever these myths appear in a medieval literary work, we are in the realm of amor stultus. When the speaker himself is aware of that, he will give the myths their traditional gloss. When he is a lover par amours, an ami, or the partisan of lovers, he will gloss them perversely or not at all. Knowledge of this convention can be of considerable value in interpreting medieval poems in which the classical lovers appear. Pandarus’s allusion to Oenone, for example, says less about Oenone—whose identity as a foolish lover had been well established for centuries—than it says about Pandarus, who actually trots out the exemplum in an attempt to comfort Troilus, or about Troilus himself, whose willful indifference to traditional wisdom makes him pliant in the hands of his foolish friend. Criseyde similarly characterizes herself as foolish and self-deceiving by her reference to the successful “lovers’ Orpheus,” and the narrator reveals himself as unreliable through his simpleminded “lover’s gloss” on the myth of Myrrha: however greatly she suffered, his lovers suffered even more. To medieval readers, these myths and their misuse by irrational speakers lacking in
objectivity would clearly have foreshadowed the message of the epilogue:

O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with youre age,
Repuyreth hoom fro worldly vanyte
And of your herte up casteth the visage
To thilke God that after his ymage
Yow made.

(5.1835–40)

NOTES

5. This and all quotations from the works of Chaucer are from Larry D. Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).


15. *Amorosa visione* 20.13–42; Hollander et al., *"Amorosa visione,"* 123.


27. Rima 77.113-14, in Emilio Pasquini, ed., Simone da Siena: Rime (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1965), 221.
31. F. N. Robinson notes (Works 818) that 'the epithet 'white' has been traced to Ovid's description of the snow-white bull in the form of which Jupiter visited Europa (Met. 1.852). But the reason for the association is not obvious.' I believe, of course, that the allusion to Jupiter's amorous adventures in this context is calculated.
33. The importance for the Troilus of the myth of Orpheus, interpreted in the Middle Ages as a parable of each person's choice of carnal or spiritual allegiance, is shown by the fact that all of the characters of the myth appear in Chaucer's poem.
34. By Remi and Guillaume in their commentaries on the Consolation of Philosophy 3, Mtr. 12; by Arnulf in Allegoriae super Ovidii Metamorphosin 10.1; by Bernardus in the Commentum super sex libros Eneidos 6.119-20; by Salutati in the De laboribus Herculis 4.5-7; by Raoul in his In Anticlaudianum Alani commentum (MS. B. N. Paris 8083, fol. 101v.-102r.); by the Ovide Moralisé 10.220-57; by Boccaccio in the De genealogia deorum 5.12; and by Henryson in The Tale of Orpheus and Erudices his Quene, lines 415-633.
41. Monica E. McAlpine, The Genre of "Troilus and Criseyde" (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 182-217. McAlpine, however, sees the tragedy of the will as Criseyde's alone.


46. *Trionfi* 1.3.76 and passim.


WHEN JEAN BAGNYON chose to rewrite *Fierabras* for his contemporaries at the dawn of the printed book, strong fictional women who participated in their own name in the world, women not limited to domestic, advisory, or intercessory functions, were rare. Their scarcity did not end then. The interest of what follows must lie, at least in part, beyond Bagnyon’s text and beyond Floripe herself. The purpose of subjecting the case of Floripe (sister of Fierabras) to close reading is in part to understand how this example of an active woman functions. My scrutiny of this text is also intended to contribute to a more general understanding of the textual means permitting woman to slip past the forces that still her voice, sometimes even in the confines of domesticity.

The questions about women’s roles that feminist scholarship has encouraged give us reason to pause at the presence of a dynamic female character in male-created and male-dominated fiction. In addition, Floripe’s case has two particular advantages to offer a feminist study. First, the scope of her activities is great, and she supplies an extreme case, in which the operative forces, here studied under high tension, are clearly rendered. The paucity of dynamic women in fiction mirrors their infrequency in the world. Second, the text in which Floripe appears, *Fierabras*, was rewritten and republished for some six hundred years, during which time Floripe came to the attention of a broad range of readers.
For four hundred years *Fierabras* was a standard (elite) literary text, and then, for two more centuries, by means of the *bibliotheque bleue*, the story circulated as popular literature. Here Floripe’s activities will ground my investigation of when and how female power could be tolerated.

My discussion of Floripe requires that she be situated in *Fierabras*, originally a twelfth-century addition to the *Cycle de Charlemagne* telling how the Crown of Thorns and other relics of the Passion that had fallen into Saracen hands were eventually returned to the Christians to be piously preserved by Charlemagne. During the twelfth century these holy relics were exhibited at Saint-Denis, attracting large numbers of pilgrims to the fairs every June. These relics remained a source of motivation in the later prose redactions as well. The story had broad appeal, appearing in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in a variety of French, Provençal, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and English versions. *Fierabras* was printed for the first time in 1478 in the new prose rendition by Jean Bagnyon (1412-1489) of Lausanne. This version set the form in which the story was reprinted countless times until the early nineteenth century, accumulating minor changes over the years without undergoing further systematic revision.

According to *Fierabras*, when the holy relics taken from the Christians at the sack of Rome are brought to the palace of the Saracen leader, Baland, he places them in the protection of his daughter, Floripe. As we shall see, Floripe is amply capable—by strength of wit, will, or arm—of fulfilling the function her father assigns her.

Floripe’s life of action is launched when she learns that her father’s prison holds five of Charlemagne’s peers. This is of more than idle interest to Floripe, who had seen and secretly fallen in love with one of the peers, Guy of Burgundy, when the French fought the Saracens seven years earlier at the siege of Rome. Her father’s jailor, Brutamont, proves an immediate impediment to the private interview she has been anticipating with Guy’s comrades:

> Madame, vous me pardonnerez, ne se peut faire que vous y voïses pour la inhonnesteté du lieu, il ne vous appartient pas/et dautre part votre père ma defendu que personne napprochë la prison/ et je me remembre que souvent par femme plusieurs preudhommes jay veus vergogniez et deceus (fol. 42 r.).
[Madame, you will forgive me, it cannot be done that you go there on account of the impropriety of the place, it is not appropriate for you. And on the other hand, your father forbade that anyone approach the prison. And I remember that by woman I have seen many fine men shamed and deceived.]8

Provoked, by both his ideas and his insubordination, Floripe responds by direct, independent action:

Quand Floripes lentendit elle cuida perdre le sens et luy dist: O mauvais glout [sic] despiteulx me doibs tu mettre cest langaige devant/ je te promes que je ten feray payer briefment et demanda son chambrelain lequel luy bailla ung baston et fist semblant la fille de ouvrir la prison et Brutamont la veult contredire/ et subitement elle cecy voiant luy donna si grant coup ou visaige que les yeux luy fist vollet dehors la teste et puis apres quil fut a terre elle le fist morir et puys le gecta sans ce quil fut sceu de nulluy des paiens dedens la prison (fol. 42 r.).

[When Floripe heard him, she thought she would lose her senses and she said to him: “O spiteful and evil man, should you speak thus to me? I promise I will shortly make you pay for it.” And she asked for her chamberlain, who gave her a stick. Then the girl made as if to open the prison and Brutamont wished to stop her. And seeing this, she quickly gave him such a blow across the face that she made his eyes fly from his head, and then after he was on the ground, she caused him to die and then threw him (into the dungeon) without any of the pagans in the prison learning of it].

Her physical strength seems to be as great as her spirit and resolve. Two earlier prose redactions suppress or modify this behavior; there the chamberlain, rather than Floripe, kills the jailor. Presumably direct violence from the weaker sex was too dangerous an example to set before the reader.9
The peers go from the dungeon to Floripe’s apartments, where one of her handmaidens, recognizing the prisoners, threatens to tell Baland. Floripe calls the woman aside, as if for private consultation, strikes her a sharp blow to the head, and with the aid of a steward throws her body out the window into the sea. Shortly afterward, Sortibrant, advisor to Baland, provokes Floripe’s anger. If with the maiden she spoke sweetly and acted violently, now, in a more public setting, she limits herself to the verbal evocation of physical violence: “Filz de putain traistre desloyal parjure si je ne pensais etre plus oultre blasmee de me prendre a toi, je te dontoye tel [sic] sur le visage que le sang aval en viendroit habundamment” (fol. 51 v.) [Son of a whore, traitor, disloyal perjurer, if I did not think I would be further blamed for dealing with you, I would give you such (a blow) across the face that your blood would flow freely down]. Floripe alludes to her status as princess, which gives her haughty superiority over her father’s less royal advisor. In all these cases, when she is offended Floripe does not seek protection from her father or any powers beyond her own. By the time Floripe’s will is crossed by Sortibrant’s words, the reader has already been shown enough action so that her words are very nearly the sign of the deed.

Floripe is presented in discourse that is constantly aware of her otherness, aware that she is a woman, and yet her otherness accords her extraordinary scope. While she lives as befits a princess in her father’s palace, she is not limited to the private and domestic. Her action on behalf of the five French peers in her father’s prison follows from the place she seems to have in her father’s court, where she is shown taking a lively interest in political developments, speaking out in council among Baland’s advisors. Although Floripe’s astonishing murder of the jailor follows a highly conventionalized portrait of our heroine, her clothing as it is described in that portrait, while departing in no way from the expectations of tradition, is as much semiotic as vestimentary:

Et elle estoit habillie dune robe de pourpre merveilleusement riche trespooette destoilles de fin ou laquelle fut faicte dune fee/ et estoit de telle vertu que personne qui lauroit ne pourroit estre empoisonne de herbe ne de venin. Et estoit Floripes si belle atout ses habillemens que se une personne eust jeune trois ou quatre jours sans mengier et la veoit il estoit
The material refinement, magical capabilities, and sensual appeal—all conventional feminine attributes—flag aspects of Floripe that push the very limits of conventional expectations about women. The purple and gold of her dress mark her royal condition as well as offering magical protection from poisons. Floripe’s mantle comes from Colchis, having been made by a fairy probably to be identified with Medea. Like the sacred relics, it is accompanied by a pleasing smell. Her dress and mantle participate in a great tradition of semiotic clothing. In Bagnyon’s version and its descendants, another magical part of her costume, a girdle permitting Floripe to protect those around her from hunger, appears only later when it becomes an active element in the narrative. By the combination of robe, mantle, and girdle, she is equipped as a kind of archetype of woman to assure the salubrious nurture of those about her; that is, if Floripe tests limits generally imposed on woman, her status as woman is nevertheless beyond question.

The understanding of Floripe’s social position, her specific power to protect from harm (poison) and hunger, as well as a more general ascription of spiritual and magical powers conveyed by her clothing is
implicit in the description of Floripe’s apartments to which the peers are taken when she releases them from their imprisonment. Her living quarters also suggest divine as well as nurturing capacities. The room to which she brings the Peers, as semiotically potent as her dress, is a symbolic abbreviation of benevolent nature:

Dessus la maîtresse porte par beaulx ars estoient fais les cieulx les estoilles le soleil la lune le temps dest et divers bois montaignes oyseaulx bestes poissons/ y estoient pain[t]s de toutes especes et figures par merveilleuse facon. Et selon aulcunes escriptures le filz matusale[m] la fiste faire/ et estoit logee celle chambre dessus une roche noire toute environnee de la mer et en ung des quarrtes de la maison avoit ung pretoire merveilleusement bel ou jamais fleurs ne fruys ne faillolient. Et la de toutes maladies for de celle de la mort on trouvoit confort et bon adiutoire. La dedans vint et croit la maindegloire (fol. 43 r.).

[Under the main door were painted the sky and the stars, the sun and the moon, summer and winter, woods, mountains. Birds and fish of all kinds were painted there by wonderful skill. And according to certain writings, the son of Mathusala had this done. And this room was placed on top of a black rock surrounded by the sea, and one of the quarters of the house had a wondrously beautiful spot where there were always flowers and fruits, and there one could find aid and comfort from all maladies except death. And in there came and grows the “maindegloire.”]

Floripe activates the nutritive aspects of her quarters, first by using the (re)generative “main de gloire” (mandrake) to heal Olivier’s wounds and then by providing a feast for the peers and her maidens. Her corner of the Saracen Admiral’s palace resembles a terrestrial paradise; not coincidentally, it is also where Floripe keeps the Crown of Thorns, the nails that attached Christ to the Cross, and the other holy relics.

The physical description of Floripe herself remains sternly conventionalized—hair, eyes, and skin compared to gold, stars, and lilies.
Convention, however, provides a flimsy barricade against the forces of desire, as is made clear in the previously cited passage. "Et estoit Floripes si belle atout ses habillemens que se une personne eust jeune trois ou quatre jours sans mengier et la veoit il estoit remply et saoule" [And Floripe was so beautiful with all her clothes that if a person had gone three or four days without eating and saw her, he would be filled and satisfied]. The inscribed audience is masculine. (This is further suggested by a breach of the usual strictures of grammar where a grammatical feminine, une personne, is the antecedent of the masculine third person pronoun, il.) The claim of satiety applies to the male viewer for whom her beauty can overcome hunger, presumably by overwhelming him with lust.

Lust leads to the destruction of the powers of Floripe’s girdle. Using his skills to break into the tower in the middle of the night, one of Baland’s magicians finds the girdle but is then distracted from his mission by the sight of sleeping Floripe. His rape attempt wakes her, and, in turn, her cries wake the peers. The Saracen is slain and thrown out to sea in an action that saves Floripe’s honor but cuts the girdle in half—its magic power destroyed indirectly by pagan lust. There is another lesson here about the danger that desire may pose to woman’s nurturing powers. Sexuality is clearly recognized as potentially dangerous.

Floripe herself is as chaste as she is passionate; she has the unswerving fidelity to the initial object of her love that tradition demands of those who love nobly. While she understands the duties of hospitality as requiring her to assign a handmaiden to spend the night with each of the peers rescued from the dungeon, Floripe herself spends the night alone, staunchly loyal to Guy. She recognizes and controls her own desire, too, when she finally greets Guy: "[Elle] sapprocha de luy pour traiet ung petit le desir de son cuer et ne losa baiser en la bouche si non es joues et ou menton por la cause quelle estoit paienne" (fol. 52 v.) [(She) approached him to deal with her heart’s desire and did not dare kiss him on the mouth, nor on the cheeks and chin, because she was a pagan]. The conventional gesture of greeting, a kiss on the mouth, would here be sexually charged; her kisses can be rendered licit only by marriage, necessarily preceded by Floripe’s conversion to Christianity, her formal admission into the community.

Eventually all twelve peers of the realm, including Guy of Burgundy, are in Floripe’s custody. Again Floripe acts, telling Guy of her love. He
accepts her declaration very phlegmatically, declaring himself completely subservient to Charlemagne's will in this as in all other matters. Guy's submission to the will of his lord contrasts sharply with Floripe's independent disposal of her own heart. In the absence of his assent, they cannot be considered betrothed. Earlier, she rejected the dominion of her father and forfeited her claim to his protection. Now the narrative protects Floripe's status as an independent actor responsible to neither a Saracen nor a Christian lord. Still, his comrades assume that Floripe will eventually marry Guy. His understated response is a reminder of the *chanson de geste* origins of the story, of the privileging of familial and national goals, that continue to determine its development. Guy's subservience to Charlemagne's wishes sets Floripe's total disregard for the wishes of her lord (her father) in sharp relief. But Baland is a Saracen; this makes Floripe's rebellion excusable and even necessary as it brings her to Christianity and protects her from the inevitable error of her father's ways. Furthermore, Guy's apparent indifference means that Floripe's love can continue to be treated publicly as a question of allegiance and intention in keeping with the discourse of group action that motivates the narrative.

In addition to her physical powers, Floripe also has magical powers beyond those initially adumbrated by her wardrobe. She cures Olivier's wounds with a magic balm. When her father's magician sets afire the stones of the tower in which she and the French knights have taken refuge, she proves herself his equal, concocting a brew that extinguishes the magical flames. Such magic may be either the expression of diabolical powers (setting the stones that shelter the Christians on fire) or the extension of divine protection (Floripe's flame-quenching brew or her magic girdle that provides food during the siege). Unlike Medea's terrifying magic, Floripe's powers are always deployed on the side of good.

The French knights' lives depend more than once upon Floripe's intelligence and strategic intervention. She saves the lives of the seven peers who came as messengers by suggesting to Baland that they might be exchanged for her brother Fierabras, then a prisoner of the French. When Naimes kills the Saracen Lucafart, she alerts the French to the need for a plan to counter Baland's fury. When the magic girdle can no longer provide food for the French knights in the tower, woman's reputation for guile is put to good use: Floripe designs the broad lines of their strategy while the peers provide the strong arms and unfailing courage.
MARGINALITY IS WOMAN’S FREEDOM

to carry it out. When the tower is attacked, she remembers her father’s
treasure hoard of gold, precious stones, and idols stored there—heavy
objects that make splendid missiles to hurl down at the Saracens trying
to invade the tower. Floripe and her maidens participate actively as
combatants during this part of the battle. Her readiness to reduce the
gods of her father to brute physical functions also assures the reader that
she is truly prepared to embrace the Christian faith.

When the Saracens have at last been defeated, Floripe is free to
become a Christian. Her baptism legitimately entails a second conven­
tionalized description of her body, now unclothed. But even while her
body is cloaked in the sacramental sanctity of baptism at a moment of
great spiritual purity, the description explicitly reminds us that woman’s
body is a sexual agent provocateur. Charlemagne has taken precautionary
measures, surrounding Floripe at the font with the oldest men present.
Nonetheless “elle frappa le cuer de plusieurs et agita leur intention de
concupiscence et especiallement de charles lempereur combien quil fuse
ancien et casse” (fol. 88 r.) [She struck the heart of many and excited their
thoughts to concupiscence, and specially Charles, the emperor, even though
he was old and tired]. 17 In the first portrait of Floripe, the inscribed reader
is marked as masculine; the audience at her baptism also appears to be
entirely male. The implied threat of Floripe’s sexuality is controlled first
by Floripe’s own purity and then by the order of Christian society. 18

The newly Christian Floripe puts on clothes—which are not described—and at long last marries Guy of Burgundy. The absence of any description
of Floripe’s wedding dress contrasts with the first presentation of Floripe
as Saracen princess, where her costume was highly semiotically charged.
The need for external signs is past. By the time of her marriage, her sensual
appeal is clear. Her social position is now determined not by her birth or
accoutrements, but by her husband. Her power will henceforth filter down
to her via her husband, emanating from Charlemagne and the God of the
Christians. Charlemagne crowns Floripe queen of the land. Baland’s king­
dom will be ruled by Guy with Fierabras as Guy’s vassal. The holy relics
are restored to their rightful custodian, Charlemagne, concluding Floripe’s
function. She has found her place in society; her days of activity are over.

One can hardly expect so strong a female character to entirely escape
negative criticism. In Floripe’s case, however, the current of censure that
runs through the text can be seen as the enabling apparatus of Floripe’s activity. The text is peppered with stock misogynist comments of the sort Baland’s unsuspecting jailor makes to Floripe just before she murders him: “je me remembre que souvent par femme plusieurs prudhommes jay veus vergogniez et deceus” [I remember that I have often seen many men shamed and deceived by women]. Or the counsel Baland’s advisor, Sortibrant, gives him: “Toutefois, Sortibrant, qui savoient bien la mutabilité des femmes et la in[con]stance va dire a Balant/ Sire admiral ce n’est chose convenable que sur ce fait vous deviez fier en femme, a cause de leur mutabilité/ et vous en avez beaucoup oy de exemples et cogneu la verite comment pluiseurs ont este deceus par femmes” (fol. 51 v.) [All the same, Sortibrant, who well knew the mutability of women and their inconstancy, says to Balant: “Sire Admiral, it is not fitting that you trust to a woman on these matters because of their mutability, and you have heard many examples of it, and known in truth how many men have been deceived by women]. Or Lucafart’s offer to see what Floripe is doing with the prisoners, because “les femmes pour peu de fait sont changies de fait et de pensement” (fol. 53 r.) [a trifle causes women to change their deeds or thoughts].

Within the narrative these remarks are all true. The jailor, for example, is indeed about to be betrayed by Floripe. Baland would have done well to have distrusted his daughter as he was often advised and had every reason to do. Sortibrant and Lucafart are both right: Floripe has changed. She has diverged from the Saracen path and seeks to betray them. Received wisdom is corroborated by events, while Floripe herself is unscathed. The discourse that condemns her also protects her; the misogyny is undermined even as it is presented. In a text clearly conceived in black-and-white terms, only Saracens, never Christians, make such remarks. By allying herself with the Christians, Floripe is following the example of Fierabras, whose nobility is beyond question and who, as a male, is presumably not prey to mutability. Floripe, enlightened to the love of God by the love of Guy, sincerely intends to become a Christian as soon as conditions permit. Such circumstances render change desirable, deception permissible. The Saracens’ failure to understand this as a desideratum demonstrates their willful blindness to truth and goodness. Seen from the Saracen point of view, Floripe is indeed the proverbially mutable woman—predictably turncoat and untrustworthy. Seen from the
Christian point of view, she exhibits *in bonum* what woman is so often accused of *in malum*.20 Relying on the reader to know that *chrestiens on droit et payens ont tort*, the text, without denying ambient misogyny, has found a powerful way of encapsulating it so that, paradoxically, behavior condemned by misogynist voices redounds finally to the credit of the heroine.21

This paradoxical balance is fostered by setting the narrative so that Floripe remains territorially in Saracen lands until the very end, although she is living among Christians. Before her baptism, Floripe violated the letter of the law while living according to its spirit. The text supports such a reading, telling us that she was baptized "sans muer son nom ne changier" [without altering or changing her name], in contrast to the Saracens in so many other medieval stories who must change their name upon conversion.

Floripe exists between two worlds: her father's, which she rejects as wrong, and the Christian one, which she is eager to join but within which, as an unmarried woman owing formal allegiance to no Christian lord, she is subservient to no one. She escapes the usual marginality imposed on women by the accident of a narrative situation that marginalizes her politically and confessionally instead. As an outsider to Christian society, she is free to act. Here and elsewhere it is her marginality, which has nothing to do with the limitations of female gender, that is the key to Floripe's freedom. Floripe is not a marginal character in either Christian or Saracen society. As a Saracen she has a social position that she had presumably hitherto fulfilled as a princess or else her father would not have trusted her with the relics and the prisoners. At her final appearance, she has a social position as Guy's wife. Her activity is condoned only in the liminal space between two societies, where she is not clearly in or out of either. Floripe, moreover, seems in subtle ways to be surrounded by what, using the term slightly figuratively, I should like to call her *odor of sanctity* (see note 14). In using this expression I have in mind a set of things such as the odor attributed to her in the first description, the Edenic setting of her apartments, her custodianship of the holy relics, her control of good magic, and the connection with her brother Fierabras, Saint Florent de Roye. All this, too, suggests a marginality, albeit of a different sort, setting her above the ordinary run of mortals, and the concomitant possibility of special dispensations from normal limits on female behavior.
In *Fierabras*, Floripe is depicted largely outside domesticity, taking a decisive role in public events. I have suggested here some of the forces helping her to withstand the risks of her position. How great these risks are is illustrated by the earlier prose versions in which her actions, having been found excessive, were pruned. The risks of Floripe’s dynamism would seem to increase as time goes by, making the continued success of the enabling mechanisms discussed here all the more remarkable. *Fierabras* continued to be reprinted in chapbooks from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.

Before the invention of printing, manuscripts obviously circulated only in limited milieux; those with access to written materials were assumed to be right-thinking people, protected by their upbringing and education from the dangers of examples requiring interpretation and from the perils of mistaking bad examples for good ones. Within a hundred years or so of the invention of printing, censorship had become a serious political issue as the reading public broadened. The type of publishers who produced the later editions of *Fierabras* show that, from the end of the sixteenth century on, Floripe’s story was aimed at an even more popular public. Censorship was deemed vital to protect the *chose publique* from the potential for chaos and riot imputed to the masses. While literature was valued—or feared—as a running stream of models for human behavior, it is remarkable that Floripe survived uncensored. She did so, in large part, thanks to a situation that exploited her marginality, in which women’s guile could turn to military strategy and in which mutability meant finding Christian Truth. Once she is baptized and married, once the sacred relics and her father’s lands are restored to Christian control, the inherent contradictions and unstable conditions that allowed her activity are eliminated, and so is Floripe’s voice. The moral of the story—that is, the theoretical model that can be drawn from it—is appropriately ambivalent: woman’s social marginality can be the measure of her opportunity to transgress safely, the measure of her power and freedom.
APPENDIX: BAGNYON’S TEXT AND THE BIBLIOTHEQUE BLEUE

The following passages, taken from a mid-eighteenth-century edition of *Les Conquetes de Charlemagne* [Fierabras] (Troyes: Garnier, n.d.), will enable the reader to trace Floripe’s six-hundred-year career to its closing days.

1. (See p. 43.) “Quand Florippe l’entendit, elle lui dit d’un ton de colère: o mauvais glouton, me dois-tu faire ce refus, je te promets que je t’en ferai payer; et incontinent manda son chambellan, lequel lui donne un baton, et fit ouvrir la prison; Brutamont voulut s’y opposer, ce que voyant elle lui donna un si fort coup au visage qu’elle lui fit sortir les yeux de la tête. Et après elle le fit mourir, puis le jetta dans la prison sans qu’aucun payen ne le vit . . .” (66). [When Floripe heard him, she said, sounding angry: “O bad wretch, if you refuse me, I promise I will make you pay for it.” And immediately she called her chamberlain who gave her a stick and had the prison opened. Brutamont tried to stop her, seeing which she gave him so great a blow to the head that she made his eyes leave his head. And afterwards, she made him die and then threw him into the prison without any pagan seeing it.]

2. (See p. 44.) “Elle étoit habillée d’une robe de pourpre, qui étoit merveilleusement riche, et peinte d’étoiles de fin or, laquelle avoit telle vercu que celle qui l’avoic ne pouvoit etre empoisonnée d’herbe ni de venin. Florippe étoit si belle avec ses habillemens, que si une personne eut jeûné trois ou quatre jours, la voyant, étoit rassassie, et elle portoit un manteau qui avoit été fait en l’île de Colcos, ou Jason prit la toison d’or, comme on a trouvé par écrit en la destruction de Troies, lequel manteau étoit fait d’une face [sic: fée] et qui avoit si grande odeur, que c’étoit merveille. Parquoi de la beauté de cette demoiselle chacun en étoit ravi” (65). [She was dressed in a purple gown that was wondrously rich, and painted with solid gold stars, which had the power that the (female) person who had it could be poisoned neither by venom nor plants. Floripe was so lovely in these clothes that if a person had gone three or four days without eating, seeing her, he would have been satisfied. And she wore a cloak which had been made in the island of Colchis, where Jason got the Golden Fleece, as is written in the Destruction of Troye. This coat was made by a fairy, and smelled marvelously strong. Therefore, everyone was pleased by the beauty of the damsel.]
NOTES

1. Penny Schine Gold, in *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), explores the roles and images of woman, limiting her study to twelfth-century France (relevant to the prehistory of our subject, since that period produced the first version of *Fierabras*, therefore of Floripe). Gold, a thoughtful historian with impressive interdisciplinary grounding, declares that she came to the subject expecting to find “a negative view of women contemporary with increasing strictures on women’s experience” (xvi) and that in fact she found women are treated with ambivalence and given greater voice than she had supposed. Expecting little, she was pleasantly surprised, but the women Gold writes of almost never act independently, that is, beyond nurturing, advising, interceding—all subordinated functions.


3. On the important implications of this socially varied audience, see p. xx[14] below.


6. Bagnyon’s version was the basis of Caxton’s translation, cited in n. 5. Later French editions of roughly the same text are entitled *Fierabras* or *Les Conquestes de Charlemagne*. In researching the fortunes and vicissitudes of Bagnyon’s version, I have examined more than twenty such editions, about half of them clearly intended for a popular market (from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries).
7. *Fierabras* is the sequel to *La Destruction de Rome*, recounting the Saracen sack of Rome. The event in which Floripe saw Guy of Burgundy is itself contained in the extended fiction.

8. This and all subsequent citations from *Fierabras* are from Jean Bagyron's text (Geneva: Symon Jardin, 1478). All translations are my own.

9. The way other retellers of the story dealt with Floripe's recourse to violence suggests that she tested the limits of their social tolerance. The fourteenth-century prose version is more circumspect, showing greater deviance from the verse model than does Bagyron. Floripe delegates the violence of the jailor's death to her seneschal. He "ferit du baston sur la teste tel cop qu'il abatit mort en la place" [used the stick to deliver such a blow to his head that he struck him dead on the spot] (*Fierabras*, ed. Jean Miquet [Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1983] 82, para. 68). This version systematically diminishes Floripe's role, eliminating her initial portrait, describing her violence without gusto, and omitting both the second killing and the antifeminist remarks of the jailor. The prose redaction, composed by David Aubert for Philippe le Bon of Burgundy in 1458, also omits the portrait but does ascribe the personal violence to Floripe herself, although later, Aubert, too, removes the ladies from an active role in the battle from the tower (*Croniques et conquêtes de Charlemagne*, ed. Robert Guiette [Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1943], vol. 2, pt. 1). These variants suggest repeated difficulty in dealing with physical violence emanating from a woman.

10. Before her first appearance, she is briefly mentioned as a woman/object, a matrimonial bargaining chip offered by her brother, Fierabras. Fearing his honor may be wounded if he kills Olivier, who is much smaller than he and who was wounded before their contest began, Fierabras offers the promise of his beautiful sister in marriage if Olivier will embrace paganism and surrender. Given the strength of Floripe's will, it is fortunate that Olivier goes on instead to defeat Fierabras, who himself becomes not merely a Christian but a saint (Saint Florent de Roye).

