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The Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association

ISSN 0195-8453
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Classical numismatists have long assumed that Roman emperors used the imperial coinage as a medium of propaganda.¹ The obverses advertised the emperor’s visages and titles, while the frequently changed reverses announced military victories, peace and prosperity, imperial beneficence and building programs, or religious beliefs, etc. Often beautifully designed, stamped with a much higher and more vivid relief than modern coins, and spread throughout the empire, Roman coins and medallions certainly seem to have been minted and disseminated with the intention that the imperial populace would note the figures and read the inscriptions thereon—not merely exchange them in economic transactions. As Michael Grant has said, “Roman coinage . . . was intended to be looked at, and was looked at.”²

Yet, numismatists admit that this contention is based mainly on the internal evidence of the coins, since ancient writers showed scant interest in economic matters, and said “lamentably little about coinage.”³ Though this is largely true, corroboratory data is not entirely lacking on this issue. A few pieces of relevant literary evidence are available to support the numismatists’ assumption that the imperial coinage was employed as a propaganda medium and its motifs and messages were noted by the imperial populace. Some of this evidence is found in late antique literary sources chronicling the reign and policies of Rome’s first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great (306–337 A.D.).⁴

The primary, and more important, source is Eusebius of Caesarea (Ca. 260–339).⁵ A contemporary of Constantine, he was the metropolitan bishop of Roman Palestine, a learned theologian active in the Christological debates surrounding the great ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325), and a prolific writer, especially famous for his Historia Ecclesiastica tracing Christianity’s rise from Apostolic times to Constantine’s day. His literary talents were recognized by Constantine who chose Eusebius as the official panegyrist for his Vicennalia and Tricennalia celebrations (325 & 336),⁶ and also commissioned the bishop
to oversee the production of particularly resplendent Bibles for the new Christian capital city of Constantinople. Upon Constantine's death, Eusebius in turn honored the emperor with a eulogistic biography, the Vita Constantini. Unlike the biographies and histories of many earlier emperors which were composed by authors removed in time from their subjects, this one was written by a personal acquaintance of the emperor portrayed, and an important participant in the events described—and for the issue at hand, by an author who viewed and handled the coins minted by the emperor he eulogized. It is here in Eusebius' Life of Constantine that literary references to Constantinian coin motifs may be found. However, since the Vita was primarily devoted to the religious acts of the emperor, one need not be surprised that the coin types Eusebius chose to mention were either related to, or interpreted in the light of, Constantine's Christian confession.

In a section of the Vita where Eusebius was describing the emperor's piety, devotion to prayer and Sunday worship, he went on to write:

"How deeply his soul was impressed by the power of divine faith may be understood from the circumstance that he directed his likeness to be stamped on the golden coin of the empire with the eyes uplifted as in the posture of prayer to God; and this money became current throughout the Roman world. His portrait also at full length was placed over the entrance gates of the palaces in some cities, the eyes upraised to heaven, and the hands outspread as if in prayer."

The numismatic reference here is to the beautiful series of gold solidi and medallions which depicted the emperor wearing a diadem and gazing heavenwards in the ancient manner of prayer. This motif was introduced in the year 324 when Constantine defeated the last pagan emperor in the east, Licinius, and became the sole Augustus and Christian sovereign of the whole empire. It appeared on the gold coinage of the major imperial mints in conjunction with the emperor's travels up through the end of the reign in the year 337. Trier, Rome, Ticinum, Siscia, Sirmium, Thessalonica, Constantinople and Nicomedia all produced this type periodically; and most of these mints as well as a few others used the motif occasionally on silver and bronze coins. Particularly rich and regular issues of the gold coinage Eusebius mentions were produced at Nicomedia and Constantinople, Constantine's favored residences and capitals during the later part of his reign.

Though the celestial gaze motif had antecedents in the "portraits of the divinely inspired Hellenistic ruler," neither Constantine nor Eusebius left any doubt that it was to the Christian God that the imperial eyes were upraised in
prayer. In edicts, laws, monetary grants and building programs, the emperor was propagating the Christian religion while openly castigating the “errors” of pagan polytheism; and in the Vita Eusebius recorded as many of his Christian ruler’s pious actions as he could. The widespread prayer pose coins—and their palace painting prototypes—seemed to be a witness to the emperor’s Christian confession which the eulogizing bishop felt were worthy of note.

Whatever their religious import, they certainly were noteworthy. The obverses carried the upward looking prayer pose, with or without imperial nomenclature, while the reverses varied with motifs and inscriptions celebrating the emperor’s valor, glory or victories. For example, a large medallion from Siscia, 326–27, presented the diademed, heavenward gazing emperor, surrounded by the inscription “Constantine the Augustus” on the obverse. He was depicted in helmet and military dress, holding a spear and military trophy, and treading over a captive with the inscription “The Valor of Our Lord Constantine the Augustus” on the reverse (Figure 1a-b).

Figure 1a-b: Siscia mint gold medallion, 326–27, with obverse of Constantine’s prayer pose, and reverse of military VIRTUS (Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Georgetown)

Another, smaller type from Nicomedia, 328–29, showed the prayer pose without an inscription on the obverse. The emperor was portrayed in armor but without helmet, holding a victory on globe and a spear in either hand, while stepping on one captive in front and apparently spearing another behind him on the reverse. The inscription around the latter motif translates as “The Glory of Constantine the Augustus” (Figure 2a-b).
Other coins later in the reign emphasized "The Victory of Constantine the Augustus." 18

Presumably the military valor and victories advertised on the reverses of these coinages were the results of the prayers offered to, and the inspiration provided from the celestial Deity whom Constantine was depicted as gazing toward on the obverses. Eusebius would have thought so since he reported in the *Vita* that the emperor pitched a prayer tent at battle sites in which he and accompanying clergy could implore God for divine guidance and assistance in war. 19 In the very section in which he described the prayer pose coins, Eusebius also related that the emperor encouraged Christian worship in the army and taught his soldiers how to pray to the Divinity. 20 The new motif on coins and medallions seemed to advertise Constantine in the very act of prayer, and, as Jocelyn Toynbee has said, "symbolize the heavenward aspirations of Rome's first Christian Emperor." 21

Eusebius' second explicit reference to coinage occurs in the part of the *Vita Constantini* devoted to Helena, the emperor's mother. After describing her pilgrimage to Palestine and church building at the holy sites therein, her pious actions and generosity to the churches and populace along her route through the east (Ca. 327-28), and her subsequent death and burial (329), 22 he wrote thus of the honors Constantine had bestowed upon her:

"He rendered her through his influence so devout a worshiper of God (though she had not previously been such), that she seemed to have been instructed from the first by the Savior of mankind. And besides this, he had honored her so fully with imperial dignities, that in every province, and in
the very ranks of the soldiery, she was spoken of under the titles of Augusta and empress, and her likeness was impressed on golden coins. He had even granted her authority over the imperial treasures, to use and dispense them according to her own will and discretion in every case.”

The gold coinage mentioned here advertised the elevation of Helena to the rank of Augusta. Like Constantine’s prayer pose coinage, it was initiated in 324, but was only issued from the four imperial mints of Ticinum, Sirmium, Thessalonica, and Nicomedia in single or double solidi sizes for a year or two. The obverse carried a bust of Helena with diadem and necklace, and the inscription “Flavia Helena Augusta.” The reverse portrayed the personification of Security, lowering a branch with one hand and raising her robe with the other, and was inscribed “The Security of the Commonwealth” (Figure 3a-b).

The same type was reproduced on the aes folles or bronze coins of all the active mints of the empire at this time, and was issued from many of them until Helena’s death. The bronze version was thus more widespread in circulation and more commonly in use among the imperial population (Figure 4a-b).
Patrick Bruun has noted that it was “typical of the time that the figures on the reverses may be ordinary personifications of the ideas expressed in the legends, but that they should more likely be identified with the imperial personages of the obverses.”

The Security motif turned out to be a most appropriate one for identification with Helena. Her fervent prayers in churches, building projects at holy sites, and generous largesses to the clergy and people of the east were offered in behalf of the security of the Constantinian dynasty.

Her pious conduct on pilgrimage advertised the imperial court’s connections with the Christian God, and the hopes it had for the security of the realm under the protection of that Divinity.

Eusebius and other eastern bishops undoubtedly received much money from the imperial treasury during these years. Imperial letters instructing the bishops to demand what they needed from the prefects and governors for church building were inserted by Eusebius in the Vita Constantini.

Receipt and use of imperial monies in heretofore unknown amounts certainly helped the imperial coinage catch the eyes of the Christian clergy. Eusebius’ references to the coin types of Constantine and Helena here described seem to indicate as much.

The third explicit reference to coin types by Eusebius concerned the posthumous coinage minted to commemorate Constantine’s death. After describing the emperor’s burial in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, and the succession to the throne by his three Christian sons, Eusebius reported:

A coinage was also struck which bore the following device. On one side appeared the figure of our blessed prince, with the head closely veiled; the reverse exhibited him sitting as a charioteer, drawn by four horses, with a hand stretched downward from above to receive him up to heaven.

The reference here is to the bronze consecration coins, Ca. 337–40, issued by the sons of Constantine from two western and six eastern mints (Figure 5a-b).

Figure 5a-b: Nicomedia mint bronze coin, 337, with obverse of veiled Constantine, and reverse of ascending chariot (Author’s collection)
Though the obverse with its motif of the veiled emperor and with the title DIVUS in the legend echoed pagan antecedents, the reverse seemed biblically inspired. In the motif of the imperial charioteer beckoned heavenward by a celestial hand, Mattingly and Jacob see a symbolic representation of God and "some reminiscence of the ascent of Elijah." The biblical scholar Eusebius would have appreciated such a graphic analogy since he himself was wont to liken Constantine to the Old Testament figure of Moses. As the latter had been chosen by God to lead the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage and to the promised land of Canaan, so Constantine was God’s agent to lead the Christians out of the Roman persecutions and to a new age of blessings in a Christianized empire. Eusebius saw Constantine as the prophet of a new world order, and presented his burial between the cenotaphs of the Apostles and his ascending chariot consecration coins as symbolic of his special position and heavenly reward in the kingdom of God.

A secondary, and less important, source who mentioned Constantinian coinage is Sozomenus (Ca. 375–450). A third generation Christian from Palestine, he settled in Constantinople mid way through the reign of the eastern Christian emperor Theodosius II (408–50). There in Constantine’s beautiful—and much expanded—Christian capital of the east, he worked as a lawyer and scholastikos for nearly a quarter century. In his later years he took up the Eusebian tradition of Christian historiography and wrote a nine book *Historia Ecclesiastica* continuing Eusebius’ “glorious history of the Christian Empire” from Constantine’s conversion a century earlier down to his own time. The first two books covered Constantine’s reign, and therein is found the numismatic reference.

In a passage on the emperor’s generous benefactions to the Church, and his pious practices in the faith, he wrote:

He honored the Lord’s day, because on it Christ arose from the dead, and the day above mentioned (Good Friday), because on it he was crucified. He regarded the cross with peculiar reverence, on account both of the power which it conveyed to him in the battles against his enemies, and also of the divine manner in which the symbol had appeared to him. He took away by law the crucifixion customary among the Romans from the usage of the courts. He commanded that this divine symbol should always be inscribed and stamped whenever coins and images should be struck, and his images, which exist in this very form, still testify to this order.

In this reference, Sozomenus did not mention a specific coin type, but
rather spoke only of a general practice of Constantine to use Christian symbols on his coins. Eusebius neglected the latter point, but had emphasized Constantine's veneration for the cross and name of Christ, and had reported how he impressed these "salutary signs" on his helmet,\(^{40}\) on his soldiers' shields\(^ {41}\) and standards,\(^ {42}\) and also employed them in statuary and painting.\(^ {43}\) Though Constantinian war implements and art objects so marked are no longer extant, coins of the era exhibiting such symbols do still exist.\(^ {44}\)

The first use of such symbols occurred on Constantine's Decennalia in 315 when he struck some silver medallions at Ticinum as luxury donatives for selected citizens of note in his realm. The obverse depicted the emperor in a high crested war helmet, holding a horse in one hand and a shield and scepter in the other. At the top front of the helm was a small badge marked with a \(\chi\rho\) monogram—the first two letters of Christ in Greek intersected to make the Christogram. Over the shield was an implement which many scholars identify as a Christian cross scepter with a globe atop it, representing the emperor's new political awareness that he ruled as an agent for Christ on earth. The inscription read "The Emperor Constantine the Pious and Happy Augustus" (Figure 6). The reverse showed the emperor addressing his troops under the inscription "The Safety of the Commonwealth."\(^ {45}\)

![Figure 6: Ticinum mint silver medallion, 315, with obverse of Constantine wearing helmet with chi-rho badge and holding globular cross scepter above shield (Staatliche Münzsammlung, Munich)](image)

The obverse motif of these silver medallions commemorated Constantine's miraculous conversion under the vision of the cross, and his victory behind Christian signs in the contest for control of Rome and the western empire with the usurper Maxentius three years earlier (312).\(^ {46}\) Here was the emperor's numismatic testimony that he had won the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge and held power on earth through the aid of Christ, his new patron Deity. A small and basically private issue, this medallion was a cautious and limited use of the coinage for pro-Christian propaganda purposes.
Christian mint officials and engravers, however, got the message and began to employ Christian crosses and monograms as control marks and decorative embellishments on the regular bronze coins of the realm thereafter. Greek or tau crosses and Christograms so used appeared in the next decade from the western mints under Constantine’s control at Trier, Ticinum, Rome, Aquileia, Siscia and Thessalonica. A typical example from Ticinum, 316, displays a Greek cross (✠) as a mark of issue in the left reverse field of “The Unconquered Sun Our Companion” type (Figure 7).

![Figure 7: Ticinum mint bronze coin, 316, with reverse of SOL INVICTUS and Greek cross (Author’s collection)](image)

The sun god, Sol, and the other pagan deities were fast disappearing from the coins of Constantine, and being replaced gradually by neutral, or Christian motifs and symbols. This Ticinum coin reveals the transition stage when the old and the new order co-existed while a Christian emperor was ruling a still predominantly pagan empire.

The passing of this transition stage was greatly accelerated when Constantine defeated his pagan co-emperor of the east, Licinius, in a war with frankly religious overtones for control of the whole empire in 324. The prayer pose coins described above helped propagate the new order of a Christian sovereign governing a Christian empire with inspiration from the Christian Deity. Yet a motif that even more explicitly symbolized the triumph of Christianity over paganism appeared on bronze coins of the newly rising Christian capital city of Constantinople in the aftermath of Constantine’s victorious eastern campaign. They were issued between 326–28, with the obverse portraying the imperial profile and titles as usual. The reverse, however, showed Constantine’s Christian war standard, the labarum, piercing a fallen and wriggling serpent—biblical apocalyptic imagery indicating the defeat of the devil and his earthly agents, and inspiring Christian hopes for an age of blessing and Christ’s millennial kingdom (Figure 8).

Eusebius had seen the artistic prototype for this coin motif in a painting posted over the imperial palace portico, and he described it at length in the Vita Constantini, marvelling at “the intellectual greatness of the emperor” in commissioning a motif that echoed what the scriptures had foretold concerning the defeat of the devil and his agents.
The triumphant war standard depicted on the coins and palace painting piercing the “dragon and crooked serpent” was the one that Constantine had adopted at his conversion in 312. He had used it at the head of his army when defeating Maxentius for control of the west in 312, and against Licinius in the conquest of the east in 324. Eusebius had seen it on several occasions and described it in the \textit{Vita}, \textsuperscript{51} as did Sozomenus later in his \textit{Historia Ecclesiastica}. \textsuperscript{52} It combined the two Christian symbols with which Constantine believed he could tap into the power of the Christian God for aid in times of need—the cross and name of Christ. \textsuperscript{53} The standard was composed of an ornate spear overlaid by a crossbar and topped by an enwreathed Christogram. Hanging from the crossbar was usually a banner with portraits of the emperor and his sons. Neither the original standard, nor paintings and sculptures of it, have survived the ravages of time. But the Constantinopolitan coin motif does preserve its image, and corroborates the literary testimonies regarding it.