11. *La Destruction de Troie* is Raoul Le Fevre's *Recueil des histoires de Troyes*, of 1463.

It is instructive to compare this initial portrait of Floripe with the Old French verse version to illustrate Bagyron's variations from his source, which gives a slightly more elaborated version of her clothing and then returns to dwell on the beauty of her breasts.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Vestue fu d'un paile galacien saffre;} \\
\text{La fée qui l'ot fait l'ot menue estelé} \\
\text{D'estoiles de fin or qui jetent grant clarté.} \\
\text{Çaint ot i. singladoire menuement ouvré;} \\
\end{align*}\]
Hons ne fame qui soit n'ara le poil mellé
Ne ja n'ert de venin ne d'erbe enpuisonné;
Se il avoit .iii. jours .iii. ou jeûné,
S'esgardast la çainture et l'anel noielé,
Si aroït il le cors et le cuer saoulé.
Caues avoit moutit ricles, de paile à or freté,
Si sauler furent rike, menu eskierkerë;
D'argent et de fin or estoient painturé.
D'un rice singlatum ot mantel affublé;
Une fée l'ouvrà par grant nobilitë,
En l'ille de Corcoi, dont on a mout parlé,
Là où Jason ala, là û fu endité,
Por l'ocoison d'or fin, ce dient li lettré;
Pour ce fu puis destruit toute la grant citë.
La pene estoit de sable, qui moutit flairoit souëf;
Ne vaut muguës ne mente à li un oef pelé.
Mout estoit la pucele sage et de grant biautë;
Petites mameletes, cors bien fait et molë,
Dures comme pumetes, blankes com flour.; de pre.

Fierabras, ed. A. Kroeber and G. Servois

[She was dressed in a yellow gown covered with solid
gold stars by the fairy who made it, and cinched with
a delicately worked belt which would protect man or
woman from poison. If he had not eaten for three
or four days, and looked at the belt and the ring,
his body and his heart would be filled. She had
elegant stockings, decorated with gold, and her shoes
were rich and finely worked with gold and silver and
designs. She had put on a rich coat worked by a most
noble fairy in the island of Colchis, well known,
there where Jason went to get the golden fleece, there
where he is celebrated as learned men say. This is
why the great city was destroyed. The bottom of the
mantle was black, and smelled sweet—as much as
lily of the valley or mint are better than a peeled
egg. The damsel was very wise and beautiful, small
breasts, her body well made and molded, hard as
little apples, white as flowers in the field.]
While nothing proves that this text, taken from a fourteenth-century manuscript of a poem undoubtedly first written earlier, is the specific precursor of Bagyng's version, it is clearly in the same tradition.

The description of Floripe, as it appeared six hundred years later in the Bibliothèque bleue, is reproduced in the appendix to this paper (p. 53).

Such protection, as also possessed by Oenone (Ovid Heroides 5:145–50), carries with it the implication that the possessor merits such skill by her virtue (which is assumed to be a sympathetic agent in the cure).

Medea was generally identified as a magician-witch in the Middle Ages. She is certainly treated as someone with quite dangerous magical powers in Raoul Lefèvre's popular fifteenth-century Histoire de Jason. The same author's Recueil de Troye is the source of the passing reference to Jason and the destruction of Troy in the description of Floripe's mantle, although the elements of the reference were already there from earlier sources as can be seen in the verse description cited on page 5. Medea as witch exemplifies the danger always seen as inherent in female power—that it may be turned to evil ends. The argument below is that just this threat, turned back on itself, becomes the agent of Floripe's freedom.

Sweet odors are often described as emanations from holy objects or the living or dead bodies of holy persons. Carolyn Walker Bynum, Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), notes that the phenomenon is largely feminine and gives many examples of holy women whose breath is remarkably sweet, whose fingers oozed sweet oils, or whose bodies in corruption smelled delightfully sweet. Of Colette of Corbie (died 1433), for example, the hagiographer tells us "that both in life and in death her body gave off only sweet odors" (138). Late in the history of the Church (under Benedict XIV) such odors were officially recognized as a sign of saintliness, but the notion clearly existed in the Middle Ages and is preserved still in both French and English by the expression odor of sanctity. In Fierabras such a sweet holy smell is evoked as well with each of the appearances of the Crown of Thorns, sometimes loosely rationalized by having it grow miraculous flowers. Flowers bring us finally to Floripe's name (in earlier versions, Floripas), which Mandach (72) interprets as "passe-fleur," suggesting pleasant odors by onomastics.

I do not mean to claim a masculine-inscribed audience on the evidence of grammar alone. The French of this period is not absolute in demanding pronominal gender distinctions, but they do exist. And if this use of the masculine is accidental, it must be granted that it is so at a telling moment.

Lust is felt by the Christians as well although, unlike the evil Saracen, they control their desire. Duke Naimes, the oldest and most prudent of Charlemagne's
Peers, remarks that he could love Floripe on sight at a moment when his mind ought to be on strategies of escape. Looking at her at the moment of her baptism, we are told that Charlemagne, old and wise as he is, lusts. Women are dangerous. Such concupiscence was understood as being part of the human (= male) condition: "Tel concupiscence n’est pas peché en soy si on n’y consent. . . . Elle procede de notre nature corrompu d’Adam" [Such concupiscence is not a sin in itself if one does not give way to it. . . . It procedes from our fallen nature, from Adam] (F. I. Benedicti, _La somme des pechez et le remede d’iceux_ [Paris: Claude Chappelet, 1601], 205).

17. The Council of Nicea, in the seventh century, forbade men to be present at a woman’s baptism, or women at a man’s, precisely because the subject was unclothed. See Jean Claude Boulogne, _Histoire de la pudeur_ (Paris: Hachette, 1987), who also cites, page 27, the chanson de geste _Gaufrey_ in which the baptism of a beautiful Arab maiden sets the elderly Doon de Mayence all atremble with desire.

18. Here, too, the fourteenth-century prose version is more circumspect, avoiding all actual description, although it cannot deal with a scene involving a naked female without conveying a strong sense of sexuality: "Estoit la plus belle creature que oncques homme eust veue . A ce jout elle fut moult desiree de plusieurs. Le roy la tint, Reyniez et le duc Tierry d’Ardaine, car le roy Charlemaigne vouloit qui n’y eust que vieulx a la tenit et fit ouster les jeunes. Et encore, nonobstant que les trois fussent bien vieulx, sy rioient ilz et avoient grant plaisir de la voyr ainsi toute nue, tant estoit belle’’ [She was the most beautiful creature ever seen by man. On that day she was greatly desired by many. The king presented her at the fount, with Regnier and Duke Thierry, for King Charlemagne wished that only old men be there and had the young ones removed. And still, even though those three were quite old, they laughed and took great pleasure in seeing her thus naked, so beautiful was she] (_Fierabras_, Jean Miquet, 170).

19. In each of these declarations of misogyny, the Old French version differs from Bagnyon’s text by adding _exempla_ in which other women’s behavior bore out the predictions being made. Bagnyon discarded this procedure perhaps in the interests of a more linear narrative. The result is a text in which praise and blame are directed at a single person.

20. Ian Maclean, in _The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 7, 16, notes scholastic notions of female behavior that present a strong double view, that is, when she is good she is very very good, and when she is bad, she is terrible. The Saracen and Christian views of Floripe invite such a reading, and as such, the text may be exploiting a consequence implicit in her sex.
21. In contrast, Baland, her father, displays masculine steadfastness but fails to earn the reader's admiration for it. When captured by Charlemagne, he refuses to depart from his course of error in a shocking display of brutish stubbornness that costs Baland not only this life but eternal life as well.

22. When Jean Bagnyon wrote his prose version of *Fierabras* in the 1470s the work was dedicated to Henri Bolomier, of Lausanne, Canon of the cathedral of Geneva, an educated man. A manuscript of Bagnyon's *Fierabras* contemporary with the author is clearly a luxury product. Many copies can be shown to have been in noble libraries. By the eighteenth century this was probably because of an antiquarian interest in books as collectors items, not books to be read. But earlier, such records of ownership as there are suggest that the audience for which Bagnyon wrote, the educated upper bourgeoisie and nobles, defined its readers for the next century or more.

23. To take only one example, very briefly, Toinette, in Molière's *Malade imaginaire*, is in a position with respect to Argan's bourgeois household analogous to Floripe's relation to the Christians: she can be a member of the family in spirit only. Toinette, on whose inventions the happy outcome depends, demonstrates a freedom of speech and action otherwise associated with male comic characters, for example, Sganarelle. Her mock doctor, wishing to remove an eye or an arm is as nonnurturing as the real (male) doctor in the play.
Gaspara Stampa’s Poetry for Performance

by

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DURING THE MID-SIXTEENTH century in Italy, when a remarkable number of women joined in the production of poetry, one of the channels open to their pursuit of intellectual life and fame was the Venetian salon. There music and poetry mingled as poems were frequently sung or recited before an audience rather than read privately in silence. The poetry of Gaspara Stampa was produced for this milieu. Published in 1554, a year after her death, her collection of more than three hundred poems has been approached in two main ways: as the autobiographical self-expression of a passionate woman and more recently as the work of a writer well assimilated into contemporary literary circles. Scholars in the last twenty years, who take her literary skill and ambition seriously, emphasize Stampa’s use of the dominant male poetic traditions to subvert male values and to empower the female creator despite her apparent self-abasement.1 A further enriched appreciation of her work may come from exploring its social and performative contexts, for Stampa was a performer as well as a poet, and indeed a performer of poetry.

Stampa was famous as a singer and had been trained in music by Perissone Cambio, a composer personally associated with Cipriano de Rore and Adrian Willaert, the major composers in mid-sixteenth-century Venice. She performed both in her own family’s salon and in that of Domenico Venier, a patrician who gathered a mix of gentlemen, musicians,
and men of letters that, overlapping with the Stampa circle, included the literati Sperone Speroni and Ludovico Dolce, Girolamo Parabosco (writer, composer, and organist at St. Mark’s), and Girolamo Molino (aristocrat, poet, and music enthusiast). As Martha Feldman observes in her recent dissertation, it was a social community that must have fostered exchange between music and literature. Parabosco, for example, wrote his own madrigals, both text and music, and performed them for his friends. Parabosco praises Stampa for both her poetic and musical abilities in one of his Lettere amorose: “chi mai sì soavi e dolci parole ascoltò? chi mai sentì più alti concetti? che dirò io di quell’angelica voce, che qualora percuote l’aria de’ suoi divini accenti, fa tale e sì dolce armonia, che... infonde spirito e vita nelle più fredde pietre, facendole per soverchia dolcezza lacrimare?” [Who ever heard such delightful and sweet words? Who ever heard more lofty conceits? What shall I say of that angelic voice, which, whenever it strikes the air with its divine accents, makes such sweet harmony that... it pours spirit and life into the coldest stones, making them weep for excessive sweetness?]. Orazio Brunetto, who repeatedly sought admission to Stampa’s salon, writes of a common acquaintance who never rereads Petrarch’s “Chiare, fresche et dolci acque” (no. 126) without hearing in his mind Stampa’s musical rendition of it. Torquato Tasso, Girolamo Molino, Giorgio Benzone, and others similarly emphasized her singing in their poems of praise for her. Perissone dedicated to her his Primo libro dei madrigali a quattro voci “Perché si sa bene homai, e non pure in questa felice città, ma quasi in ogni parte, niuna donna al mondo amar più la musica di quello che fate voi, né altra più raramente possederla” [Because it is well known by now, and not in this happy city alone but almost everywhere, that no woman in the world loves music more than you, nor is any other more musical].

Besides these praises from others, Stampa herself frequently describes her own poetic activities as a combination of writing and singing:

cosi vorrei aver concetti e detti
 e parole a tant’opra appropriate,
 sì che fosser da me scritte e cantate,
 e fatte cónte a mille alti intelletti.

(no. 16)
[Thus I would wish to have conceits and phrases and words befitting such work, so that they could be by me written and sung and made known to a thousand lofty intellects.]

... i lumi alti e sereni
di cui conven che sempre scriva e canti.
(no. 17)

[... the lofty and serene lights (eyes) of which I must always write and sing.]

che 'n voci e 'n carte spesso accuso e lodo.
(no. 27)

[that in voice and on paper I often accuse and praise.]

come volete...
con questa forza stanca e così frale
i' dica in vive voci, o scriva in carte?
(no. 39)

[how do you want... that with this strength so weary and frail I speak in living voice or write on paper?]

... la fiamma mia spietata e ria,
che per sfogar talor descrivo e canto.
(no. 44)

[... my pitiless and cruel flame, which to unburden I sometimes write and sing.]

fede d'esser cantata in mille carte.
(no. 68)

[a faith to be sung on a thousand pages.]
qual potrà ingegno chiaro,  
'quant’io debbo e vorrei, giamai lodarte  

*in vive voci o 'n carte?*  
Io per me farò fede,  
dovunque esser potrà *mia voce udita.*  

(no. 233)

[wat bright intellect will ever be able, as  
much as I should and want, to praise you *in*  
*living voice or on paper? For my part, I will*  
bear witness wherever *my voice can be heard.*]

ciò ch’io *scrisi e cantai ...*  

(no. 266)

[what I *wrote and sang ...*]

This incomplete set of examples shows how pervasive in her poetry is the  
dual nature of her work. Although poets frequently used the word *sing*  
as a metaphor for writing poetry, Stampa’s combination of “sing and  
write” calls attention to the separate activities of each, a distinction fur­
ther emphasized by the opposition between “*vive voci*” [living voices]  
and “*carte*” [papers].

How did Stampa perform her poetry and that of Petrarch and others?  
Luigi Pompilj, not generally a reliable source, imagines her singing together  
with her sister, Perissone, and other friends, a five-part madrigal. One  
poem seems to suggest its own performance by several voices:

*Ninfe, che d’Adria i più riposti guadi  
sacre abitate, ...*  

canti l’una di voi, l’altra risponda.  

(no. 278)

[Sacred nymphs who inhabit the most  
sheltered fords, ... one of you sing  
and the other respond.]
However, imaginative scenes featuring singing with others are not unusual in poetry, and no polyphonic settings of Stampà’s verse exist from her lifetime. Other scholars assume that she sang solo, accompanying herself on the lute or viol.11 For example, Feldman plausibly suggests that Stampà used the common technique, called recitarcantando, of applying a few adaptable phrases of melody to the verses of various poems.12 Books of simple melodies for the singing of sonnets and capitoli were available in print for general use and were quite popular.13 The simplicity and frequent repetition of the musical phrases suggest that the singer may have been expected to vary and ornament them herself. Self-accompaniment would enhance the singer’s control and thus her freedom to render the lines expressively according to the words being sung.14 The lack of existing music composed specifically for Stampà’s poetry, together with Stampà’s almost total concentration on the poetic forms of sonnet and capitolo, for which such generalized melodies were available, supports the notion that she used this kind of pre-composed “aria.” However, since Perissone dedicated to her his book of madrigals, she could undoubtedly perform that sort of singing in parts as well.

Actually, although Perissone published some of his music together with that of Cipriano de Rore, one of the foremost polyphonic composers of the time, Perissone wrote his four-part madrigals in a more conservative, homophonic style, which aided in understanding the text. As Feldman explains, “Perissone’s settings . . . may be taken as written versions of the improvised singing to the lute practiced by Stampà and female counterparts like Franceschina Bellamano within the receptive salon of Venier.”15 Molino, another member of their circle, was enthusiastic about the older simpler, frottola songs, which could easily be rendered by a soloist with a lute; and one of Stampà’s poems (no. 261) depicts Molino himself singing in that manner. Doni’s Dialogo della musica, describing the conversation and music-making among a group of people that includes Perissone and Parabosco, mixes part-songs, for which both music and text are printed, and texts, recited solo with a viuola or lira, for which Doni does not include the music.16 So too the Stampà and Venier salons may well have offered a mix of those two kinds of music.

The sixteenth century was a time when, through the development of the madrigal, music and poetry drew especially close to each other. Petrarch was known to have sung his own poetry, possibly to melodies
of his own devising; and his texts had been set to music by composers contemporary with him, such as Jacopo da Bologna. The revival of Petrarch as the major poetic model in the sixteenth century was paralleled by the notion that such poetry should be set to music and sung.\textsuperscript{17} Whereas many poets’ works are now studied without any reference to music, in their own time these poets themselves were associated with musicians who set their poems to music. Stylistic norms were established with regard not only to literary models but also to developing musical tastes, and the same people, as in the case of the Venier salon, were often involved in both arts.

Stampa’s poetry addressed itself to the same audience that her singing did. The lines from no. 16, previously quoted, make clear reference to the importance of an audience, defined there as intellectuals. Other of her poems describe this audience, that is, the salon society, as “quell’illustre e nobil compagnia” [no. 30; that illustrious and noble company], “cavalier onorati” [no. 242; honored knights], “schiera gentil” [no. 268; a well-born crowd]. Salon life made musical and literary talents a means to social interaction with the upper class. Sixteenth-century Venice saw the progressive separation of the commercial class from the nobility. Nobles turned away from mercantile involvements toward land investments, while the merchants, who had previously mingled freely with the nobles, felt themselves increasingly scorned by them and found themselves losing social ground. Merchants tried to enhance their prestige by investing in art: not only in fancy homes and portraits of themselves and their families, but also in the musical skills that might permit them to maintain their ties with the nobility.\textsuperscript{18} Stampa’s family encouraged her musical education; and her talented celebration of the aristocratic object of her devotion (Count Collalto) gave her, the daughter of a merchant, the continued access she desired to noble society.

Stampa is quite open in many of her poems, starting with the very first, about her desire to use both poetry and song to raise her social status. Parodying Petrarch’s \textit{Rime} no. 1, Stampa writes in her own no. 1,

\begin{quote}
\emph{gloria, non che perdon, de' miei lamenti spero trovar fra le ben nate genti.}
\end{quote}

[Glory, not only pardon, for my laments I hope to find among the well-born.]
and indulges in the fantasy that some well-born woman, envious of her lofty love-object, passion, and poetic ability, will say,

Deh, perché tant’amor, tanta fortuna per sì nobil signor a me non venne, ch’anch’io n’andrei con tanta donna a paro?

[Oh, why did such love, such fortune, for so noble a lord not come to me, that I too might go as equal with such a lady?]^{19}

No. 157 complains of unrequited love while simultaneously acknowledging the social aims of her poetry:

a che scrivendo procacciarmi onore . . . ?

[what for by writing to pursue honor for myself . . . ?]

With similar candor, Stampa follows her epistolary poems to the King and Queen of France with one to the established poet Alamanni, saying:

Tu, che traesti dal natio paese le nostre muse tutte ed Elicona là dove regge il Rodano e la Sona il maggior re che viva e ’l più cortese, ed or con voi son tutte ad una intese insieme col gran figlio di Latona a celebrar quella real corona, e le sue tante e gloriose imprese, chiaro Alamanni, io vorrei ben anch’io venir in parte di cotanto onore, e lodar lui con voi e poi voi anco.

(no. 248)

[You, who drew all our muses and Helicon from your native land to where the greatest
and most courteous king reigns the Rhone and the Saone, and now they (muses) are all as one intent with you, together with the great son of Latona, to celebrate that royal crown and its many and glorious enterprises; famous Alamanni, I very much wish that I too could come to a place of such honor, both to praise him with you and then to praise you too."

This expresses the wish to share with Alamanni an audience that is not only noble but royal, and to do so not just through the sending of poems as letters but through her actual presence to the audience. So, too, no. 269 prays for the welfare of the more local cultured leisure society and for her own inclusion in it:

Amica, dolce ed onorata schiera,
schiera di cortesia e d'onestade,
soggiorno di valore e di beltade,  
di diporti e di grazie madre vera,  
    io prego Amor e'l ciel ch'unita, intera  
ti conservi in felice e lunga etade,  
e questi giochi e questa libertade  
veggan tardi, o non mai, l'ultima sera.

A me si dia per grazia di gioire  
con lei molt'anni e con la fiamma mia,  
che sovra ii ciel mi fa superba gire.

[Friendly, sweet and honored crowd, crowd of courtesy and honesty, sojourn of valor and beauty, true mother of entertainments and of graces, I pray Love and heaven that they may preserve you united, whole, in happy and long age, and that these games and this liberty may see late or never its last evening. . . . To me may it be granted by grace to rejoice with you for many years, and with my flame which makes me go proudly above the heavens.]
The emphasis on social courtesy and entertainments—lines 7 and 8 suggest an endless series of evening gatherings—overshadows the brief mention of “valore.” Her count’s role in the wars often kept him away from her and excluded any participation on her part; only the pastimes of the leisured afforded her entry. Their “libertade” is also hers. Her “fiamma” raises her to their proud heights, which are likened to the heavens (“sovra il ciel”), as if she were being admitted to the circle of the blessed. Thus the prayer form becomes especially appropriate; continued social success is her salvation.

Because her aim is social self-enhancement, it is important to her to have an audience; she writes not just as a form of private self-expression but as a public performance that will bring her attention and praise. We have seen this already in no. 16 (“e fatte cōnte a mille alti intelletti”). So, too, other poems declare:

Io per me sola a dimostrar ne vengo
quanto l’amo ad ognun, quanto lo còlo.
(no. 15)

[I by myself alone come to demonstrate how much I love him to everyone, how much I adore him.]^{20}

e piango ch’atta a pinger non mi sento
al mondo il mio bel sol quanto devria.
(no. 58)

[and I weep that I do not feel myself adequate to paint to the world my fair sun as well as I should.]

... io la divolgo, e non la celo,
e non mi pento, anzi glorio e gioisco.
(no. 155)

[I reveal it, and I don’t conceal it, and I do not repent of it, but rather glory and rejoice in it.]
Her prefatory letter to her beloved Count Collalto, whose very name ("high hill") is used in her poems to link the poetic and social heights to which she aspires, offers her poems to him not as a lover's complaint or demand but as entertainment and praise that can do her good even if her love is never requited:

Né pensi V. S. ch’io abbia ciò fatto per farla conoscente della sua crudeltà, perché crudeltà non si può dire, dove non è obbligo, né per contristarnela; ma per farla più tosto conoscente della sua grandezza ed allegrarla . . . Poi che tormentando ancora giovì e fai frutto

[And do not think, your lordship, that I have done this to make you recognize your cruelty, for it cannot be called cruelty where there is no obligation, nor to make you sad about it; but rather to make you aware of your greatness and to gladden you . . . since even by tormenting me you still help me and do me good.]

In fact, since the count was absent much of the time, her audience is less her lover than the social circle that is allowed to "overhear" her confessions and complaints. It is with this audience that her suffering for the heartless count brings her pleasures and advantages. Although the cruel and absent beloved is an obvious borrowing from the fashionable model of Petrarch's verse, Petrarch's flight from company into solitude is reversed in her seeking out a large and noble audience for her complaint.

Stampa's intent to be a successful entertainer who can enjoy the pleasures of upper-class society helps to explain the combination of two qualities in her verse that might, at first glance, seem contrary: one is the tragic tone and theme of many of her poems, the other is her wit. Scholars who see Stampa as a tragic poet of unrequited passion completely ignore the element of wit. Both characteristics actually contribute to her intent, for reasons that also link her efforts with those of contemporary composers.

Poetry and music were undergoing a similar development at this time: a separation of stylistic levels aimed at raising the general status of
the art. Pietro Bembo and his disciples, such as Lodovico Dolce in the Venier salon, emphasized the clean separation of stylistic levels and found reinforcement in the current enthusiasm for Aristotle’s Poetics. A tragic tone and subject indicated the “high” style associated with upper-class characters, while comedy suggested a more plebeian ambience. Along with this separation of themes and moods came a linguistic distinction. Bembo’s advocacy of a noble Italian language to replace the various Italian dialects gave rise to a consciousness of choice between writing seriously and idealistically in the sweet elegant style or more comically or realistically in dialect. Similarly in music the frottola was giving way on one hand to the villanesca or villanella, in a simpler, popularizing style and with texts usually in dialect, and on the other hand to the madrigal, with its texts in the purer Italian recommended by Bembo and drawn most frequently from the same authors revered by the literati: Petrarch and Ariosto. According to Alfred Einstein, “The transition to a more ‘literary’ form [of the madrigal] begins between 1530 and 1540 and continues at a steadily accelerating pace.”

Here again mood shares in the distinction of social levels, and composers after 1540 increasingly took as their texts the more pathetic and spiritualized poems of Petrarch on Laura’s death rather than the amatory poems on her life, which had previously been more popular. From Ariosto, it was the dramatic laments of abandoned or jealous lovers that were most frequently set to music. In the 1540s and 1550s Venetian composers were for the first time setting to music Petrarch’s canzone to the Virgin Mary and his spiritual sonnets of repentance: “Padre del ciel, dopo i perduti giorni” (no. 62) and “I’ vo piangendo i miei passati tempi” (no. 365), sonnets that provided a model for some of Stamp a’s own poems. Rore’s setting of the canzone to the Virgin as a cycle of eight madrigals emphasizes the poet’s anguished sorrow. Feldman cites a poetic suggestion by Dolce that terms of grief and joy be combined in Petrarchan oxymoron so as to moderate emotional extremes by finding a common “sweetness” in both. Thus Dolce emphasized the aesthetic pleasure of a sweetened pathos. But interest in the aesthetic sweetness of tragic emotions had begun even earlier. Albercht Dürer, attending a concert in Venice, noted that the players themselves were moved to tears. “This Venetian madrigal,” writes
James Haar, referring especially to the circle around Willaert and Rore, "is characterized by seriousness of musical language corresponding to the texts, which include some of Petrarch's most melancholy and contemplative sonnets." The association of tragedy with high literariness made the musicians' search for affective pieces and for respected literary texts converge.

Willaert, popular in the salons as a writer of madrigals and the central figure in Venetian music of Stampa's time, was influential in breaking from the homophonic or chordal harmonies of earlier composition to a more polyphonic use of voices that shared with Petrarchan poetry the fracturing of the singing persona into contrasting parts. This fractured self both expressed and required a tragic stance. Even more than Willaert, Feldman says, "Rore drew from among the darkest and most tumultuous" of Petrarch's poems, and Rore's music exploited the dramatic potential of the texts he selected, with dissonances, jagged rhythms, and widely ranging voices, paving the way for operatic developments. The aesthetic pleasure in contrasts encouraged the construction of a self torn by unresolvable conflicts of feeling. A happy lover simply did not offer suitable material to demonstrate the poet's wit or the composer's skill, and merry material was more likely to be set as a villanella. Stampa's verses, full of dramatic emotion, are mentioned by Einstein as an example of the "mannerist" poetry that attracted composers "for the clash of the conflicting feelings." She wrote to suit the converging currents both of poetic fashion and of contemporary musical taste.

Some of Stampa's poems—especially the more pastoral ones—even present themselves as performances. No. 278 ("Ninfe . . . ") mentioned above is one example; another is no. 201, of which the octave is a speech for which the sestet provides the setting:

—È questa quella viva e salda fede, che prometevi a la tua pastorella, 

Così l'afflitta e misera Anassilla 
lungo i bei lidi d'Adria iva chiamando 
il suo pastor, da cui 'l ciel dipartilla; 
e l'acque e l'aure, dolce risonando.
[Is this that lively and solid faith which you promised to your shepherdess . . .
So the afflicted and wretched Anassilla along the fair shores of the Adriatic was calling her shepherd, from whom heaven had parted her; and the waters and breezes were sweetly resounding.]

A similar self-staging occurs in other poems: no. 173, “Cantate meco, Progne e Filomena” [Sing with me, Procne and Filomena]; and the capitolo, no. 244, in which the first nine lines set the scene of a “donna, avendo lontano il suo signore” [lady with her lord far away] releasing her burning desires by addressing the Adriatic shores along which she paces, while the following lines present her words. In no. 59, verbal echoes of the Vergilian Dido imply that Stampa is taking on another recognizable role that simultaneously suits her own case and remains an enacted other. The witty turn at the end of sonnet no. 82 (“Ciò si comporta, Amor, ne la tua scola?” [Is this tolerated, Love, in your school?])—along with the explicit staging at the beginning when Anassilla is lamenting by the shore (“Qui, dove avien che ’l nostro mar ristagne,”)—clearly marks a separation of poet from character, whom she even refers to in the third person while directly addressing the count (“E si l’assenzia e ’l poco amor v’invola / la memoria di lei, la vostra fede, / che pur non le scrivete una parola” [And absence and slightness of love so steal from you the memory of her and of your promise, that you do not even write her one word]). Thus, the speaker becomes an interceder between Anassilla and her beloved.

The role-acting could not be more self-conscious here; but I would argue that it is similarly self-conscious even in the many poems whose theatricality is less obvious. More than half the poems in the Rime d’Amore section are directly addressed (the Rime varie, frequently epistolary, are almost all to specific persons): the greatest number to the count, whether present or absent; the second greatest number often to Amore; the third greatest number to a generalized audience (“voi chi . . .,” “donne,” etc.); and many others to the landscape or other objects such as eyes, tears, the night, a dream, and her soul. These direct addresses often present small dramatic scenes, implying at
times a larger context of action and reaction, of which we are glimpsing only a part:

S'io 'l dissi mai, signor, che mi sia tolto l'arder per voi, com'ardo in fiamma viva.

[no. 128; If I ever said it, lord, let my burning for you, as I burn in living flame, be taken from me.]

Certo fate gran toto a la mia fede, conte, sovra ogni fé candida e pura, a dir che 'n Francia è più salda e più dura la fé di quelle donne a chi lor crede.

[no. 180; Certainly you do great wrong to my faith, count, above every faith white and pure, to say that in France the faith of those ladies is more solid and sure to one who believes them.]