A simplified version of the \textit{labarum}—merely a pole with a monogrammed banner—came into common use in the armies. It appeared on silver medallions of Rome in 326, and on bronze coins of Arles in 336.\textsuperscript{54} Various forms of the cross and Christogram employed as minting control marks also continued to appear occasionally in the later part of the reign as they had earlier on.\textsuperscript{55} Such reflections of the emperor’s pro-Christian policies only reached a limited audience since they were only issued from a few mints for a short duration. It is no wonder that contemporary literary sources failed to mention them.

Sozomenus’ reference to the cross on coins and Eusebius’ testimonies to Constantine’s veneration of it may be reflected in a more widespread and longer lasting coin motif. On 11 May 330 Constantinople was consecrated as the emperor’s Christian capital. For five to seven years thereafter all the active mints of the empire issued bronze coins with an obverse carrying the inscription “Constantinople” and portraying a helmeted bust of the city’s personification with a cross scepter over her shoulder. The reverse, without inscription, showed the figure of victory standing on a prow and holding a spear and shield.\textsuperscript{56}
Some of the specimens only carry a transverse bar at the top of the scepter (Figure 9a-b); but others have a globe above the crossbar (Figure 10a-b).

Figure 9a-b: Constantinople mint bronze coin, 330–33, with obverse of CONSTANTINOPOLIS personification holding cross scepter, and reverse of victory on prow (British Museum, London)

Figure 10a-b: Heraclea mint bronze coin, 330–33, with obverse of CONSTANTINOPOLIS personification holding globular cross scepter, and reverse of victory on prow (Author’s collection)

The latter are similar in shape to the globular scepter seen many years earlier on the silver medallions of Ticinum. As the rare Ticinese medallions witnessed quietly in court circles to the emperor’s personal change in religious convictions, so these common bronze coins announced loudly throughout the realm Constantine’s public policy of Christianizing the empire as a whole. If Sozomenus actually saw any Constantinian coins with crosses on them when he was writing a century later in Constantinople, this late and common type was most probably the one he was referring to in his Church History.

This case study of Constantinian coin motifs in ancient literary sources would seem to support the assumptions of numismatists that Roman coinage was a propaganda medium employed by the emperors to inform the populace of changes in imperial policy, and that the coins were noticed by the people to whom they were issued. At least Eusebius and Sozomenus noted and recorded the coins and medallions of Constantine which they felt illustrated his change
in religious orientation. The prayer pose, Helena and ascending chariot motifs mentioned by Eusebius, and the use of Christian symbols suggested by him and recorded by Sozomenus, reveals that the coinage was an effective medium of propaganda that was appreciated by perceptive individuals.

As the coinage therefore often represented or reflected changes in the political, military, social and religious policies of the emperors, historians attempting to chart and analyze such changes would be wise to take the numismatic evidence into consideration.*

NOTES


2. Roman History from Coins, p. 13.

3. Ibid., p. 12; Cf. p. 58.


7. Euseb., Vita Const IV. 34-37. The Codex Sinaiticus in the British Museum may be one of these imperially commissioned Bibles.


9. E.g., Suetonius, Tacitus and the authors of the Historia Augusta.


11. Ibid., IV. 15 (Italics mine). The Greek word Eusebius here and elsewhere used for coin(s) was to nomisma, whence cometh our modern derivative “numismatics.”


15. E.g., “Constantine’s Edict to the People of the Provinces Concerning the Error of Polytheism” in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 48–60.


19. *Vita Const* II. 12, & IV. 56.


22. *Vita Const* III. 41–47.


27. See especially: Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 42.

28. Cf. the *Spes Publica* coins of the Constantinople mint, Ca. 326–28 (Figure 8 below). The ostentatious pilgrimage was all the more necessary because of recent domestic turmoil in the imperial family that included the executions of a son and the wife of Constantine. E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, A.D. 312–460* (Oxford: University Press, 1982), pp. 32ff, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, p. 221, see Helena’s pilgrimage as both a penance for, and publicity to detract attention from, the turmoil of 326.


32. Hill, Kent, & Carson, *LRBC*, p. 35, & *passim*, list the mints of Trier and Lyons; and Heraclea, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria for this type of coin motif.


35. Especially in Book I of the *Vita Constantini*.


40. Vita Const I. 31, & III. 2.
42. Vita Const I. 31-32; II. 3-9, & 16; III. 1; & IV. 21.
46. Euseb., Vita Const I. 26-40; & Lactantius, De Mort Pers 44. That the Christogram ( \( \Gamma \) ) rather than the Crossogram ( \( \mathbf{X} \) ) was the original Christian monogram used by Constantine at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge, see: Charles Odahl, „The Celestial Sign on Constantine’s Shields at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge,” Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, Vol. 2 (1981), pp. 15-28.
50. Vita Const III. 3—referring to scriptural passages in Isaiah 27 and Revelation 12-13, 17, & 19. For Constantine’s use of serpent imagery in art and letters, see the article in note 49 above.
53. See the Emperor’s testimony to this apotropaic power in Euseb., Vita Const II. 55.
55. Ptah cross at Aquileia ( \( \mathbf{X} + -333 \) ), Christogram at Arles ( \( \mathbf{X} \) - 334), and Crossogram at Antioch ( \( \mathbf{X} -336-37 \) )—see Bruun, „Christian Signs, pp. 25-31; and Odahl, „Christian Symbols in Military Motifs,” pp. 70-71.
56. Hill, Kent, & Carson, LRBC, pp. 4-35; & Bruun, RIC, VII, passim.
* The author would like to thank the Museum Directors, and especially the Curators of Roman Coins and Medallions at the Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Georgetown, the British Museum, London, the Staatliche Münzsammlung, Munich, and the Istanbul Archeological Museum, Istanbul, for allowing him to examine their collections, and providing him with negatives, prints &/or slides of the coins pictured in this article. The author is also indebted to Ken Hyde, Mark Wibbells, and Charles Scheer of the Boise State University Educational Media Services for developing the prints for this article.
Gastronomy and Sexuality:
“Table Language” in the Heptaméron*

by

Colette H. Winn
Washington University

In his penetrating study on Marguerite de Navarre, Themes, Language and Structure, Marcel Tete! calls attention to the metaphoric usage of food in the Heptaméron.1 Critics, to date, have failed to pursue this line of inquiry. Readers accustomed to Rabelais’s elaborate gastronomic depictions may be disappointed by the extreme sobriety of corresponding scenes in the Heptaméron. Marguerite eschews the picturesque description of a generously laden table, the exuberance associated with this traditionally jovial event and the gigantism required by the Gargantuan legend in favor of briefer and often less colorful table encounters. Yet relegating these scenes to an accessory rôle because of their brevity and lack of color seems to reflect a misunderstanding of Marguerite’s narrative strategies. Since she frequently refers to these gatherings and since significance emerges from the repetitive process, the reader must acknowledge that these encounters serve a primary function.

Drawing on a code familiar to many cultures, Marguerite associates table encounters with verbal exchanges, which are clearly a major theme in the Heptaméron. In the novel, table encounters almost always precede “bed” encounters. Thus, table language frequently suggests a more intimate, physical exchange. By using metaphoric language which takes on its full significance from the associations between gastronomy and sexuality, the author can subtly suggest and yet not name explicitly. She challenges the reader’s imagination, invites him to fill in the gaps while she herself never crosses the boundaries of civilized good taste. In sum, the frequency of table encounters and the primary rôle they play in revealing man’s sexual and communicative behavior show that these scenes are far from gratuitous and, in fact, point up the author’s expertise in narrative techniques and her delicate attention to the wide range of human exchanges.

Marguerite is certainly no innovator in using the gastronomic sexual metaphor. She addresses an audience quite familiar with the often grotesque
intermingling of sexual discourse with food, as it frequently appeared in the continued tradition of the theater and the *fabliaux* in this first part of the sixteenth century. Even the Biblical tradition, which concretely describes man's limitations in terms of appetite (Eva's legend), provided Marguerite with additional narrative resources. In the *Heptameron*, she evokes passion and sexual drive in terms of cravings for food which at times become uncontrollable (story XXII), or in terms of a capricious appetite, which often leads to physical decline and expresses the perfect lover's withdrawal from or rejection of sexuality (story IX). Man's desires are expressed as a hardy voracity that continually draws him to "new objects," and makes him seek the pleasure that comes from a change of diet. That which he has not yet tasted excites his appetite or arouses his greed (story VIII). In Marguerite's world of desire, the coveted object appeals to the ever-growing needs of the Other—inexhaustible greed, hysterical appetite, insatiable curiosity. In the *Heptameron*, the sexual coloration of table encounters depicts vividly the realities of love pursuit and the straightforwardness of the hunting game. In many stories, the feast stands as the meeting place for men and women. It often marks the beginning of the erotic pursuit, the undertaking of a new conquest, and the anticipation of more intimate exchanges. In story III, the festive table encounter stirs the king's irrepressible passion for the gentleman's lady. The appetizing and stimulating qualities of food appropriately suggest the awakening of sexual desire. Woman represents "le plat de résistance," a particular "chère" for which man has come. This code is thoroughly understood by both sexes. Thus, in story XVI, the lady from Milan, who foresees the undesirable development of a love affair, renews her pledge of chastity and vows never to go to another feast.

Let us now further examine Marguerite's particular usage of the gastronomic sexual metaphor in her exploration of human communicative behavior. She frequently exploits this rhetorical device to describe male communicative behavior in the patriarchal society of the novel, a society in which women are seen as the projection of and the receptacle for the male's desire. A few examples will suffice to show in interactions between men—i.e., male friendships—woman serves as an "exchange value," as "the possibility of mediation, transaction . . . between men and his fellow creatures." In story XXVI, the reader is led to believe that the Seigneur d'Avannes would very much like to see his foster father's generosity extend to the sharing of his cherished wife. As in the story of the two friends (XLVII), Dagoucin explains in the beginning: "ce n'estoit que un cueur, que une maison, ung lict, une table et une bource." This ironic comment hints at the outcome of the story. Because one is married and the other is single, the latter in the end will share the farmer's sexual "property" to punish the husband for his unjustified suspicions. Story XLVIII follows a similar pattern. A friar, excluded from the table, gains revenge by sharing the newlyweds' bed and nuptial pleasures. This association of gastronomy,
sexuality, and society, which presents woman as an instrument of revenge but also as “the valuable goods” which two friends willingly share, as in story VIII, may have socio-sexual implications but is primarily a clever way for the author to reinvigorate the traditional erotic triangle.

By expanding the metaphoric usage of gastronomy, Marguerite renews a common metaphor when she simultaneously mingles different traditions; to the aforementioned popular and Biblical, she adds the release of the word (“la venue à la parole”) which comes from the classic symposium tradition. This tradition presents table encounters as favorable opportunities for verbal exchanges. The spoken word uttered on that occasion is directly connected to man’s search for truth and often leads him closer to its discovery. When the associations of food and sexuality serve in the communicative process, they are transformed from a pure rhetorical device (a simple metaphor) into a true mode of expression which we shall call, for the sake of clarity, table language, including verbal as well as non-verbal exchanges.

In the story of Bernage (XXXII), the eating ritual, as strange as the mysterious scene of the Graal, reveals a sterile amorous relationship. Food has lost its power to appetize and excite as shown by the sobriety of the gastronomic description. The frugality of the lady’s meal could imply a decline in her sexual desire. But we soon learn that the lady is being cruelly punished for betraying her husband. Her sexual desires are, in fact, repressed by a jealous spouse, determined to render justice. At meals, because she is forced to drink from the skull of her dead lover, horror will forever haunt her desire for food as well as for sex. The hand-washing ritual, suggesting an act of purification, reinforces her daily torment. In this story, table talk proves to be a non-verbal communication which bears a heavy significance. For those bonded by the marital contract, yet constrained in a common space without intimacy or mutual faith, the meal becomes the only means of exchange. Communication is totally unambiguous, with signals lucidly uttered and clearly received. At the table, the lady is chained to the daily repetition of her betrayal, making her incapable of escaping her guilt. The table encounter stands as the crime perpetually denounced, the wound repeatedly reopened. It functions, however, as a dynamic element in the narrative framework with Bernage’s unexpected visit. The curiosity and concern of a third party will suddenly free the word and reopen “voiced communication” between the spouses. The husband’s hospitality is rewarded by the rediscovery of happiness and the prosperity of the young couple.

Story XXXVIII exposes a more subtle aspect of table talk. In this story, gastronomic discourse functions as an attempt to establish communication, as an exchange indirectly carried out where direct verbal exchange would have failed. “S’ennuyant de manger bon pain” (270), the husband of a virtuous bourgeois woman from Tours decides to “change diet” and abandons his wife for his farmer’s wife. The suspicious spouse soon discovers her husband’s infidelity. She pretends to be concerned about the poverty and the uncleanliness
of the farm house and generously sends to her husband's mistress bourgeois luxuries (mostly expensive dishes and refined food) so as to render his stay away from home more enjoyable.

The reader cannot help questioning the neglected wife's true motivation. Why would she willfully scatter obvious signs of bourgeois culture, which clash with the rural decor? These out-of-place symbols, separated from their everyday environment, stand out as signs that should disturb the husband. Table talk shares here the oblique nature of seduction as it seeks out the receiver and yet escapes the realm of meaning, preserving its enigmatic attraction. In the narrative, the gastronomic elements acknowledge the social and marital status that the husband deceitfully denies. "La vaisselle honnête" (270) points to the moral attitude one would expect from the bourgeois class. Its inappropriateness in the tasteless rural decor underlines the wife's disapproval of her husband's sexual inappropriateness. By inserting the familiar world of deciphered signs into an unexpected environment, the neglected wife frees the decoded messages of their frozen meanings and imposes her "présence à table." This strategical device reopens the dialogue with her husband, compelling him to face his feelings of guilt. The husband finally figures out "l'honnête tour de sa femme" (271) and her subtle invitation to return home.

In these two stories, direct verbal communication, involving the characters' most intimate emotions, was bound to fail, because the addressee would probably strike back at the addresser. But when the addresser takes into account the feelings of the other, (s)he succeeds. Consequently, (s)he finds (her)himself obliged to rely on a more subtle discourse, a discourse efficiently manipulated to produce connoted meaning. Table language, in both cases, alludes to the sexual neglect and unfaithfulness of the one toward the other. It implies, or suggests, anger and strong disapprobation. Yet, it refuses to express these feelings in a straightforward manner. Table talk invites the cooperation of the addressee to be "complete" and comprehended fully.

Up to this point we have seen the suggestive power of table language and its efficient and effective usage by the characters in the stories. Marguerite has trained the reader in the code of table language and goes on to use the same mechanism in recounting the stories to the reader. However, the sexually connoted gastronomic discourse is exploited to such an extent that it strips the denoted gastronomic terminology of its primary meaning. In other words, the sexual connotations are so frequent that they affect all gastronomic references. Although literal meaning is not totally excluded, it loses its "first innocence" and is "robbed" of the full weight it once carried. As a result, Marguerite's table talk often sounds equivocal. It seems to force the reader to acknowledge its existence and the intentions which have motivated it. Although the reader senses a certain desire for ambivalence on the part of the author, he is often puzzled and cannot help letting himself be caught up in what seems to be the author's game. Marguerite's misleading table discourse is particularly successful when the reader...
automatically chooses the connoted gastronomic language. From this equivocal discourse emerges the plural reading which Marguerite most certainly intended on several occasions. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this narrative strategy.