Here we are aware of Stampa's responding to something said previously by the count, as if a dialogue were in progress; but only one of the actors is before us. In other cases we are made aware of a context of actions, such as the count's departure again for the wars despite a number of poetic pleas that he remain in Venice:

Deh lasciate, signor, le maggior cure d'ir procacciando in questa età fiorita con fatiche e periglio de la vita alti pregi, alti onori, alte venture;

[no. 158; Oh, leave off, lord, the greater cares of going, in this flowering age, with troubles and dangers to your life, in pursuit of lofty prizes, lofty honors, lofty fortunes.]

Signor, ite felice . . .

[no. 199; Lord, go and be happy . . . . ]36
Or we hear Stampa's challenges to her tormentor Love, and her mockery of his powers:

Straziami, Amor, se sai, dammi tormento,

[no. 154; Tear me apart, Love, if you know how, torment me].

Che bella lode, Amor, che ricche spoglie
avrai d'una infiammata giovinetta

[no. 168; What fine praise, Love, what rich spoils you will have of an inflamed young girl].

Even her addresses to herself can be dramatic, as in the pair of sonnets nos. 88–89, beginning: "Lassa, chi turba la mia lunga pace?" [Alas, who disturbs my long peace?] and "Ma che, sciocca, dich'io? perché vaneggio?" [But what, fool, am I saying? Why do I rave?]. In other words, Stampa constructs herself as someone on stage, performing drama. She addresses either fellow characters (the count, Amore) or members of the audience: "Chi porterà le mie giuste querele / al mio signor . . . ?" [no. 67; Who will bear my just complaints to my lord?] "Piangete, donne" [no. 86; Weep, ladies]. If she sang these particular poems, the music would make these speeches even more operatic and theatrical. Luigi Malagoli takes Stampa as the prime representative of a new dramatic sensibility in style approaching the baroque. We would do well, however, to remember that for Stampa, poetry, when it was not epistolary, was potentially designed for actual performance; that even her written verse was addressed to the same people who had seen her perform; and that being taken seriously as a performer contributed to the acceptance of her public voice as a poet.

Stampa employs an entertaining wit in dramatic exaggerations and cleverly stated emotional paradoxes. But there is wit, too, in the whole stance of a tragic poet’s adoring from afar her social superior while entertaining him and his friends with her complaints. Within Parabosco’s Diporti, a poem (much like some of Stampa’s poems) on how only the hope of shortly dying keeps the unhappy lover alive in the absence of his
beloved is received with admiration for its wit rather than with sympathy for the lover’s pain. Similarly in Doni’s Dialogo dell musica, Parabosco’s recitation of a sonnet to the divine eyes of his beloved elicits laughter. The following poem by Stampa (no. 142) provides an example of various types of wit: dramatic scene-playing, humorously exaggerated use of a classical motif, and the stark contrasts of theme and feeling (Ercol or Sansone/giovane e donna; giorni/anno; valor/inganno; her enemy is her only defense.)

Rimandatemi il cor, empio tiranno,  
ch’ a si gran torto avete ed istraziate,  
e di lui e di me quel proprio fate,  
che le tigre e i leon di cerva fanno.  

Son passati otto giorni, a me un anno,  
ch’io non ho vostre lettere od imbasciate,  
contro le fè che voi m’avete date,  
o fonte di valor, conte, e d’inganno.  

Credete ch’io sia Ercol o Sansone  
a poter sostener tanto dolore,  
giovane e donna e fuor d’ogni ragione,  
massime essendo qui senza ’l mio core  
e senza voi a mia difensione,  
onde mi suol venir forza e vigore?  

[Send back my heart, cruel tyrant, which with such great wrong you possess and tear apart, and you do with it and with me just what tigers and lions do with a deer. Eight days have passed, to me a year, that I have had no letter or message from you, against the promise which you gave me, oh fount of valor, count, and of deceit. Do you believe that I am Hercules or Samson to be able to sustain such pain, I who am young and a woman and without any reason (or right), especially as I am here without my heart and without you to defend me, from whom is wont to come my strength and force?]
The shift from tyrants, lions, and tigers to eight days without receiving a letter is surely humorous, as is the wonderful twist—enhanced by internal rhyme—in line 8. The final paradoxical conceit, that her defense comes from her enemy, must have elicited the same type of admiration as was elicited by Parabosco’s lover who was preserved by the hope of death. This poem’s attraction is the detached entertainment it can draw from an engaged, passionate unhappiness. Again we are dealing with a divided self.

Stampa also indulges in wordplay on people’s names. Poem no. 252, for example, gives us two different meanings for conte within a pair of rhyming lines:

vi pregherei che ’l valor e ’l bel volto  
e l’altrre grazie del mio chiaro conte  
a la futura età faceste cònte.

[I would pray you that the valor and handsome face and other graces of my illustrious count you make known to future ages.]

In these lines, the very identity of her “count” is made to imply her “re-counting” of his praises and his worthiness to be widely known. Similarly, her sonnet to Speroni (no. 253) opens with a pun on his name:

Speron ch’a l’opre chiare ed onorate  
spronate ognun . . .

[Speron, you who spur on everyone to illustrious and honored works . . .]

This sort of wit, which may seem frivolous and was certainly not unique to her, imitates Petrarch’s games with the variations of “Laura” and enhances the sense of Stampa’s professional seriousness through its display of technical skill. Thus wit, as a demonstration of artistic control, was seen as appropriate even to a tragic complaint that one was dying of love; for both wit and pathos raised the social level of the verse. It was not the sentiment that was taken seriously, but the artistry.
While the men around her could at times be completely playful—Parabosco, for example, in his outrageous love letters, or Perissone in his *villanesche*—Stampa had reason to avoid the low style despite her desire to entertain. Singing was an ambiguous social talent, for while it permitted an upward career, it was also associated with the seductions of the courtesan. Like Stampa, the courtesans Tullia d’Aragona and Veronica Franco played instruments and had a good knowledge of music; and Pietro Bembo wrote to discourage his own daughter from learning an instrument, “che il sonare è cosa da donna vana e leggiera. E io vorrei che tu fossi la più grave e la più casta e pudica donna che viva” [For playing music is a matter for a light and loose woman. And I want you to be the most serious and chaste and modest woman alive]. Just as Veronica Franco—who, like Stampa, attended the Venier salon as well as holding her own salon—had elevated her status and earnings by a display of costly furnishings and clothing, so Stampa, whose status as courtesan has been disputed but seems probable enough, needed to enhance her social value by adopting only the higher and more correct style. Her emphasis on her own fidelity, despite her torments and her lover’s cruelties, similarly ennobles her self-presentation. A socially less admirable role is displaced by the stance of an innocent, faithful, and tragic victim, whose continuing praise of the noble object of her loyal passion increases her social worth by its very persistence. The celebration and adornment of her own *fede* becomes indistinguishable from the celebration of her lover: “fate fede a colui de la mia fede, / che ’n tante carte omai celebro ed orno” [no. 23; Give him credence of my faith, which (or whom) in so many pages by now I celebrate and adorn].

Stampa’s personal aims coincided with the increasing participation of women not only in writing poetry but also in composing and performing music and with their increasing professionalization as musicians. The women who in 1580 formed the first female group of professional musicians at the court of Ferrara included a merchant’s daughter, as was Stampa. Even by the 1560s and 1570s, women of humble origins had risen to international stardom as performers. Stampa was certainly aware of the new possibilities for women’s cultural participation afforded by the life of the salons. It has even been suggested that Stampa’s family encouraged her musical training with the intent of directing her toward a position as entertainer in a court, or at least toward the patronage of a patrician.
At the same time, Vittoria Colonna had recently opened the way for women to publish their own verse. Being taken seriously as a woman of artistic ability, therefore, was a major concern for Stampa, one that she demonstrated repeatedly in self-deprecating references to her own sex while she expressed the hope that talent, both poetic and musical, would allow her to rise above the usual limits.49

Considering Stampa’s poetry as the work of a woman who sang poems before an audience provides us with important new insights into her work. What might seem like hackneyed metaphors of the poet’s singing come alive as references to real musical performance enhanced by her construction of a dramatic persona. Her aim was not only literary immortality on paper but also direct sensual and aesthetic appeal to the audience present before her. Finally, understanding that Stampa was a performer of poetry helps her combination of entertaining wit and tragic pose become both more apparent and more understandable. Aware of the overlapping aspirations of women, merchants, musicians, and poets in mid-sixteenth-century Venice, we may find that the aspects of social performance in Stampa’s work help us appreciate why she wrote the way she did.

NOTES


“chi compone i canti, Parabosco; chi fa versi, Parabosco; chi suona, chi ha mille virtù, Parabosco” [who composes the songs, Parabosco; who writes the verses, Parabosco; who plays, who has a thousand virtues, Parabosco]. Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.


6. Abdelkader Salza includes these poems and others about Stampa in his edition of the Rime of Veronica Franco and Gaspara Stampa (Bari: Laterza, 1913), 190-94. Molino’s sonnet ends: “Nuova sirena / poggii cantando un colle alto, ed in cima / fe’l verde eterno, e l’aria ognor serena” [A new siren, singing, climbed the high hill and on its summit made the green eternal and the air always serene].


8. Emphasis added.

9. The only mythical figure to whom she twice compares herself (no. 124 and no. 152) is Echo, reduced by her unrequited love to a voice with a name:

che, quasi ad Eco imagine simile,
di donna serbò sol la voce e l’nome.
(no. 152)

[who, almost the image of Echo,
retained only the voice and name of
a woman.]

Walter Binni, Critici e poeti dal Cinquecento al Novecento, 3d ed. (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1969), 3-16, is the critic who most emphasizes the musicality of Stampa’s verse, while associating that quality with superficiality as a poetry of “piacevolezza.” Musicality in this sense, however, does not imply the presence of actual music but refers to the harmonious flow of the lines of verse.

13. The most famous of these were the series of volumes published in Venice by Petrucci in the early 1500s.

14. This style of singing was taken up by Caccini for theatre music, both so that the text might be more clearly rendered than in polyphonic singing and so that the performer’s *sprezzatura* might be allowed to display itself. See Nino Pirrotta’s discussion in *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, trans. Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 245–48. Surely the dramatic possibilities of this style of singing were already present in salon song performances.


16. The *Dialogo* was published originally in 1554, the same year Stampa’s poetry was published and just a year after her death. Doni and Stampa were the same age.


19. See also Phillippy’s discussion of this poem, “Gaspara Stampa’s *Rime*,” 3–4: “The poem replaces the eternal perspective of divine judgment . . . with a plea for an earthly judgment” (4).

20. These lines also support a vision of her performing solo before the audience.


23. Ibid. Thus, for another example, Luca Di Marenzio in the preface to his 1588 volume of madrigals refers to his own change of style: “questi Madrigali da me ultimamente composti con maniera assai differente dalla passata, havendo, & per l’imitazione delle parole, & per la proprietà dello stile atteso ad una (dirò così) mesta gravità.” [These Madrigals recently composed by me in a very different manner from the past, having both through the imitation of the words and through the quality of the style achieved (as I call it) a mournful gravity.] Marenzio Di Luca, *Madrigali a Quatro Cinque, et Sei Voci, Libro Primo* (Venice, 1588), cited in James Haar, “Self-Consciousness about Style, Form, and Genre in 16th-Century Music,” *Studi musicali* 3 (1974): 223. One may recognize here, through the composer’s concern for a music suited to the words, the influence of Bembo’s advocacy for a style that combined *dolcezza* with *gravità.*


28. J. R. Hale, *Renaissance Europe: Individual and Society*, 1480–1520 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 247. Outside Italy, Thomas More’s *Utopia*, while praising the expressive effectiveness of utopian musical settings of poetry, lists only the darker emotions: “All their music, whether played on instruments or sung by the human voice, so renders and expresses the natural feelings, so suits the sound to matter (whether troubled or mournful or angry), and so represents the meaning by the form of the melody that it wonderfully affects, penetrates and inflames the souls of the hearers” (Hale, *Renaissance Europe*, 252).


34. Phillippy, “Gaspara Stampa’s *Rime*,” esp. 15, links the abandoned *pastorella* pose to Ovid’s *Heroides*, suggesting these as a model for Stampa’s own female-voiced complaints to her absent lover.

35. Identity is restored momentarily in the unification of voices in lines 12–13, only to be ruptured again by the final shift in tone. Here is the complete poem:

     Qui, dove avien che ’l nostro mar ristagne,
     conte, la vostra misera Anassilla,
     quando la luna agghiaccia e l’ sol favilla,
     pur voi chiamando, si lamenta ed agne.
     Voi, dove avien che l’Oceano bagne
     la notte, il giorno, a l’alba ed a la squilla,
     menando vita libera e tranquilla,
     mirate lieto il mar e le campagne.

     82
E sì l’assenzia e ’l poco amor v’invola
la memoria di lei, la vostra fede,
che pur non le scrivete una parola.
O fra tutt’altre mia miseria sola!
o pena mia, ch’ogn’altra pena eccede!
Ciò si comporta, Amor, ne la tua scola?

[Here, at the edge of our sea, count, your
wretched Anassilla laments and suffers,
when the moon chills and when the sun
sparkles, still calling you. You, where Ocean
bathes, night and day and dawn and dusk,
leading a free and tranquil life, look about
happily at the sea and fields. And absence
and slightness of love so steal from you the
memory of her and of your promise, that
you do not even write her one word. O my
misery unique among all others! O my
pain, which exceeds all other pain! Is this
tolerated, Love, in your school?]

36. Compare also

Poiché da voi, signor, m’è pur vietato
che dir le vere mie ragione non possa.

(no. 131)

[Since you forbid me, lord, even to speak
my true reasons.]

Signor, per cortesia,
non mi dite che, quand’andaste via,
Amor mi negò ’l pianto.

(no. 230)

[Lord, please, do not tell me that, when you
went away, Love denied me tears.]

37. Compare also “Prendi, Amor, de’ tuoi lacci il più possente” [no. 80; Take,
Love, your most powerful snares] or “Ecco, Amor, io morro” [no. 196; Behold,
Love, I shall die].
38. Luigi Malagoli, Le contraddizioni del Rinascimento (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1968), 105-23; see also his La lirica del Cinquecento e Gaspara Stampa (Pisa: Libreria Goliardica, 1966), esp. 21-22.


40. Doni, Dialogo della musica, 189.

41. This type of wit is analogous to the contemporary musical punning that sets the word lofty with high notes and the word dark with black notes, or to the derivation of melodies from the syllables of words and names, such as the use of notes equivalent to "mi fa" or Josquin's setting "Her-cu-les" with re-ut-re.


44. Borsetto, "Narciso ed Eco," 223-24, suggests that Stampa actually lowered the style of her poems by the inclusion of realistic conversation or epistolary informality and the occasional use of proverbs. She interprets this as a rejection of auctoritas and offers this self-abasement as a reason for the lack of further editions of her work. Other reasons are also suggested, however, such as the morally rigorous climate of the Counter-Reformation (233) or the divergence of Stampa from Petrarch's narrative (186). There is indeed a certain freshness to Stampa's language compared to that of the most artificial Petrarchans; however, her general tone remains within the higher rather than the lower style, which could descend to a vulgarity totally absent from her poems.


47. Ibid., 103.

48. Bassanese, Gaspara Stampa, 3-4; Bellonci, Rime, 8.

49. See the work, cited above, of Vitiello, Bassanese, and Zancan.
LONG DISMISSED AS an immature play with no intrinsic merit, *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* (ca. 1570–1583) quite thoroughly debates issues of contemporary political interest. This essay seeks to restore *Clyomon* from its undistinguished position in Renaissance studies by showing how it dramatically supports Queen Elizabeth’s use of chivalry as an ideology of power and order and criticizes military adventurism. By reading this play as a political text, in this essay I employ the methodologies of New Historicism, which identifies literature as only one of many cultural discourses taking part in the negotiation of power. "Representations of the world in written discourse," observes Louis A. Montrose, "are engaged in constructing the world, in shaping the modalities of social reality, and in accommodating their writers, performers, readers, and audiences to multiple and shifting subject positions within the world they both constitute and inhabit." Necessary to this construction is the representation in these discourses of "ideology," the system of ideas, values, and beliefs common to any social group. "This vexed but indispensable term," Montrose continues, "has in its most general sense come to be associated with the processes by which social subjects are formed, re-formed and enabled to perform as conscious agents in an apparently meaningful world." In *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, the playwright represents in the title characters the ambiguities of Elizabethan chivalry in order
to show that in its most perfect form it requires strict allegiance to the monarch. 3

Far from being obsolete, or recovered purely for nostalgia, chivalry during Elizabeth’s reign was an ideology that retained enough of its feudal connotations to be employed as a means of consolidating power by both the monarchy and the aristocracy. Chivalry’s tenets naturally required that its practitioners embody the virtues of courtesy, prowess, and charity; but what is more important for the monarch, chivalry promoted strict loyalty to one’s liege, while for the aristocracy, chivalry guaranteed the privileges of knighthood, which included the notions of military adventurism and individual honor. As a consequence, the monarch’s version of chivalry and that of the aristocracy were in constant conflict during the Elizabethan era, conflict repeatedly represented in its literature. 4

In any study of Elizabethan chivalric literature, Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes occupies a strategic position as one of only three romantic plays surviving from the period of 1570 to 1585, the time of the establishment of permanent commercial theaters in London. The other two plays are Common Conditions and The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune. On the basis of what little evidence we have—the accounts of the Revels Office, entries in the Stationers’ Register, and contemporary references—we can surmise that romances comprised approximately one-third of the plays produced during this period, indicating they were quite popular. 5 Of these three surviving romances, only Clyomon concerns itself largely with matters of chivalry.

For modern historians of the theater, Clyomon also serves as a transition piece, containing in equal measures elements of the old morality play and foreshadowings of the more sophisticated drama yet to come. Like much medieval drama, Clyomon contains a vice, personifications, and clumsy fourteeners; like Renaissance drama, Clyomon evinces concern with realistic characterization and structure (both of which we will look at momentarily). The play also demands at least ten actors—an unusually large number for that time, especially if we take into account the practice of doubling. 6 Rather than being regarded as a transition piece between medieval and Renaissance drama, Clyomon should be seen as a drama of its own time.

According to its title page, the play “hath bene sundry times Acted by her Majesties Players.” Her Majesties Players, or the Queen’s Men,
was an ensemble created in 1583, at Elizabeth's request, by her principal secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham. Composed of some of England's finest actors, the Queen's Men was the preeminent acting troupe in England for the first several years of its career. Because of the play's use of elements from the older morality drama, most critics assume that Clyomon was performed first by an earlier acting company before it came to the Queen's Men. Although this may be so, the number of players required by the script argues for a later dating. The large number of characters in fact demands a large acting company. In the 1570s, the average size of a company was five to seven players, while the Queen's Men had the unusually high number of twelve, enough to stage Clyomon.

Critics also point to the old-fashioned fourteeners and personifications as evidence for dating this play in the early 1570s. However, Robert Wilson's Three Ladies of London, written in 1581, also employed fourteeners and personifications such as Conscience, Fame, and Love. Attempting to date a play on the basis of such inadequate criteria is clearly unreliable. The Queen's Men in all likelihood premiered Clyomon.

That Clyomon was performed "sundry times" by the Queen's Men and that it was deemed worthy of being printed later (in 1599) suggests that Clyomon was quite popular, perhaps not just because it was an entertaining chivalric romance; it may also have investigated political issues important to the English people. Its political subtext may supply a clue to Clyomon's popularity and significance until now overlooked by most critics. I would suggest that it is no coincidence that the popularity of chivalric drama on the public stage corresponds to the popularity of the equally chivalric festivals for Elizabeth from the mid-1570s to the end of the century.

During the Renaissance, the court festival was an important means of representing both monarchial and aristocratic power. As critics such as Stephen Orgel, Roy Strong, and Sydney Anglo have demonstrated, the royal festival disseminated propaganda by representing in an idealized form the way the court wished itself to be understood by both its participants and its observers. Incorporating ritual and ceremony, the royal festival symbolically transformed the court into what it wished to become. Through dramatic analogy the monarch could show that she and her court embodied sanctity, virtue, and power. The dramatic context
created for many of Elizabeth's festivals was one of chivalric romance, in which the Queen appeared as Astraea (or as some other idealized personage) and her knights protected her from all enemies, allegorical or otherwise. Thus, both sets of chivalric drama—the courtly and the professional—promoted an ethos of chivalry that demands, in part, complete loyalty of subject to monarch. This is exactly the theme of *Clyomon*.

David Bevington has shown that the structure of *Clyomon* follows the basic structure of the morality play: "The pattern of wandering, confusion, separation, and loss leads ultimately to rediscovery and reunion, a linear process not unlike the fall from grace leading to regeneration in the moral play." Indeed, what most readers of the play have overlooked is that the two protagonists, Clyomon and Clamydes, must undergo trials before they can be considered true knights embodying the version of chivalry favored by the playwright. Specifically, the two protagonists must learn the chivalric virtue of faith, or loyalty.

The play introduces the theme of loyalty in a quick succession of four contrasting scenes. In the first scene, Clamydes has been rescued by Juliana, Princess of Denmark, from a great storm that threatened his passing ship. In order to win her hand (for they have naturally fallen in love), Clamydes must slay the flying serpent that feeds "his hungrie panch" with the women who live in her country. Clamydes accepts the task in language that reveals his chivalric values. Before he learns the nature of his quest, Clamydes says that Juliana

\[
\text{Did me permit with full consent, to land upon her shore:} \\
\text{Upon true promise that I would, here faithfull still remaine,} \\
\text{And that performe which she had vowed. . . .} \\
\]

\[
\text{(31-33)}
\]

After he learns that he must slay the serpent, he accepts the challenge, "Yea though the dangers should surpasse stout Hercules his toyle" (61), and adds:

\[
\text{And therefore Lady lincke with me, thy loyall heart for aye,} \\
\text{For I am thine til fates untwine, of vital life the stay.} \\
\]

\[
\text{(65-66)}
\]
By saving the helpless Juliana from the flying serpent, Clamydes will win honor by proving his faithfulness to her.

Clamydes is thus introduced as a warrior who already possesses the chivalric virtues of a knight (although he is not technically a knight until he is dubbed in scene three). As a result, he contrasts directly with Clyomon, who is introduced in scene two as one who has yet to learn the virtues of faithfulness and loyalty. Instead, Clyomon seeks honor through martial deeds that serve no one but himself. For about twenty lines, Clyomon extols the glories of "martial exercises." In other words, Clyomon seeks after vainglory, a vice decried by, for example, Ramon Lull in *The Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry*, a thirteenth-century treatise on chivalry translated and published by William Caxton in 1485. This book exerted considerable influence upon Elizabethan discourses on chivalry. Lull writes:

```
yf a squer have vayne glorye of that he doth / he is not worthy
to be a knyght / For vayne glory is a vyce / whiche destroyeth
& bryngeth to nought the merytes & guerdons of the benefyce
of chyvalry.12
```

In this play, Clyomon must learn to direct his deeds so that they serve others rather than himself.

The next two scenes confirm this reading of Clamydes and Clyomon. In scene three, Clamydes has returned home to be dubbed a knight so that he can slay the flying serpent (a rather thinly veiled plot device that allows the confrontation between the two protagonists to occur). As the scene begins, Clamydes’s father, the King of Suavia, explains to his son "unto what end a knight is made" so that "honour thine may flow . . . to thy immortall fame" (228–29). The King then outlines the responsibilities of the knight, emphasizing loyalty and faithfulness:

```
Know thou therefore, Clamydes deare, to have a knightly name
Is first above all other things his God for to adore,
In truth according to the lawes prescribde to him before.
Secondly, that he be true unto his Lord and king.
Thirdly, that he keepe his faith and troth in every thing.
And then before all other things that else we can commend,
```
That he be alwaies ready prest, his countrey to defend:
The Widow, poore, and fatherlesse, or Innocent bearing blame,
To see their cause redressed right, a faithful knight must frame.

(231-39)

Accordingly, in slaying the flying serpent Clamydes will perform his chivalric duty by keeping his "faith and troth" to Juliana. Clyomon's desire for vainglory, on the other hand, fails to fulfill the chivalric creed.

Critics have taken the fourth scene, in which Alexander the Great enters "as valiantly set forth as may be," as an excuse for mere spectacle and pageantry. On the contrary, if we understand the play's primary theme to be the promotion of the chivalric virtue of loyalty, then this scene performs a natural function in that argument. Alexander enters fresh from new conquests, sounding very much like Clyomon two scenes earlier:

After many invincible victories, and conquests great atchived,
I Alexander with sound of Fame, in safetie am arrived
Upon my borders long wished for, of Macedonia soile,
And all the world subject have, through force of warlike toile.

(360-63)

Alexander, however, does not lust after vainglory. In medieval chivalric romance, Alexander the Great is typically portrayed as the pinnacle of knightly virtue. This play is no exception; it depicts Alexander as the "chief of chivalrie" (486). After thus recounting his numerous military victories, Alexander adds:

And yet Alexander, what art thou? thou art a mortall wight,
For all that ever thou hast got or wonne by force in fight.

(382-83)

Taking advantage of Alexander's reflective mood, one of his lords reminds him of his chivalric duty to the gods, which, of course, recalls the King of Suavia's exhortation to his son that a knight must "above all other things his God for to adore":

90
Acknowledging thy state O King, to be as thou hast said,  
The Gods no doubt as they have bene, will be thy sheeld and aid  
In all attempts thou takst in hand, if case no glorie vaine  
Thou seekest, but acknowledging thy victories and gaine,  
Through the providence of sacred Gods to happen unto thee:  
For vaine is trust, that in himselfe, man doth repose we see.  

(384-89)

This lord reminds Alexander specifically to avoid seeking vainglory.  
Alexander, thankful for this reminder, agrees to perform his sacred  
duty to the gods and offer sacrifices of thankfulness at the temple of  
Pallas Athena (402-11). By professing loyalty to the gods, Alexander  
upholds the chivalric code as outlined by the King of Suavia and shows  
exactly where Clyomon fails. Thus by juxtaposing these first four scenes,  
the playwright of Clyomon represents the chivalric virtue of loyalty as  
an ideal to be prized over mere vainglorious feats of arms.  

This negative reading of Clyomon must be tempered, however. After  
all, no one in the play accuses Clyomon of seeking vainglory. On the  
contrary, Clyomon’s good reputation as a knight precedes him. The only  
action for which Clyomon is criticized occurs in scene three when, just  
before the King of Suavia dubs his son Clamydes a knight, Clyomon comes  
forward and takes the dubbing instead. Clamydes thus stands “bereft  
of honour,” and the King orders his men to pursue “that Traytor.” Even  
so, Clyomon’s stealing of Clamydes’s knighthood is viewed with some  
ambivalence because on the one hand the “honour cowardly was stolne  
by Caitiffe he” (319) and on the other hand the theft “imports him for  
to be, of valiant heart and mind” (307). This seeming contradiction  
suggests the playwright’s own uncertainty about how to depict realistically  
a character who, though initially flawed, soon changes for the better.  

This apparent conflict in dramatic craftsmanship is further indicated  
in the scene in which Neronis and Clyomon meet for the first time. Upon  
discovering Clyomon lying upon the shore after his shipwreck, Neronis  
exclaims to her companions:  

Of truth my Lords, his countenance bewrayes him for to bee,  
In health, of valiant heart and mind, and eke of hye degree.  

(799-800)
Thus in standard physiognomic tradition, even his appearance proclaims Clyomon to be a virtuous knight. Yet the important words here are "in health," because until this moment, Clyomon has practiced an unhealthy version of chivalry—one promoting vainglory.

This scene mirrors the opening scene of the play in which Clamydes pledges his faithfulness to Juliana after she saves him from a sea storm. It also marks the turning point in the play as far as the chivalric progress of Clyomon is concerned. As scene eight opens, Clyomon, like Clamydes before him, has survived a terrible tempest: "Ah set me to shore sirs," he begs the mariners, "in what country so ever we be" (721). "Truly Gentleman," the Boatswain observes, "we were never in the like tempests before" (727). It is then, as Clyomon lies on the shore bemoaning his fate, that Neronis, "daughter to Patranius, King of the strange Marshes," discovers him.

A man surviving a tempest is a common motif in English Renaissance literature, particularly in romance, chivalric or otherwise. Life is frequently represented as a sea voyage beset by occasional storms. The life wisely led brings one safely into port; the life led unwisely does not. Writing about Shakespeare's romances, Northrop Frye argues that "the images of chaos, tempest, illusion, madness, darkness, death, belong to the middle action of the comedy, in the phase of confused identity. It is at this point, the low point of the hero's or heroine's fortunes, as a rule, that the comic dialectic is formed." 14 This comic dialectic occurs when "the renewing power of the final action lifts us into a higher world, and separates that world from the world of the comic action itself." 15 In Shakespeare's plays this device of spiritual travail and rebirth symbolized by a tempest works most notably in Twelfth Night, Pericles, and The Tempest; it also works in Clyomon. The higher world to which Clyomon and Clamydes are lifted is the world of chivalry. After Neronis discovers the weakened Clyomon, she promises to nurse him back to health. Clyomon responds:

O Princes, if I ever be to health restord againe,
Your faithfull servant day and night, I vow here to remaine.