Story XXIII demonstrates Marguerite's expertise in renewing a well-known motif in the medieval tradition of the récit, that of generosity and hospitality. The table represents the setting of the conversation that marks the turning point in the narrative. While one eats without restraint, one speaks without reserve. The spoken word is freed of all constraints, and the most private topics can be discussed in the most candid way. A gentleman takes the opportunity to share the intimacy of his amorous relationship with his wife when he generously shares his meal with a casually passing friar.

While disclosing his sexual desires to the friar, the husband hopes to obtain his permission yet simultaneously arouses the same desire in the other, playing the rôle of the mediator as defined by René Girard in his well-known study, *Desire, Deceit and the Novel*. Girard offers the following argument: "If a desiring subject yields to the impulse which draws him toward the object, if he reveals his desire to others, then he creates new obstacles at every step of the way and strengthens already existing ones. The secret of success, in business as well as in love, is dissimulation" (107).

The reader, alerted to the gastronomic code, has the advantage over the protagonists and foresees what is to follow. In accepting to share his "bonne chère" with the friar, the husband actually consents to share his marital privileges with his guest. Although it seems at first that the friar is taking advantage of the husband's hospitality and generosity, a close reading of the story shows just the contrary. It is in fact the husband who wishes to profit from the friar's generosity by extorting from his guest the permission to sleep with his wife: "il espéroit bien que son beau père luy bailleroit congé" (187). The lesson to be drawn from the story is indeed "tel est pris qui croyait prendre" (it is doubly pleasant to deceive the deceiver). The dramatic irony results from the short-circuiting of the sexually coded message or from a deliberate misinterpretation of the concept of hospitality on the husband's part. There is indeed as much to the act of receiving as to the act of giving or, as Montaigne put it, "the receiver obliges the giver as much as the latter does the former." In fact, in Old French,
the term *hôte* applies to both host and guest. The act of sharing reveals the husband’s bad faith. Sharing his sexual preoccupations is fine as long as it does not involve the sharing of the pleasures that result from the friar’s permission.

Similarly, in story XXV the reader immediately senses the exceptional nature of the eating scene and its full significance in the story. A lawyer, greatly honored by a noble gentleman’s visit, asks his wife to serve him the most delightful refreshments:

> il dist à sa femme qu’elle apprestast la collation des meilleurs fruictz et confitures qu’elle eut; ce qu’elle feit très volontiers et apporta la collation la plus honneste qu’il luy fut possible (204).

The irony of the passage surfaces when the unexpected guest, on the verge of becoming the lover of the lawyer’s wife, encounters the husband and claims to have come to entrust him with some private business. The husband’s message becomes equivocal and the situation quite ambiguous. How shall one read the husband’s command to his wife to “generously serve” their guest? After all, he is quite flattered by his guest’s visit. What would he not do for his social advancement? Is he the blind and deceived husband commonly portrayed in medieval and Renaissance texts, so blinded by his vanity that he does not comprehend the possible impact of his message? One cannot help smiling at the over-zealous obedience of the lady, knowing that she will respond *literally* to her husband’s order by becoming their guest’s lover that very same night.

The clever use of table language exemplifies what critics have often called Marguerite’s techniques of dissimulation. In both stories, she alludes to the lovers’ later “bed” encounters, yet will not describe explicitly a daring erotic scene which would have been judged tasteless. She provides the reader with subtle hints about the lovers’ irrepressible desires and heights of passion, but lets him fill in the gaps. By allowing language its own free play, by letting it speak or “perform,” she disappoints the reader’s expectations of meaning, and instead, exposes him to a plurality of readings. Thus, she escapes the limiting role of the author as defined by Barthes in *Image-Music-Text*: “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (147).

Another example will stress this point. Marguerite frequently mentions the devisants’ table encounters following the tale telling. She alludes to their frank and animated discussions around a bountiful table, and suggests that, in their continuous quest for truth and wisdom, they further pursue the debates originated earlier. These verbal exchanges recall the symposium tradition. Yet Marguerite remains very ambiguous when she refers to the devisants’ quest for truth. As in Rabelaisian novels, the reader is not clear as to what message is being conveyed. Is Marguerite inviting him to find truth, “to break the bone and
reach the substantial marrow," as Rabelais put it? Is she engaging him to pursue for himself the devisants' inconclusive debates? Is the author playing with her audience's horizon of expectations, its urge to uncover hidden truth? Or is she merely seducing her reader by her refusal to "stipulate"? Is she conveying a message at all? Like Rabelais, Marguerite employs a deliberately unclear language and by so doing, restores to the text "l'inquiétant langage de la fiction."16

The particular usage Marguerite makes of a rather common association between gastronomy and sexuality demonstrates the author's expertise in manipulating traditional devices, in renewing topoi. But it also reveals her desire to explore further man's communicative behavior. By developing a communicative process that we have named table language, she underscores the suggestive power of language and exploits both the disconcerting effect and the entertaining value of ambiguity at the center of an exchange. Had she just shown this communicative process at work between characters in the stories, she would have led us only to witness and share the usual advantage of reader over character. But Marguerite proves to be a much more ambitious author; she incorporates the communicative process described here as table talk to the narrative process, directly involving the reader. In effect, by exploiting the gastronomic discourse, weaving the text from words with double meanings, she communicates to the reader the unpredictability and the uncertainty of the human code.

This desire to generate a certain indirection through the use of an ambiguous discourse—which in fact proves to be a common trait of sixteenth-century narratives—may be viewed as the author's refusal of closure or as her determination to force the reader into the world of Creation.17 We regard it as Marguerite's clever means of forcing the reader into the equivocal world of Communication, into the endless game of exchanges, a game in which, the author willingly admits, all participants are equal:

AU JEU NOUS SOMMES TOUS ESGAULX (10).

NOTES

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Central Renaissance Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska in April 1984.
1. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1973), pp. 43-54; Professor Tete! particularly examines the use of food as an emblem of the sexual needs of the body. This use, he argues, betrays Marguerite's willful ambivalence as food terms frequently suggest spiritual needs as well.
2. We do not mean here that the author only treats "carnal love" in her work but that she recognizes the primary rôle of desire in love relationships. On the different types of love relationships in the Heptameron, see Jules Gelernt's study, World of Many Loves: The Heptameron of Marguerite de Navarre (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 66-125. See also Nicole Cazauran, L'Heptameron de Marguerite de


6. On this particular motif, see Michel Olsen’s study, Les Transformations du triangle érotique (Copenhagen: Akademisk, 1976).

7. For a better understanding of the classic and popular traditions of the banquet and the close connection between table encounter and spoken word, see Michael Bakhtin’s remarkable study, Rabelais and his World (Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp. 278-308. This association between table encounter and verbal exchange appears quite strikingly in Marguerite’s following observation: “Vespres oyes, s’en allèrent soupper autant de parolles que de viandes” (326).

8. See Jean Baudrillard’s interesting discussion on “the seductive derivation of discourse” in De La Séduction (Paris: Galilée, 1979), pp. 77-85.

9. The distinction we are making between “connoted” (the figurative meaning) and “denoted” (the meaning in “a kind of Edenic state,” in its pure signifier state) can be compared to the distinction Roland Barthes makes between the “denoted image” and the “connoted image” in his essay “Rhetoric of the Image,” Image-Music-Text, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 32-51. See also Tom Conley’s article on Barthes’s essay: “A Message without a code?” in Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1981), 147-56.


l'un pouvoit donner à l'autre, ce seroit celuy qui recevroit le bien-fait qui obligeroit son compaignon.” See also Rabelais’s chapters III, IV and V on debts in Le Tiers Livre.

15. Our use of the term is derived from Barthes’s famous essay, “The Death of the Author,” in Image-Music-Text, p. 143.


17. As Barthes argues in “Criticism as Language,” Times Literary Supplement (September 27, 1963), 739-40: “A work of literature . . . is neither ever quite meaningless (mysterious or ‘inspired’) nor ever quite clear; it is, so to speak, suspended meaning; it offers itself to the reader as a declared system of significance, but as a signified object it eludes his grasp. This kind of dis appointment or deception . . . inherent in the meaning explains how it is that a work of literature has such power to ask questions of the world . . . without, however, supplying any answers.” Quoted by Frank Kermode, “The Use of the Codes” in Approaches to Poetics, ed. Seymour Chatman (New York and London: Columbia UP, 1973), p. 67.
The Anglo-Norman Courtly Lyric

by

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Whereas many works of a religious or moral nature survive from the Anglo-Norman era, secular lyric poetry was until quite recently virtually unknown.\(^1\) Isabel S. T. Aspin’s *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*\(^2\) provided the first, and to date the only, readily-accessible modern edition of secular lyrics.\(^3\) This collection of political poems and satires shows that the author of occasional verse is not only interested in singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary or adapting parts of the liturgy into the vernacular; he is moved also to sing of the corruption of state or church, to lament the death of the noble departed, or to applaud the death of a traitor. Many other secular poems were discussed in M. Dominica Legge’s *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background*,\(^4\) which further demonstrated that the Anglo-Norman temperament was not always inclined to be serious and utilitarian and that the Anglo-Norman poet might even on occasion turn to thoughts of love.

Dr. Legge’s study of some forty anonymous amatory and occasional poems found in various Anglo-Norman mss indicates that most of the genres associated with the courtly lyric were practiced in England: the *canso* or love-song, the *pastoreta* or *pastourelle*, the *tenso*, the moral or political *sirventès* and the *planh*, or funeral lament, all of which originated in the south of France. In addition, genres of later, northern-French origin including the *ballete*, *rotrouenge* and *rondeau* are found. Other formal similarities between the Anglo-Norman and the continental lyric have been noted by editors of individual poems. Admittedly, relatively simple techniques such as *coblas unissonans*,\(^5\) *coblas doblas* or *coblas singulars*, which are not unknown in the poetry of other languages, may be attributed to spontaneous generation as readily as to conscious imitation. However, as far as the more sophisticated techniques are concerned, they may well be indicative of familiarity with continental practices. An Anglo-Norman example of *coblas capfinidas*,\(^6\) in which a key word or phrase from the last line of one stanza is repeated in the first line of the following, is
furnished by the *Lament of Edward II.* Another intricate technique used in courtly poetry is that of *rimas derivatas,* in which alternating masculine and feminine rhymes derived from the same root-word are employed. One Anglo-Norman poet who imitated the technique was obviously proud of his technical skill, entitling his poem "Ryme Bon."8

Although genres and techniques are important formal elements of poetry, the courtly lyric of the troubadours is not to be defined solely in terms of poetic technique. The "grand chant courtois"9 evolved from a literary tradition inspired by the ideal of *fin'amors;* its essence is to be sought in the concepts of the lyric rather than in its formal aspects. In this regard too, the AN lyric shows similarities with the troubadour lyric. It draws upon the *topoi* of courtliness and exploits courtly motifs and metaphors; the themes are often couched in courtly terminology and they express the ideals of *fin'amors.* Yet the poetry which arose in the south of France and which was imitated by the *trouvères* of northern France10 is already old when the earliest extant AN poems appear, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It may be the object of unconscious misinterpretation or conscious transformation in a society considerably removed in time and place from that which furnished its matrix. In view of these social and chronological factors, it is interesting to assess to what extent the courtly motifs cultivated by the troubadours are reflected in the lyric poetry of the AN era.

One *topos* which may be considered both as a formal and a thematic element of courtly verse is the spring introduction. This is certainly not exclusive to the courtly love-lyric practiced on the continent: it is well-known in Latin poetry and in popular lyrics, and the recurrence of the month of May in introductory stanzas has led many to conclude that the *topos* stemmed from popular folk traditions associated with May Day.11 Nevertheless, though references to spring may exist in other traditions known to insular poets, the relationship between the renewal of nature and the rebirth of hope, between the song of the bird and that of the poet, and between budding tree and burgeoning love is a literary formulation unique to the courtly lyric. The *topos* is found in the AN poem *Quant le tens se renovele* (ed. Mayer, "Mss de Cambridge," 253–255, lines 1–7):

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Quant le tens se renovele
E reverdoie cy bois,
Cist oysials sa pere apele
Cele cum a pris a choys;
Lur voil chanter sur mun peis
D'une dame gent e bele,
Sur trestutes tourturele.
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The variations practiced by the troubadours are also found in AN verse: if spring is the time for lovers and for hope springing eternal in the lover's breast,
then dreary winter is the time for sorrowing and for singing of unrequited love. The very grass is pale and wan, the birds are hushed and seek refuge in the leafless boughs. In the poem El tens d'iver (ed. Alfred Jeanroy and Artur Långfors, Chansons satiriques et bachiques du XIIIe siècle [1921; rpt. Paris: Champion, 1974], pp. 39-42, lines 1-10), nature is not merely a setting, but a mirror of the poet's melancholy and despair:

El tens d'iver, quant vei palir
L'erbe pur la freidure
E les menuz oisels tapir
En la ramee oscure,
A grant dolur suvent suspir,
Tant vei eisir
Amur de sa nature:
La bele a qui jœ pens e tir,
Senz rien merir,
Me gref a desmesure.

The first words of one of the earliest AN poems extant, written on a blank page at the beginning of MS. Rawlinson G.22 in the Bodleian Library are undecipherable. Even so, in view of the courtly notions contained in the body of the poem, one may imagine that it is the song of the nightingale which has stirred the poet and inspired him to sing of his love (ed. John Stainer, Early Bodleian Music [London, 1901], Vol. 2, p. 3, lines 1-6):

................ [ue]
[E sun] chant ai entendu:
Icele mun sanc remue
Dunt jeo fremis e tressu.
A li dunt ai peine e delit
Cri merci qu'ele ne m'ublit.

Other introductory stanzas are less interesting from the thematic point of view but not uninteresting from the point of view of similarities and comparisons. William IX of Aquitaine may start “Farai un vers de dreyt nien” or “Pos de chantar m'es pres talentz” — so, too, the poet of Harley 2253 says, “Ferroy chaunsoun que bien doit estre oye,/De ma amie chaunterai qe m'ad deguerpie” (ed. Thomas Wright, Specimens of Lyric Poetry, Percy Society, IV [1842; rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1965], pp. 63--64, lines 1-2). The author of an elegy on Simon de Montfort laments (ed. Aspin, AN Pol. Songs, pp. 24-35, lines 1-3):

Chaunter m'estoit,
Mon cuer le voit,
En un dure langage;
Another poet, inspired by love or his lady, declares simply “De ma dame vuil chanter / Ke tant est bele et bloie” (ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 375, lines 1-2).

The courtly relationship celebrated by the poet is an ideal which seeks to elevate physical love above the level of mere instinct or material self-interest. A new and indeed novel relationship is formed, in which social reality is frequently reversed, the lover declaring himself the servant of his lady. The feudal ceremony of vassalage, or homage, provides the analogy and central metaphor of courtly conduct. Paying homage to the lady, often symbolized by the clasped hands, is an expression of the humility the lover feels in her presence. The Provençal term *midons* indicates his willing acceptance of his lady as his “overlord” and his eagerness to acquit himself long and faithfully in her service. As the feudal lord William IX of Aquitaine declares his surrender to his lady’s will in *Farai chansoneta nueva* (ed. Press, *Anthology*, pp. 20-22), so the AN poets protest their humble and unfeigned loyalty to their lady (*Lung tens ay de quer amé*, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 248-49, lines 6-8):

De fin quer sanz fauseté  
Dunt la serf en lealté  
E serveray sanz feintyte.

They stress too the undying nature of their service, “Cum je vous ai servi sanz tricherie / E serviray tuz les jours de ma vie” (*Jeo m’en voys, dame*, ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 378, lines 5-6).

What qualities in the lady inspired such devotion? Troubadours such as Peire Vidal sing of her beauty and physical charms, her “bell cors plazen”; Giraut de Borneil praises his lady on account of “sos cors gais et isneus / E complitz de belas colors” (*Can lo glatz e.l frechs e la neus*, ed. Press, *Anthology*, p. 134, lines 14-15). AN poets may describe their lady quite simply as “bele et bloie” or may use more sophisticated verse and even two languages to extol her charms (*En mai quant dait e foil e fruit*, ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 381-82, lines 9-12):

Cler ot le vis et [le] cor[s] gent, *nature moderamine*,  
Neirs le[s] surcils, les oyz (sic) riant, *plenos amoris flamine*;  
Plus de cristal sunt blancs se[s] dens, *justo locantur ordine*;  
Si n’a plus bele geik’ en Occident, *a solis ortus cardine*.

They may protest their inability to describe her incomparable beauty, a protest followed in *Quant le tens se renovele* by a detailed description vaunting the lady’s beautiful hair, wide brow, flashing eyes and small mouth. A similar
portrait, painted in glowing colors, is found in the rotrouenge Quant primes me quintey de amors (ed. Paul Meyer, “Rotrouenge en quatrains,” Romania, XIX [1890], 102–105, lines 9–20):

Les chevoys li lusent cumme fil de or;
Ele ad le col lung & gros,
Si ne y pert frunce ne os
    Ne veyne.
Ele ad les oyz vers et rianz,
Les denz menu renge devant,
Buche vermayle fete cum teint
    En greyne.
Ele ad beu braz pur acoler,
Ele ad duz cors pur deporter;
Un mort purra resuciter
    Sa alayne.

Such hyperbolic descriptions are reminiscent of the continental lyric though they are not exclusive to the genre, for the portrait conforms closely to models found in twelfth-century romances. From the lady's shining, golden hair to her sweet breath, virtually every detail of the eulogy is stereotyped, deriving from a standard concept of beauty. The commonplace phraseology—eyes “vers e rianz,” teeth “menu”—is exploited on both sides of the channel by authors of both lyric and narrative verse.

Certain of the comparisons and metaphors common to these two forms may also be noted in the courtly lyric of the AN era. The lady is a treasure; God formed her with love, Nature created her with joy; she is noble, worthy of a prince or king; she must be an emperor's daughter, as the author of these macaronic lines exclaims (Dum ludis floribus, ed. G. L. Brook, The Harley Lyrics, 4th ed. [Manchester: Manchester UP, 1968], p. 55, lines 9–12):

Ele est si bele e gente dame egregia
cum ele fust imperatoris filia,
de beal semblant e pulcra continencia,
ele est la flur in omni regis curia.

This emphasis on the lady's nobility reminds us that her physical beauty is but the reflection of her moral beauty. She has the mezura so prized by the troubadours, which Marcabrun described as “gentil parler” and which the classical troubadours considered as “moderation.” She is gentle and generous, courtly and considerate (Quant le tens se renovele, lines 25–34):

Deu! tant est de bonté pleine
Ma dame al cors lunge e gent,
E de parole certeine
Beaus respunt (a) tute gent.
Bon mestre a ki ben aprent,
Kar curtesie la meine,
Franchise al cuer dreit l’aseine,
Largesce sun cors i prent;
Meint hom pur lui joie enprent,
Tant la trove sage e seyne . . .

This theme of troubadour poetry is not well attested in the AN lyrics extant, which focus more on the lady’s attitude towards her lover than on her courtly qualities. The object of the troubadour’s affections was often haughty, scornful of her lover’s attentions or at least indifferent towards him. Likewise in the AN poem Jeo m’en voys, dame, the lady is capricious and disdainful of the poet’s attentions, “... ma dame aillors se humilie/Si qe devers moy est tut assurdie” (lines 19–20). She may be indifferent to the point of cruelty or appear to be wilfully unkind, provoking the aspiring lover to deplore her conduct (De ma dame vuil chanter, lines 11–14):

Duce dame, de mei grever
Pur quei estes si aprise,
Quant deu tut en vus amer
Ai m’entente mise?

The lover’s own attitude, which may be expressed in terms of a love-fear paradigm, provides a further obstacle to love: though he loves his lady, he fears to declare his love. Courtly conventions dictate that in view of the lady’s acknowledged social or moral superiority, the poet should be humble and timid even to the extent of concealing his passion. In Lung tens ay de quer amé the obstacle to the poet’s declaration of love remains unstated and interiorized as it does, for example, in Peire Vidal’s Per melhs sofrir lo maltrait e l’afan (Press, Anthology, pp. 212–215). In other poems, the obstacle to love may be the gelos or slanderers familiar in troubadour poetry who have turned the lady against her suitor. One poet who complained that he had labored long in the service of love for precious little reward certainly thought so: in case he died of love he wrote a mock will in which he inveighed against those who had destroyed his chances of happiness, calling down on their heads all sorts of ills, including toothache (Longement me sui pené, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” pp. 252–253, lines 80–91):

As gelus Deu doint meschief,
Feu d’enfer par tut le cors,
Povre e riche de tresors!
Nul de eus n’i met dehors,
Kar trop sunt diverse genz;
Passion les fere as denz,
Par defors e par dedenz,
K’as amanz sunt mal veisin!
Trop sunt de felun e[n]gin;
D’assez sunt pire ke mastin,
Si les comand a malfee:
Tuz jur[z] eient il mal dehee!

For his part, the poet will willingly endure any such ills for the sake of his lady. Love is akin to a sickness. The troubadour Peire Cardenal may write that he “maigresc e sec” for his lady; so, too, the AN poet waxes pale and wan, grows sick and suffers physically. The physical effects are graphically described in Lung tens ay de quer amé (lines 25–28):

Tut ensi va de mun cors
Cum d’une torche eslumé[e]:
La char se destruit dehors,
Si n’esteynt point ma pensé[e].

Worse still, his peace of mind may be attacked, his very reason assailed. He is not merely “murns e pensif,” like the poet of Ryme Bon, but may fear impending madness. Sentiments reminiscent of William IX of Aquitaine’s Farai un vers de dreyt nien are expressed in the AN poem Malade sui, de joie espris (ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 376–78, lines 8–11),

Sages suy et si ne soi ren,
E jeo sui tant dolerouse[e]
Plus jolifs homme n’ert a nul jourz
Que ma n’est ci ne aillors.

Other poets may express love’s folly without employing the rhetoric of reversar is but nevertheless using courtly terminology: “Mêes jo, cheitif sanz mesure,/Ai perdu sen e savoir” (Quant le tens se renovele, lines 59–60).

The captive and the prisoner of love are, of course, familiar courtly metaphors illustrating the physical and mental distress of the lovelorn suitor. An instance of the metaphoric captive as supplicant is found in Longement me sui pené (lines 19–21):

Mês tujur a joynte meins
La pri cum amy certeins
K’ ele pense de sun prisun.
M. D. Legge draws attention to an AN poem in which a less familiar image appears, the author comparing himself and his lady to the fabled unicorn captured by a maiden. "This comparison, derived from a favourite theme in the Bestiaires, also occurs in a poem by no less a writer than Thibault de Champagne." The AN author of Lung tens ay de quer amé certainly knew the legend, if not the actual poem, and ends by remarking (lines 57–60):

Soviengez vus ent, ma drue,
Ke sanz vus ne pus durer;
Si vus puys ben aficher,
Kar d’autre ne quer ayue.

However despairing, however languishing the lover may be, nothing will induce him to leave the service of his lady or of love itself. AN poets are as ready as continental ones to admit that this results largely from the paradoxical nature of love: it is pain but pleasure, sickness and medicine, sorrow but joy. Despite the anguish that love entails it is preferable to the peaceful yet dull life led by those who are unaware of li duz mal d’amér. They admit this freely, saying, “Trop me plest et si me pleink/De bon’amur q’ensi me blesce” (Malade sui, de joie espris, lines 27–28). This theme, which is central to troubadour poetry, recurs frequently in AN lyrics. One of the earliest AN poems extant, Jeo m’en voys, dame, concedes that there is nothing preferable to enduring love’s sweet suffering: “Q[ue] ii n’est ren que jeo desir[e] tant / Cum endurer la duce maladie” (lines 27–28). In a similar vein, the author of Ryme Bon admits, “D’un duz regard suy si mal poynt,/Que jeo m’y murg, mès trop m’agree” (lines 9–10). Love’s sickness, love’s folly is so ecstatic a state that none would wish to be delivered from its douce détresse. Moreover a mere kind glance will suffice to free love’s prisoner or to heal the love-sick, for the lady is a mire, a doctor for such ills. AN poets draw upon this familiar courtly conceit frequently, exploring its ramifications. One lover, preferring to languish in vain hope, even pleads for a falsely-compassionate glance (Jeo m’en voys, dame, lines 21–26):

Succurrez moi, dame, d’un faus semblaut
Pur recoverer arer[e] ma sotie.
Si vous me alez tuz les jours veir disaunt,
Jeo ai grant pour que mon sen ne m’occie.
Coverez un poi, si f[e]rez corteisie,
E me lessez languir en attendant.

False hope is, then, preferable to despair. The delirium of love is a state of delight, its madness preferable to wisdom.

One reason for this is perhaps more important than the fascination exercised
by the paradoxical nature of love. Through love one may glimpse a nobler self and aspire to a state of moral perfection. For the troubadours, love of a beautiful lady is an ennobling experience; it does not merely allow the lover to attain happiness but is also the source of all virtues and values, “Joie, solaz e duçur;/Sanz, curtesie e valur” (Tant suy a beau sojur, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 249-250, lines 6-7). He who achieves love will be enriched morally. The qualities of generosity, moderation and courtliness first sung by the troubadours will blossom in the propitious climate of love, transforming love’s servant into a glorious and noble courtly lover, the fin amant. By contrast, the false suitor who pays court to a lady for her wealth will grow churlish, “recreanz” and “mautalentiz,” says the author of the above-quoted poem. He castigates the material and transitory goal of self-interested venal love, contrasting amur with avoyr in terms which recall Marcabrun’s denunciation of aver. The fin amant, however, will reap a “riche guerdon,” knowing complete happiness and rejoicing in his heightened qualities and capabilities. He is described in Grant pesç’a ke ne chantai (ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 251-252, lines 37-40):

Jolifs en tute seson  
Franc de quer, net cum fauron,  
Pruz e fer plus ke lyon  
E bon crestien en Dé.

So it is that the hopeless hope of the long servitude of love takes on a moral significance, for it is a means of attaining that perfection mirrored in the lady. The suffering which love entails has its own moral and spiritual value, as a form of purification—as it is expressed in Chant ai entendu (lines 27-28): “... sufrance m’ad value,/E bien amer m’ad valuz.”

Evidence exists, then, that in general AN poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are aware of the techniques and genres of the continental lyric and are familiar with the standard motifs and topoi which constitute the rhetoric of courtliness. The service of love, the prison of love, the malady of love, love’s paradoxical nature, the lady’s physical and moral perfection and the lover’s moral aspirations are all major themes of the continental lyric which are found in the AN lyric. Furthermore, the themes and terminology of courtly conventions colour poems other than the love-lyric, permeating, as on the continent, religious poetry. The domna is the madonna in a number of poems, including a bilingual poem utilizing the spring topos (ed. T. Wright & J. O. Halliwell, Reliquiae Antiquae, 2 vols. [1841 & 1843; rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1966], Vol. I, pp. 200-202, lines 1-8):

En Mai ki fet flurir les prez,  
et pullulare gramina,
E cist oysels chauntent assez
\textit{jocunda modulamina},
Li amaunt ki aiment vanitez
\textit{quaerent sibi solamina},
Je met ver wus mes penser s,
\textit{o gloriosa domina}.

Another poem shows maximum interpenetration of registers, mixing courtly elements with popular, and profane with religious. The theme of the woman's \textit{chanson d'ami}, couched in courtly terminology, assimilates Christ to the \textit{ami} and attributes to him the qualities of the courtly lover (ed. Wright & Halliwell, \textit{Reliquiae Antiquae}, Vol. I, p. 104, lines 5–8):

\begin{quote}
Mei ke suy ameruse, ne suy a blamer;
Kar je ay tel amy ke n'ad poynt de per;
Il est si tres beaus, e si franc de quer,
Ke en trest tut le munde ne trovera sun per.
\end{quote}

Any doubts one might have had throughout the poem concerning the identity of the "lover" are finally dispelled by the \textit{Amen} at the end of the poem.

Although courtly influences are evident in the main themes of the AN lyric, some dilution of the continental lyric tradition does occur. For example, insular poets speak of the servitude of love but they do not mention the stages of servitude the classical troubadours recognized: \textit{fenhedor, pregador, entendedor} and \textit{drut}. AN poets appear to have simplified the originally complex scheme of amorous vassalage, as did the troubadours' disciples in Portugal and Sicily. The latter also discarded the \textit{senhal}, or pseudonym used by the troubadours to conceal the identity of the lady to whom the poem is addressed. Similarly, AN poets rarely feel the need for secrecy. A \textit{senhal} is used in only one AN poem: Edward II sends his lament on his imprisonment to the unidentified "La Bise"—"The Doe." Moreover, this last poem, claimed in the ms as being "De le roy Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qe il fist mesmes," together with a debate by Walter de Bybbesworth, in which he takes Sir Henry de Lacy to task for not fulfilling his intentions of going on the Crusade of 1270,\textsuperscript{18} are the only two lyrics to which authorship is ascribed. Thus, whereas the names of more than four hundred troubadours are known, the AN poets are largely anonymous.

There are formal divergences, too: the \textit{tornada}, or envoy, is found only infrequently in the AN lyric but many poems have a refrain. Most refrains enhance the musical and aesthetic qualities of the song and reinforce its courtly theme, as in \textit{Mult s'aprisme li termines} (ed. J. Stainer, \textit{Early Bodleian Music}, Vol. II, p. 4), a lament of unrequited love with the refrain: "Jeo sui li plus traiz del munt/Ki maignent de tuz cels ki sunt." Other refrains are not integrated semantically; bearing little or no thematic relationship to the poem, they appear
to be of popular origin. Such is the case in Quant primes me quintey de amors: its stanzas extol the lady's qualities in courtly commonplaces but its refrain, which is not written down in full, is popular in character—"Va ester ke dundeus, va . . ." suggesting it was borrowed from a well-known poem or perhaps a dance-song. Another feature of the lyrics composed in England is the surprising number of bilingual and trilingual compositions in the courtly vein, in which various techniques are used to combine the three languages current in England during the AN era.

Such differences may be explained in terms of chronology, for in general the earliest poems preserved (Chant ai entendu, Mult s'aprisme li termines, De ma dame vuil chanter) show the most marked formal and thematic similarities with the continental lyric. Drawing upon courtly themes and conceits, they express a kaleidoscope of emotions lyrically and convey a common situation with intense personal immediacy. Many later poems, however, are disappointingly diffuse, little more than pale, uninspired imitations of a distant tradition, unrelieved by evocative imagery. Thus, despite their courtly themes and imagery, most of the six poems of MS. Dd. X.31 in Cambridge University Library (ed. Meyer, "Mss de Cambridge," 248–255), are closer in style and form to the spoken dit than to the lyrical canso. Desire, entreaty and service are expressed without that tension between sensual and spiritual love which characterizes fin'amors. Form and formulae are retained but the spirit of mezura, that quality of moderation which is the very foundation of cortezia, is lacking.