(820-21)

Clyomon has left the world of vainglorious martial action and entered the world of true chivalry. 16
It is politically significant that in the scene which introduces Clyomon and portrays him as a knight for whom "only upon feates of armes, is all my delight" (160), Clyomon sends Subtle Shift, the vice, to the court of Suavia, "because I would heare / If any shewes or triumphs be towards, else would I not come there" (158–59). Clyomon prefers "shewes or triumphs" as a means to win honor and fame: "For nothing doth delight me more, then to heare of martiall play" (167). The use of the word play is highly suggestive because it is almost certainly used in this sense as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Exercise or action by way of recreation; amusement, diversion, sport, frolic. (In early use sometimes in bad sense: Vicious or profligate indulgence, revelling.)" If Clyomon’s participation in "shewes or triumphs" is meant to be understood as frivolous indulgence, then, by extension, the "shewes or triumphs" at Elizabeth’s court could also attract vainglorious men, at least according to this playwright. The Accession Day tilts celebrating Elizabeth’s birthday began at least as early as the mid-1570s, which would make the earliest of them contemporaneous with Clyomon. Although representing the Queen’s own propaganda, many of these Elizabethan festivals were frequently used for the promotion of self-interests by their aristocratic participants. It is therefore likely that many viewed these tournaments as politically dangerous, celebrating the knight rather than the Queen. Unless their martial exercises served the Queen, they were examples of vainglory.

Significantly, Clyomon, like Clamydes, learns the virtue of loyalty through serving a woman. In *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare’s Genres*, Leonard Tennenhouse argues that Elizabethan romance is frequently concerned with the problematics of monarchial succession through a female. This was, after all, a leading question of Elizabeth’s reign: whom would she marry in order to beget an heir; or, when it became clear that she would not marry, who would succeed her to the throne? In discussing Sidney’s *Arcadia*, Tennenhouse suggests:

This problem is a peculiarly English dilemma. That is to say, the fact of the king’s having only daughters for heirs represents a clear threat to the continuity of power: the oracle hints at the possibility that one daughter will be stolen and the other will make an unsuitable match. Both these possibilities call the
patrilineal distribution of power into question. This suggests that once embodied in the female, power can be transferred to an outsider, a foreign line perhaps, or a family not of aristocratic lineage at all.¹⁸

I do not wish to argue that the issues of the *Arcadia* are the same as those of *Clyomon*; the play is not primarily about the succession of power, although it is an issue in one of the subplots. Yet both Clamydes and Clyomon do discover the chivalric virtue of loyalty as a result of serving some very powerful women. In the first scene of the play, Juliana informs Clamydes that after he slays the flying serpent

> Then shalt thou of all women win, the heart and great good wil,  
> And me possess for spowed wife, who in election am  
> To have the Crowne of Denmarke here, as heire unto the same:  
> For why, no other children hath my sire besides mee, but one other,  
> And he indeed is heire before, for that he is my brother.

Almost as an afterthought, Juliana tells Clamydes that she has a brother: the effect is that she is heir to the throne and that Clamydes is her knight.

Neronis, unlike Juliana, is not heir to a throne, but her mother is. In the middle of the play, Neronis is kidnapped by Thrasellus, the King of Norway. Weakened by the loss of his daughter, Pacranius dies, leaving his pregnant wife to rule. She is challenged in her rule by her brother-in-law, Mustantius, who “from her the Crowne would take” (1205). Both Mustantius and the Queene allow Alexander to decide who will rule the Isle of Strange Marshes. He, in turn, declares that the issue will be determined by a trial by combat, with one knight representing Mustantius, and the other the Queene. As it happens, Clamydes volunteers to fight for Mustantius and Clyomon for the Queene. This episode is the climax of the play, serving to reunite Clyomon and Clamydes in addition to resolving the story of the Queene of Strange Marshes. In this bout, Clyomon no longer fights for vainglory, but for a queen whose circumstances resemble, but do not mirror, Queen Elizabeth’s. While we should not try to equate the Queene of the Isle of Strange Marshes with
Queen Elizabeth of England—their two situations are quite different—the playwright does represent a female in a position of power, and the matter of who should succeed to the throne is debated. In addition, this episode has been altered from its corresponding episode in the romance of Perceforest, the source for Clyomon, in order to have a pregnant woman as one of the claimants to the throne. To understand fully the political statement the playwright seems to be making and how this relates to the subject of chivalry, we should reacquaint ourselves with the political situation of England in the late 1570s and early 1580s.

At the time this play was first performed, the question of who would succeed Queen Elizabeth to the throne was of the utmost political concern. In the late 1570s and early 1580s, Elizabeth was being courted by the Duke of Alençon, the brother of the King of France. Arrangements for a marriage appeared so close to being finalized that many of Elizabeth's countrymen protested vehemently. For example, John Stubbs, a Puritan zealot, had his right hand cut off for writing The discovery of a gaping Gulf wherein England is to be swallowed by another french marriage . . . (1579), in which he warns of the dangers that will occur if Elizabeth turns her country over to the rule of a foreigner. Or, to cite another example, Sir Philip Sidney's famous letter written in 1580 also implores the Queen not to marry the French Duke. Finally, Elizabeth's entertainment at Whitehall in 1581, The Four Foster Children of Desire, allegorizes the French suit for Elizabeth, depicting the presumptive attempt of the four foster children (one of whom was Sidney) to storm the Fortress of Perfect Beauty (from which Elizabeth watched the festivities). The French ambassadors were in fact present in the audience for this entertainment. The children fail in their attempt, as did the French in theirs, but not until 1584 when the Duke of Alençon died. In the meantime, the subject of an impending royal marriage continued to dominate both political and social forums.

In Clyomon, the Queene of Strange Marshes is pregnant. Elizabeth, of course, was not, although there was much concern over whether or not she could beget an heir. In January of 1579, ambassadors representing the Duke of Alençon arrived in England, and, soon after, physicians examined Elizabeth to see if she could bear children. In a letter dated 15 January 1579, the Spanish ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza reported to his King that "a few days previously, [the Queen] had a consultation
of doctors to decide whether she could hope for progeny.’ ’ The doctors, he writes, ‘‘found no difficulty.’ ’ Elizabeth was already forty-five.

Sir William Cecil, Elizabeth’s principal minister, was also optimistic about the Queen’s ability to bear children and recognized the national importance of her doing so. Writing on 2 October 1579, Cecil outlined the dangers of a marriage between the Queen and Alençon. Second on Cecil’s list of dangers is his view on the succession question:

The good and naturall Subjects, which of a long Tyme have desyred hir Majesty’s Marriadg, both for Love of her own Person, and to have hir Lyne contynued by a Child of hir own, and also to avoid the Perrills that must nedes follow with the Quarrell for the Crown, will gretly be miscontented, and depely greved, as they may in ther Harts, as though hir Majesty had no Care over them, but only to provyde for hiself, and to leave them all and ther Posteritye that shall overlive hir Majesty, to the Mercy of the bloody Heyres.

Clearly the English wanted Elizabeth married and pregnant. They wanted no turmoil surrounding the succession like that which occurred when Mary Tudor came to the throne, or which persistently threatened while Mary, Queen of Scots was alive. If the situation of the Queene of Strange Marshes approximates Elizabeth’s, then the fact of her pregnancy represents wish fulfillment at the least and veiled advice at the most. Her pregnancy serves no other purpose, and in fact complicates the plot when the succession question could have more easily revolved around the Queen herself or Neronis, rather than around an unborn child.

Further support for this political reading of the Queene of the Isle of Strange Marshes comes from an unexpected quarter—the vice Subtle Shift. Until the episode under discussion, Shift acts as a counterpoint to the theme of loyalty. Throughout the play he has been consistently unloyal, serving, he says, only himself. Serving in succession Clyomon, Clamydes, Bryan sance foi, and finally Clamydes again, Shift has acted as foil to the chivalric virtue of loyalty as exemplified in the play’s protagonists—until, that is, the episode with the Queene of Strange Marshes. When Alexander declares that the matter of succession will be decided by trial by combat, no one immediately comes forward
to represent the Queene. (Clyomon is still far away and has only just
learned of the Queen’s trouble.) Mustantius thus declares to Alexander:

And having not her Champion here, according to decree,
There resteth nought for her to loose, the Crowne belongs to
mee.

(1722–23)

But Subtle Shift, in a remarkable moment in the play, comes forward
and says:

Nay ant shall please your grace, rather then she shall it lose,
I my selfe will be her Champion for halfe a doozen blowes.

(1724–25)

His bravery does not last long, however: faced with the immediate
prospect of battling his master Clamydes, Shift declines, saying, “Nay
soft, of sufferance commeth ease, though I cannot rule my tongue, ile
rule my hands” (1727).

The fact that Shift volunteers himself when no one else will do so
is noteworthy nonetheless because the vice figure of medieval and
Renaissance drama, in addition to his many trouble-making functions,
frequently serves as the voice of the populace. As Robert Weimann argues,
“In the midst of increasingly illusionary scenery and localized settings,
the fool and his descendants [like the fool of ancient Greek plays] continue
to break through the ‘fourth wall’ . . . , and again conjure and renew
the old audience contact.”22 Speaking of the clown figure’s frequent use
of direct address to the audience and of his anachronistic language,
Weimann writes that “the postritual element of nonrepresentational self­
expression became associated (as long as it persisted in a secular context)
with the actor’s awareness of his social identity and function and served
as a link between the experience of the real world and the theatrical and
idealistic illusions of the play world.”23 “In this way,” he continues,

the fool creates a complementary perspective that (down to
Shakespeare’s day) counterpoints the attitudes of the heroic
or romantic characters. His perspective reflects a dramatic and
social position that rejects the assumptions of the mythical or heroic theme in favor of the common sense attitude of a plebeian or secularized audience.24

Thus, the vice figure of medieval and Renaissance drama—here, Subtle Shift—frequently speaks with the voice of the common man. Considering the play retrospectively then, we can see that the faithlessness of Shift highlights the faithfulness (or faithlessness) of the protagonists; but even more, Shift's action criticizes the unnecessary violence that accompanies the knight. Whenever violence threatens, Shift asserts that he will be on his way. When he first learns that Clyomon is a knight, he avers, "If I had knowne so much before, serve that serve will, / I would have serv'd no martall Knight" (161-62). When Clyomon and Clamydes meet and threaten to fight: "Nay then God be with you, if you be at that poynct I am gone. / If you be of the fighters disposition, ile leave you alone" (471-72). He identifies himself to Bryan sance foi as "even the cowardlyest villaine ant shall please you that lives under the sun" (591). All the more noteworthy is it, then, that this surrogate for the people is willing to fight like a loyal knight for the Queene of Strange Marshes, a dramatic reminder of England's Queen.25

As it turns out, neither Shift nor Clyomon fights to defend the Queene's right to rule. Before Clyomon enters, Mustantius and the Queene agree to forego the trial by combat and let Alexander decide the matter. In a decision equally relevant politically, Alexander decides that Mustantius and the Queene will rule jointly until the Queene's child is born and wears the crown. Even after Clyomon enters, declaring that he is ready to fight, he is told that the matter has already been decided. Negotiation thus replaces the ritual of trial by combat.26

As we can see, Clyomon is hardly a play without topical significance. Contemporary with the frequently political court festival, Clyomon actively supports the propaganda that represents Elizabeth as queen over her loyal knights. It criticizes military adventurism that glorifies the knight rather than the queen, and it suggests that the common man, as well as the knight, is chivalrous enough to fight for his Queen.

It is unfortunate more plays do not survive from the critical early period of 1570 to 1585, so that they, too, could be examined, not as awkward plays that look forward to more sophisticated drama, but as
Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes

cultural texts that can tell us much about the age. *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, long ignored as an old-fashioned, immature play, may be seen, instead, as a drama that debates issues of contemporary importance through the guise of chivalry.

NOTES


6. Although they divide the parts differently, both David M. Bevington, *From “Mankind” to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 196, and Littleton in *Clyomon and Clamydes*, 36, deduce that the play can be performed by seven men and three boys.


9. Many critics make the mistake of reading the play with modern sensibilities; to them the play is awkwardly old fashioned. Eugene M. Waith, *Ideas of Greatness: Heroic Drama in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), for example, calls the play “ludicrous” (37) and “foolish” (42); Norman Sanders et al., eds., *The Revels History of Drama in English: 1500–1576* (New York: Methuen, 1980), write that “the heroes vie with each other not only in heroism but also in absurdity” (2:209). Most other critics restrict their comments to the play’s structure, vice figure, and fourteeners. See, for example, Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), 299–300; Bevington, *Popular Drama of Tudor England*, 194–96; and F. P. Wilson, *The English Drama: 1485–1585*, ed. G. K. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 209–10. Littleton’s critical edition of the play begins to right the wrongs this overlooked play has suffered, although she, too, concludes her introduction by observing: “Enough has been said of the style and content of *Clyomon and Clamydes* to indicate that its significance is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. It is a significance that consists of its literary relationships and, more specifically, its place in the poetic and structural development of English drama from craft to art” (*Clyomon and Clamydes*, 63).

A dissenting voice can be found in Scott McMillin’s essay on the Queen’s Men. McMillin argues that the troupe enjoyed a special status as Elizabeth’s own and that it was the “category of English patriotism and culture to which the Queen’s Men were devoted. The politics of their origin run through their entire repertory, as far as we can see from the extant plays” (15).


13. For example, Littleton in *Clyomon and Clamydes*, 164.


15. Frye, *Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance*, 133.

16. Using the terminology of New Historicism, we might describe both Clyomon’s and Clamydes’ conversions as their being “fashioned”—not, in this case, “self-fashioned”—in terms of the rejection of a politically abhorrent Other: the practice of a chivalry that legitimizes aggression and self-promotion over a chivalry requiring loyalty to one’s monarch (see Greenblatt’s methodology of self-fashioning in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 8–9).


21. Even Bryan sance foi’s name points out the theme of loyalty in this play: “Brian without faith.”


24. Ibid., 13–14.

25. Richard Tarlton, the most popular member of the Queen’s Men, would most likely have portrayed the character Subtle Shift. We do not know if *Clyomon and Clamydes* was ever performed at court. We do know, however, that the Queen’s Men performed regularly before Queen Elizabeth and that, according to Thomas Heywood in his *An Apology for Actors* (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1941), Tarlton was a great favorite with the Queen as well as with the public (E2v). For more on Tarlton and his importance to the clown and vice traditions in Elizabethan drama, see Weimann,

26. Assuming that Clamydes is supposed to practice the (correct) virtues of chivalry, his fighting for Mustantius appears to be a problem with the politics of this play. However, the playwright is merely following his source Perceforest. Littleton writes, "The playwright follows this episode closely, arranging however that the knight[s] meet for a trial by combat in Macedon (rather than at the Pine of Marvels) and changing the dispute over the crown from the land of Borras to the Ile of Strange Marshes" (Clyomon and Clamydes, 42). In other words, matters of storytelling here take precedence over matters of politics.
LITERARY CRITICS have relied increasingly upon what we know of the particular goings-on at the court of Queen Elizabeth to explain all things we call Elizabethan, including a vast corpus of poetry. Pastoral poetry in particular, long regarded as an allegorical embodiment of court politics, is seen now more than ever as a product of social and political power struggles.1 I argue instead that the pastoral poetry of Renaissance England has to do with the academic world as much as, if not more than, with the ancillary world of the court. For although the English pastoral furnished entertainment for the court, it was born of the academy, where Edmund Spenser and others encountered the classical pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil. In initiating the pastoral as an English genre, Spenser looked to these poets to see how to write, but like them he relied upon his own experience to teach him what to write. The recollection and depiction of pastoral delights returned Spenser not only to his first readings of Virgil and Theocritus but also to the place where he first encountered his classical pastoral predecessors. In the classical models Spenser found the shepherd’s campus; in his own recollections he found a student’s campus. In his pastorals, as well as the pastorals of those who followed him in this genre, the two campuses combine to form a poetry whose ingredients distinguish it from its classical origins.
From Theocritus's first eclogue forward, pastoral poetry has always been born of the backwards glance. Recent focus upon the pastoral as a courtly construct has ignored this essential reflective quality of the pastoral.

Granted, *The Shepheardes Calender*, along with Spenser himself, was fashioned for a world beyond the confines of the collegiate cloister. Yet, the world of the *Calender*, wherein reside "the delights of youth generally," shares more in common with the enclosed gardens of the poet's personal past—Pembroke College—than with the political world where he had begun to forge his poetic future. We come nearer the English pastoralists' imagination, I believe, by doing as they themselves did: turning our attention from the complexities of the court back to the safer haven of the university. There in its chapels, lecture halls, gardens, and bedchambers three poets—Edmund Spenser (Pembroke College, 1569-1576), Phineas Fletcher (King's College 1600-1615), and John Milton (Christ's College, 1625-1632)—discovered their own poetic talent, as well as a pastoral tradition that gave it form.

**COLLEGIATE LOSS**

The loss that initiates Virgil's *Eclogues* is the loss of the pastoral world itself. Meliboeus, who must flee the "sweet fields" and "abandon home," addresses his companion Tityrus, whose fortune allows him to remain behind. Recollecting all that he must now leave, Meliboeus pastoralizes the land where he has lived:

Lucky old man! here by familiar streams  
And hallowed springs you'll seek out cooling shade.  
Here for you always, bees from the neighboring hedge,  
Feeding on willow blossoms, will allure  
To slumber soft with their sweet murmurings.  
The hillside pruner will serenade the air;  
Nor will the throaty pigeons, your dear care,  
Nor turtledoves cease moaning in the elms.  

(1.51-58)

Whether or not Meliboeus ever inhabited such an ideal world, he most certainly leaves behind an imagined one. Likewise, whether or not Tityrus's
future days will be spent enjoying the cooling shade and nature’s perpetual serenades is irrelevant: the pastoral world of Eclogue I is the product of Meliboeus’s nostalgic imagination, and as such it belongs more to him than to Tityrus.

Edmund Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calender* is the product of just such Meliboean recollection. Having recently moved to Kent from Pembroke College, where his closest companion, Gabriel Harvey, remained behind, Spenser fashioned himself as Colin Clout and Harvey as Hobbinol and turned his former residence into a pastoralized paradise from which he was unhappily removed. As Meliboeus addressed Tityrus, so Colin addresses Hobbinol:

That Paradise hast found whicch Adam lost.  
Here wander may thy flock early or late,  
Withouten dreade of Wolves to bene ytost:  
Thy lovely layes here mayst thou freely boste.  
But I unhappy man, whom cruell fate,  
And angry Gods pursue from caste to caste,  
Can nowhere fynd, to shroude my lucklesse pate.  
(“June,” 10–16)

As Colin, Spenser recollects the less complicated days of his youth: “I, whilst youth, and course of carelesse yeeres” ("June," 33). Forgetting the accompanying miseries of his college days—as we are all wont to do—he re-creates not only a perfect place and time for song but also the perfect companion with whom to sing. This recollection, as Harvey will point out, has no more to do with the world in which Harvey actually lives than does Meliboeus’s sorrowful depiction of the residence he had formerly shared with the fortunate Tityrus.

Mired in the particularly antipastoral enterprise of battling for academic rank, Harvey challenges his friend’s intoxicated recollection. Taking the occasion of a pastoral revelry of his own—“at myne hostisses by the fyresyde being faste heggid in rownde abowte on every side with a company of honest good fellowes, and reasonable honeste quaffers”—Gabriel Harvey sets to dispelling his friend’s idealistic descriptions of past and present golden worlds:
You suppose the first age was the goulde age. It is nothinge soe. . . . You suppose us students happye, and thinke the aire praeferrid that breathithe on thes same greate lernid philosophers and profonde clarkes. Would to God you were on of there men but a sennighte. I doubte not but you would sweare ere Sundaye nexte, that there were not the like wofull and miserable creaturs to be founde within ye cumpas of the whole worlde agayne.5

This is a far cry from the opening lines of the June Eclogue in which Hobbinol declares, "Lo Collin, here the place, whose pleasant syte / From other shades hath weand my wandering mynde." The Hobbinol who proclaims this is, like the locus he describes, the product of the pastoralist's imagination—of a Colin Clout who perceives as idyllic the world that he no longer inhabits. This paradise is not Kent, nor merely "the south-parts," but the poet's reimagined Pembroke, an irretrievable time as place, a locus amoenus for which Colin is no longer suited and where his closest companion remains behind. Louise Schleiner, in her recent article "Spenser's 'E. K.' as Edmund Kent," describes the circumstance perfectly:

The effect for Harvey as he read the printed Calender must have been stirring: a recognition that his student and devoted friend had now outgrown him. By continuing their friendship in this new situation, he justifies his place in the locus amoenus of "June" as definer of the young scholar-poet's earlier paradise of expression and learning.6

While a collegiate reading of The Shepheardes Calender relies in part upon the elaborate construct of E. K.'s gloss, the Piscatory Eclogues of Spenser's imitator Phineas Fletcher are explicitly academic. Nowhere more than on Fletcher's "River Cam" are the academic and pastoral campuses so overtly connected. Like his father, Fletcher was denied the privilege of being a fellow at Cambridge, and his eclogues record both of their academic misfortunes. As with Virgil's and Spenser's before him, Fletcher's idyllic world springs from the recollections of a departing swain, Thirsil (Phineas Fletcher), addressing his dearest companion, Thomalin (John Tompkins), who remains behind in that world:
Farewell ye streams, which once I loved deare;
Farewell ye boyes, which on your Chame do float;
Muses farewell, if there be Muses here;
Farewell my nets; farewell my little boat;
Come sadder pipe, farewell my merry note:
My Thomalin, with thee all sweetnesse dwell;
Think of they Thirsil, Thirsil loves thee well.
Thomalin, my dearest deare, my Thomalin farewell.

(Ee. 2, St. 24)

In what amounts to a piscatory rendition of Colin Clout’s “adieu delights,” Thirsil simultaneously catalogues the academic and pastoral joys his companion, but not he, may enjoy.

The most famous companionless shepherd in English pastoral poetry is the uncouth swain of Milton’s “Lycidas,” who comes forth alone and recollects, like Meliboeus, Colin, and Thirsil before him, the world and the friendship he and his companion, Edward King, had formerly shared:

For we were nurse upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
   Together both, ere the high Lawns appear’d
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the Gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Batt’ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the Star that rose at Ev’ning, bright
Toward Heav’n’s descent had slop’d his westering wheel.

("Lycidas," 23-31)

The imbedded academic allegory in this passage caused Samuel Johnson to complain: “We know that they [Edward King and Milton] never drove a field, and that they had no flock to batten.” John Milton was no shepherd. He was, however, a student at Cambridge with Edward King, as David Masson explains: “The hill . . . is, of course, Cambridge; the joint feeding of flocks is companionship in study; the rural ditties on the oaten flute are academic iambics and elegiacs.” Like Phineas Fletcher and John Tompkins before them, and Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey
even earlier, Milton and King shared an irretrievable time and place that, though far less than idyllic, could be recollected and re-created in pastoral poetry.

COLLEGIATE FRIENDSHIP

As Thomas Rosemeyer has indicated, out of Virgilian pastoral come two essential ingredients for pastoral happiness: "first, a thorough understanding of the workings of the universe; and, second, a life of simple good fellowship, with a company of like-minded and unambitious friends." Both of these ingredients were fundamental to the academic world of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England: an understanding was the common pursuit, and the fellowship provided the ideal circumstance for that pursuit. Such lofty sights and circumstance, like the common clothing and language of the pastoral world, while explicitly anticourt, were certainly not antiuniversity. Fellowship, in fact, was the central ingredient of both the pastoral campus and the university campus. Neither the swain nor the student was alone in his world, nor in his understanding of the world.

In the world of both the pastoral and the university, freedom depends upon a circle of friends. Peaceful association with one's peers was as much a necessity as a privilege for both swain and student, as is evidenced in the plight of Gabriel Harvey, whose appeal for his degree of Master of Arts was refused because "he was not familiar like a fellow and did disdain every man's company." The members of Pembroke College complained that he "needs in al hast be studiing in Christmas, when others were a plaing, and was then whottest at [his] book when the rest were hardist at their cards." Harvey, whose degree was eventually granted by the intervention of Master Young, claimed for his part that at usual and convenient times, as after dinner and supper, and commenti fiers, yea and at other times too, if the lest occasion were offrid, I continued as ani, and was as fellowli as the best. What thai cale sociable I know not: this I am suer, I never avoidid cumpani: I have bene merri in cumpani: I have bene ful hardly drawn out of cumpani.
This example illustrates how much was to be gained or lost by the company of one's peers. A circle of the right friends yielded not only the benefit of company but also, perhaps, advancement. As in the court, students with political or literary aspirations would benefit themselves by being part of a particular clique.

One reason for Harvey's purported lack of social ability may be due to the value he placed upon more private friendships with the likes of Edmund Spenser. Describing how Spenser and Gabriel Harvey conspired in the creation of the Calender's "E. K." construct, Louise Schleiner claims that "an idealized Kent is clearly the Calender's mental locale."¹⁴ The academic in-game Professor Schleiner describes, however, between "Edmund of Kent" and "Aulus Pembrochianus Socius" belongs not to the countryside of Kent but to the idealized locus of Pembroke College, where the two men had resided together, where the rules for such games were developed, and where Spenser acquired his "sundry studies and laudable partes of learning, wherein how our Poete is seene, be they winnesse which are privie to his study" ("December," Glosse, 109) under the tutelage of Harvey. Such a private conspiracy of song-making finds its parallel in the pastoral world, where small groups of shepherds gather to hear and evaluate one another's songs. When the concern is "pastoral songs," or literary competition, such as that between Harvey and Spenser or between Tompkins and Fletcher, the atmosphere is ideally like that of the shepherd's singing matches, which conclude in mutual admiration. Such rivalry enhances rather than destroys fellowship.

Eventually, these circles of companions within the university began to directly mimic the pastoral poems they inspired. Abram Langdale observes that during Fletcher's years at Cambridge "the Cambridge society of poets . . . surrounded Fletcher and celebrated him as their president. This clique was founded in accordance with the traditional laws of the pastoral cult."¹⁵ In using pastoral laws to form their group, these students quite deliberately shaped their lives to imitate art. In Fletcher's Eclogues, art returns the compliment. Pastoral cliques such as these usually had at their center a more prominent poet around whom the rest of the group gathered.¹⁶ The size of these groups varied from two to as many as six or seven. Ultimately, we find, in and out of the amoebeans, in nearly all pastoral eclogues that the pastoral number is two. Pastoral is largely composed of the often intimate, sometimes hostile, exchange between two
swains. Such dialogues in the poetry of Spenser, Fletcher, and Milton could all have been modelled on Cambridge friendships.

Of these friendships, and others that these men had, we probably know most about that of Fletcher and Tompkins—an excellent example of a Cambridge friendship turned into pastoral poetry. According to Langdale: “Tompkins shared the poet’s inmost thought, became the confidant of his love affairs and his consolation in disappointment. . . . The relationship was all the more vital because it was concentrated within Fletcher’s creative years and colored nearly all of his major works.” The intimacy between Fletcher and Tompkins is not only the subject of Fletcher’s Eclog 6, but, like the relationship of Colin to Hobbinol in The Shepheardes Calender, governs the Eclogues as a whole. “I love my health, my life, my books, by friends, / Thee (dearest Thomalin) Nothing above thee” (“To Thomalin,” lines 25–26) expresses the essence of pastoral friendship, especially insofar as it exceeds the “true love” between swain and maiden, as Thirsil insists that it does.

The university conversations in which these poets’ fraternal friendships were formed were not free of governing rules. Students’ conversations with one another, except in their chambers or during the hours of relaxation, were restricted to Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, an inhibition for even the most learned students. The bedchamber then was one refuge within the university where students were allowed to converse freely in their native tongue. The bedchamber necessitated conversation since it was unusual during these times for a member of a college to have a chamber wholly to himself. Two or three students usually shared the same room; consequently, we read in contemporary college biographies “of the chum or chamber-fellow of the hero as either assisting or retarding his conversation.” The very fact that conversation is thus described emphasizes its importance.

We know of course that students, by whatever means, managed to converse in English outside of their bedchambers. We read of walks in the garden, through the town at night, and in the surrounding fields and woods. Such excursions were not likely illuminated by Latin discourses, nor was the content of these common English conversations restricted, as they would have been had they been in the mandatory Latin of the university. (In fact, the requirement to speak in Latin was intended to limit students to elevated scholarly discourse.) Students undoubtedly
looked forward to excursions and to the privacy of the bedchambers for the chance they provided to talk in English about love, poetry, and politics. Given the freedom to speak in their native tongue, students, we can be sure, did precisely that; the tone and substance of those conversations were as common (they might say as “base”), as English itself.

Given the linguistic environment of the university, we can begin to understand the significance of Spenser’s, and the others’, choosing to write their pastorals in vernacular English. A more traditional imitation of Virgil—indeed, a more courtly imitation—would have been composed in formal Latin or French, and Spenser was certainly capable of composing in either language. One reason for his choice of English, of course, was its commonness, which allowed it to serve, appropriately, as the language of the “common” swain. Spenser even chose to embellish his pastorals with a pseudo-antiquated commonality. Yet there is more here than just the desire to portray commonness; among university students, English would also denote privacy, for English was not only the more common tongue but also the more intimate. In his choice of English over Latin, Spenser clearly perceived the pastoral genre as linguistically intimate and wrote accordingly.