Although the conventional may become banal in later poems, courtly echoes are nonetheless heard, indicating the continuing influence of the troubadour aesthetic on AN verse. Specific points of contact between continental and insular poetry may be suggested. It would be convenient to assume that Eleanor of Aquitaine was responsible for the introduction of lyric poetry of a courtly nature to England, for as the queen of Louis VII she had played a seminal role in the introduction of courtly literature and customs to northern France. However, no AN poems remain which are anterior to 1173, when Eleanor was imprisoned by Henry II. Her son Richard the Lion Heart, friend of troubadours and himself a troubadour might have introduced courtly themes and techniques to England during his ten-year reign from 1189–1199. However, this king of England was first and foremost a prince of Aquitaine: in ten years he paid but two visits to England, spending six months there after his coronation and a further six weeks later in his reign. It has also been suggested that the diffusion of Provençal poetry was above all the work of Henry III and his queen Eleanor of Provence, many of whose compatriots settled in England. But it will be remembered that hatred of these same "foreigners" and of the favours shown them by Henry III led in 1258 to the Provisions of Oxford, confirmed in 1263 and corroborated by the Provisions of Marlborough in 1267. Thus specific influences would appear to be less conclusive than the general ones at work in a society whose dominion extended on both sides of
the Channel and which was both insular and continental in outlook. The sub-
jects of this society owed allegiance to the king of England, himself a vassal of
the king of France. There were many family bonds and commercial links—the
wine trade with the south, the wool trade with the north—even following the
loss of Normandy in 1204. Literary contacts may have been personal and
limited or broader and more general. The influence of Bernard de Ventadour,
whose biographer claimed he followed Eleanor of Aquitaine to England, may
have been negligible; Bertran de Born’s association with the sons of Eleanor
and Henry II seems unlikely to have affected literary trends in England. How-
ever, the continuing influence of a puy, or poetry competition, held in London
for the best part of a century, cannot be discounted.

Nevertheless, our knowledge of the AN lyric is based on a relatively small
number of poems and must consequently be considered inconclusive. In addi-
tion, the majority of the poems are found in a single ms and many are inci-
dental to the ms in which they are preserved. For the one reverdie consciously
preserved in a parchment ms (Quant le tens se renovele), another is preserved
by chance, on a fragment from a thirteenth-century songbook folded over and
bound into a copy of Peraldus (En averil al tens delits, ed. M. R. James, Copy
of the Manuscripts, St. John’s College, Cambridge [Cambridge: Cambridge
UP, 1913], p. 174). The only extant AN variation on the topos, El tens d’iver,
in which dreary winter mirrors the poet’s melancholy as he reflects upon his
unrequited love, is written on a blank page of a ms of Juvenal and Persius.
Without the last two songs so fortuitously saved it would be said that the topos
is represented in AN amatory verse by a single example. Similarly, the only
rotrouenge extant (Quant primes me quintey de amors) is written on a flyleaf
and a number of short love-lyrics are known only because they are part of a
Manière de Langage. Finally, one of the earliest and finest love-songs, De ma
dame vuil chanter, preserved with its musical notation, was written invertedly
on the reverse of the last leaf of MS Ashmole 1285. This leads us to conclude
that these poems are the chance survivors of a more extensive corpus of lyric
poetry. They have been preserved by accident rather than design.

NOTES
1. As no AN chansonniers or other collections of verse survive, it was thought that the
secular lyric was virtually non-existent. This view is represented by a number of schol-
ars, including Johan Vising, who stated that “lyric poetry, other than religious, hardly
exists in Anglo-Norman literature” (Anglo-Norman Language and Literature [London:
Oxford UP, 1923], pp. 37–38). A similar conclusion was reached by Constance B. West,
who like Vising imputed the paucity of secular lyric poetry to “the seriousness and the
utilitarian bias which seems to be characteristic of the Anglo-Norman temperament”
2. Anglo-Norman Text Society, XI (1953; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corpora-


5. In coblas unissonans the rhyme scheme and rhymes of the first stanza are repeated in all subsequent stanzas. With coblas doblas the same rhyme scheme is used throughout, but the same rhymes extend through two stanzas only. Coblas singulars are monorhyme stanzas of equal length whose rhymes change from stanza to stanza.

6. The technique of coblas capfinidas was originally imitated from the chansons de geste (see Fred Brittain, The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A.D. 1300, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1951], p. 22). Jean Rychner analyses its effects in La Chanson de Geste (Geneva: Droz, 1955), pp. 74-80. It was however the troubadours who perfected this metrical technique, subsequently imitated in the lyric verse of poets of many countries.

7. Ed. Aspin, AN Pol. Songs, pp. 93-104. Paul Studer commented in “An Anglo-Norman Poem by Edward II, King of England” (Modern Language Review, XVI [1921], 34-36): “It bears obvious signs of Provençal influence. It opens with a reference to the season of the year, and ends with an envoy. After the fashion of troubadours, the poet addresses his song to a lady whose real name he conceals under the senha/ of ‘La Bise,’ i.e. ‘The Doe.’”

8. Ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 379-80. The technique is discussed by Legge: “The rhymes are nearly all of the “grammatical” type. These are described in the Leys d’amors and are used in lyrics by the Countess of Die and Bernart de Ventadorn” (AN Lit., p. 347).


10. Differences between the ethics and aesthetics of courtoisie in the south and north of France have been noted by Zumthor: “dans le Nord (y compris l’Etat anglo-normand, qui joua l’un des premiers rôles dans cette histoire) la courtoisie mit plus longtemps à trouver ses formes d’expression; elle resta largement ouverte sur l’action chevaleresque, intégra et valorisa le code d’honneur militaire, dont elle fit l’élément central d’une morale qui embrassait l’existence entière de l’homme et de la femme nobles” (Essai de poétique médiévale, p. 468).


15. AN Lit., p. 346.

16. The role of the senses, specifically sight and hearing, and their relationship with


21. According to Zumthor (*Essai de poétique médiévale*, pp. 406–416), the characteristic stanza of the *dit* (“strophe d’Hélinand”), is usually composed of twelve octosyllables rhyming *aab aab bba bba*. This is in fact only half as long as the stanzas of *Tant suy a beau sojur*.

22. See Rita Lejeune, “Le Rôle littéraire d’Aliénor d’Aquitaine et de sa famille,” *Cultura Neolatina*, Vol. XIV (1954), 5–57, who states that “[Aliénor] se trouve à l’origine de la renaissance française du XIIe siècle” (p. 5) and “à cause d’elle, les thèmes de la lyrique occitane vont faire éclorer la lyrique courtoise en langue d’oil; pour elle, ils vont même déborder dans le genre lyrique” (p. 20).


24. Vising maintains that this event has the “necessary result of a reinforcement of the dominant French element, and Anglo-Norman literature becomes much richer in the thirteenth century than before” (*Anglo-Norman Language and Literature*, p. 20).

The loathly lady of Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath’s Tale* delivers a lecture to her reluctant swain which is remarkably gracious and persuasive, although hardly unconventional. Her sentiments, which find a parallel in Dante’s *Convivio*, may be summed up in a phrase: Virtue is the true nobility. True virtue, furthermore, is a legacy from Christ, not an inheritance passed on with titles and wealth. The chief difficulty facing a reader is to find a way of reconciling this view with the cynical, maverick personality established for Alice of Bath in her own prologue. We might suppose that Chaucer is here speaking to us over the head of his narrator, but the gentility of the sentiment is an achievement not merely beyond the Wife’s reach, but totally at odds with the materialism she has been preaching. The justification she offers for marital infidelity is merely the most arrogant of a series of flagrant rejections of the received morality:

He is to greet a nygard that wolde werne  
A man to lighte a candle at his lanterne;  
He shall have never the lasse light, pardee.¹

My concern here is to examine the strategies by which Chaucer adjusted the speech on “gentilesse” to his conception of a bitter and intelligent woman who bridled at male affectations of superiority. Contemptuous of what she considered a bloodless, schematic approach to human motivation and behavior by academics, she was at the same time well enough versed in the technical concepts and terminology of scholastic discourse to be able to deflate the clerkly penchant for pontifical utterance and orotund evasion. The prologue presents us with a woman capably orchestrating the rhetoric of a traditional anti-feminism. But she has also become master of a lecture-hall vocabulary which tended to reduce human complexity and individuality to the more manageable counters of the physical world of “mobile being” or the abstrusities of metaphysics. Her
tone is one of continual, mocking self-justification. Thus, to take just one example, Alice’s Aristotelian “appetit,” the teleological drive shared with all other elements of the world of changeable being, is insisted upon in such a way as to render morally neutral her life of carefree libertinism.²

Against such a backdrop, in short, the loathly lady’s speech, which begins with an earnest exhortation to gentility, virtue, and participation in a Christian community, may seem orthodox and gracious to a degree far transcending the potentialities of the Alice we have come to know. It is not long, however, before the familiar accents appear (emphasis added):

Taak fyr, and ber it in the derkest hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne;
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brene
As twenty thousand men myghte it biholde;
His office natureel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.

Heere may ye se wel how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo, in his kynde.

(1139–49)

The illustration is offered as proof that “gentilesse,” since it is not observed to be an invariable characteristic of the scions of so-called “gentil” families, is not something “planted natureely” and thus subject to the law of nature. “Office natureel,” “annexed,” “possessioun”—the academic terminology is a rather clear sign that the clerk-baiting harradin is showing through the assumed character. The word “operacioun,” in particular, has a range of associations that is worth considering. Even from the most general perspective, however, the term nicely underscores the image of an Alice possessed of a grudging fatalism towards the passing of youth into age, when a clerk can no longer “do / Of Venus werkes worth hi olde sho” (707–08), when the pith is gone and only the husk is left to sell, and when sleepy old dotards who marry are useful only as meal tickets. The only reasonable criteria, in Alice’s view, for measuring vital worth, are performance, practice, works—the stuff of “experience.” Alice could even have found authoritative, if qualified, support for her attitude among the schoolmen. Aquinas, for instance, commenting on a point in Aristotle, notes that

every capacity is reduced to operation (operatio) as to its proper perfection. Consequently, what is principal is operation and not mere capacity, for
act is more excellent than potency, as is proved in the ninth book of the *Metaphysics*. . . . From this it is evident that for animal or man life in the full sense is an act of sensation or thought. Indeed a slumbering individual—since he does not actually feel or think—does not live completely but has half a life.  

Aristotle himself makes action or operation the very hallmark of felicity. His initial discussion of the point in the first book of the *Ethics* is summed up by Bradwardine in the statement “Felicity consists in use, not in possession.” Bradwardine’s principal concern is with the future felicity of the blessed, described by him as an actual and perfect operation of the intellect and will, which nevertheless allows for a disposition in these faculties which has, as he says, a certain indifference, potentiality, and imperfection “annexed” to it. It is clear that “possession” refers here not to material acquisitions but to psychological attainment such as a developed understanding, which would make possible the speculative “operations” in which true felicity, even for Aristotle, consists. It is noteworthy how Chaucer adapts this learned vocabulary to his immediate purpose—how he provides an echo of the context of academic discussion in such a way as to make that context seem diminished by the more humane setting in which its instruments are forced to function. The assertion that “genterye is nat annexed to possessioun,” for example, immediately suggests by its phrasing that the argument is somehow worthy of serious philosophical attention, even while it ostensibly limits itself to more basically human questions of social standing, inheritance and personal behavior.

Such terms, “operacioun” in particular, were scholastic commonplaces. As technical terms in philosophy, *operatio* and its correlative *scientia* in the first instance refer to acting and thinking as the two perfections of the human soul. As Gundissalinus explains it, they correspond to the faculties of sense and reason, and dictate the basic division of philosophy into speculative science and practical science. Since most sciences are not purely one or the other this eventuates in the separation of the majority of scientific treatises into a *theorica* and a *practica*. Medicine, for instance, as Avicenna remarks, has two parts: “One contains a knowledge of principles, the other the mode or manner of treatment (operandi).” Even Physics, which as Ockham notes is for the most part a theoretical science because it does not on the whole treat of human actions (operibus nostris), should have a part reserved, he feels, for providing directive knowledge for performance of actions.

Aquinas treats the distinction between speculative and practical sciences at considerable length in his commentary on Boethius’ *De Trinitate* and elsewhere, a matter which William Wallace has discussed in detail. Obvious examples of speculative science are metaphysics and physics, and of practical
sciences engineering and ethics (the science of producing human happiness). The distinctive note of a practical science, as Wallace points out, is “that it is concerned with the principles and causes of operables,” and he notes that “the end of practical science . . . is operation.”9 A further distinction (again, made by Aquinas) is also possible, between practical or operative sciences dealing with human actions per se and those dealing with the production of external objects (scientiae factivae). A slight variation in terminology can be noted in the Summa philosophiae of the pseudo-Grosseteste, who specifies that an actio which involves a material subject is more properly called an operatio, and is seen for the most part in the productions of craftsmen (artifices). That Chaucer at some point began to conceive of the Wife as a kind of parodic version of “operative scientist,” standing against the speculative Clerk in particular, is, in my view, a defensible position. Those lines early in her Prologue, apparently genuine but cancelled by Chaucer (44a–44f)—

Of which [prospects] I have pyked out the beste,  
Bothe of here nether purs and of here cheste.  
Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,  
And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes  
Maketh the werkman parfyt se kirly;  
Of fyve husbondes scoleiying am I

—may not alone be fair evidence of the extent to which Chaucer wants the Wife to be taken as a practical scientist manqué, a person with marriage rather than, say, medicine as her field of expertise. Nevertheless, her Prologue readily resolves itself, significantly, into the two parts of a treatise, a theorica (vv. 1–183), and a practica introduced by the Pardoner’s mollifying remark:

Telle forth youre tale, spareth for no man,  
And teche us yonge men of youre praktike.

(186–87)

In more general usage operatio was only slightly less technical, referring to actions performed not casually but rather as formally related to some virtue or potency in the agent. Thus a man may operate as a horologist by designing and making a clock, or as a moral agent by answering the claims of friendship; Nature has her “operations,” too—the processes governed by what we call natural law; even God is said (although equivocally) to “operate” in performing miracles, bestowing grace, judging souls, and so forth. The classic treatment of human operations, at least of man considered as a moral being, was the Ethics of Aristotle. There is, in addition, good reason to consider the Ethics, and the tradition of Christianizing commentary on that work as having particular relevance to Chaucer’s purposes in the speech on “gentilesse.”
To begin with, the illustration of the operation of natural law through the example of fire burning the same way even in the Caucasus mountains almost certainly comes ultimately, if not directly, from Aristotle's brief discussion of natural law, or natural justice, in the *Ethics*. There he distinguishes it from statute law, which varies from place to place: "Some hold the view [he says] that all regulations are of this kind, on the ground that whereas natural laws are immutable and have the same validity everywhere (as fire burns both here and in Persia) they can see that notions of justice are variable."\(^1\)

It should also be noted that justice is the subject of one book of the *Ethics* (the fifth) because acting justly towards oneself and others is an aspect of moral virtue. There is an important and related question concerning the possibility of man's having an innate capacity for choosing the good, a notion elsewhere vigorously attacked by Aristotle. The issue posed in the hag's speech concerning inherited "gentilesse" is really the same question in another form. Aquinas, in his commentary on the Aristotelian argument, provides a formulation of the opposing position, a position he regards as erroneous. In his discussion, he introduces the image of the capacity "planted natureely":

That a person desires a proper end [they say] does not arise from his own free will but must belong to him by birth. As from birth a man has external sight by which he correctly distinguishes colors, so also from birth he should have a well-disposed internal vision by which he may judge well and desire what is really good. Thus he must be said to be of good birth in whom the previously mentioned judgment has been implanted [*inditum*] from birth. When a man innately has in good and perfect fashion what is greatest and best for him, this is a perfect and truly good birth. . . .\(^1\)

The argument is naturally rejected by Aquinas, as it is by Aristotle; after allowance is made for dispositions or inclinations wrought by planetary influence and bodily temperament, freedom of the will and individual responsibility are of course affirmed. Hardly revolutionary is the hag's rejection of the idea of a naturally inherited nobility of character. One may easily suppose that Chaucer, having derived pertinent ideas from the ethical tradition, here applied them specifically to the concept of "gentilesse."

By far the most significant feature of the *Ethics*, in terms of its usefulness as a gloss on the "gentilesse" speech, is Aristotle's consideration of the way in which virtue (*virtus*—power, ability, strength, but especially moral strength) is developed.\(^1\) Bradwardine, in the *De Causa Dei*, discusses at some length the Philosopher's treatment of this point, in connection with the analogous question
of the way in which grace comes to be present in the human soul. His analysis is especially interesting in view of Chaucer’s (or the hag’s) repeated insistence on the fact that true “gentilesse,” the power to live virtuously, derives from Christ and comes in the form of divine grace. Bradwardine’s chief concern is to defend the principle that divine grace is necessary for willing the performance of meritorious acts. That is to say, one cannot independently of the Creator develop the power inescapably to choose the good. He sees a potential threat to this position in Aristotle’s view, stated at several points in the *Ethics*, that people develop moral virtue by the successive performance of virtuous acts. A man becomes just, temperate, and brave by continually doing just, temperate, and brave deeds, just as a person becomes a builder by building, or (a famous, if quaint illustration) one becomes a zither-player by playing the zither. When we are born we are constituted to receive certain virtues, but we bring them into increasingly perfect actualization by practice; we develop “habits” in ourselves. *Virtus ex operibus generatur* (“a power is produced by a succession of individual acts”) was the familiar form of the principle. Aristotle himself seems to have recognized a difficulty, namely, that the position appears to suppose some degree of innate capacity. Averroes, too, explicitly argued in connection with the point that it is impossible for anything to come into being without having initially something of that which it will have at last, and that thus no one can come to play the zither without having possessed from the beginning something of the art of zither-playing. An ass can not learn to play the zither, nor a man in whom “zitherizing” is not to some degree innate. Bradwardine’s own position is that a man, having a certain species or form of zither-playing in his imagination, perfects it through practice.

The entire discussion is for the purpose of making a distinction between virtues of this sort however developed or acquired, and the grace freely given by God. Bradwardine insists that of ourselves or from other creatures we have not the least scintilla of charity or grace, and he goes on to condemn the heretical view that grace is given by God so that a man can perform more easily what he would in any case be able to do, though with more difficulty, without the aid of grace.

Now, although the loathly lady’s speech on “gentilesse” may seem unexceptionably Christian, it might nevertheless be argued that much of its special force derives from the fact that some of the particular sentiments it expresses are not themselves exclusively Christian in nature, and that the very structure of the speech reflects the uniqueness of Chaucer’s appreciation of the hard-won intellectual and moral stance of the central religious current of his time. The speech assimilates acceptable pagan ideas in a framework which echoes the scholastic struggle to adapt the Aristotelian world view, especially the vision of the moral athlete which informs the *Ethics*, to the Christian world of charity and grace. With only a slight change of terminology, statements such as “vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl,” or “he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis,”
can easily be accommodated to Aristotle's humanistic, pagan outlook. And the passage,

Looke who that is most vertuous alway,
Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he kan;
Taak hym for the grettest gentil man,

(1113–16)
might well find a place in the *Ethics* if one merely substituted for "gentil" Aristotle's "just, temperate, and brave." Even the ambiguity may be deliberate on Chaucer's part. Do "cherles" and "gentils" come to their villainous or virtuous perfection through repeated operations like the zither-player, or are their actions the result of a character existing prior to the deeds? But the point need not be pressed.

There may even be an implicit contrast intended on the precise point that man perceived through Christian eyes, because he is unable to persevere in his "operacioun," requires the divine operation of a God granting grace as a continual support for the performance of virtuous actions. As noted earlier, the terminology of a God "operating" by giving man the grace to be just, pious, wise, and blessed, with such analogies as that to the sun operating to illuminate the world, or the farmer operating with the plow to produce food from the field, can be found in Bradwardine and other scholastic commentators. But this point, too, need not be vigorously urged. The hag's prayers for the grace of "gentilesse" can stand by themselves, even if we can never decide whether or not Alice herself is best understood as fully subscribing to the sentiments enshrined in the speech. The complexities of her character persist to the very end of the tale, where she herself prays for grace—the "grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde"—and begs Christ to shorten the lives of husbands who refuse to submit. Whether the blasphemy is meant to be genuine or facetious on the part of the Wife, or whether the ending as a whole is to be seen as a good natured joke or a final bit of impudence, probably depends largely on a reader's own critical predilections. It does appear, however, that Chaucer was at some pains to make the speech on "gentilesse," insofar as it is understood to be a fictive creation of the Wife of Bath, seem the natural utterance of one as competent in scholastic give-and-take as Alice has previously shown herself to be.

**NOTES**

I ne loved nevere by no discrecioun,
But evere folwede myn appetit,
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit;
(622–24)

The last line, an obvious allusion to certain scholastic sophisms having to do with "denomination," helps to make the more extended meaning of "appetit" (Aristotelian appetitus, inclination towards natural place) the relevant one.


Omnis autem potentia reducitur ad operationem, sicut ad perfectionem propriam. Unde id quod est principale consistit in operatione, et non in potentia nuda. Est enim actus potior quam potentia, ut probatur in nono Metaphysicorum. . . . Et ex hoc patet quod principaliter vivere animalis vel hominis, est sentire vel intelligere. Dormiens enim, quia non actu sentit vel intelligit, non perfecte vivit, sed habet dimidium vitae. . . . (p. 609)

The ‘Finiguerra’ Venus and her Children: the Iconology of a Fifteenth-Century Florentine Engraving

by

Gwendolyn Bryant

Interpreting Finiguerra’s engraving of the planetary Venus and those born under her aegis not only entails an analysis of the engraving itself and other related images, but it calls for a reassessment of the work of Aby Warburg, whose research on this and other series of the planets cleared the way for many subsequent studies. Since Warburg’s followers have consistently ignored many of his theoretical concerns, it is essential to outline them briefly if we are to understand his analysis of the ‘Finiguerra’ Venus.

The most concise exposition of Warburg’s approach to art history is formulated in his famous lecture “Italienische Kunst und internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoja zu Ferrara,” delivered in Rome at the tenth International Congress of Art History in 1912. This lecture is mainly remembered as a tour de force in which he identified the hitherto incomprehensible monsters of the middle register of the Schifanoia Months frescoes as the Indian version of Hellenistic decans or sidereal demons. However, this iconographic feat was not the principal objective of the lecture; rather for Warburg the interpretation of the content or subject matter of the work of art was merely a preliminary step towards a history of style, or more precisely, the “historical psychology of human expression” he advocated at the end of his lecture.

We should not be misled into thinking that his terminology refers to a history of ideas or mentalities, for this is not the direction indicated by the question with which Warburg “concluded” his lecture: “[i]n what measure does the introduction of a sudden stylistic change in Italian art in the representation of the human appearance constitute a process of explication and conflict of international dimensions, with representations which had survived from the pagan civilization of the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean?” The word here translated by “explication and conflict” (Auseinandersetzung in the German text) reveals Warburg’s acquaintance with Nietzschean theory. It is this Auseinandersetzung between conflicting tendencies, influences, and “energies,”
the striving towards liberation from existing forces that manifests itself in stylistic change, which interests Warburg and which constitutes ultimately the "meaning" of the work of art for him.

The search for origins, antique models and sources, that is so much an end in itself for the Warburgian school of art history, is merely a means for Warburg, a way of seeing the antagonistic forces alive within a work of art, or in more bluntly Nietzschean terms, the play of the Dionysiac and the Apollo-nian. Thus a Nietzschean iconological analysis is less preoccupied with identifying artistic themes and situating them in an all-englobing historical continuum than with the irruption of a "will" that opposes the forces of stability and tradition.

A Warburgian approach necessarily concentrates on the birth of a tendency, the traumatic moment when the new style, which appears to be Dionysiac, is most clearly in opposition to an established Apollonian order, for a style at its apogee, a mastered style—even though "Dionysiac" at its inception—has already become "Apollonian." Hence Warburg's preference for researching the Early Renaissance and the earliest Italian engravings like that of the so-called 'Finiguerra' Venus.

* * * *

This representation of the planetary goddess and her "children," part of a series of the seven planets, exists in two versions. One set of plates was engraved in the "Fine Manner" a few years earlier than the second, coarser series which was copied from it about 1464 (Figures 1 and 2). Both sets of engravings are traditionally attributed to the workshop of the Italian niellist Maso Finiguerra. Warburg, however, refers to the artist of the engravings as Baldini-Botticelli, maintaining that the series or "calendar," long considered to be the work of Baldini, is in fact a youthful engraving of Botticelli. And it is the work of Botticelli which constitutes for Warburg a sphere of transition between the realism of Cossa's Schifanoia frescoes and the ideal Apollonian perfection of Raphael. Here is the essential passage from Warburg's 1912 address in which he explains the engravings' importance to the evolution of Italian Renaissance art:

As for what it depicts, the apparently accessory circumstance that a later edition of the same calendar exists, furnishes a precious contribution to the comprehension of the history of styles; thanks to a nuance of the representation, we can observe, in its nascent state, the new stylistic principle of idealizing mobility in the Antique style. The first edition of this calendar should be dated around 1465 and is exactly related
in type to the astrological broadsheets of the North. In the midst of Venus’s entourage a small feminine figure holds herself rigidly: we have here a woman in Burgundian dress who, in a very recognizable way, wears on her head the French hennin and wimple; she already proves externally that Baldini-Boticelli must have made use of a Burgundian version of the Nordic model. The tendency and essence of the stylistic transformation of the Early Florentine Renaissance reveals itself therefore in the second edition of this engraving which must be dated several years later.

From the Burgundian caterpillar narrowly enveloped in its cocoon escapes the Florentine butterfly, the “Nynfa” with the winged headdress and floating drapery of the Greek maenad or Roman victory.\(^7\)

In spite of the embryonic nature and somewhat antiquated prose style of his analysis, Warburg’s concept of liberation is discernible here and I intend to render this aspect of his theory more explicit by developing and expanding his comments on the engraving. To understand the “liberation” of the Nynfa requires a familiarity with the traditions from which she is freed, those of “medieval realism” and astrological illustration.

* * *

The genre of planetary illustration was well-established in Northern Europe by the first half of the fifteenth century. French manuscript 606 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, German manuscript 2\(^0\) formerly in Kassel’s Gesamthochschul-Bibliothek, and the Basel and Graz Planetenbücher are earlier examples of this popular genre which shows the seven planetary gods above in the sky with those over whom they rule engaged in various trades and occupations on earth below. But perhaps the Finiguerra engraving’s adherence to Northern medieval tradition is best seen by comparing it to a roughly contemporary Venus print of a Blockbuch which was widely reproduced and is now preserved in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett (Figure 3).\(^8\)

The similarities which caused Lippmann to derive mistakenly the Northern print from the Florentine engraving are numerous.\(^9\) In both works the planetary Venus is shown in the heavens above with those whose birthdays make them subject to her celestial influence below. In the lower register, both sets of “children” engage in the typically Venusian activities of bathing, and making love and music in the open air. Even the formal composition of the two works
is alike in that a barer central space is framed by the couples in the bottom corners and the clumps of trees or architecture massed to either side.

It is this general disposition of the planets and their children, to the exclusion of all other aspects, that Erwin Panofsky comments in *Saturn and Melancholy*. He explains how the unified composition with planetary deities above, children below, evolved from linear Eastern tables which presented first the planets and then a series of single figures engaged in the various occupations ruled over by the planet. According to Panofsky, the genesis of the unified composition showing planets united in the same pictorial space with their children as found in the Berlin and Finiguerra series is due to a “process of modernization” performed by a Western Europe which desired to avoid the “too monotonous form” and “heterogeneous content” of Eastern tabular representations of the subject. Panofsky finds it quite natural that the composition showing a heavenly force above and those subject to it below should have been borrowed from the Christian iconography of the Pentecost and other mysteries. The progressive movement towards what Panofsky deems a more “coherent” representation is not entirely dependent on religious models however, for a “fusion of the secularized Pentecostal design with [a] version of the “Liberal Arts” picture makes further development easily comprehensible.”

Is further development, in fact, “easily comprehensible?” Do the superficially analogous structures of the compositions explain anything at all? Panofsky is too quick to reduce the heterogeneous and complex to the “easily comprehensible.” For even if his theory of “fusion” were better supported, it would serve only to show that the ‘Finiguerra’ engravings are a logical step in the creation of coherence from the “chaotic variety” of the oriental tables. For Panofsky the engravings are simply one of the moments of a continuous historical process by which the rational becomes real and the real rational. Can anything be more different from Warburg’s insistence on the *heterogeneity* of Finiguerra’s Venus? Instead of marking a step in a logical sequence, the ‘Finiguerra’ Venus is a concrete reminder of the contradictory, opposing, agonistic forces materialized in its incongruous details. Warburg formulates questions and seeks to reformulate them. And rather than seeing this as a shortcoming, a failure to “arrive at a convincing synthesis” as Gombrich puts it in his *Aby Warburg, an Intellectual Biography*, these questions should be seen as a Nietzschean affirmation, a refusal to reduce phenomena in metaphysical or Hegelian fashion.

Thus a representation ultimately dismissed as “coherent” by Panofsky is for Warburg a dynamic visual complex, a sort of drama whose shifting contradictions can be experienced but never resolved.

So let us look beyond the Italian artist’s adherence to the general composition and design of Northern astrological illustration and ask how he transforms the Northern model. What, in other words, are the *heterogeneous* elements of the ‘Finiguerra’ engraving?

Without eliminating the most conspicuously Northern iconographic element
of the bathers in a wooden tub protected by a canopy, the Italian artist alters
the architecture of the bathhouse by making it into a sort of barrel-vaulted
pool decorated on the outside with an antique garland. In the second version
of the Italian print this bathhouse has been simplified to the point that the
Northern wooden tub is no longer visible, and the satiric aspect of the bath
scene with its cavorting threesome has entirely disappeared to be replaced by a
pair of frontally posed lovers.

The changes concerning the planetary goddess are no less important. In
keeping with the medieval tradition of manuscript illumination and block
book prints, the Berlin Venus is inscribed in a circle or bubble with her
zodiacal signs in turn inscribed in smaller circles within this bubble. This
arrangement separates and abstracts her from the genre scene taking place
below, much as the zodiacal signs were separated and contained within the
great cosmological rose windows of the Middle Ages. The 'Finiguerra' Venus,
however, rides like a Roman imperator through the upper register in a chariot
pulled by doves, birds sacred to the goddess of love. This mode of transporta-
tion was surely inspired by the popular images of Petrarch's Trionfi. More-
over, the reference to a “triumph” of love is reinforced by the Latin inscrip-
tion, OMNIA VINCIT AMOR, on the first version of the engraving, as well as
by the blindfolded Cupid with drawn bow, since fifteenth-century illustrations
of Petrarch's “Triumph of Love” most often show Cupid/Eros on the proces-
sional cart rather than Venus. 12 Also the Italian Venus conforms in her more
generous bodily proportions to an antique ideal of beauty, whereas despite her
pagan nudity the thin, high-breasted Northern figure with her protruding belly
remains Gothic in inspiration.