As the more common tongue, English lends itself readily to discussion of such common matters as the shepherd’s or fisherman’s trade. As the more intimate tongue, English invites conversation on more personal matters, such as the swains’ hearts. With regard to content, the conversations in The Shepheardes Calender are essentially like those that took place in the Cambridge gardens and bedchambers, implicitly intimate, fraternal exchanges between two youths. They praise one another’s songs, “O Colin, Colin, the shepheards joye, / How I admire ech turning of thy verse” (“August,” 190-91); reveal their private ambition, “Piers, I have pyped erst so long with payne, / That all mine Oten reedes bene rent and wore: / And my poore Muse hath spent her spared store, / Yet little good hath got, and much less gayne” (“October,” 7-10); engage in ecclesiastical debate, “Syker, thous but a laesie loord, / and rekes much of the swinck / That with fond termes, and weetlesse words / to blere myne eyes doest thinke” (“Julye,” 33-36); “make purpose of love and other plesaunce” (“March,” Argument); and pass along gossip, “Colin thou kenst, the Southerne shepheardes boye: / Him Love hath wounded with a deadly darte” (“April,” 21-22).
From Theocritus on, this pastoral pleasure of conversation comes intertwined with a bucolic setting, a pleasant place. A makeshift version of such a landscape might well have been afforded by the countryside surrounding Cambridge, where, according to statutes issued by Elizabeth in 1570, scholars, in time of plague, were to assemble and continue their learning in the countryside:

Lectores et caeteri ejusden Collegii, si simul rure tempore pestis sunt, ut lectiones caeterasque exercitationes consuetas quemadmodum si domi essent, habeant, omnes commoditates et fructus percipiunt, quos haberent, si domi essent.

[Readers and others of this college, if once they are in the country in time of plague, in order that they may have their readings and other customary exercises just as if they were at home, let them obtain all the advantages and benefits which they would have if they were at home.]

This bucolic inconvenience furnishes a direct and richly suggestive connection between the life of the academic world and the subsequent pastoral poetry of a student like Spenser for whom the country became a locus of fellowship and learning.

Likewise, students' vacations from the university often took the form of bucolic retreats. Charles Gawdy, for example, writing to his father in 1637 requests payment to his tutor for "that quarter when I was in the countrie." In the following updated letter written from Oxfordian Diodati to his friend John Milton, we see why such bucolic ventures, in and of themselves, are not necessarily pastoral:

I have no fault to find with my present mode of life, except this alone, that I lack some kindred spirit that can give and take with me in conversation. For such I long; but all other enjoyments are abundant here in the country; for what more is wanting when the days are long, the scenery blooming beautifully with flowers, and waving and teeming with leaves, on every branch a nightingale or goldfinch or other small bird glorying in its songs and warblings, most varied walks, a table
neither scant nor overloaded, and sleep undisturbed. If I could provide myself in addition with a good companion, I mean an educated one and initiated in the mysteries, I should be happier than the King of the Persians.\textsuperscript{21}

Here is epicurean bliss without the epicurean companion. The setting is every bit the \textit{locus amoenus}; the table bears the fruits of moderation; no worry harasses his sleep; and yet, left alone, Diodati lacks the essential ingredient of pastoral happiness—companionship. Here the Oxford student sounds much like Hobbinol in the ‘‘June’’ eclogue of the \textit{Calender} who also lacks only the good conversation formerly provided him by his companion. Diodati has found a place for song, but there is no one to hear him sing. Note also that for Diodati as for Hobbinol, Thomalin, and the uncouth swain of ‘‘Lycidas,’’ not just any companion will do. He requires ‘‘an educated one . . . initiated in the mysteries,’’ one presumably with whom he can share not just conversation, but verse.

These collegiate friendships of Spenser, Milton, and Fletcher were based chiefly on ‘‘the mysteries’’ of poetry, just as the pastoral dialogues of their eclogues concerned the common activity of composing and singing songs. The subject of the songs themselves is often True Love, a calling not exclusively bucolic, which necessarily brought both the Cambridge student and the pastoral swain beyond the boundaried world they inhabited.

\section*{Collegiate Love}

Though opinions vary concerning the role love plays in the pastoral world, it seems clear that this world, like that of the Renaissance university, is essentially a man’s world. Just as women were prohibited from the cloistered academic campus, so they are virtually absent from the shepherd’s world in English poetry. Renato Poggioli argued that English poets so developed the pastoral of innocence that they neglected the pastoral of love and happiness that would fulfill the passion of love and erotic wishes.\textsuperscript{22} This lack of fulfillment typifies the pastorals we are examining. They contain plenty of love laments, but all passion remains unrequited. Lack of consummation, in fact, is what propels these pastorals forward, what gives the swains something to pipe about. As Rosenmeyer
describes it, love is an animating force that enlivens *otium*. If successful, it would be higher than *otium*; if unsuccessful, it would destroy *otium*. The naturalness of love, Rosenmeyer asserts, is tempered by its lack of consummation.23

What compensates for unconsummated love affairs in both campuses is the consummation of actual friendships, which is why pastoral fellowship, and not true love, is the central joy in the world of both student and swain. The loves of whom the swains sing in their pastorals, while not imaginary, are at best beautiful objects. For instance, Colin's lovesickness takes up a good part of the *Calender*, yet we learn little of the object of his affection other than that she is "a countrie lasse called Rosalinde," who cares very little for either him or his piping. In the *Piscatorie Eclogues*, Myrtil is infected with love-madness when "A friendly fisher brought the boy to view / Coelia the fair." Though in matters of love there is no consolation, the "swowing" Myrtil is at least kept alive and comforted by his friends: "'Till fisher-boyes (fond fisher-boyes) revive him, / And back again his life and loving give him" (3.20.2–3).24

The objects of the shepherds' affections exist, like those of the university student, beyond the boundary of the campus (in Colin's case, for example, the neighboring town). The consummation of such a love requires that the lover, be he student or swain, go beyond the boundaries of the pastoral circle. If successful, the pastoral lover will find a love that replaces *otium*. The very pondering of true love, therefore, while it enlivens *otium*, simultaneously threatens the destruction of the pastoral circle. Thus like Harvey whom he represents, Hobbinol (about whom we learn much more than Rosalinde) can rail against romantic love for more than just reasons of principle. Such love not only is immoderate, unrealistic, and therefore the source of inevitable misery, it also threatens the pastoral circle. Colin not only scorns Hobbinol's gifts, he hands them over to a woman who scorns pastoral song ("Shepheardes device she hateth as the snake"). More particularly, Colin's romantic love jeopardizes the preexisting love between him and Hobbinol. "The ladde, whome long I lovd so deare," Hobbinol complains, "Nowe loves a lasse." This splendid pun emphasizes, alas, romantic love's futility. Ironically, though, Colin's actual departure from the world of the *Calender* demonstrates the transience and unreality of pastoral *otium*. 

II4
In Eclog 6 of Fletcher's *Eclogues* the lovesickness of Thomalin comes between him and Thirsil. Not as easily put off as Hobbinol is by Colin, Thirsil challenges his friend:

Thomalin, I see thy Thirsil thou neglect'st  
Some greater love holds down thy heart in fear;  
Thy Thirsils love, and counsel thou reject'st;  
Thy soul was wont to lodge within my eare:  
But now that port no longer thou respect'st;  
Yet hath it still been safely harbour'd there.

(St. 3, lines 1-6)

We see here the critical importance of conversation to the pastoral friendship, which is formed by the confiding of one's soul through language. The college world, far more than the world of the court, provided the occasion for such an intimate lodging. When Thirsil extracts a confession from Thomalin, he discovers that it is the nymph, Sweet Melite, who is behind the neglect of their friendship. Thirsil does not regard his friend's recent infatuation with the nymph as a "greater love"; for though he too once had his heart held down in fear, he is now cured and uses his own experience to persuade Thomalin of a higher love. "Those storms of looser fire are laid full low; / And higher love safe anchors in my heart: / So now a quiet calm does safely reign" (st. 17, lines 1-7). This quiet calm, this *otium*, requires that Thomalin be unbound from his love of Melite, who has left him with a captive heart. Thirsil tells him that "If from this love thy will thou canst unbinde" (st. 26, line 3) proper pastoral freedom can be restored: "To morrow shall we feast; then hand in hand / Free will we sing, and dance along the golden sand" (st. 26, lines 8-9).

This freedom is the same fraternal freedom, not merely allowed but, in a sense, required in the university. To be wounded by Rosalinde or Melite is to venture, not just beyond the pastoral circle, but beyond the cloistering walls of the all-male university environment. In Langdale we read of Fletcher's trips from Cambridge to visit his cousins, where he enjoyed at least one courtship. Judson suggests that since Colin represents Spenser, love may have been the "exciting force" that prompted Spenser's departure from Cambridge. In the real world as in the pastoral
world, the consummation of love often meant marriage and maturity. Marriage means essentially the death of the pastoral circle and the loss of freedom by which that circle was formed, for marriage is the institution of a civilized society apart from the pastoral world. Marriage belongs at the court, not on the campus, and one aspires to marriage, as one aspires to the court, only after departing from the campus.

COLLEGIATE RIVALRY

Like fellowship, the joy of rivalry was an ingredient the English pastoralists found both in their classical models and in their immediate university environs. The rivalry in the pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil takes the form of singing matches between two rival swains who exchange boasts, usually about their respective beloveds. These matches are usually friendly exchanges that end in mutual admiration and gift giving, although sometimes they are less than friendly bouts that must be resolved by an intervening third party. In either case, the contests provide the excuse, the frame, for pastoral songs and at the same time illustrate the pastoral joy that is as much a part of the pastoral world as singing itself, the joy of competitive rivalry. In the English pastoral, the sport and rivalry of the singing matches were more ranging and often more physical than in earlier poetry.

In the fourth of Theocritus's Idylls, for example, Corydon tells Battus that the goatherd Aegon has been carried off to Alpheus because "Men say he rivals Heracles in might" (line 8). In the fifth Idyll, a goatherd and a shepherd precede their piping with accusations of theft and then venture into progressively cruder subject matter before arriving at this final exchange before beginning the singing match:

COMATAS

Most excellent blockhead, all I say, I, is true, though for my part I'm no braggart; but Lord! what a railler is here!

LACON

Come, come; say thy say and be done, and let's suffer friend Morson to come off with his life. Apollo save us Comatas! thou hast the gift o' the gab.

(lines 76–79)
Such "gift o' the gab" is weeded out by Virgil in order to make room for more refined song. Along with the bantering also go the suggestions of Heraclean strength and footraces. The shepherds have less to do with sheep than with singing.

In Spenser the conversations are resumed, but this time in a decidedly collegiate manner. Thenot and Cuddie rival as old and young; Piers and Palinode dispute as churchmen, but in other eclogues of the Calender rivalry has largely been replaced by collegiality. The eclogues are governed by "arguments," and the swains typically give more energy to conversation than song. Spenser reserves the more raucous Theocritan rivalry for book 6 of The Faerie Queene in which the shepherds, "To practise games, and maisteries to try" (6.9.43.2), turn to wrestling. Such physical contests have no place in the "arguments" of The Shepheards Calender. When we compare the Calender with its classical models, we see that the English pastoral was clearly born more of the classroom than the country.

That campus originally meant "field of contest" gives us a good idea of the sorts of pastoral play to be found in the world of the university. Pastoral rivalry found a place in the dormitory, the lecture hall, the playing field and, in its most mischievous form, beyond the campus. The rivalry and sport of the university world took basically two forms, legal and illegal, with a clear and unsurprising preference being shown by the students for the latter. The result, in both the world of the university and that of the English pastoral, was a perpetual tension between epicurean impulses and puritanical restraint, a tension that inevitably resulted in a rivalry between youth and age, a rivalry that gave way to debate. For in neither the pastoral nor the university world do the impulses of youth go unchecked by age. Elder shepherds reside in the pastoral, just as in the university there are elder tutors, and in both cases it is the duty of these elders to instruct. Often, be they shepherd or tutor, the subject of their instruction is "the greater world" in which they have lived and from which they have returned wiser. Those whom they instruct, however, by the virtue of their youth, are the proprietors of this world of youthful joys.

Thenot and Piers know the maturity of age, the brevity of life, and the empty promises of the greater world. They advocate a puritanical restraint that is lost on Cuddie and Hobbinol, who, in harmony with the locus amoenus, are true pastoral shepherds, enjoying the delights of
youth to which Colin bids a reluctant adieu. These shepherds observe an epicurean code that, while sometimes complementary with the puritanical code of Piers, finds itself in continual tension with it as well.

A nearly identical tension between epicurean impulses and puritanical restraint existed in the world of the Renaissance university. In his description of undergraduate life, John Venn suggests that the impulse toward disobedience was a way of life. Speculating where one might find a Cambridge student of that day, Venn writes: "If he was forbidden to attend bull-batings, to go fowling in Chesterton marshes, or to bathe in the river [Cam], we gain a clue as to where we should be likely to find him of a summer's afternoon." In a letter of 1563, William Soone describes Cambridge students carousing through the streets of town "perpetually quarreling and fighting" with the townsfolk: "They go out in the night to show their valour, armed with monstrous great clubs furnished with a cross piece of iron to keep off the blows, and frequently beat the watch." Like romantic love, the violence of arms was reserved for ventures beyond the safe and prohibitive confines of the collegiate cloister. Concerning such nighttime recreation, Soone concludes: "The way of life in these colleges is the most pleasant and liberal: and if I might have my choice, and my principles would permit, I should prefer it to a kingdom." The pleasantness to which Soone refers is that which happens in spite of, and not because of, college codes.

In college, as in the pastoral world, the proprietors are the young, a circumstance that prompts the following complaint of a Cambridge authority during the late sixteenth century. Upset by students wearing the "new fashioned gowns of any colour whatsoever, blew or green or red or mixt," the official declared:

If remedy be not speedely provyded, the Universety, which hath bene from the begyning a collection and society of a multitude of all sorts of ages, and professyng to godlines, modesty, vertew, and lernynge, and a necesary storehouse to the realme of the same, shall become rather a storehouse for a stable of prodigall, wastfull ryotous, unlerned and insufficient persons.

A nearly identical complaint is delivered by Piers, the shepherd-guardian, in "Maye" of *The Shepheardes Calender*; when informed by his more
liberal companion, Palinode, that "Yougthes folke now flocken in every where / To gather may buskets and smelling brere" (lines 9–10), Piers responds:

Perdie so farre am I from envie,
That their fondnesse inly I pitie.
Those faycours littl e regarden their charge,
While they letting their sheepe runne at large,
Passen their time, that should be sparely spent,
In lustihe and wanton meryment.

(lines 37–42)

For Piers the shepherd is a Shepherd, a proper Christian minister. He has no envy for the epicurean joys, gratuitous interests, and leisurely activities described by Palinode.

Unfortunately for both Piers and the Cambridge authorities, "wanton meryment" would not subside, and the epicurean impulses that are the joy of the pastoral world would prevail over the puritanical codes that governed the university. Eclog 4 of Fletcher's Piscatorie Eclogues records this decline in discipline at Cambridge. As the fisher Thelgon (an allegorical figure for Fletcher's own father) departs Chamus's shores, he laments the deterioration of the fishers' trade and complains that his songs will be replaced by the songs of "a crue of idle grooms, / Idle, and bold, that never saw the seas" (st. 14, lines 1–2). Such as these, he tells Chromis, will fill the empty rooms and enjoy lazy living and "bathing in wealth and ease" (st. 14, lines 3–4)—bathing, too, no doubt in the River Cam, come the month of May.

Despite the frolic of the students on the sporting fields, in the river and the woods, and through the dark streets of town, the rivalries that occupied them most occurred in the corridors of the university, namely the rivalry of minds. This rivalry played itself out in conversations fed by murmured rumor that raised up some and lowered others and in a never-ending parade of academic and ecclesiastical disputes. Such rumors might include the latest of the attacks on the existing church system by Thomas Cartwright or news of a rebuttal by Elizabeth's loyalist John Whitgift. Such events, Alexander Judson notes, would not soon be forgotten: "The emotional life of large bodies of young men must find
some outlet," he says, "and in the absence of important athletic contests [no football was permitted with those beyond the university], it probably concerned itself at this time with events such as we have been narrating."  

Rumor might, about this same time, encourage the young fellows of Pembroke Hall not to vote for Gabriel Harvey in his appeal for Master of Arts. Thus it is no surprise that in the covert shades and bowers of The Shepheardes Calender we are privy to more than just the "delectable Theocritan controversy" of who is the best singer of songs. We hear talk of who is and who is not a worthy shepherd ("Maye," "Julye"), reports of how badly love has ruined a fellow swain (Hobbinol's constant theme), and discussion of the general wickedness of the world (Diggon's lament in "September"). As he recounts the university's injustice to his father, Fletcher's Eclogues take on a particularly Theocritan tone. Chame, having given to the worthy fisher Thelgon a costly boat (academic post) "bequeath'd it to a wandering guest" (2.12.3). Thelgon no sooner regains his "boat" when "Chame to Gripus gave it once again, / Gripus, the basest and most dung-hill swain, / That ever drew a net, or fish't in fruit-full main" (2.14.6-8). By Eclog 4, Thirsil's own consolation comes from "the Prince of Fishers," who, like Chame, appears again in Milton's "Lycidas," in which "Camus, reverend Sire," demands "Ah! Who hath reft . . . my dearest pledge?" (lines 103, 107) and the pilot of the Galilean Lake rails against "Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold / A Sheep-hook" (lines 119-20).

**COLLEGIATE POVERTY**

One may observe yet other similarities between the world of Cambridge, where English pastoralists resided and the worlds of their subsequent pastoral poems. One such similarity is the practice of poverty, which Theocritus calls the "one stirrer-up of the crafts . . . the true teacher of labour" (Idyll 21, line 3). The exchange of funds or currency by which, for instance, one's reputation might be bought or sold at the court, was not a part of the student's world. The delight of poverty for the shepherd is not the Christian joy of being poor but rather the epicurean joy of commonality. The shepherd shares with his companions common garb and common tasks; these put him in contrast with those at the court for whom negotium has taken the place of otium. The Greek
equivalent of *otium*, of course, is *scholia*. The scholar’s leisure, like that of the shepherd’s, derives from his freedom from economic concerns. If not supported by family or patron, the student supported himself with his own labor. Spenser, for example, attended the Merchant Taylor’s School as a “poor scholar” and served at Pembroke as a sizar, a student who received lodging and an education in exchange for his services and a nominal fee. As Richard Helgerson notes, “[Spenser] suffered no major déclassement.”

Freedom from worldly transactions, combined with the simpler life necessitated by a universally poorer world, allowed for a sort of ideal poverty by which the student could, if he wished, disdain the wealth of the world in the same fashion as the shepherd. Just as he could cast aside his Latin well-learnedness to adopt the simple tongue of the swain, so too this student of the university could pretend to enjoy the self-sufficiency of a pastoral economy that, Poggioli says, “equates its desires with its needs” and “ignores industry and trade; even its barter with the outside world is more an exchange of gifts than of commodities. Money, credit, and debt have no place in an economy of this kind.”

Such a barter with the outside world is the inevitable appeal the student must make for funds from his patron. The following appeal for funds comes from a letter written by Anthony Gawdy (cousin to Charles) in August of 1626. Gawdy desires to have some new clothes for spring, and we see that he does indeed perceive this dealing as an exchange of gifts, rather than commodities. More than that, however, we see in the letter, which he signs “Yor Porre Kinsman,” that the imaginative young man fancies himself in a world of nature quite apart from the world of commerce: “I confess it is the time now when nature doeth cloth all her creatures: the earth with grass, as the cloth, and with diversity of flowers as it were the trimming or setting out of the garment.”

Gawdy obviously desires more here than the standard weeds provided him by the university, probably without expense. If the court was made colorful by elaborate costumes, the campus, like the pastoral world, was distinguished by simplicity in dress. The common dress of the Cambridge student was as clerical as it was scholarly; it included a gown that reached down to the heels and a sacred cap of the variety worn by priests. The following regulations also applied: “No student shall wear within the university, any hose of unseemly greatness or disguised fashion, not yet
any excessyve ruffs in ther shyrts; nor shall wear swords or rapiers but when they at to ryde abroad; nether shall any person come to study, wear any apparell of velvet or silk." The decree against weaponry is pastoral enough, but, as might be suspected and as is certainly evident from Gawdy's letter, this code of dress was not in itself a delight. If the students enjoyed the common life, they missed the color and frills of the greater world that nature herself wore quite openly.

Residents of the pastoral world are joined not just by the "weeds" they wear but also by the tasks they perform. These tasks, if performed willingly, are not like the drudgery of the work-a-day world but are a fruitful manner of living by which they are freed from the normal curse of work. Generally speaking, the student in his cloistered world had as little to do with the usual curse of work as he did with industry and trade. Like the swain, he enjoyed instead a sort of *hesychia*, or work without toil. We find decrees such as the following one made by the vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1570 to be an exception: "No inhabitant within the town of Cambridge, being scholar or scholar servant, can or may be privileged by that title, from the common days work of mending the high-ways." The very fact that such a decree had to be made indicates there was much from which the scholar, by virtue of his privileged status, was exempt, including imprisonment and legal suits. In any case, we can be sure that study, not roadwork, was the chief occupation of the Cambridge scholar. The common task of learning, requiring *scholia* and *otium*, links the university student to the pastoral swain whose only real tool is an oaten pipe. The private ponderings, learned conversations, formal debates, and verse composing in which the students spent their days were tasks like the "work" of the shepherd and fisher swains, whose primary occupation was neither herding nor fishing, but singing. The infringement of municipal laws and labor—like the black plague itself—threatened the potential *otium* of the academic cloister.

For the aspiring poet, the study of the ancients was not merely an academic task or intellectual discipline. Rather, this study provided him both the model and the inspiration for his own verse. Here was a place of poetic inheritance, and now was the time to try one's own song. The shepherd's world and the student's world share a startlingly similar end:
The poet comes to Arcadia for a clarification of his artistic, intellectual and moral purpose. The assumption of the shepherd’s weeds signalizes for a millennium and more a commitment to poetry and to the exploration of the relative worths of the active and contemplative existences. The temporary retirement to the interior landscape becomes a preparation for engagement with the world of reality, for it is necessary for knowledge to precede action.\(^43\)

We need not substitute scholar’s gown for shepherd’s weeds to see the connection between the literary and historical worlds. What Peter V. Marinelli says of Arcadia is essentially true of the Renaissance university: “It is here [in Arcadia],” he observes, that the shepherd/poet explores “his commitment to the arts of poetry and to the art of love in its widest sense.”\(^44\) Similarly, it was in the university that the student/poet explored these same commitments and thereby prepared for engagement with the greater world, specifically the center of that greater world—the court. If successful, the student of poetry emerged from the university world, like the Arcadian poet, as the inheritor of a great tradition of poetry. The difficulty he then faced was how to live in the world without squandering his precious inheritance.

This engagement with the greater world required first a departure from the campus, a departure recorded—step by “stayed step”—in the twelve months of Spenser’s \textit{Calender}. Moving beyond the walls of Pembroke meant leaving behind fellowship, rivalry, poverty, and to an extent the common song—forsaking, as it were, “the delights of youth generally.” These pastoral joys did not vanish altogether, but neither would they ever be quite the same. The shepherds of \textit{Colin Clout Comes Home Againe}, published fifteen years after the \textit{Calender}, are middle-aged courtiers in thin bucolic disguise. Among his many other objections to these shepherds, “masked with faire dissembling curtesie” (line 700), Colin complains that they lack collegiality and respect for learning:

\begin{quote}
No art of schoole, but Courtiers schoolery.
For arts of schoole have there small countenance,
Counted but toyes to busie ydle braines:
And there professours find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of other gaines.
\end{quote}

(lines 702–6)
Gone are the scholar-poet-shepherds who peopled *The Shepheardes Calender*, and gone for Spenser is the world that had inspired them, the collegiate world of youth that had allowed the postponement of real-world responsibilities and the neglect of *negotium* in favor of *otium*.

Like the poet in Marinelli’s description, Spenser had come to Cambridge for a clarification of his artistic, intellectual, and moral purpose. As the English inheritor of the classic pastoral tradition, Spenser spent his inheritance in a particular fashion, one that records not just the emergence of the poet from pastoral to heroic epic, but even more precisely the emergence of the poet from the campus to the court. To explore the latter world and ignore the former is to ignore this movement and see only the political portion of the English pastoral, to see only the greater world to which the poet travels and miss the world to which he bids adieu.

Phineas Fletcher did not so easily bid farewell to the world of his youth. He remained at Cambridge off and on for fourteen years. Finally, with his most productive years as a poet behind him and exhausted by his long struggle for official stature at Cambridge, he exiled himself to Risley, where, as a chaplain, he took to pasturing a spiritual flock.

Milton, though he would later criticize many of the methods of Cambridge in his *Prolusiones oratoriae*, faced more difficulty than either Spenser or Fletcher in leaving the university and engaging in the greater world. Choosing not to stay on at Cambridge as a Fellow and declining the clerical profession, Milton chose “to adopt no profession at all, but to live on as a mere student and a volunteer now and then in the service of the muses.”45 Milton’s later yields would more than justify this initial loitering beneath the cumbersome burden of poetic inheritance. His reluctance, like that of his pastoral predecessors, was but the reluctance of youth faced with departure from itself.

NOTES

1. Even before Paul McLane’s exhaustive study of historical allegory in *The Shepheardes Calender: A Study in Elizabethan Allegory* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), historical considerations of Renaissance pastoral poetry

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focused primarily upon the Elizabethan court. More recently, New Historicians like Louis Adrian Montrose have returned to the court-pastoral connection with renewed fervor. “The otiose love-talk of the shepherd,” Montrose claims, “masks the busy negotiation of the courtier; the shepherd is a courtly poet prosecuting his courtship in pastoral forms” (“‘Eliza Queene of shepheardes,’ and the Pastoral of Power,” English Literary Renaissance 10 [1980]: 154). Such claims are what prompted McLane to untangle anagrams in the first place. Less concerned with precisely whom each of the shepherds represents, however, the New Historians concern themselves instead with what those shepherds were up to; and what they were up to, of course, was not innocent bucolic conversation, but jockeying for power. Stephen Greenblatt argues that Spenser’s shepherds “‘are neither completely autonomous . . . nor entirely the creatures of the courtier’s situation. There is a genuine doubleness about them, a mixture of outspokenness and diffidence’” (Representing the English Renaissance [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 166). Greenblatt’s granting of at least some autonomy to the shepherd allows the pastoral poet something like a personal past, which, in the case of Spenser, brings us most immediately to the gardens of Pembroke College at Cambridge University.

2. Peter Marinelli calls pastoral “the art of the backward glance” (Pastoral [London: Methuen and Co., 1971], 9). Like Frank Kermode, he presents the case that pastoral poetry is essentially a nostalgic product, that the pastoralist lives and writes in one world (urban) and recollects another (rural). See Kermode’s English Pastoral Poetry, from the Beginnings to Marvell (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1952), 14. This understanding of pastoral dates back at least as far as Quintilian, who, speaking of Theocritus, states: “Musa illa rustica et pastoralis non forum modo uerum ipsam etiam urbiem reformidat” (10.1.55).

3. Referring to Colin’s departure from the pastoral in the “December” eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender, E. K. writes: “Adiew delights is a conclusion of all. where in sixe verses he comprehendeth briefly all that was touched in this booke. In the first verse his delights of youth generally” (211). All quotations from the Calender are taken from The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, ed. William Oram et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).


12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
16. Just as the first Idyll of Theocritus laments the loss of Daphnis, so these English pastoraals record the sorrowful loss of their most excellent singer. The world of the *Calender* suffers the departure of Colin Clout. The world of Fletcher’s *Eclogues* is likewise disrupted by the departure of Thyrsil, and the loss of Lycidas (who “hath not left his peer”) comprises Milton’s pastoral elegy.
17. Langdale, *Phineas Fletcher*, 44.
19. From “Statuta Reginae Elizabethae: An XII mo edita,” in *A Collection of Letters, Statutes, and Other Documents, From the Ms Library of Corpus Christi College*, ed. John Lamb (London: John W. Parker, 1838), 352. The translation of this passage was provided by Herman Schibli.
24. All quotations from the *Piscatorie Eclogues* are taken from Phineas Fletcher, *The Purple Island, or The Isle of Man: Together with Piscatorie Eclogs and Other Poetical Miscellanies* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1633).
26. In Longus’s Greek pastoral romance, *Daphnis and Chloe*, the lovers return to the country to be married, so that their bucolic stepparents, their fellow herdsmen, and even the goats themselves are able to take part in the wedding festivities.
From thence forward the two lead a pastoral life. This rare allowance afforded to a pair who in the world of the city enjoy a status equivalent to prince and princess is clearly a happy exception to the normal pastoral course of things. More often than not, love consummation means a marriage without goats. In book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* Calidore brings Pastorella from the pastoral world to discover her old courtly parents and her new courtly home. Likewise, in *As You Like It* it is understood that after their marriage unions, Rosalind and her companions will depart from Arden and return to court.


28. The classic example of the shepherd–tutor is Meliboe, “that good old man,” in book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, who instructs Calidore in the essential ingredients of the pastoral world to which he (Meliboe) has returned after venturing into the corrupted world of the court (see 6.9.24.1–7).

29. In Poggioli’s words, “the shepherd is neither a stoic nor a cynic, but . . . an epicurean and observes with natural spontaneity the ethics of that school” (8).


32. Ibid., 26. The “principles” that kept Soone from Cambridge, Judson tells us, were his Roman Catholic leanings: “Soone knew whereof he wrote: a Cambridge man, he had served briefly as Regius Professor of the Civil Law, but had gone abroad in 1563 on account of his Catholic sympathies” (25).


35. Economics was not taught at Cambridge until the eighteenth century, and mathematics was introduced only in the mid-seventeenth century.


40. As if different-colored gowns were not enough, Cambridge officials had to worry about priests, graduates, and younger students sporting such courtly fashions as “fair roses upon the shoe, long frizzled haire upon the head, broad spred Bands upon the shoulders and long large merchant Ruffe about the neck, with fayre feminine cuffs at the wrist” (Cooper and Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 3:280).