More generally still, Finiguerra translates the elements of the Northern
print into an Italian idiom. Not only does the bathing tent take on a rounded,
arching form, but the points of the steeples and shoes are less conspicuous in
the Italian print. And in the second version of the 'Finiguerra' engraving the
architecture has lost its crenellation and become even more typical of a Floren-
tine Renaissance palazzo. These general changes in style and iconography
make it all the more difficult to understand why the Italian artist dresses two of
his female figures in the stiff Northern costumes of the Berlin print. This is the
stylistic detail which fascinated Warburg and made the engraving significant
for him.

In Warburg's judgment the Northern dress is part of a realistic “barbaric”
medieval tradition opposed in principle to the ideal paganizing “modern” style
being born in Italy from the revival of classical art. Not only does the Bur-
gundian dress with its stiff folds and exaggeratedly high, pointed headdresses
belong to an entirely different aesthetic from that of the loose, curved, floating
garments of Hellenism, but such clothing naturally restricts the movement of
the dancer—movement whose representation Warburg considers the essential
characteristic of the new style. In this sense there can never be a fusion or
reconciliation of the two tendencies.

Despite their irreconcilable nature, Warburg’s oppositions are never so
naive and simple as they may at first seem, for elsewhere he points out that “the
energetic trend towards a grand manner all’antica can only be explained as a
response to Flemish realism,” that is Flemish realism would have been a necessary
opponent, instrumental in the creation of a new idealizing style. Neither is
the opposition always pure, for a similar aim—a certain aggrandizing tendency:
“a desire to recall the grandeur of antiquity”—is not altogether absent from
contemporary Northern art.13 Unfortunately, the most insightful and com­ple­te
analysis of this many-faceted opposition in the writings of Warburg is
found in chapter eight of Gombrich’s Intellectual Biography which regrettably
interprets Warburg's Auseinandersetzung as a “dialectical progress towards
the Renaissance within the force which appears as its very antithesis,” that is,
in the direction of a Hegelian synthesis or reconciliation of opposed elements.14

Mesnil, too, misses the point of Warburg’s analysis when, because Florentines
actually imported many Franco-Burgundian goods, he objects to War­burg’s
deriving the Florentine print from Northern models on the basis of
clothing styles.15 In fact, Warburg is well aware of the vogue for Burgundian
merchandise—the Medici inventories he had studied contained many mentions
of these items—and the importance of Northern influence is not diminished by
Mesnil’s insistence on the impact of tapestries, cloth, panni dipinti or other
imported goods, for the North/South relationship is one of wider cultural
conflict. Nevertheless, one of the questions raised by Mesnil perhaps deserves
an answer since it contributes considerably to a more precise interpretation of
the engraving: in what measure does the clothing pictured in the ‘Finiguerra’
Venus and her Children reflect that actually worn during the 1460’s in Florence?
In other words how “ideal” is the Northern realism of the dress
depicted, how “real” the antiquarian “idealizing mobility” of the new style?

We know that national styles of foreign lands were recognized and often
appreciated in Florence and that diffusion of foreign styles was great during
the Renaissance.16 Northern clothing styles, particularly those of the lavish
court of Burgundy, were sometimes adopted for wear in Italy. After the
middle of the fifteenth century Italian women appear to have replaced the
balzo or ghirlanda headdresses of the 1430’s and 40’s with the corna, the
horned headdress of the North. However, close scrutiny reveals that, although
the Burgundian dress of the Venusians is too extreme to be accounted for simply
as one of these recognizable Italian adaptations, the ‘Finiguerra’ engraving
nevertheless gives a rather garbled account of contemporary Northern fashion.
For example, the steeple headdress of the central dancing figure in the first ver­
sion of the engraving is not constructed in conformity with Franco-Burgundian
norms. The black velvet band is set too far back on the head and lacks the characteristic loop or *frontelle* for adjusting the cumbersome cone. Instead of the black velvet lying against the forehead, another cloth or veil juts out over it forming almost a brim above the eyebrows. The long veil of the headdress is also puzzling, since the veils on conical headdresses seem to have been short until towards the very end of the 1460's. In still other respects the gowns are inaccurate as copies of Burgundian clothing. The bodice of the dancing lady is far too squared-off for Northern dress of the period which showed v-shaped necklines, with the point of the décolleté hidden by a *pièce*, or additional bodice, which was worn underneath. Nonetheless, the excessive length of both the gown's skirts and its sleeves is in keeping with contemporary Northern styles. The fur-lined sleeves were turned up at the wrists to form deep cuffs which tended to fall back over the hand of the wearer, as has the cuff of the dancing figure's upraised arm. Thus, though some aspects of the dancing woman's clothing is accurate, the Italian artist, or perhaps the Italian dressmaker whose designs he has copied, has not rendered a completely faithful version of Northern fashion.  

Observations of a similar type can be made for the clothing *all'antica*, which cannot have been modelled on actual Florentine street wear. Respectable Florentine girls and women were simply not permitted to don the flimsy, revealing clothing of antiquity. The thin, loose, "antique" garments seen in Renaissance painting more nearly resemble the *camicia*, or undergarment of Florentine women than their outer gowns. Therefore to approximate decently antique dress during the Renaissance required that a loose, blousy chemise be worn over a stiffer gown. In the 'Finiguerra' engravings this method of creating the illusion of classical dress is perhaps to be observed in the loose fabric the woman crowning the lutenist has draped over her shoulder.

While it is doubtful that Finiguerra's Venusians' clothing is patterned after "real" Florentine dress, it may in fact mirror contemporary festival or holiday costume. The "festive" ambience of the engraving has often been remarked upon, but has perhaps not been examined in a sufficiently literal manner. For the most logical explanation of their unusual attire is that the "children" of Venus are in costume, disguised either as foreigners from distant lands or as inhabitants of another epoch.  

The theatrical nature of the representation becomes more obvious when the Finiguerra Venusians' almost urban surroundings are compared to the bucolic setting of the Berlin woodcut and other *Blockbücher* prints. The Italian "children" of Venus make merry in front of a *palazzo* facade which creates a backdrop and separates "spectators" from "performers." The spectators, girls waving and tossing flowers from the balconies, do not wear the elaborate embroidered dress or the fantastic headdresses of those who play a more active role in the festivities taking place below them.

What is the exact nature of the celebration pictured? Can the dancing,
music-making, and throwing of flowers refer to the secular May Day festivals that took place annually in Florence, and as rites of spring would have been associated with the planetary goddess presiding over this season? This hypothesis is attractive since we know that from the High Middle Ages through the fifteenth century both May Day and Carnival were celebrated with Northern feudal forms such as the dance, joust, and armeeggerie.19 In fact the oldest accounts of Florentine May Day celebrations tell of brigades or companies of youths that constructed "courts" in several parts of the city. Women with garlands of flowers on their heads formed similar brigades and danced, played musical instruments, and joined in games and amusements. In the fifteenth century dance competitions often preceded the war games, jousts, and armeeggerie, as a sort of incitement for the "knights" to perform their equestrian feats admirably before the "ladies." To judge from Del Corazza's diary entries describing these dance contests, it was more important to be finely dressed than to dance well. And the matching pearl-encrusted, fur-trimmed livery of each competing brigade was as rich and ostentatious as possible. Given the feudal and courtly origins and activities of the May Day celebrations, it is not so difficult to understand that costume may sometimes have mimicked the great courts of France or Burgundy. In this light the change in style perceived by Warburg may also signal a change in Florentine celebratory modes.

The brigades also fabricated props or "floats" which they then pulled through the streets. In the Carnival of 1464, for example, one such brigade pulled a trionfo topped with a flaming, bleeding heart and representing the "triumph of love" to the Strozzi home in order to honor Marietta di Lorenzo degli Strozzi.20 And it is in this context of parade costume and floats that the 'Finiguerra' Venus on her decorated wagon should be placed, for Venus's attire is far too skimpy to have been dancing costume for the contests. No girl of an honorable Florentine family could have appeared in the short tunic and open-toed, calf-length boots worn by Venus, although such a disguise and role could have been assumed by a boy. Even later mentions of nymph costumes like that sported by Venus suggest that the short camicie and mid-calf boots or socci were still considered extremely provocative costume in the sixteenth century when they do seem to have been worn by female entertainers.21

Thus, when the 'Finiguerra' Venus engraving is examined closely, not only are two types of national dress distinguishable, but several degrees of costume as well: the ordinary dress of the spectators, the fancy dress of the brigade, and Venus's completely theatrical disguise. This should make it even clearer that we are dealing neither with a genre scene of everyday Florentine life, nor with a simple copy of a Burgundian print, but with a visual Auseinandersetzung. Such an Auseinandersetzung is not only an artistic explication, but a social and cultural one as well.

In fact the influence of the North is visible not only in the dress of the first version of the engraving as Warburg maintains, but also in the dress of the
liberated *Nynfa* or "butterfly," the dancing figure of the second version of the engraving. The sleeves of her thin, billowing gown are dagged, that is decorated with the leaf-like pinking or fringe common to the extravagant *houppelandes* and other Northern garments of the beginning of the century. This survival of Gothic dagging long after its heyday was common in certain occupational clothes such as those worn by lawyers and fools, and seems usually to indicate either adherence to outmoded traditions or theatricality. The anachronistic dagging appears for example on the chemise of Flora in Botticelli's *La Primavera*.22

Rather than contradicting Warburg's view, this detail suggests that an *Auseinandersetzung* of opposing tendencies is to be seen not only in a single detail of style, but even within that detail, as well as in the more general transformation of the engraving. Nor does the fact that such a costume may have been "real," that the idealizing mobility of the engraving may have copied an actual trend in fancy dress, in any way invalidate Warburg's interpretation. For the Dionysiac was perhaps freer to manifest itself in the domain of representation, whether it be that of the secular festivals or that of the art of engraving, than in more scholarly pursuits.

* * *

The preceding discussion should have served to demonstrate that Warburg's "stylistic" detail is inseparable from iconographic detail. Not only does it have content in the sense that the clothing styles have their own meaning or symbolism, but in the broader sense that the heightened mobility of the dancing figure in the second version of the engraving constitutes the "meaning" or content of the work in a Warburgian approach. It is concrete, visible evidence of the irreducible forces alive in Florentine Renaissance society, which can only partially be apprehended through a purely literary or political approach to the period. To insist on form and the "content" of form is to privilege the image itself rather than the text. Such an approach seeks not so much to *decipher* images, to put them into words, as to dramatize them, to *make them visible*. . .

Thus traditional iconography, or even Panofskian iconology, becomes a secondary pursuit or merely a means toward an end. And with this firmly in mind, let us ask whether it is possible to find strictly iconographic differences between the first and second versions of the 'Finiguerra' Venus which would lend support to Warburg's stylistic analysis. Are there any concomitant changes in the engraving's subject matter which could be considered Dionysiac, which exhibit a "will" towards the uncontrolled release of passion, like that of the idealizing mobility of the dancer's costume?

Until now a small kneeling figure added to the far background of the second version of the engraving has escaped all notice. Hands pressed together, the kneeling man stretches his arms forward in the direction of Venus in her
chariot. Can he be praying to the goddess? Is such an interpretation plausible for a Florentine engraving of c. 1464?

Perhaps, for during the 1460's Florence was flirting with a kind of “Christian paganism” in the form of the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino. In 1463 Ficino interrupted his work on the translations of Plato's manuscripts in order to translate for Cosimo de' Medici the Corpus Hermeticum, a collection of second- and third-century hermetic dialogues. His translation, completed in 1464, had an immense impact. It infused new life in and lent additional prestige to the traditional medieval science of astrology, for the framework of the Corpus is resolutely astrological. The Corpus describes a material world dominated by the seven planets which pour down “spirits” from above. In turn every object is imbued with occult affinities to one of these planets or “governors,” and man has only to understand this system of occult correspondences to become an operator, a Magus, capable of tapping the energies of the stars. Ficino attempted to do just this by means of Orphic hymns, prayers to the sun, and other ceremonies designed to attract the fortunate influences of Venus, Jupiter, and Apollo and to combat the deleterious effects of Saturn.

So in this context of the revival of late antique magic, it does not seem impossible that the kneeling figure may be attempting to attract the beneficent power of the planetary goddess. The introduction of pagan, Dionysiac elements perceptible in the stylistic transformation of the ‘Finiguerra’ engraving is thus also to be seen in the engraving’s iconography. But, once again, an iconological analysis is less concerned with interpreting the “textual” meaning of a single figure by using documents from the period than with isolating the elements, “stylistic” we might call them, which ultimately escape iconographic interpretation and capture a more vital, less verbal, meaning.

In order to explicate and develop the work begun by Warburg I have tried to extend his analysis to the totality of the two engravings, to show that the conflicting tendencies and the will to “liberate antiquity” are not limited to a single detail, nor is liberation to be found only in style. Warburg’s philosophy of art history neither reduces the image to a text nor to its purely formal elements. Rather it goes beyond the opposition form/content to seek the Dionysiac, that which defies the rational, established order of things and appears here and there, momentarily, before becoming itself Apollonian. With such a perspective it becomes once again possible to give the period we still call the Renaissance this appellation in the strongest sense, with the emphasis remaining on the rebirth of antiquity into a medieval Christian world both born from it and forever antagonistic towards it.
NOTES

1. Aby Warburg (1866–1929), the art historian son of a Hamburg banking family, founded the library that became, after it was moved to London in 1933, the Warburg Institute of the University of London. He is generally credited with having been the “father” of iconology, the art historical methodology best known through the work of his students and followers Fritz Saxl and Erwin Panofsky. Cf. William Heckscher, “The Genesis of Iconology” in Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes (Akten des 21. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964), Bd. 3 (Theorien und Probleme) (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag), pp. 239–262. For an exhaustive bibliography see Dieter Wuttke, Aby M. Warburg. Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner Verlag, 1980). The most complete study available on Warburg’s work and theory is still E. H. Gombrich, Aby Warburg, an Intellectual Biography (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1970), but for a briefer and less traditional study see Carlo Ginzburg’s “Da A. Warburg a E. H. Gombrich: Note su un problema di metodo” in Studi Medievali, 7 (1966), pp. 1015–1065. To varying degrees all these studies ignore Warburg’s numerous declarations that his kritische Ikonologie aims above all at a history of style and not just a history of culture (Kulturgeschichte) and generally, except for Ginzburg’s, they all reject or fail to accord any significance to the obvious influence of Nietzsche’s works on Warburg.


12. See, for example, fol. 7r and fol. 8r of French manuscript 594 in the Bibliothèque Nationale (BN Fr. 594) for an illustration of Petrarch’s “Triumph of Love” showing a blindfolded Cupid on a cart.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Figure 1. Attributed to Maso Finiguerra or Baccio Baldini, *Venus and her Children*, Florentine engraving, ca. 1460. London, British Museum (photo: The Warburg Institute). Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 2. Attributed to the workshop of Maso Finiguerra or Baccio Baldini, *Venus and her Children*, Florentine engraving, 1464–65. London, British Museum (photo: The Warburg Institute). Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 3. Anonymous Netherlandish artist, *Venus and her Children*, from a blockbook, Kupferstichkabinett Berlin SMPK Cim 10, fol. 28v, ca. 1460–68 (photo: Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin).
The relationship between Tasso's early Discorsi dell'arte poetica and his Gerusalemme liberata needs clarification for a variety of reasons. The existence of a later poetics—the Discorsi del poema eroico, which modifies and expands the earlier version—has frequently side-tracked readers into a text that more properly pertains to Tasso's later version of his epic, the Gerusalemme conquistata. The availability of the second poetics in English, while the first remains inaccessible to readers without Italian, has also encouraged this inappropriate pairing. Further, the current vogue of literary theory tends to promote a view of Tasso's poetics as an important moment in the history of ideas and in the Renaissance assimilation of Aristotelian aesthetics which, though entirely valid in its own right, isolates Tasso's philosophical and critical text from his creative performance. Tasso's poetics, however, are anything but disinterested speculation; this fact requires full acknowledgment because certain basic ambitions of literary theory as a mode of discourse often obscure it.