42. In *An Abstract of the Composition between the University and Town of Cambridge* (Henticus Septimus, 1502, 2), we learn that students’ status as
"privileged persons" included exemption from legal suits brought by citizens, as well as a reprieve from detention in jail after an arrest: "He shall have vii days to bring a certificate under any seal of the chancellor, vice-chancellor or his lieutenant, that he is a scholar and upon such certificate shall be immediately discharged" (Letters, Statutes, and Other Documents, 2).

43. Marinelli, Pastoral, 45-46.
44. Ibid., 47.
BOOK REVIEWS
GENERAL


These essays originated in the 1985 Dartmouth College Colloquium on Medieval and Early Modern Romance Literatures. The editors’ introduction seeks to place the essays in the context of contemporary criticism’s preoccupations with *inter alia*, authors and authority, texts and intertextuality.

Albert Ascoli discusses Dante’s construction of a superpersonal poetic authority against the limitations of poetic language and his construction of the poet as an individual man by historicizing the self and by suggesting the analogy of “binding words” (*Convivio* 4.6.3–4) to divine creation. Giuseppe Mazzotta sees Dante solving the same problem by exploiting the role of play in the *Commedia* to figure the poet’s work as God’s work, a transcendental aesthetics that grounds ethics and knowledge. François Rigolot studies Ronsard’s comparable wrestling with the problem of suprapersonal authority in the *Franciade*: the poet’s unresolved claims for the historically circumstanced authority of Vergil and the originary epic authority of Homer, imagined as beyond time and circumstance. The one essay on a later figure, Donald Verene’s on Vico, shows an analogy in Vico’s preference for the authority of *sapienza poetica* over that of documented history.

Nancy Vickers writes on Petrarch’s appropriation and reinterpretation of Dante’s “widowed verses” (*Vita nuova* 31) in the first of Petrarch’s *in morte* sonnets, which rewrites Dante’s community of mourning into an isolated and individualized widowhood to construct a more poetically masterful authority. Authorial self-consciousness is also at issue in David Hult’s essay on Chrétien’s *Charrette*, a text whose authority is evidently shared between Chrétien and his presumed continuer “Godefroi de Leigni.” Whether or not “Godefroi” was Chrétien’s creation, the text precludes a single intentionality.
Marina Scordilis Brownlee studies a sequence of appropriations: Boccaccio’s use of Ovid’s *Heroides* in the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta* and the continuation of the *Elegia* by Juan de Flores in *Grimalte y Gradissa*. She interprets the tension between Boccaccio’s mythologizing (universalizing) and psychologizing (individualizing) as a crisis in linguistic referentiality, the split being then widened by Flores through reversal of the conventional signifying movement from word to referent. A similar problem is explored by James Burke in *Libro de buen amor* and *El Conde Lucanor*: both enact the hermeneutics of distinguishing signs of the true and the false, the former confident in its discernment of the counterfeit, the latter skeptical about the referentiality of signs.

Kevin Brownlee finds Christine de Pizan’s authority in *Dité de Jehanne d’Arc* deriving from collaboration between woman warrior and woman poet, the former in a figural line of female saviors, the latter in the sibylline line of female prophets, both equally empowered by God. Through instances of Tasso’s implicit imitations and borrowings from other texts in *Gerusalemme liberata*, Walter Stephens finds, in contrast to some recent readings, an unstable and scarcely consistent plurality of representations of marital relations and the roles of women.

In his study of Petrarch’s *Rime* 131, William Kennedy finds Renaissance commentators and poets (Louise Labé and Shakespeare) responding in different ways to the poet’s complex gendering of self and audience. Nancy Struever’s essay seeks to show how Machiavelli and Montaigne redefined ethical inquiry in the humanist tradition—Machiavelli by resisting the exemplum as a narrative prop to canonical moral counsel, Montaigne by accentuating the autonomy of moral belief within public situations that test it; both writers appeal to an anti-authoritarian ‘‘moral work’’ enacted through a break with the authority of traditional moral discourse.

Michael Rudick
University of Utah

**MEDIEVAL**

In *Augustine’s Prayerful Ascent*, Robert McMahon attempts a literary approach to the *Confessions* that emphasizes internal patterns, unity of narrative and expositional movements, and imagery that represents the work as an oral prayer that, like drama, exists and unfolds in the present. In his reading of the *Confessions*, McMahon distinguishes between Augustine the speaker or character and Augustine the author. Though Augustine the character struggles forward in a seemingly unstructured manner, he is actually being meticulously guided and nurtured by God’s careful direction, as understood by Augustine the author. Thus the inconsistencies that theologians and philosophers have thought to exist within and between the parts of Augustine’s spiritual autobiography are resolved, in McMahon’s view, by Divine Providence and the Neoplatonic concept of return to origins.

The apparent noncoherence of the first nine books—which culminate in Augustine’s becoming a Christian and end with praise and prayer for his wonderful mother, Monica, who has passed on to heavenly bliss—is deliberately intended to show the meaninglessness of Augustine’s life and of those readers’ lives who subsist without the word of divine creation of Genesis 1 and 2, the word that Jesus Christ fulfills as the Word (John 1–2). “Looking for patterns of metaphor and interpreting their meanings” (41), in order to unify books 1 through 9 with the concluding elaborate exposition of Genesis in book 13, takes up over half of McMahon’s short book. The spiritual ascent appropriately ends at the beginning—an exegesis of the creation of man and woman and God’s blessing and sanctifying the seventh day.

McMahon follows this discussion with a shorter chapter that relates books 10 through 12 of the *Confessions* to book 13, with its interpretation of Creation as an allegory of the Church. Spiritual ascent continues throughout time and history, especially in the development and structure of the Christian community, the spiritual mother of both Augustine the protagonist and Augustine the author. McMahon thinks the *Confessions* imitate the return to origins found throughout Scripture, and he believes readers are unintentionally caught up in Augustine the author’s careful plan.

Certainly both St. Augustine himself and various forms of “Augustinianism” have had a major influence on Western cultural history for both good and ill. Their influence on the predominant views of love, grace, providence, evil, sin, war, man, and moral and spiritual attainment come immediately to mind. Augustine’s view of human sin, for example, has countered the biblical and Eastern Orthodox perspective of the human capacity for sharing divinity, as well as for receiving grace (on this point see the five volumes of Jaroslav Pelikan’s *The Christian Tradition* and John Meyendorff’s *Byzantine Theology*).
McMahon supplies a useful, though limited, review of recent scholarship—particularly that of John Freccero, Robert Durling, and Kenneth Burke—upon which he builds his own insights. McMahon’s emphasis on Scripture as well as the Church in the Confessions is a corrective to other views, as is his awareness of the unity of narrative and instructive styles that the Confessions shares with the Bible. Some important elements have, however, been omitted from McMahon’s study. I wish, for example, that he had clarified what Augustine means by reason and in what ways it is the same as and different from spirit.

Wilson G. Baroody
Arizona State University


What follows is a review (by Sowell) of a book (by Mastrobuono) whose key sections review other volumes (by Charles Singleton, John Freccero, and Giuseppe Mazzotta) that are devoted to interpreting a poem (by Dante) that often incorporates other writings (by Thomas Aquinas) that interpret, among other books, the Book of Books (the Bible). Although this entire bookish enterprise may strike some as an exercise in frivolity, most literary scholars feel that nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, the matter is most serious, for the question of how to interpret another’s book fuels most of the debates that rage today concerning literary theory. In the case of Dante’s Commedia, the debate over how best to read the text has become especially heated in the last half-dozen years. For ever since a deeply depressed Charles Singleton committed suicide on October 11, 1985, the competition for the coveted title of “leading American Dantista” has proven intense. Now Antonio Mastrobuono has thrown his hat into the ring.

Unfortunately, the reviewer’s task becomes unduly complicated when, as in the case of Dante’s Journey of Sanctification, the author’s rhetoric appears calculated to create controversy. To cite a few parenthetical examples: Mastrobuono stridently accuses Singleton of “sheer absurdity” (53) in reading Thomas Aquinas, and of a “fundamentally false interpretation of the entire structure of the Comedy” (73); he accuses Freccero of “pure improvisation” and “sophistry” (78) in explaining Dante’s theology, and he accuses Mazzotta of “irrationalism or nihilism” (89) in arriving at a methodology. When a scholar employs invective, the reviewer must attempt to separate intemperate style from underlying argument, even if that reviewer ultimately must evaluate both.
Mastrobuono divides his truly important study into three chapters—"Sanctifying Grace: Justification and Merit," "This is the day the Lord has made [sic]," and "The Powerful Enigma: A Mortification of the Intellect"—each with a somewhat different polemical target. The first chapter seeks "to demonstrate that Singleton’s thesis of the Comedy is based on an erroneous interpretation of St. Thomas, and that Dante’s journey under Virgil’s guidance... is an effect of (not a preparation for) sanctifying grace, which Dante has already received before entering the world beyond" (v). The chief arguments Mastrobuono adduces to show Singleton’s mistaken understanding of Aquinas are reasonable and convincing. Singleton apparently quoted the Summa theologica in a highly selective and fragmentary manner to buttress his peculiar theories about grace; in the process he oversimplified the theology of Aquinas and consequently misread Dante at various points. But Mastrobuono perhaps makes too much of this, for his insistence that "sanctifying grace as it pertains to man [is] the most fundamental problem in the Divine Comedy" (30) raises more questions than it settles. How does the problem of grace relate, for instance, to what Dante himself placed at the focus of his poem—that is, the extended discussion of free will and love in Purgatorio 16 and 17?

Having bitterly attacked Singleton in chapter one, our author inexplicably cites him with approval in the second chapter (137). Mastrobuono, in search of a dual philosophical justification for his analogical approach to the Purgatorio, turns first to Singleton and then to the pseudo-Dantean Epistle to Cangrande on which Singleton unwisely relied. (I say "unwisely" because of the Epistle’s spurious authorship, as I and many others have shown.) Mastrobuono’s purpose in the second essay is to introduce new evidence in support of his unusual belief that the first day in Purgatory is not Easter Sunday, as most critics believe, but "simply a day that corresponds to the night of the Vigil between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday in Jerusalem" (131). This chapter fails to convince even as to its basic premise. Resurrection imagery hardly begins, as Mastrobuono argues, with the singing of Te Deum in Purgatorio 9; it appears subtly and powerfully, for example, in Purgatorio 1, from the initial verbs of rising to the final potent image of the regenerating reed. Also, Mastrobuono’s repeated and uncritical acceptance, in this chapter and throughout the book, of Dante’s authorship of the Epistle to Cangrande (see 8, 34, 86, 101-2, 137, 168, 238) smacks of scholarly naiveté.

The third chapter focuses on Beatrice’s highly enigmatic “DXV” prophecy and proposes "a philosophical approach that makes the meaning of the prophecy proceed from the text of the poem" (vii). In this case, the author’s "proposed translation of ‘cinquecento diece e cinque’ into the figure of a cross" (201) is quite helpful as an example of a new way to approach an old problem.
Unfortunately, Mastrobuono does not marshal enough evidence to prove that his solution is the final one. Too many of his extrapolations about “wax under the seal” (Purg. 33.79) and palmieri (palmers) rely on questionable assumptions or forced analogies.

An acrimonious appendix, “A Book Twenty-Five Years in the Making,” rounds out the volume. A lengthy and scathing book review of Freccero’s collected essays, the review was, according to Mastrobuono, originally commissioned by a former editor of Italian Culture but not published in that forum. Length was, I suspect, but one reason for its failure to appear in a refereed journal; another was undoubtedly its vitriolic language. The author self-righteously proclaims that Freccero “cannot be exonerated” of disregarding “proper theological facts” (247). This is the main thrust of Mastrobuono’s quarrel. Furthermore, Freccero is supposedly guilty of an “overworked imagination” (267), “gross misunderstanding” (269), and “interpretative perversion” (270). Such harsh language and ad hominem attacks sadly characterize the style of the book as a whole and tend to obfuscate valid points that need to be made about contemporary Dante studies.

What, then, are we to make of Dante’s Journey of Sanctification? In its pages Mastrobuono purports, above all else, to rescue the Commedia from the Singletonian school. But in doing this, he imitates too closely, from the viewpoint of style and tone, the voice of his irascible mentor and the book’s dedicatee, Rocco Montano. Even more telling, perhaps, is that Mastrobuono himself goes to amazing lengths to provide the “correct” interpretation of his book. He attempts this in the first chapter, which constitutes almost half of the book, primarily through restating his argument every few pages: Dante’s journey with Virgil is an effect of sanctifying grace, not—as Singleton “asininely” believed—a preparation for it; the pilgrim receives this boon in Inferno 2, not in the Purgatorio’s Terrestrial Paradise, as Singleton naively argued (see 5, 12, 25, 28, 42, 60, 62, etc.). And so it goes. Instead of making his point and moving on, Mastrobuono continually derides Singleton for having “put the cart in front of the horse,” a trite metaphor he employs at least four times (see xi, 45, 107, and 216).

A much better example of Mastrobuono’s desire to lead the reader by the hand occurs in the Preface (x–xiii), when he quotes verbatim—including senseless endnote numbers and a dangling colon—pages 54–57 from later in the same book. The point of this incredible redundancy seems to be to underscore, in as dramatic a fashion as possible, the “terrible confusion, on Singleton’s part, between the order of nature and the order of grace” (ix). Most significantly of all, Mastrobuono offers a built-in book review, located opposite the table of contents, that reproduces the seven detailed and laudatory appraisals of his book (by acknowledged friends—see iv) found on the back cover of his paperback. This
defensive and vainglorious act would appear much less troublesome had Mastrobuono not devoted the entire last paragraph of his book to attacking Freccero for the promotional blurb on the dust jacket of the latter’s *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. The notion, found on the dust cover and accepted by many American Dantists, that Freccero “is the best contemporary critic of Dante” is, to quote Mastrobuono, “a shameless, if not shameful, example of advertising hype, altogether unbecoming in a scholarly book on Dante, whose *Comedy*, after all, is also a celebration of humility” (279). Needless to say, such contradictions will likely confuse the sentient reader trying to make sense of the book’s overall purpose.

One final warning: Mastrobuono’s book is not particularly user-friendly; it lacks an index and confusingly locates the Contents page after the Preface. In conclusion, *Dante’s Journey* contains important revelations but could have benefitted enormously from a good editor.

Madison U. Sowell
Brigham Young University


This special issue of *Quaderni d’italianistica* brings together fourteen essays and five notes by some of the most distinguished Dantists working today and cumulatively offers a panoramic view of the current “state of the art” from a predominantly Anglo-American perspective. It also contains brief notices on twenty-six recent books and a sixty-page bibliography of Dante research published between 1984 and 1988.

The editor, Amilcare A. Iannucci, leads with his own essay, “Dante, Television, and Education,” which critiques a 1988 Italian series on the *Commedia*, a British production of the *Inferno* in progress, and finally the University of Toronto classroom videos that Iannucci himself conceived. Teodolinda Barolini’s groundbreaking “Dethesologizing Dante: For a ‘New Formalism’ in Dante Studies” authoritatively proposes a new course for future research on the poem: “The time has come for us to be more interested in how the *Commedia* works than in *what it says*” (46). Massimo Verdicchio, in “Error in Dante’s *Convivio*,” considers Dante’s error in believing and leading his readers to believe that one can improve oneself simply through the study of philosophy. Dino Cervigni persuasively interprets Dante’s loss of consciousness at the end of *Inferno* 3 in terms of a Dantesque rhetoric of silence in “L’Acheronte dantesco: Morte del Pellegrino
Diskin Clay investigates Dante's confessions of unfaithfulness to Beatrice throughout the _Commedia_ in "Dante's Broken Faith." Elio Costa's "From _locus amoris_ to Infernal Pentecost: The Sin of Brunetto Latini" reads _Inferno_ 15 in the light of Latini's philosophical and political writings. Christopher Kleinhenz provides in "Deceivers Deceived: Devilish Doubletalk in _Inferno_ 21-23" an articulated analysis of the ambiguous and deceptive linguistic surface of these cantos that examine the workings of fraud, especially fraudulent language. An important and original contribution is Madison U. Sowell's "Dante's Nose and Publius Ovidius Naso: A Gloss on _Inferno_ 25.45," in which Sowell demonstrates that the verse contains a play on Ovid's last name and integrates that play within a larger discourse on the role of Ovid in the _Commedia_. Margherita Frankel's "Juno among the Counterfeiters: Tragedy vs. Comedy in _Inferno_ 30" addresses the rhetorical incongruities of that canto's opening simile, which she reads convincingly as meta-rhetorical manifesto for Dante's comedic, anticlassical "new style." Domenico Pietropaolo, in "Dante's Paradigms of Humility and the Structure of Reading," provides thoughtful reflections on the phenomenology of reading as dramatized by Dante in _Purgatorio_ 10, which serves as a paradigm for reading the _Commedia_ as a whole. Zygmunt G. Baranski's lucid treatment of "Dante's Three Reflective Dreams" both shows how the organization of the dreams establishes structural connections throughout the poem and highlights the way in which Dante, in a strikingly contemporary manner, "imbues the dreamer's visions with psychological realism" (227). Giuliana Carugati's "Dante 'Misticò?'" is a fascinating and deeply pertinent essay that attempts the precise collocation of Dante's writing in relation to the writings of religious mystics. The essay portion of the volume concludes with two _lecturae_ by acknowledged masters in the genre: Michelangelo Picone on _Paradiso_ 20 and Riccardo Scrivano on _Paradiso_ 28.

The "Note e Rassegne" that follow the essays include a brief history of the Dartmouth Dante Database project, written by its "inventor," Robert Hollander; Nicola de Blasi’s discussion of the unfortunate philological history of Marino Jonata’s neglected _Giardeno_; a gloss on _Inferno_ 30.64-69 by R. A. Shoaf, who identifies Peraldus on the vice of avarice as a source for Dante’s _acqua falsa_; Carolynn Lund Mead’s observations on how Dante’s meeting with Forese comments upon the Ugolino episode; and finally, Mirella Pasquarelli’s engrossing note concerning the historical morphology of one of Dante’s most interesting and controversial _hapax_, the rhyme word _crese_ at _Purgatorio_ 32.32.

This general and necessarily cursory description should suffice to give a sense of the volume’s importance and usefulness, not only as a research tool for Dantists but also as a guide for scholars from other fields as well as for general readers interested in gaining access to the contemporary state of Dante scholarship and
criticism. In this regard, *Dante Today* can be taken together with the 1990 issue of *Annali d'italianistica: Dante and Modern American Criticism* as both quantitatively and qualitatively representative of the very healthy state of Anglo-American Dante studies.

Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.
University of Notre Dame


The authors of this study have provided a wealth of fascinating material for such a short book. They discuss the development and implications of the licensing of medical practitioners in the Kingdom of Valencia and provide thirty-one documents pertaining to this licensing and its results, printed both in the original Catalan and in English translation. These documents include legal requirements for obtaining a license, accusations of practicing without a license, and a number of recommendations that those examined be licensed to practice various aspects of medicine. They also provide a list of the municipal examiners responsible for this licensing between 1336 and 1400.

The licensing of medical practitioners—physicians, surgeons, and barbers—comes into prominence with the *Furs*, the lawcode of Valencia, of 1329. The *Furs* provided that each year two leading physicians would be selected to examine all prospective physicians in the kingdom. Before they could be licensed, candidates had to study the art of medicine for at least four years in a *studium generale* and then be found competent by the medical license examiners. Only if they met these requirements were they to be licensed to practice medicine.

The authors also discuss how this licensing was carried out and what its implications were for medical care. Valencia was far from being the first kingdom to pass laws requiring licenses for medical practitioners, but the Valencian situation differed from much of the rest of Europe due to its majority Muslim population and substantial Jewish minority. Lawmakers in Valencia, like those in the rest of Europe, were placing increasing importance on university training and professionalization in the practice of medicine. One of the more interesting peculiarities of Valencian licensing procedure is that the city of Valencia itself maintained the right to choose medical license examiners for the entire kingdom. It was certainly hoped that licensed physicians, surgeons, and barbers (and later
apothecaries) would prevent the injury and debilitation caused by quacks and ill-trained medical personnel. Not surprisingly, though, the results were somewhat different from those anticipated.

If followed strictly, the provisions of the Furs would have kept all Jews, Muslims, and women from medical practice, since they were not able to attend a university for training and would usually not know Latin. In general, however, the laws seem only to have applied to the treatment of Christians. Jews and Muslims were left largely to their own devices, although several documents do contain recommendations that Jews be granted medical licenses. Women were forbidden to practice medicine, but there is much evidence to show that they did practice in the area for a long time. Despite attempts to force unlicensed medical personnel to cease practice, the reality of life was that there were too few doctors to serve the needs of the population. The authors’ estimate that only six to seven licensed personnel existed (five if only physicians are counted) for every 10,000 inhabitants of Valencia. This number is comparable to the medical care available in the least developed portions of today’s world, so it is obvious that a great demand for other healers would remain, despite royal and municipal attempts to control medical practice.

Kristine T. Utterback
University of Wyoming


Readers of Chaucer have long known that his early poems are cast as dream visions, while his later works offer a strong realism. In *The Dream of Chaucer*, Robert R. Edwards, chair of the Department of English at the State University of New York at Buffalo, argues that the seeds of this admirable realism lie deep in the ethereal world of the early dream visions. *The Dream of Chaucer* examines with considerable care, in the usually accepted chronological order, the *Book of the Duchess*, the *House of Fame*, and the *Parliament of Fowls*. The early poems, explains Edwards, are linked together not merely by style, convention, or structure, although certainly all are there, but also by Chaucer’s strong adherence to a poetically imaginative approach toward the nature of love, art, and the interpretation of experience (23). Chaucer depended on the poets and rhetoricians whom he read less for pieces and fragments to be reworked (although he did indeed rework pieces and fragments) and more for symbols of meaning. The result is a sophisticated courtly narrative,
which is a cerebral improvement over the attempts of earlier continental writers, to the point where continental writers were soon imitating Chaucer.

Although some realistic pragmatism is evident in the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame*, it is not until Chaucer reaches the *Parliament of Fouls* that the real transition to realism begins. While exploring how language itself can demonstrate meaning in the *Parliament*, Chaucer moves to a new knowledge based on realistic particulars. He rarely looks back. From this point on, Chaucer’s depiction of meaning is rooted in the realistic behavior of characters and sequences of events offered by his narrators. The realism of the war-torn world of *Troilus and Criseyde*, the various problematic explanations of the Boethian answer to freedom of the will, and the mundane social intercourse of the Canterbury pilgrims all give additional meaning to Chaucer’s message, to his presentation of truth. The result is a much more sophisticated Chaucer, one who has taken all he can from his predecessors and become the Chaucer of the major poems.

Edwards’s conclusions will probably meet little opposition from the Chaucer community. The more we learn about the development of Chaucer’s art the better. But the *Dream of Chaucer* is not an easy book, and its writing could have been more lucid. Granted that the subject is complex, that an intense critical analysis always brings its own built-in intricacies, some of Edwards’s theoretical positions still might have been presented less enigmatically. That, however, is a minor problem. This book is a valuable source of good information for those with the patience to find it.

**Sigmund Eisner**  
University of Arizona


Embracing recent critics who see Chaucer’s art as “‘contrastive,’ ‘exploratory,’ a repository of ‘partial truths,’ ‘pluralistic,’ ‘inconclusive,’ ‘plurivalent,’ and ‘disjunctive’” (169), Paul Strohm develops a complementary social dimension by asking: What are the social implications of a plurivalent and disjunctive art of the late fourteenth century? After examining the structure of the late fourteenth-century social relations, Chaucer’s position as a courtier, his audience, and his work, Strohm offers an answer thoroughly congenial to our own times. Of the *Canterbury Tales*, for example, Strohm concludes: “The hospitality of Chaucer’s ‘framing fiction’ to the varied styles and genres and forms in which his tellers express themselves, and to the ultimate irreconcilability of their voices,
thus enables the perpetuation of a commonwealth of 'mixed style,' with ultimately reassuring implications for the idea of the natural state as a socially heterogeneous body that recognizes the diverse interests and serves the collective good of all'" (168). Those attracted to a disjunctive and pluralistic aesthetic will find Strohm's historical and social contentions highly persuasive; those not so attracted will just as surely detect modern artistic and social theories imposed on the art and society of another time and place.

Strohm locates the source of Chaucer's social plurivalence in his experience as a courtier. During the later fourteenth century, Strohm argues, a divinely sanctioned, hierarchical order was giving way to a secular, opportunistic, and horizontal order. Most exposed to the tensions were Chaucer and his fellow courtiers, "gentle in rank, but insecurely so; linked to the nobility, but less by sworn and eternal ties than by temporary contracts; members of a feudal retinue [but one] that actually combined elements of a political party and a precocious bureaucracy" (xi). These tensions, especially as exacerbated by the desperate troubles of 1385 to 1388, were, Strohm implies, enough to move Chaucer from hierarchical to horizontal social perspectives, perspectives for the most part only recently articulated.

The most historical and suggestive section of Social Chaucer is chapter two. Here Strohm examines Chaucer's royalist associations and compares the courtiers executed by the Appellant lords with those who survived. Strohm is not alone in detecting self-protective action when Chaucer left his post at the London port, and he is doubtless correct that preferment figured in the executions. A "persuasive pattern" (38) based on preferment alone is not, however, enough to distinguish those executed from those who lived to thrive in the 1390s. Burley and Beauchamp held positions more sensitive than any held by the survivors, and, based on preferment alone, John Clanvowe could have been executed with more justice than John Salisbury. Nor is it necessary to find detached calculation of self-interest in Chaucer's every new association and change of post. In its suggestive treatment of the opportunities and difficulties of court service in unsettled times, however, this chapter breaks new ground.

The last chapters, based on horizontal trends in late medieval political and social thought, offer a perspective on the full body of Chaucer's work. Throughout, Strohm finds discourse communities of "multiple, independent, and unresolved voices" (163) favored over hierarchical structures. Thus, the Knight's Tale focuses on the hierarchical and providential but, given Saturn's role, reveals "a scheme . . . anything but providential" (138). The Miller's Tale, on the other hand, focuses on the horizontal and the temporal but, in the jeering clerks at the end, recognizes that purely temporal "calculation in one's own interest . . . entails significant costs" (139). The Franklin's Tale "suggests that oaths themselves can
be a part of the problem" (106) and that a new, more "flexible and humane" alternative to "outworn social structure" is necessary (108). The Parson's Tale, by contrast, attempts a refedualization and resacralization of the "natural and varied world," but unresolved voices in the preceding tales "resist closure, denying to any one pilgrim the finality of utterance to which the voice of the Parson would aspire" (180).

The perceived strength of these last chapters (and the book generally) will depend entirely on the reader's presuppositions about Chaucer's art. Such is the irony of social and literary perspectives on work so rich and, as Social Chaucer demonstrates, so susceptible to multiple readings.

Charles R. Smith
Colorado State University


The title, Chaucer Reads "The Divine Comedy," is an apt beginning for this reconsideration of Chaucer's appropriation of Dante's text. This is not a book concerned with how Dante "influenced" Chaucer; that has been done before. Rather, this book explores the key theoretical differences between these two major medieval poets on the subject of the authority of reading and writing: it examines their assumptions about the domain of fiction, what human language can and cannot do, how one reads and what one apprehends from language, regardless of authorial intention. The House of Fame and Troilus and Creseyde are, for Karla Taylor, Chaucer's "critique of Dante's poem and its poetic typology" (171), a critique that implicitly defines the limits of human language. As she argues, "Troilus and Creseyde is, among other things, a sustained dialogue with Dante on the circumscription of human fictions" (209).

Taylor introduces her argument by providing the linguistic model from which she will analyze how the two writers create "authenticity" (10). She presents the grammatical and verbal structures that enable the two poets to create histoire (objective narration) and discours (subjective narration). Following this clear explanation of methodology, the first chapter describes Chaucer's view of "tidings" and fame by considering the House of Fame as an "antitypological vision of history as mere stories, recorded in literature, which, like fame, has no secure relation to truth" (40)—the antithesis of Dante's "vision" in the Divine Comedy.

Chapters two and four demonstrate how Dante authenticates his text through figurative language, thereby legitimizing the authority and objectivity of his vision
and conversion. By way of contrast, we see how Chaucer uses allusions to the *Divine Comedy* and figurative language, in particular to proverbs, to challenge Dante’s assumption that poets can “escape the deceptions of human language” (201). For Chaucer, language must inevitably share the instability and mutability of earthly existence.

This is a provocative and incisive study of Chaucer’s reading of Dante. The notes are thorough, the references and index helpful, and the book itself handsomely bound and sewn. In all ways, this is a valuable text.

Sandy Feinstein
Southwestern College


This annotated bibliographic index lists each “significant” reference, with a short summary, of twentieth-century commentary to lines and passages in G. C. Macaulay’s 1900–1901 edition of Gower’s *Confessio amantis*. The Index covers criticism through 1986 and a few items published early in 1987; it does not cover linguistic or textual studies, unpublished dissertations, or studies published in Japanese. Nicholson includes much material on the relationship between Gower and Chaucer, especially when such material aids in the study of the *Confessio*. As far as Gower’s influence on other writers is concerned, Nicholson limits commentary to those items that contribute directly to an understanding of Gower’s poem. In compiling the Index, Nicholson used approximately 330 books and articles, more than 100 of which are recorded here for the first time.

The entries are arranged according to book and line number as they appear chronologically in the *Confessio*; thus it is possible to locate instantly all the significant commentary on a particular line or passage, including the Latin verses. Cross-references in the entries direct readers to related passages in the *Confessio* and to other pertinent literary works. The Index also covers significant topics and figures not directly related to specific passages (for example, Amans, Venus, Genius, the Confession frame, and Pride).

The Index complements but does not replace Robert F. Yeager’s *John Gower Materials: A Bibliography through 1979* (New York: Garland, 1981), which contains close to 800 entries and is therefore more comprehensive, but which does not refer to specific lines. The Index does, however, replace Macaulay’s notes, now nearly a century old. The valuable 28-page Introduction to the Index provides
an overview of twentieth-century *Confessio* criticism and is a strong critical piece in its own right, containing useful information on new directions in Gower criticism.

The Index will be unusually valuable for scholars who wish to focus their research on topics and passages that have been neglected. Such unplumbed areas can now be found in a matter of minutes rather than in the many hours it once took.

The information in the Index seems accurate: a solid spot check revealed that the author’s information was correct and that he had summarized his sources impeccably. And Gower scholars will probably concur with Nicholson’s decisions about which criticism was important enough to include.

Scholars may wish that the list of Works Cited had included cross-references to lines and passages: it would be useful to know which passages a specific scholar had referred to. It would also be useful to have a list of Gower’s sources (Ovid, for example) with cross-references to passages. But to include such cross-references might have made the Index too costly and cumbersome. As it stands now, the Index is an excellent tool for Gower scholars: its publication will assist incalculably in expediting and broadening the base of scholarship on the *Confessio amantis*.

Katherine S. Gittes
California Polytechnic State University—San Luis Obispo


While treating different cities in widely separated regions, the distinctive approaches of these two books allow them to serve as companion studies. Fuente Pérez provides a detailed examination of the often tangled internal affairs of Palencia, a seigneurial city. The bishop, lord of Palencia, was responsible for guaranteeing its citizens (vecinos) effective judicial administration under the provisions of the charter (fuero) of 1180 in exchange for certain economic benefits. Lordship was particularly complex in Palencia because the cathedral chapter was lord of the village of La Puebla, which had been incorporated into Palencia as
the city grew, and Palencia's bishop was also lord of the city's separate Jewish and Muslim communities. As in any Castilian seigneurial municipality, Palencia's free citizens under the terms of the charter controlled their own affairs and managed the city's corporate assets (propios). Initially, these tasks were done by officials elected in the open council (concejo abierto) of all citizens, but by the fifteenth century community administration had become dominated by a small patrician council (concejo cerrado), although citizens sometimes asserted their right to meet in open council. As Palencia developed, it became difficult to apply the charter's terms to new situations, and the resulting conflicts among lords, small council, and citizens permitted more frequent direct royal intervention, culminating in the virtually permanent presence of a royal justice (corregidor) and the resulting reduction in seigneurial authority. Struggles between tax-exempt knights and taxpayers and between farmers and herdsmen accompanied these jurisdictional conflicts.

Fuente Perez provides a detailed and fascinating study of the great complexity and dynamism of Castilian municipal life at the close of the Middle Ages, a study that should be mined for future comparative and specialized works (although since there is no index, such use will be difficult). However, she does not adequately explain the relationship and conflicts between the bishop and the cathedral chapter, often incorrectly treating the two entities as manifestations of a single lordship, which they were not. Also, her treatment of the merino, a seigneurial judicial official whose role appears to have been transformed from appellate justice to some kind of police function, lacks clarity. She is vague about the geographical extension of Palencia's rural territory (término), and she fails to indicate whether the bishop's nearby seigneurial villages were carved from the city's boundaries. She also leaves the reader wondering how the citizens' open council was rendered increasingly powerless by a small council dominated by a few wealthy families.

While Fuente Perez's sources do not permit her to trace the development of Palencia's oligarchic patriciate, Sanchez Saus employs a different type of documentation to expose the emergence of Seville's urban nobility as it established its administrative primacy and scale of values. Starting from prominent families' genealogies prepared in the late sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and combining these with data drawn from archival and chronicle sources, Sanchez Saus has put together chapters on 25 representative lineages (of the 84 studied) of Seville's late medieval patriciate, with particular emphasis on the fifteenth century. For each lineage he provides a genealogical table with detailed notes, brief biographies of the principal members, and concluding comments about the course of its development. These chapters are preceded by two general chapters in which Sanchez Saus attempts to interpret the importance of lineage
and the nuclear family on the basis of his examination of 695 individuals and 588 marriages. Anyone working on late medieval Castile will be indebted to the author for the years of research this book represents.

While no real commentary on so much detail is possible here, I do have some general reservations about the author’s focus on lineage to explain the motives for individual actions. Influenced as they were by an increasing early modern emphasis on genealogical proofs of racial purity (limpieza de sangre) and nobility (hidalguía) for access to all sorts of opportunities, by the ever greater significance of entailed estates (mayorazgos), and by the diffusion of Italian treatises on nobility, the authors on which Sánchez Saus has relied tended to see lineage, meaning a genealogical entity binding together a certain group of people over a long span of time, as a far more important source of motivation than it was for late medieval Sevillian leaders. Unfortunately, in his general chapter on lineage Sánchez Saus attributes this early modern view to the individuals he has studied despite the huge quantity of evidence he presents showing that medieval patricians responded to a different scale of values. This difference will become clear only when someone brings together for a single city the two types of research these two books represent.

J. B. Owens
Idaho State University


This book was prepared in the spirit of a *Festschrift* for two longtime leaders in English local history, Maurice Beresford and John Hurst. Its purpose is to present a multidisciplinary view of current research into the origin and development of rural English communities. The essays collected by the editors present an overview of the latest research methods and update readers on developments in the study of medieval English communities since the publication of Beresford and Hurst’s *Deserted Medieval Villages* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1971).

The book is divided into three parts, representing the research specialties of contributors. Historical archaeologists dominate the list of contributors and give the work its archaeological flavor.

Part One, History and Geography, includes discussions by researchers who have attempted to reconstruct rural communities on the basis of contemporary documents, nineteenth-century ordinance survey maps, and archaeological
evidence. This section provides starting points for further meaningful research about lord–peasant negotiations and settlement changes, whether or not there was a retreat from marginal land in times of economic stress in the late Middle Ages, and the link between place names and settlement morphology in the study of nucleation and dispersion of populations.

Part Two, Field Work, presents essays in fieldwork methodology and the interpretation of evidence gathered through this type of study. An excellent introduction to the issues addressed by historical archaeologists, it should be required reading for students in medieval history. C. C. Taylor's article about shifting conclusions at Whittlesford is entertaining and valuable because it forces researchers to admit their own fallibility and to appreciate the contribution of older studies to current exploration.

Part Three, Excavation, details the use of archaeological excavation to describe medieval settlements and the social and economic life of their inhabitants. Essays by Richard Hodges and Martin Bell shed light on the roles of environmental archaeology and statistical sampling in understanding communities and the people who inhabited them. Hodges also shares some thought-provoking ideas on why scholars from different disciplines must cooperate with each other to accurately describe the past.

The Rural Settlements of Medieval England is a valuable summary of current trends and issues in the study of medieval English rural communities. Its scope is limited primarily to the work of archaeologists, but it does touch on the roles of historians and geographers in explaining the physical remains of medieval settlements. Unfortunately, there is no glossary or bibliography and the authors seldom define terms unique to this field. Footnotes are the only means provided for learning about related literature. The book is obviously intended for specialists in English local history.


Raymond S. Wright III
Brigham Young University

It is clear that Roland Bechmann’s *Trees and Man* is meant to contain all the information anyone would want to know about the medieval forest. His very comprehensive chapters cover such areas of study as the forest’s ecosystem, the natural resources of the forest, the farmer in the forest, actors and phases of clearing the ground, stock breeding and the forest, fuel, lumber, miscellaneous products and uses, production, exploitation and parceling users’ rights, legislation and administration, strategy, economics and politics, and, finally, myths and realities of the forest. Appendices include charts and tables devoted to chronology, interdependence of the forest’s socio-economic environment, cycles of primary forest clearing, and forest legislation. Each page is filled with a large amount of data and an equally large number of anecdotes. At the same time, this material often stretches across several centuries and sometimes across several lands (even on numerous occasions going beyond western Europe into Africa or the Middle East).

In these pages the reader will find an abundance of encyclopedic information on almost all aspects of medieval life and culture: on biology, on building and land clearing technology, on the agricultural revolution, on linguistics, on medieval hunting and fishing, on honey, on livestock mobility (both pigs and cattle), on the manufacture of charcoal and ashes, on the construction of wickerwork and fences, on roads, on the legal ownership of the forests, on the cult of trees, and even on the evolution of pagan mythical forest creatures into Catholic saints.

This encyclopedic abundance leaves the reader swimming in information. Ideas and theses flow past quickly and nonchalantly and chronology and geography jump erratically back and forth, all in a way that leaves very little lasting impression and even less satisfaction. Were the monasteries responsible for most of the deforestation of the Middle Ages? Who knows? The argument is stated and investigated in less than one page. What about securing the use of forest timber for shipbuilding? Again, who can say for certain? For although the issue is mentioned, nothing more is stated except that the French king, Charles V, exploited the Roumare forest in 1376 to ensure the supply of lumber of the Rouen shipyards (an interesting anecdote, but a poor indication of general medieval policy).

Bechmann’s book is not a monograph and should not be used as such. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to read the book from cover to cover. It is, rather, a reference work in which readers will have to search both the table of contents and the index to find discussions relating to their own specific interests. Even this will bring some dissatisfaction, as the footnotes are scanty and often incomplete. (One reads merely, ‘French text by Gimpel according to Panofsky.’)
BOOK REVIEWS

There is much about the medieval forest that is intriguing and in need of further study. It is thus a pity that with *Trees and Man* Roland Bechmann tried to do so much and, in fact, accomplished so little.

Kelly DeVries
Loyola College in Maryland


Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* is a novel of great complexity that admirably fits a definition of the genre as “a machine for generating interpretations” that Eco himself proposes in his Postscript. Of the many exegeses Eco’s work has elicited, none is richer or more illuminating than Theresa Coletti’s *Naming the Rose*. With her critical assessment of Eco’s novel, she has produced an informative and stimulating book that guides its readers to an awareness and a better grasp of Eco’s reflections on a panoply of cultural, linguistic, and theoretical issues, an impressive achievement considering the intricacies of the topics involved and the interdisciplinary proportions of Eco’s work. She demonstrates, with particular acumen, Eco’s ability to formulate carefully thought-out statements about language and hermeneutics against a concrete setting of medieval social, religious, and intellectual life. Declaring her discussion eclectic, she covers a vast array of intellectual endeavors, appealing to history, semiotics, biblical exegesis, medieval studies, literary theory, etc. In broader terms, she describes her book as a gesture toward the furthering of the dialogue between students of the medieval past and of modern theory. Emphasizing that Eco does not simply use medieval history as a setting—as an object of representation destined solely to enhance the historical novel aspect of the work—she draws attention to the fact that medieval history provides Eco with an opportunity to reflect on meaning as the product of culture and on a wide variety of social, linguistic, religious, and philosophical concerns.

Central to Coletti’s discussion of the medieval component in Eco’s book is her analysis of the role played by the Franciscan order in changing the religious configuration of Europe. Poverty, as preached by the Franciscans, evolves into a social problem constituting a challenge to the dominant Benedictine power base. The poor become marginal, excluded from the social order; they became outsiders produced by processes of cultural exclusion, hence the felicitous definition of culture as a system of exclusions legislated from above. These developments are posed in terms of an opposition between Benedictine monasticism and
Franciscan scholasticism. Monastic study advocates the repeated reading of Scripture, while scholasticism engages in the pursuit of new knowledge with its attendant risk. There are other oppositions in this medieval power play, between spiritual and carnal love, between sinner and saint, between serious and comic. Poverty, knowledge, love, and laughter are thus seen as having potential to challenge established power. This view ties in with semiotics, with the problem of distinguishing between similar phenomena with different names and different phenomena with similar names. The larger issue in Eco’s work is the cultural production of meaning.

It is impossible, within the limited scope of a brief review, to bring out the topical diversity of Coletti’s book. What precedes will have to suffice as a sampling. The book contains a useful topical index, but no bibliography. An annotated bibliography would have been a welcome addition, and it could easily have been assembled from the material available in the copious notes that accompany the text.

Frede Jensen
University of Colorado


This little volume consists of five essays: ‘‘Social Change Versus Revolution: New Interpretations of the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381’’ by J. A. Raftis; ‘‘Peasant Resistance to Royal and Seigniorial Impositions’’ by Barbara A. Hanawalt; ‘‘Chaucer and the Economic and Social Consequences of the Plague’’ by D. W. Robertson, Jr.; ‘‘He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence’: Iconography of the Plague in the Late Middle Ages’’ by John B. Friedman; and ‘‘Social Conscience and the Poets’’ by Russell A. Peck.

These papers focus exclusively on England and are primarily concerned with two events, the 1381 peasant revolt and the 1348 Black Death. The title of the book thus promises more breadth than the book provides.

The first two essays on the peasants are excellent and pack a lot of information into a few pages. Of course, this is only what one would expect of such pioneers in this field as Raftis and Hanawalt. Both scholars offer a sweeping view of changing economic, social, and political conditions in English villages, although Hanawalt, as usual, also manages to fit in many specific details of peasant life.
To a historian, these essays are the meatiest and most interesting chapters in the volume.

Friedman’s contribution attempts to answer the baffling question of why there are no direct depictions of the plague in late medieval art. He claims that medieval artists, who were conservative and constrained by tradition, preferred to use familiar symbols to confront this new calamity. His persuasive thesis is backed up with many excellent black-and-white illustrations.

The other two essays in this collection are on literature. Robertson points out that Chaucer, like many other writers of the era, was disgusted with the corruption and moral failure he saw in society in general and in politics in particular. Within the confines of a relatively few pages, Peck attempts the difficult task of trying to trace “truly basic changes in the medieval psyche” (116) that occurred, he believes, in the three decades after the 1381 peasant rebellion. He focuses on the writings of John Wyclif and Piers Plowman, Plowman’s Tale, and Jack Upland. Although not entirely persuasive, Peck is thought-provoking.

At $16.00, this hardbound book is a bargain despite its rather narrow scope of subjects. It is of interest to students of history, art, and literature. If not startlingly original, all the contributions are well written, solidly researched, and worth reading.

Melanie V. Shirk
University of New Mexico—Los Alamos

Cindy L. Vitto, The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 79, Part 5, 1989, 97 pp., biblio., index, $15.00

In fourteenth-century images of the Harrowing of Hell, Christ is often pictured wounded but triumphant, extending his pierced hand to a line of souls issuing out of the mouth of hell. The first two figures to leave hell are almost always recognizable as Adam and Eve; occasionally others in the line will be identifiable as Old Testament figures. But Plato will not be there, nor Socrates, nor Aristotle, unless one assumes that the anonymous figures might be taken to represent these ancients. Their absence is symbolic of a problem that medieval theologians and writers faced: What was the ultimate fate of the virtuous pagan, that person who earnestly sought after God, who followed innate rules of goodness and charity, but who lived too early or was geographically too removed to have knowledge of Christ’s incarnation and passion?
This is the question that Cindy Vitto deals with in her slim volume, *The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature*—something of a misnomer since only about half of the study examines Middle English literature. She begins the study rather traditionally—a lengthy chapter dealing with the theological background of the question. In this chapter she examines such worthies as Justin, Clement, Origen, and Augustine, comparing their conflicting visions of the possible union of philosophy with Christianity and the eternal implications of such a union. If reason or philosophy were seen as adjuncts to faith, these men and others argued, then certainly it was possible that God had made some provision for the virtuous pagans.

Vitto continues with the emergence of this question in popular lore, focusing on its appearance in legends such as that of the emperor Trajan, whose gift of humility would eventually result, in some stories, in a saving baptism after death. Vitto’s consideration of Dante’s use of this question leads her to conclude that Dante believed explicit faith was necessary for salvation—perhaps a too obvious conclusion.

Vitto’s main interest in Middle English literature lies in *St. Erkenwald* and *Piers Plowman*, and herein lies this volume’s greatest contribution. She concludes that *St. Erkenwald* demonstrates that a pagan can be saved, but not through his or her own merit; further, the poem demonstrates the unequivocal need for divine grace both for the individual and for the Church as a whole. *Piers Plowman*, in essence, shows this same need, though it establishes a tension between the need for good works and the role of divine grace. The virtuous pagan can be saved, but only through divine grace and intervention.

This book is somewhat too slim for its topic, a problem Vitto compounds by allowing herself to stray widely, dealing with questions of faith versus reason, good works versus faith, the historicity of the Harrowing and its meaning, and the ways in which all of these questions touch upon medieval understandings of the virtuous pagan—all in one hundred heavily footnoted pages. The opening chapter on the Church fathers suffers from its use of a wide range of sources that are not effectively integrated. The final effect is that of a series of opinions that do not add up to anything solid. Nor is there any direct evidence of how notions of the fate of the virtuous pagans filtered into popular literature; I suppose we are meant to assume such filtration.

Much of the background to the question of the virtuous pagans’ fate is examined in G. H. Russell’s “The Salvation of the Heathen: The Exploration of a Theme in *Piers Plowman*,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 101–16. Vitto might have followed Russell’s model to improve her work, which reads like a dissertation: There is an almost overwhelming amount of material in the package, but it hasn’t been sorted out and organized to lead to
significant conclusions about the influence of the question of the virtuous pagan on the literary art of the later Middle Ages. What different impulses are apparent in the folklore and in structured works like *Piers Plowman*? How did the question of the virtuous pagan play into some of the anonymous accounts of the Harrowing? Where did it appear in the sermon literature that might have popularized the question? In short, this study is only a preliminary step; deeper, more penetrating studies are needed to examine the place of the virtuous pagan in Middle English literature beyond the boundaries Vitto has set.

Gary D. Schmidt
Calvin College

**RENAISSANCE**


Leon Battista Alberti's writings have always commanded a central place in the history of Italian Renaissance art and architecture, but Alberti, whom Jacob Burckhardt more than a century ago proposed as a prototype for the "universal man" of the Renaissance, has in recent years emerged as a central figure in literary studies as well. Though we still lack an English translation of his important political satire, the *Momus*, David Marsh's new translation of his short satires, which Alberti in his autobiography described as "dinner pieces" to "be read over dinner and drinks," goes far in recovering for English readers his reputation as a satirist and moralist. Marsh's skill as a translator is evident throughout. He has performed great service to Renaissance studies in assembling a manuscript tradition that is not without some confusion, providing what is without question a definitive edition of the *Intercenales* works.

*Dinner Pieces* shows the influence of Lucian's satires in a number of places, making Alberti an important early proponent of the tradition of Menippian satire that would flourish in the sixteenth century, but they also reveal some debts to the fables of Aesop, a genre Renaissance humanists referred to as the apologue. Two of the satires, "The Slave" and "The Deceased," included orations that might be most accurately considered in the tradition of the mock or paradoxical encomium, praising, respectively, the condition of servitude and the superiority of death to life. A rhetorical genre often classed with Menippian satire
by humanists, the mock encomium would also become a favorite form in the repertoire of later humanists, and Alberti’s revival of the form is again a mark of his importance as a literary tastemaker. Because Alberti’s satires became available in printed editions only in the nineteenth century, we may never be able to assess explicitly the influence of Alberti on other writers of Menippean satires, such as Pontano, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Calcagnini (who also wrote a handful of apologues), but given the fairly extensive manuscript transmission some of them enjoyed, and Ariosto’s use of the satire entitled “The Dream,” we can assume a certain measure of influence on later writers. Many of the Intercentales seem quite close in sensibility to Erasmus’s Colloquies (one of them, “The Shipwreck,” shares a common title). Marsh’s edition will no doubt prove fruitful for future scholars of Renaissance satire.

But there is material of interest here for other scholars as well. Intellectual historians will find an interesting blend of both stoical and cynical moral positions taken in many of the satires, and early anticipation, perhaps, of the more troubling strains of skepticism that emerged in the later Quattrocentro. Alberti’s dialectic of fortuna and virtù (“The Deceased”), with which readers of the Momus are already familiar, may interest political historians in its anticipation of Machiavelli. Book 10 in particular will be of interest to this last group. Though Marsh sees Alberti as being conservative in his remarks about revolution (“The Temple”), I sensed a deeper ambivalence in the author, and Alberti’s comments on tyrants in the allegorical fable “The Lake” make clear his sentiments about despotism in the fifteenth century. Dinner Pieces also contains materials that will interest art historians, such as the allegorical program described in “Paintings.”

This handsome and relatively inexpensive volume is not without its tiresome moments—no fault of the translator—but it will prove valuable for years to come.

W. Scott Blanchard
Southampton College


Thomas Muntzer has long been an important figure in the research of Marxist historians and those interested in early modern revolutionary movements. In recent years, numerous studies have appeared examining different aspects of the reformer’s career. Interest was also evident in the years 1989 and 1990, which commemorated the approximate 500-year anniversary of the reformer’s birth.
Interpretations vary on Muntzer's impact on the Peasants' War and how his theology developed and influenced the motives of his followers. He is often seen primarily either as an antagonist to Luther or as an insightful social revolutionary. This lack of consensus stems in part from a tendency to examine Muntzer in light of modern political and social movements. These examinations have led to interpretations that perhaps too readily see him in terms of recent ideologies.

Scott's study is not designed to weigh these controversies but is "intended as an introduction to Muntzer's life and work" (xviii). In an all-too-brief narrative, Scott recounts the major events of the reformer's life and presents the basics of his thought. Scott continually downplays Muntzer's contribution to the various movements of the lower classes with which he was identified. Scott concludes that Thomas Muntzer was important as a "legend," meaning "the links between Muntzer's theological revolution and the mass of the peasants' aspirations and demands were fitful, fragile and fortuitous" (174–75). Muntzer, therefore, owes his fame to later interpreters, who could say what they liked "secure in the knowledge that their mentor could not gainsay them from the grave" (175).

Scott's thesis is interesting but requires more evidence and better argumentation than he presents in this short study. To say Muntzer has been interpreted too broadly invites an examination of the various schools of thought relating to him. Scott's study only hints at such an inquiry. Also, a more extensive recounting of the man's actions and beliefs is necessary to adequately substantiate the claim that Muntzer was not as important as he has often been portrayed. Furthermore, Scott's work is muted by a cumbersome structure that includes over-lengthy and occasional run-on sentences.

Scott's introduction will please few. His treatment is too brief for novices because a more extensive knowledge of the topic's background and context is necessary to understand Muntzer properly. Scholars will find the study equally inadequate because it is too superficial. A close treatment would have been more helpful. Scott's study adds little to the older but still valuable works of Eric Gritsch and Walter Elliger on Muntzer; it also suffers in comparison to the recently published Thomas Muentzer: A Destroyer of the Godless by Abraham Friesen. Friesen's work remains the most comprehensive, stimulating, and valuable to come out at roughly the 500th anniversary of Muntzer's birth.

Albert L. Winkler
Brigham Young University

Walter Liedtke, The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship, 1500–1800, Abaris, 1989, 336 pp., over 300 b & w and 34 color illus., biblio., $65.00.
Visitors to well-stocked European and American art museums can see any number of equestrian portraits from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Most likely, many of these gallery visitors dismiss the horse and rider combination as an archaic convention that has no particular significance. Nevertheless, these same gallery-goers may have perceived the mythic quality that once enveloped John Wayne in his heroic (à la Joseph Campbell) escapades across the starkly emblematic landscapes essential to the better films of John Ford. Is there any connection between one and the other Miles Christianus? Even though Walter Liedtke never mentions John Wayne, he does nicely restore the complex meanings once investing equestrian portraits. This superbly illustrated monograph (incidentally Abaris' first independent venture after the monumental Bartsch Peintre-Graveur project) reproduces scores of representative examples, from the classical Greek age up to the eventual “bourgeoisification” (Liedtke’s adjective) of the genre in the Victorian era.

Before the recent appearance of this comprehensive study, all we had at hand (besides a few current journal articles known only to specialists) were three very useful surveys: O. Grossmann, Das Reiterbild in Malerei und Plastik (1931); H. Friis, Rytterskauens historie i Europa fra oldtiden indtil Thorvaldsen (1933); L. Camins, Glorious Horsemen: Equestrian Art in Europe, 1500-1800 (1981)—but those were unfortunately made mostly inaccessible either because of language or limited distribution. When I first began working on equestrian portraiture some fifteen years ago, the essentially emblematic substance of this genre, which was initially an exclusively political kind of art, was largely unknown and thus scarcely mentioned by either Grossmann or Friis. Now, however, all that has changed. Among its other virtues, Liedtke’s scholarly but always readable text gives us a nice rehearsal of arguments for emblematic interpretation, now evidently taken for granted.

In brief, in the way that the emblematic tradition was first codified by Alciati (1531) and considerably amplified by his numerous followers, the attributes of equine disciple—exemplified by bridle, spurs, and whip and conspicuously displayed in mounted ruler-portraiture—symbolized the virtus (“mastery,” in this case) of the ruler–horseman. This doughty figure was to be shown mounted upon his cathedra (saddle) and ruling over a fiery horse, often explicitly described by emblematic commentators as symbolizing “brutish and unbridled passions,” specifically meaning, in this case, those of “the people.” In short, a rider/ruler who did not know how to ride/rule over his unruly charges would soon be (over)thrown from his saddle/throne. Liedtke’s specific contribution to this ongoing discussion is unique among art historians. Besides knowing himself how to ride a horse, the intrepid author actually knows the traditional, but now largely forgotten, specialist vocabulary of equine mastery belonging to the haute école.
Therefore, as no other art historian before him was able to do, Liedtke can correctly describe the particular pose of any given mount as having been depicted in either a "levade," a "courbette," a "pesade," a "passage," a "capriole," and so forth. Like Liedtke, any connoisseur of the period could quickly read these signs and evaluate them properly—which moderns cannot do, that is, without Liedtke's book in hand. Besides its other virtues, Liedtke's monograph provides the interested reader with a nearly complete bibliography of scholarly contributions on the evolution and meaning of equestrian art.

In fine, this handsomely produced volume is an essential acquisition for all libraries on art—and political—history.

John F. Moffitt
New Mexico State University


Accounting for the "spectacular rise and tragic fall" (242) of Anne Boleyn, Retha Warnicke proves that, in interpreting oft-told tales of King Henry VIII's machinations for producing a male heir, this story can be recounted from fresh historiographical perspectives. The author also invokes medical and psychiatric insights of twentieth-century science to explain the behavior of sixteenth-century princes; she reinterprets literary and historical sources from which she extracts new meanings to describe society in Henrician England and add new dimensions to historical perceptions of Henry VIII. In fact, Warnicke claims, Henry was the "master of his own house" (255); even his most powerful ministers like Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell, were servants rather than makers and disposers of Henry VIII's queens.

By amassing genealogical and historical details, the author explains how Anne Boleyn's father and other relatives established ties to factions at the Henrician court to advance Anne from her modest beginnings to the queenship and to improve their own lots. By Warnicke's account, Anne Boleyn was foremost a dutiful pawn to Boleyn family ambitions, and the family exploited her status until her fall from Henry VIII's good graces dictated that these opportunists distance themselves from her to save their titles and riches.

Although Warnicke demonstrates that the Boleyn family's machinations yielded them advantages, she argues less persuasively that love (rather than Boleyn family maneuvering, Anne Boleyn's coquettish behavior, or Henry VIII's
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...led Henry to select Anne for his next queen after Catherine of Aragon. After a stormy courtship, adversative relationships persisted in the marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Yet despite the writer's evidence suggesting that affection and mutual distaste alternately characterized their marriage, Warnicke concludes that genuine love dominated their relationship until Anne's miscarriage of a deformed male child caused Henry VIII to think that she had bewitched him. Next, in a notably incisive chapter, Warnicke shows how contemporary social mores confirmed for Henry VIII his judgment of Queen Anne and helped him to justify executing her. Warnicke pictures Anne Boleyn as a queen who respected social traditions and religious conventions and abided by their constraints, but who became a tragic figure. Warnicke's Anne is a woman whose femininity, fair-mindedness, and gentle human impulses were exploited by relatives and Henrician courtiers. In short, Warnicke recounts an old story lucidly, usually sustains her new historical judgments, and tempts readers to reassess traditional thinking about Anne Boleyn's place in Tudor state affairs. In fact, in spite of the author's dogmatism at points, her volume's best qualities include substantive historiographical discussions. For instance, Warnicke skillfully analyzes sources like Eustace Chapuy's diplomatic dispatches; she exposes Wolsey's and Cromwell's untruths and distortions of fact that have sometimes misled historians; and she persuasively criticizes "modern argument[s]" (154) about the influence of Aragonese factions at the Henrician court and purported alliances between Cromwell and Anne Boleyn to manipulate English state affairs.

Hugh T. Lovin
Boise State University


Biography has been an unfashionable form of historiography in the era of the Annales school, but recent years have seen the appearance of several distinguished biographies of French kings by scholars such as M. G. A. Vale (Charles VII), R. J. Knecht (Francis I), and David Buisseret (Henry IV). Frederic Baumgartner's study of Henry II is a welcome addition to this list and fills a large void in the literature of Renaissance France. It is the first scholarly biography of Henry II in over seventy-five years.

Henry II, second son of Francis I, was born at the height of the French Renaissance. The famed "roi-chevalier" and "père des lettres" would no doubt be relieved that he is more remembered as "père des lettres" than as "père
de Henri II," for it was his son's destiny, if not achievement, to open the route to the great civil wars that almost destroyed the kingdom and precipitated the collapse of the cultural and political greatness of Renaissance France. Heir to the Italian ambitions and Habsburg enmities of his ancestors, Henry II quickly learned his responsibilities by serving several years of his childhood as hostage for his father in Spain. After an active apprenticeship in arms and governance, Henry assumed the throne in 1547 at the age of twenty-eight. The next twelve years were years of steady bureaucratic modernization and intermittent victory and defeat as the focus of the Habsburg-Valois Wars shifted northward. Henry recovered Calais and acquired Metz before concluding the unfavorable treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. His absurd death of a tournament wound that year precluded his addressing the domestic problems of religious and aristocratic factionalism that had reached crisis proportions during his reign, and his successors' failures have left the impression of a disastrous legacy.

At first glance, Henry II has much to answer for in his stewardship of the Valois kingdom, and Baumgartner offers a plausible if not altogether persuasive apologia for his hero. Traditional in approach, the study offers a lucid narrative and well-informed analysis. As an expert on ecclesiastical history, Baumgartner provides a good treatment of religious policy, though his discussion of the medieval origins of Gallicanism is too cryptic. Renaissance monarchs are best understood when their policies are presented firmly in the context of precedent, and Baumgartner does a better job with his discussion of the fifteenth-century Burgundy-Orléans feuds, which formed the underpinnings of Valois diplomacy. The entire study is based on a firm command of the secondary literature, but the focus is narrowly political. The many socio-cultural studies of Natalie Davis are neglected, and the recent works of M. G. A. Vale and Maurice Keen on late medieval chivalry are disregarded, though they potentially offer much to a study of such a militaristic monarch.

The end result is a thoroughly competent, highly useful work. It succeeds admirably in describing the man and his reign. It will be read by all students of Renaissance France and repeatedly referred to thereafter. It may be another seventy-five years before anyone again feels the need for a new biography of Henry II.

Paul Solon
Macalester College

Historical literature on European witch-hunting has made great strides in recent years by using court records to document the patterns and assumptions involved in witchcraft accusations and trials. Yet with the notable exception of Carlo Ginzburg's work on the Friulian *benandanti*, the Italian witchcraft experience remains less well studied than that of other western European countries. To some extent there is less to study, since Italy did not participate very energetically in the European "witch panic" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The relevant historical question in this case turns out to be "Why was there no Italian witch panic?" or "What did the Italians do instead of hunting witches?"

Ruth Martin's book, based on a Ph.D. dissertation directed by Brian Pullan at Manchester University, addresses these questions through a study of Venetian Inquisition trials dealing with witchcraft and related magical crimes. The author uses the term *witchcraft* (*stregoneria*) in its broadest sense (indeed, almost as equivalent to *magic*) to include practices ranging from the learned ritual magic of both lay and clerical male treasure hunters to more humble forms of illiterate female divination and love magic. The classic model of European witchcraft, focused on night-flying to the Sabbath for collective devil worship and subsequent acts of *maleficium*, was conspicuously absent in the Venetian records, and only mild penalties were imposed for the magical crimes prosecuted.

This study is based on extended research in Venice, yet the organization of the book tends to subordinate its rich archival material to a sometimes overly general review of how the broad categories and concepts of European witch-hunting do and do not fit the Venetian experience. The best of these discussions concerns the way in which concepts of ritual magic dominated Inquisitorial manuals and trials, leading to a curious but characteristic institutional disinterest in the basic witchcraft category of *maleficium*. One of Martin's most intriguing discoveries about the peculiar magical landscape of this intensely political urban republic involves the widespread resort to divination in order to win at the *piria*, an unofficial Venetian gambling institution based on predicting the outcome of frequent elections to government offices. By being organized more closely around phenomena like this, which emerge directly from the documents, the material could have been presented in a more compelling manner, giving more prominence to its distinctively Venetian aspects. For example, urban/rural contrasts, such as the lack of popular concern about *maleficium*, and the extensive magical activities both of foreigners (Greeks, Slavs, Albanians, Cretans) and of non-Venetian Italians (especially Friulians) remain striking but not fully developed themes, although both are discussed in a final chapter.

The author underlines the value of Inquisitorial archives for a social history of Venice, yet her tendency to summarize rather than quote from specific cases
leaves unexploited much of the potential of verbatim trial records documenting ordinary conversations and "remarks made in passing by accused and witnesses" (234). Other problems include a labored but somewhat unleavened prose style, an overreliance on English secondary sources, and a corresponding neglect of Italian scholars like Andrea Del Col, who have produced important work on the Venetian Inquisition in recent years. (However, it should be noted that articles published in local Italian journals can be somewhat inaccessible to foreigners.) Despite these reservations, Ruth Martin's study represents a solid and important contribution to the scholarly literature on patterns of European witch trials.

Mary R. O'Neil
University of Washington

Philippa Berry, Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen, Routledge, 1989, 193 pp., xii, ill., biblio., index, $35.00.

This dazzling study of the "literary" cult of Elizabeth the Virgin Queen sets out to revise both old and new orthodoxies. In the first two chapters Philippa Berry traces the genealogy of a female wisdom figure and the relationship of this figure to Petrarchan and Neoplatonic discourses of love, connecting these intellectual movements to the construction of an absolute state in which a male ruler governs a state that has been gendered female. These discussions serve as a context for her reexamination of the courtly cult of Elizabeth.

In chapter three Berry points out that modern interpretations of the courtly cult, deriving from Frances Yates, fail to take account of Elizabeth's gender. Likewise, recent criticism has depicted Elizabeth as a largely passive figure whose patrilineal descent alone establishes her authority. To offset the privileging of patriarchal views of Elizabeth, Berry dwells upon Elizabeth's ties to her mother and her bonds with female courtiers. In the next three chapters, Berry supplies a diachronic interpretation of the mythological imagery in entertainments, drama, and poetry as these metaphors changed between the 1570s and the 1590s. In these discussions, Berry focuses on the early courtly entertainments of the mid-1570s, the drama of John Lyly, and the poetry of George Chapman, William Shakespeare, and Edmund Spenser, although numerous other writers also receive commentary.

Highly influential studies by Louis Montrose and others of the complex power and gender relations in the Elizabethan court have stressed Elizabeth's lack of impact on her culture. Montrose, for example, comments that "because she was always uniquely herself, Elizabeth's rule was not intended to undermine the male hegemony of her culture. Indeed, the emphasis upon her difference from

In the spirit of the best volumes in Twayne’s English Author Series, Jean R. Brink’s study of Michael Drayton balances an accurate, current biographical survey of the author’s work with a reassessment of its critical and historical importance. In the case of Drayton, this balanced approach calls for a major overhaul of deeply entrenched assumptions, for Drayton criticism carries with it generations of cultural prejudices that have influenced our understanding of the man and his work. Brink offers a revisionist reading framed largely in terms of Drayton’s tenuous place in the Tudor and Stuart patronage system.

The early chapters of *Michael Drayton Revisited* chronicle Drayton’s life and literary apprenticeship up to 1597 and complete most of the levelling in the demythologizing process begun earlier. Brink scrutinizes against the documentary evidence the sepia-tinted image often painted of Drayton’s life in Sir Henry Goodere’s household as well as accounts of his lifelong devotion to Anne Goodere. Brink shows us a Drayton who lacked both social connections and social skills and who struggled for patronage in a system he resented and felt vitiated the poetic tastes and moral fiber of James’s and Charles’s courts. Brink refers to Drayton’s use of dedications and prefatory material and to his habits
of revising his work to interpret the poet’s life within the clientage system. Given Drayton’s long and chequered career, Brink’s study provides a richer and more nuanced portrait than we have had to date of Drayton’s deteriorating relations with Lucy Harington, later Countess of Bedford; of his exclusion from court circles; and of his vocal disapproval of coterie poetry and even of James I himself.

Brink’s historicized reappraisal of Drayton’s work also adds significantly to our understanding of Drayton’s experiments in, and critical comments on, literary form and genre. We have long recognized Drayton as among the most self-conscious of writers. Brink goes a step further, studying his works, including dedications, prefatory remarks, and revisions, for their critical content, and shows him to be an astute commentator on the state of the *bonae litterae* in his generation.

Brink comments on each of Drayton’s major volumes or works in ways that set them in new historical contexts. Because of the narrow scope of the series format, Brink’s surveys are sometimes quite cursory, but they all open up fresh approaches to the work. The most interesting and informative are the studies of *Ideas Mirrour* and *England’s Heroicall Epistles*. In each case, Brink provides an original and informative assessment of the work as a whole, including its genre, design, and evolution. More disappointing is the examination of *Poly-Olbion*, which uses current argot to dress up what is essentially the standard image of Drayton the patriot yet neglects some solid though less fashionable recent work. But more important than the studies of individual works are Brink’s discussions of the folios of 1619, 1627, and 1630, which open up promising new critical avenues into Drayton’s awareness of the potential of printing for the establishment of his legacy.

Brink’s Drayton, an irascible, socially unsubtle individual, is more realistic and rounded than the portrait of benign mediocrity we have lived with, but it is the same man. Brink’s study does not overstate Drayton’s poetic achievement, but it does renew critical interest in the author. Naturally, Brink’s approach has its limitations. Some of the old myths persist in slightly different and often more extreme forms, which is not to say they are inaccurate, just that they need to be recognized for what they are: part of the old Drayton, the arch-conservative Elizabethan alienated from James’s court. Drayton is also cast, interestingly, as an unrepentant Petrarchan in a way that implies that Petrarchism is to be associated with “Elizabethanism,” which, of course, it should not be. Finally, Brink’s insistence on the theme of patronage, although it helps contextualize the poet, seems to imply that poetry was written for the sole purpose of winning a patron; as a critical focus, patronage may not prove to be a durable vehicle for interpretation.

Wyman H. Herendeen
University of Windsor

Although densely concise prose sometimes obscures his argument, John D. Bernard has written what the book’s dust jacket aptly describes as “the most comprehensive study of pastoralism in Edmund Spenser’s poetry” to date. Bernard traces pastoral elements through the bulk of Spenser’s poetry, focusing on relationships between the vita contemplativa represented by pastoral poetry and the contrasting vita activa associated with heroic poetry and courtly values. Bernard asserts that “Spenser never resolved his personal and social conflicts as a poet” (165), but Bernard demonstrates a progression in the poet’s work toward a “pastoral of contemplation” distinct from new historicists’ “pastoral of power.” Bernard sees Spenser’s pastoral as peculiarly mediating between the poet’s inspired contemplation and the political exigencies of Elizabethan court life. As his poetic career mirrored Vergil’s composition of eclogues, georgics, and epic, Spenser became increasingly disillusioned with Vergil’s Arcadian model of pastoral poetry and the court poet’s role, ultimately seeming to retreat into contemptus mundi as a thinly veiled criticism of court life.

Bernard sees the pivotal events in Spenser’s life around 1591 (the publication date of Complaints and the prefatory date of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe) as the biographical corollary to Spenser’s revaluation of the poet’s role as it appears in his works. This emphasizes Spenser’s failure to obtain preferment with the publication of the first installment of The Faerie Queene, but Bernard’s theory of Spenser as poet stresses a positive role for poetry even when the poet’s social and didactic goals seem blighted. The pastoral is a locus of appropriation of authority in which Spenser often demonstrated his own agency by creating in dissembling form the images of imperial power as well as the reflection of inspired contemplation. Bernard acknowledges the important recent work of Louis A. Montrose and points to the roots of his own perspective on the pastoral in the criticism of William Empson, Paul J. Alpers, and Harry Berger, Jr. In some respects Bernard’s work can be seen as an attempt to accommodate more traditional readings of Spenser’s poetry to the politically conscious work of New Historicism. Bernard pursues this goal by analyzing Spenser’s poetry in a biographical framework that utilizes archetypal and formalist approaches; and his examination of the arrangement of the poems in the 1591 volume of Complaints is particularly interesting. His reading of The Shepeardes Calender is provocative, and he treats The Faerie Queene as the two separate parts that Spenser committed to print in 1590 and 1596, stressing continuity in the poet’s role.

Certainly the pattern that Bernard observes in Spenser’s career is not surprising, but the comprehensive survey of pastoralism is a valuable contribution.
to Spenser studies. As a concise examination of the genre in Spenser’s works, the book offers a learned and thoughtful perspective, but not the last word, on Spenser’s pastoral.

Steven Max Miller
Millersville University of Pennsylvania


Not a conventional biography, this book focuses on Shakespeare’s professional career: his life as a poet, playwright, and shareholder in the Globe theater. It is little concerned with his immediate family, education, property investments, or private relationships. Instead it treats subjects and issues such as the status of actors and the acting profession; patronage; censorship; topical allusions; coterie vs. public drama; rivalry between the major companies; Shakespeare’s earnings and other business details connected with the dramatic professions; and his choice of dramatic subjects and style compared to the choices of his contemporaries, especially Ben Jonson. In fact, one of the questions Dutton, author or editor of several books on Jonson, contemplates is why Shakespeare worked “in modes and styles so different from those adopted by his younger rival” (xi). This treatment of Shakespeare within the context of other playwrights and their various responses to the theatrical marketplace is one of the more interesting topics of the book.

This treatment of Shakespeare is also why the book will be useful primarily to undergraduates who tend to read Shakespeare in a vacuum, and who have never heard of Middleton, Marston, or Beaumont, much less read them. This book will expand their conception of Shakespeare as a romantic genius and allow them to see him as a consummate working professional affected by the practical exigencies of his craft and the business of satisfying paying customers at the court or Bankside. While it is, of course, impossible to state the precise effect of, for instance, the dimensions of the Globe theater on the plays, Dutton takes such information and explores its repercussions in a balanced and impartial fashion. For example, Shakespeare’s steady income as an actor, playwright, and shareholder allowed him to get by writing approximately two plays per year, compared to the average of as many as six for most playwrights. Dutton suggests that this comparatively light work load gave Shakespeare an advantage over his rivals by allowing him to compose for quality rather than quantity, a privilege Ben Jonson also acquired after he received the court masque commission.
Graduate students and general readers who may require a brief, clearly written account of Shakespeare’s professional background will also benefit immensely from Dutton’s book. But it is probably fair to say that to Shakespeare specialists or scholars most of the information will be very familiar, especially to those who have read E. K. Chambers’s classic work in this area, which is Dutton’s major source. Granted, discussions of these subjects may also be found in prefatory matter of the major anthologies of the plays, but what is found in summary form there is discussed and judiciously weighed here.

One of the most appealing features of the book is its balanced presentation and dispassionate analysis of various sides of an issue. The book and the series to which it belongs (Literary Lives, published by St. Martin’s Press) qualify the historicizing tendency of the school of criticism that makes the individual author only one of a huge array of factors and influences that determine the creation of a literary text. The “death of the author in literary studies,” proclaims the book jacket, echoing Mark Twain, is “an exaggeration.”

I definitely recommend this book for students. I intend to require mine to read it.

William F. Gentrup
Arizona State University West

George Parfitt, John Donne: A Literary Life, St. Martin’s Press, 1989, viii, 140 pp., biblio., $35.00

This study examines John Donne not as a single figure but “as a multiple made up of the interaction of personality with the shaping qualities of the modes in which he is working and the specific circumstances which bear upon his adoption of these modes and not others” (71). Ambition, in Parfitt’s view, is the link that connects Sir Thomas Egerton’s secretary and Ann More’s husband and the Church of England priest. This addition to the Literary Lives series (which traces the outlines of writers’ working lives in light of professional, publishing, and social contexts) provides a good overview of Donne’s career, although it often does so at the expense of a problematizing analysis or an engaging critique. Parfitt states his objections both to the ahistoricism of John Carey’s Catholic-dominated study and to the possible reductivism of Alan Sinfield’s materialistic criticism; however, despite the fact that he wants to see the poems as “energetic concentrations of experience” (31), he ends up stressing the social contexts of these opportune experiences in ways that almost bypass their literary importance.
His study is first-rate when it explores and explains the different genres in the various stages of Donne’s career: the witty superior satirist entertaining a coterie of like-minded young men, the more traditional modes of the penitent husband, and the elitist performance of the via media Anglican preacher. Equally precise at contextualizing Donne’s differences from satirists like Marston and Hall, as well as from devotional poets like Herbert, Parfitt makes a strong case for the continuing sense of restlessness, doubt, and debate with the self throughout Donne’s mask-filled writing.

Yet, along with this thoroughness, there is a curious offhand quality to Parfitt’s observations in two key areas: Donne’s treatment of women and his role in the tense religious politics of the seventeenth century. Although Parfitt acknowledges “the rise of feminist studies” (30), he still parades the conquests of the ‘self-satisfied’ young man as merely “a brilliant projection of a very common male viewpoint whereby women are to be denigrated (perhaps out of fear) and also celebrated as objects for male gratification, to be shown off, stripped and [f——d]” (37). He mentions pornography, colonization, and dehumanization and goes so far as to admit that “women may justly resent” (78) this portrayal; but he then concludes, somewhat stereotypically, that these poems tell the “disturbing truth” (79) about men. The question of Donne’s religious loyalty is even more slippery for Parfitt. A self-declared “atheist” (125), Parfitt not only dismisses contemporary Anglicanism wholesale as “an etiolate memory of an idealized past and a sentimental indulgence for patriots” (119), he also accounts for Donne’s “orthodox Anglicanism, ... hybrid Calvinism ... co-existing with residual Catholicism” (97) by resorting to labels rather than exemplifying these tenets in Donne’s poetry and prose.

Situating writers in their time invariably involves some anachronistic assumptions. With certain gaps and simplifications, Parfitt has succeeded in keeping alive the drama between the secular and the spiritual, the opportune and the felt responses in the work of John Donne.

Patricia Demers
University of Alberta


*Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, published posthumously in 1617, is, if we are to trust Cervantes’s own assessment, his finest achievement in the realm
of letters. The lengthy narrative is an epic in prose, "a Northern story," with episodes set on Nordic shores and ending in Rome. Modeled after Heliodorus's *Aethiopica*, an early Hellenistic romance, the *Persiles* traces the trials of the title characters—their separation, travels, tribulations, and eventual reunion—in a lofty and elegant prose style. Cervantes's creation is interesting from a number of perspectives. The *Persiles* invites comparison with other types of romance and with *Don Quixote*, which also re-creates an existing form. Reacting to criticism of the first part of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes finds a place in part 2 for commentary on the relation between the main plot and episodic digressions. The exotic adventures and the geographical range of the *Persiles* together with the open middle space of romance (the space between separation and reunion or, in this case, between love and marriage), offer the writer an opportunity to interweave plot fragments and to explore the art of description. Like *Don Quixote*, the *Persiles* allows Cervantes to incorporate elements from a number of genres, to cast literary conventions in a new light, and to set forth variations on the theme of love. Persiles and Sigismunda, who travel as brother and sister under the names of Periandro and Austristela, have been bred in the frozen North, a literary fact that may suggest points of contrast with their Mediterranean counterparts in Cervantine fiction.

Ideologically speaking, the *Persiles* is a fascinating blend of Renaissance and Baroque concepts. The protagonists seem to be victims of a capricious fate that constantly places them at the brink of disaster and relates to the Renaissance as a remnant of the blind fortune of classical antiquity. The happy ending, a papal blessing for the pair's love, attests to a new (Counter Reformation) vision, replete with a faith in Providence amid the dreamlike illusions of this life. The tale of growth and figurative rebirth adapts a pagan structure to a developing Christianity, a Northern saga to a Southern worldview.

Completed only days before his death, the *Persiles* represents Cervantes's final thoughts, his final outlook, an analogue of the quest for immortality. The idealism of the novel is, obviously, less playful and less ironic than that of *Don Quixote*, and the author is far more detached from the text. This is a novel not about the process of reading and writing, but about journeys, in real and allegorical terms. It is Cervantes's attempt at high art, and it is like a beautifully staged spectacle, full of motion and color, inspiring wonderment. One may miss the brilliant self-consciousness of *Don Quixote*, but the geography and imaginative breadth of the *Persiles* make it the ideal companion piece, an entirely different undertaking, but a tour de force nonetheless. Whether troubled by the false continuation or by life itself, or both, Cervantes concludes *Don Quixote* with the death of the knight-errant. In the *Persiles*, at the end of the road, he renews his trust in the world and in the word.
The *Persiles* presents a major challenge to the translator, and the collaborative effort of Weller and Calahan is quite impressive. The translation is accurate and reads smoothly, and it captures the rapid pace of the original. My only serious objection is to the use of contractions throughout the text, which, I believe, detracts from the dignified tone and classical spirit of Cervantes’s prose. The ambitious and successful enterprise will introduce the *Persiles* to readers who have studied *Don Quixote* and the *Exemplary Novels* in English. A concise introduction, helpful notes, and an appendix that focuses on the territories traversed by the heroes complete the volume, a sweet and useful addition to Cervantine scholarship.

Edward H. Friedman
Indiana University

John Ogilby, *The Entertainment of His Most Excellent Majestie Charles II in His Passage through the City of London to His Coronation*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 43, 1988, 192 pp., ill., biblio., index, $30.00.

Ronald Knowles’s edition of Ogilby’s *Entertainment* is volume 43 in the prestigious Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies facsimile series, whose general editor is Margaret M. McGowan. Ogilby’s work, first published in 1662, describes the spectacle—the paintings, architecture, music, and poetry—used to celebrate Charles II’s passage through London to his coronation at Westminster. The *Entertainment*, the most elaborate extant document for any English festival and an expanded version of an earlier description by Ogilby, was approved for publication by Edward Walker, Garter Principal King of Arms. Walker seems to have been primarily concerned with editing Elias Ashmole’s appended description of the coronation ceremony, deleting, for example, a discussion of the dispute between the royal footmen and the Barons of the Cinque Ports about a canopy.

Knowles’s brief, intricate introduction of only 42 pages is essential to his readers’ understanding of the historical and contemporary context of the literary allusions of the spectacle, many of which were to Latin authors, especially Virgil. Some of the allusions, which are extremely obscure even for seventeenth-century audiences, would otherwise be incomprehensible to modern readers. Praising Sydney Anglo for making English festivals a serious subject for scholarly study, Knowles cleverly quotes the comment by the Earl of Newcastle to Charles in 1638: “For what preserves you Kings more than Ceremony. . . . For in all triumphs whatsoever or publick shewing yourself, you cannot put upon you too much King” (7). Having learned that lesson well, Charles decided to hold his coronation
ceremony on St. George’s Day, thus linking his celebrations to those of the saint. No other English monarch has ever been crowned on April 23.

Ogilby, who was in charge of the spectacle, seems to have relied on the account published by John Gaspard Gevaerts of Ruben’s festival for the entry of Prince Frederick of Habsburg into Antwerp in 1641. This account was probably brought to his attention by Sir Balthazar Gerbier, an English traitor who had been suspended by Charles II from his position as master of ceremonies. The spectacle was organized around four triumphant arches, the original drawings of which are still extant. Much contemporary comment was made about the £11,000 spent on them, and they evoked the hostility of Venner’s Fifth Monarch men, who had planned to burn them down.

Of the four arches, the first two receive extensive treatment in Knowles’s introduction. His explanations are sometimes difficult to follow, but this is primarily because of the complexity of the material. The imagery from the Aeneid on the first arch lends a demonic dimension to the English rebels and represents Charles as the realization of the future promised to Aeneas. His arrival in London also parallels the return of Augustus to Rome. On the second arch Charles is praised as Neptuno Britannico, recalling John Selden’s earlier arguments for English maritime supremacy.

This volume is a welcome addition to the facsimile series and will be of interest to all students of English festivals. Scholars also owe a debt to the Huntington Library for permitting this facsimile edition to be based on a microfilm of their copy of the Entertainment.

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Philip J. Gallagher, Milton, the Bible, and Misogyny, ed. Eugene R. Cunnar and Gail L. Mortimer, University of Missouri Press, 1990, x, 185 pp., biblio., index, $27.50

Philip Gallagher, recipient of the Milton Society’s James Holly Hanford Award for the most distinguished article on Milton in 1980, attempts to exonerate Milton from the charge of misogyny in his interpretation and use of the Bible, particularly in Paradise Lost but also in Samson Agonistes. Gallagher argues that Milton rationally resolves biblical discrepancies and reshapes his source materials in a way that counters a view of woman which emerges from interpretations based on the concept of biblical inerrancy and which perpetuates misogyny. For Gallagher, not only medieval and seventeenth-century theologians have
adopted a misogynist approach to the Creation, Fall and regeneration, but this approach is accommodated by such contemporary scholars as James H. Sims and Leland Ryken, who study Milton within a "scriptural tradition" that assumes the unity and inerrancy of the Bible. In addition, anti-Miltonists, feminist critics, and promisogynist commentators are shown to be misguided in their representation of Milton.

Gallagher's hermeneutical method is perhaps the most distinctive feature of this book. He engages the text with intense rigor and closeness, bringing head-to-head biblical texts and the poetic lines and words of Milton. He depends heavily on interpolation, with the result that commentary intrudes into quotations from the primary source; at times the reader has difficulty distinguishing the voice of Milton from that of Gallagher. Often, instead of interpolation Gallagher uses italicization followed by the frequently used phrase "emphasis mine," which signals interpretative nuances sometimes questionably tied to the poet's own voice.

Gallagher admits that the source analysis he employs is risky (46), but he argues that Milton's method is like that of the modern practitioners of higher biblical criticism that have rationalized the cruxes of certain texts in order to substantiate their claims (47). But Gallagher can't have his cake and eat it too. He condemns James Sims and his type for their scriptural assumptions and methodology but borrows part of their approach himself to accomplish his major critical purpose in the study.

Plain bias is as distractingly evident in this study as the antipapist references in Luther's commentaries. Gallagher's tone becomes more acerbic and generalized in expressions like "the naked misogyny of the New Testament" and the "chauvinist etiologies" of Milton's "ancient source" (102). Gallagher can also be heavy-handed in his aspersions against certain theologians.

You cannot read this book quickly or passively. It confronts you with the text as well as with Milton's principal original source, the Bible. Despite your suspicions, you are compelled to follow the reconstructed process of thinking and composition, that Milton, the poet-polemict, has revealed elsewhere in the theological passages of De Doctrina Christiana. We are also drawn into the contentious world of medieval and Renaissance theology with all the vigor of a textualist fired by a fondness for his subject. The book's three chapters will make you reexamine both the feminist and antimisogynist positions, despite its almost crusading bias and tone. Its substantial bibliography, its index, and its well-documented pages replete with line and book references are useful sources for the Miltonist concerned with male-female roles in Milton's works and with source analysis and textual exposition.

Clement H. Wyke
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Two distinguished, internationally known scholars—a philosopher and a literary critic, both experts of Renaissance culture—have authored this unusual commentary on the Humanistic dichotomy of folly and insanity. Grassi (author of the first four chapters, the last part of chapter five, and the conclusion) and Lorch (author of chapter five) have presented a challenging study of a topic important to understanding why Humanism represented such a significant milestone for the history of philosophy as well as of literature. Donald Verene, the Vico scholar, offers a brief but incisive introductory clarification of this monograph’s purpose and scope, particularly its importance as a reassessment of the traditional view of “Renaissance Humanism . . . as a period of literary and aesthetic activity with only indirect philosophical significance” (9).

The book’s thesis asserts that by anachronistically imposing Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian, or other contemporary definitions of philosophy—for example, analytic or phenomenological, which stress systematic, logical, and deductive approaches to reality—scholars have demoted the philosophical primacy of Renaissance Humanism and have viewed the writings of Landino, Salutati, Bruni, Erasmus, and others as mainly literary, rhetorical, and mythical. Grassi and Lorch instead demonstrate how these writers use folly (in the form of fable, tale, and narration, and the rhetorical and poetical tropes of irony and metaphor) to transform the praxis of the human situation into a meaningful, universalized, philosophical vision. Thus, they attempt to demonstrate how philosophy and literature shared an interchangeable nature in the Humanist tradition by virtue of Humanism’s preservation of reflection and universalized meaning through the specificity and uniqueness of the human situation.

The ontological illumination of folly emerges from an act of *ingenium* that allows one to perceive the open nature of reality, to see and accept the ironic potential or reversed dimension of any event, situation, or word, to accept that truth goes beyond logic, reason, and deductive proposition to illusion, experience, and metaphor. The rhetorical tropes of irony, myth, allegory, and imagery operate as the reflective vehicles of understanding.

In chapter one, “The Priority of Metaphoric Thinking,” Grassi, after establishing the complex classical Greek context for rational thinking, traces and defines the rhetorical stages leading to *scientia* as exemplified by Salutati. Chapter two, “Folly as a Philosophical Problem,” explores the roots and insufficiencies of rational, casual thought and introduces Erasmus’s concept of *moria* as the Humanist answer to the problems of human existence. It argues that Erasmus affirmed “that *moria* is the deeper root of the *unveiling of all*
beings. . . . Through its power the world appears'’ (43). This crucial chapter establishes the essential difference between folly, the unveiling of sense through the metaphorical function of the word (chapter three), and insanity, "the incapacity of 'getting down' to things, of arranging things in the right manner, having the ends meet with respect to the environment'’ (48). Chapter four, "The Allegorical Fable," and chapter five, "The Poetic Tale of Folly," apply this approach to interpreting the philosophical, historical, and literary inter­relationships in Alberti, Ariosto, Boiardo, and Cervantes. These chapters deal with the use of allegory and metaphor as forms of philosophizing, with the secularization and demythologizing of history and politics, and with the rhetorical and philosophical functions of chivalry, pazzia negativa, and avventura in the Renaissance long poetic tale.

This is a difficult study, directed to scholars versed in classical Greek language, culture, and thought, as well as in all aspects of Renaissance Humanist discourse. In rehabilitating the philosophical integrity and value of analogy as a significant method of interpreting reality, it skillfully reaffirms the importance of language in achieving acutezze, apertura, enlightenment, and in the clearing of the dark wood (117).

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