For example, the appearance of an objective review of representative texts in order to derive or demonstrate an hypothesis can lead us astray simply by its failure to acknowledge the immediate interests of the writer conducting that review; and Tasso's style as a theorist warrants no special exemption from such skepticism about his motives. He wrote his Discorsi dell'arte poetica while he was in the midst of writing his epic. For them to bear no partisan and explanatory connection to his poem would entail a miracle of detachment. Likewise, Giraldi Cinthio, Tasso's chief theoretical rival in the argument over unity of plot, illustrates this same point. Giraldi wrote his own Discorsi on the composition of romances while he was also writing a romance of his own. For him, unity of plot could legitimately derive from unity of character, and he structured his poem, the Ercole, on this principle. Although what may seem an objective survey of past works and the straightforward mechanics of reason support his theoretical conclusions in this regard, his own personal practice as
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a poet naturally conditions the outcome of his arguments. It is the middle ground between theory and practice that occupies my attention in the pages that follow because Tasso, like Giraldi, undoubtedly traversed that terrain time and again.

Although this essay contains two sections, both of them share the same goal. They aim to examine the first of Tasso's Discorsi dell'arte poetica as a source of useful critical ideas for reading the Gerusalemme liberata. Since it is necessary to set forth Tasso's thinking about the poetics of epic before I can explain its relation to his creative efforts in the same field, I begin the first section with a thorough and sequential exposition of Tasso's ideas. Then I turn to a central issue among these ideas, the relationship between history and fiction in epic, and consider how it works itself out in Tasso's poem with reference to his main historical authority, William of Tyre. The second section addresses further key issues that derive from Tasso's first discourse: the role of religion in an epic poem and the shortcomings of Trissino's Italia liberata da' goti in the light of Tasso's theorizing about history and religion. Because Ariosto was Tasso's unavoidable precursor, his presence makes itself felt throughout my reflections, as it did throughout Tasso's entire literary career. Since the ideas Tasso expresses are major generalities that lead into far reaches of literary history and theory, I have not pretended to treat comprehensively the inevitably various topics I address. Rather, I have tried to keep my two central texts in steady focus with the hope of clarifying some of the light they shed on one another.

I

Reflections on the relations between history and imagination in Tasso's major epic can take as their almost inevitable point of departure Aristotle's brief discussion of the same topic in his Poetics. By the middle of the sixteenth century Aristotle's volume of literary theory had already occasioned considerable debate among the literati since it had begun to gain widespread currency through the publication of Alessandro de' Pazzi's Latin translation of the text in 1536 (Hathaway 179); and Tasso's own poetics, early and late, derive from a developing tradition of affirmation and revision of basic tenets of Aristotelian thought. On our present topic Aristotle most notably remarks that Herodotus, turned into verses, does not qualify as poetry because the poet transcends the historian's concern with specific events. The poet focuses on probability and general truths, the sort of things that could happen in all likelihood because they are in the nature of human affairs and thereby arise from a deeper reality than the merely particular and circumstantial. However, Aristotle does immediately proceed to claim that historical names from familiar legends can win conviction in the minds of an audience because they are ultimately reminders of supposedly genuine characters and their actual lifestories. What actually has occurred, he continues, is much more credible than something made up,
though, when a strong sense of probability governs the artist's imagination, his fictions still ring true to fact. Indeed, Aristotle seesaws here momentarily between the powers of history and those of imagination before coming down strongly on the side of the latter (IX [1451b]).

No such wavering gives Tasso any pause in his early Discorsi dell'arte poetica of 1564 or thereabout. This treatise on the epic, whatever its actual date of composition within the accepted range of possibilities, constitutes an essential guide to Tasso's ambitions in Gerusalemme liberata; one recent critic of merit aptly calls it a "primer" for that poem (Kates 50) while another asserts its "organic" connection to Tasso's masterwork (Poma in Tasso, Discorsi 226).

In the first of the three discourses, where the young poet addresses the issue of appropriate subject matter for an epic, he concludes that such a poem should draw its material from history because epic deals with illustrious events and it is unlikely that affairs of this order would pass unrecorded by historians. If such events have passed unrecorded, people will deem them untrue, and readers will not readily yield their feelings to poems based on undocumented stories (4-5). Further, Tasso departs from Aristotle's endorsement of plots that remain true to probability even though they are entirely made up, like Agathon's Antheus (IX [1451b]); Tasso maintains that the power of invention shows itself to better advantage in freshly structuring an established story than in concocting a completely new and unprecedented one (5-6).

Inevitably, given the spirit of his post-Tridentine age, Tasso next turns to religion. Once he has affirmed history as the right place to find an epic theme, he broaches a double issue: first, history includes religion, whether a false or a true one; and second, epic requires wonder, the marvelous. Then, while acknowledging the complexity of the process, he neatly combines his two concerns by asserting that only true religion can sponsor credible wonders; thus, verisimilitude entails not merely historical sources but Christianity as well, since no one in his age would credit a miracle occasioned by a false, i.e. non-Christian, god (6). He can now return to his most fundamental Aristotelian premise, that poetry is the imitation of an action, with all of his latter-day addenda securely in tow. Imitation requires verisimilitude and, as we have seen, history and Christianity can together assure that prime desideratum (7).

Tasso's subsequent exploration of how to fulfill the formulae he has thus far deduced in his treatise enables him comfortably to co-opt the romance material of his immediate predecessors in Ferrara while accommodating his mid-sixteenth-century literary and religious scruples. Tasso now inquires into the nature and period of an apt historical theme for a Christian epic, and he repeatedly concludes that the stories of Charlemagne and Arthur both meet the requirements he has formulated and elude their pitfalls. A poet with Tasso's ambitions must steer clear of certain kinds of material that would inhibit his imaginative chances. Sacred history, for example, is unchangeable since it serves to underwrite precious Church doctrines; ancient history, while
distant enough in time to allow ample room for invention, still involves curious and outmoded customs. Modern history, on the other hand, is altogether too familiar, and a poet thus invites controversy when he takes any imaginative liberties with it. So, he should find a Christian story not so holy as to prove inalterable and from a time in the middle distance, neither too remote and therefore full of obsolete and unfamiliar fashions, nor too modern and therefore well-known and easily contestable, limiting thereby the poet's opportunities for invention (9-10).

Again we can note how well the tales of Arthur and Charlemagne fit the bill, as Tasso has here drawn it up, and how readily that affiliates him with prior Ferrarese poets, Boiardo and Ariosto most especially. Though Tasso chooses this moment to make a break from Aristotelian precept that in turn establishes a potentially good reason for him to reject the approach of his most conspicuous antecedent among the romanziatori, Ludovico Ariosto, he defers that gesture in its most decisive form until an even more opportune occasion in the following discourse. There, Tasso specifically and at length indicts Ariosto on the issue of unity of plot (22-42). Here, he actually cites a character of Ariosto's, Bradamante, as an illustrious paragon of one aspect of the heroic virtue that epic, by its very nature, portrays (12). But despite Bradamante's virtue, which is indeed constancy, as Tasso claims, and which is impressively hers for the claiming, he nonetheless fails to mention the abundant instances where Ariosto irreverently subverts the apparent entitlement to such grandeur on the part of his "heroes."

Rather, he proceeds to distinguish epic from tragedy. Since the former achieves a different effect from that of the latter, which aims to move its spectators to terror and pity, Tasso asserts that these two types of poetry must differ inherently in terms both of the actions they imitate and of the characters who carry out these actions, notwithstanding Aristotle's opinion to the contrary. It is in moral stature that epic actions and characters surpass their counterparts in tragedy, for they embody the highest ideals as well as the lowest vices (12-13). The drift of Tasso's argument here suggests the inspirational purpose behind heroic poetry, which uplifts while it instructs by representing extremes of human achievement. Tragedy, on the other hand, serves a cautionary and cleansing function that it effects through characters of a more intermediate moral nature, however high their social rank and however mighty the public consequences of their actions may be. Further, given these ambitions, the epic poet does well to select a theme that affords him an abundance of grand and notable events of major importance, such as the arrival of Aeneas in Italy or the expulsion of the Goths by the Italians or similar enterprises undertaken on behalf of the Empire or the Faith (13).

Tasso, then, summarizes his chief points thus far about the requisite qualities in what he calls the "raw material" of epic: the authority of history, true religion, freedom for the imagination, an appropriate period of time, and
events both grand and noble (13–19). Thereafter, he addresses one final topic, the size of the chosen subject; this enables him both to make another brief and tentative critique of the local laureates, Boiardo and Ariosto, and to reaffirm another primary difference between history and poetry. In the first case, he proposes the gargantuan chore of reading the *Innamorato* and the *Furioso* together as a single book to demonstrate the overabundance that an excessive subject may entail (15). In the second, he distinguishes history from poetry in terms of both plot and style by specifying the problems too large an historical subject has caused such writers as Lucan, Silius Italicus, and Giovan Giorgio Trissino. Their choices allowed them no room for ornaments of style and episodic intervals within their main story. Their verses echo and reduce even further the spare technique of the chronicler (14–15).

We do not have to look far in the *Gerusalemme liberata* to find Tasso’s theories in action. Though we should not expect too precise and consistent a correspondence between ideals and their practical implementation, doing so would, sadly enough, be in keeping with our author’s unhappiest inclinations. For the creative tension that often obtains between actuality and our highest standards became increasingly tense and constrictive in Tasso’s experience, and the sober assertion in the Yeats epigraph that “in dreams begin responsibility” achieves a somber realization in this poet’s biography, as in the story of his age. Bringing up such aspects of history, the biographical as well as the highlghts of a more general chronicle of a given period, is hardly beside the point in literary study, however keen an ambition for “purity” and for freedom from “extra-literary” factors may sponsor critical inquiry. Inevitably, to one degree or another, personal experience and social milieu impinge upon the poetic imagination.

Tasso, who chose to create an epic from an historical topic, was himself the creature of a given history. In 1559, when Turkish corsairs sacked Sorrento, young Torquato’s hometown, he was accompanying his father in Venice, where both of them suffered weeks of uncertainty and apprehension over the fate of Cornelia, Torquato’s sister (Brand 8). That misfortune merely exemplifies in small the ordeal of an epoch embroiled in feuds between Moslems and Christians, Turks and Italians, that culminated in Sultan Selim’s offensive against the Venetian possession of Cyprus in 1570. Though that attack did not serve to rally a united Christendom, sure signs of the old spirit clearly emerged. Pius V, for example, perceived in this occasion a welcome opportunity to organize a great Crusade against the infidels (Vernon 129). The entire affair played itself out in the famous encounter at Lepanto in October of 1571, the largest galley battle in naval history (Donnelly 167).

Probably in his sixteenth year, while in Venice in 1559, young Tasso made his first attempt at the epic theme that would occupy him, with some intermissions, virtually for the rest of his life. As we have seen, both private and public promptings make themselves felt in the beginning poet’s chosen topic, and his
consultation of the chronicler William of Tyre's *Belli sacri historia* is certainly indicative of the latter sort of influence. The initial publication in 1549 of this twelfth-century archbishop's Latin account of the Crusade, as well as its subsequent publication in Italian in 1562, amount to just a fraction of the volumes issued around the middle of the sixteenth century that addressed the topic of the holy war of the Christians against the heathens in the East and that certainly gained a Western readership sometimes intimately concerned with a continuation of that conflict even nearer to home (Brand 54-55; Raimondi 181).

The so-called *Gierusalemme*, a 116-octave fragment that Tasso soon abandoned for both the *Rinaldo* and, soon enough, the *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, bears the unmistakable mark of young Torquato's reading of William of Tyre. Since over half of its stanzas survive in their original form in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, which itself manifests an extension of Tasso's debt to his major historical source, this early effort can serve as a preliminary gauge of his imaginative adaptation of prose records of his subject. Moreover, the general conclusions reached in a comparative study of the young poet's rendition of the Christians' march toward Jerusalem after the seizure of Antioch should not surprise anyone possessed of a more than passing familiarity with the style of the *Liberata* and its underlying narrative principles. For example, among some of the stanzas that survive (*Gl 75, Gier 16; Gl 79, Gier 14*) we observe a shuffling of their original sequence but a preservation of their intense poeticism. These saved octaves are both extremely stylized, the former with its sustained series of negatives and the latter with its litany of proper names, while those dropped, though quite informative, are discernibly more prosaic. Of course, Tasso's manner of composition frequently involves such intensifications of language and their evocative effects. But an examination of the passage in William of Tyre from which Tasso derives his epic version will also show that in both its initial and subsequent form Tasso has bypassed an opportunity for an episodic interlude, preserving instead his single-minded purpose and the narrative drive that carries it forward (330-332).

If we consider the problem of unity of plot versus multiplicity of action abstractly, it hardly makes much sense that Tasso should choose otherwise. He is close to the start of his story and thus has no time for a break until the plot's main purpose gains a secure footing on the page and in the mind of the reader. However, a glance at the first canto of the *Orlando furioso* should quite concretely betray any such abstract confidence in how one opens a narrative poem, for at the outset in Ariosto incidents multiply and diverge in such a hurry that they defy us to keep track of them. Tasso, on the other hand, defines himself and his methods by complete contrast at what we may call the highest level, for his poem has only just begun when he has already “taken it to the top” in an overview of total unity from the divine perspective:

gli occhi in giù volse, e in un sol punto e in una
God intends, as we soon learn, to bring order among the faithful through the election of Goffredo, the Duke of Bouillon in Lower Lorraine, as the sole leader of the Christian forces in their attack on the Holy City.

Naturally, we search William of Tyre in vain for any account of this sort of drama in the heavens, though we find abundant citations of scripture that surely indicate his sense of divine guidance behind the First Crusade. We learn as well of no such earthly election at this stage in its advance. Rather, an uneasy balance of power obtains among three rival nobles with the influence of other prominent leaders making itself significantly felt on occasion. But literary and religious principles govern Tasso’s imagination and determine his response to the history he inherits. He means to exploit the credit that received legends rate in the popular mind while altering and adjusting the facts in keeping with the other agendas that order his ultimate priorities.

For example, almost the earliest specific, immediate detail in the Liberata falsifies the record while following both classical precept and classical precedent. For Tasso opens his account of the Christians’ progress toward Jerusalem in what he calls the sixth year of their mission (Gl I, 6, 1) whereas it was indeed the third, as he well knew and later acknowledged in his Giudizio sopra la sua Gerusalemme da lui stesso medesimo riformato. But an additional three years readily increases our sense of the ordeal undergone by the soldiers of the cross, and that adds to our awe at their heroic suffering and thus gets at what Tasso certainly deemed the truth of a deeper dimension of their actual experience. A modern Christian interpreter might arguably discern in Tasso’s meaning at this juncture what Dietrich Bonhoeffer aptly termed the cost of discipleship, however much he may question the Crusaders’ motives for paying that price. But Tasso’s own motives equally spring from secular sources like those he relied upon in discussing the appropriate size of an epic in his early Discorsi. Horace’s praise of Homer’s opening to the Iliad and the way it thrusts the reader in medias res underlies Tasso’s theoretical advisory for the composition of an epic just as he echoes the exemplary ancient text in his actual telling of the tale.

Comparable scruples and precedents guide and sponsor Tasso’s invocation of the Muse and her mother in his poem’s initial canto. Tasso’s variations on the conventional summoning of heavenly aid in the exordium (Gl I, 2 + 3) have inevitably, and rightly, attracted much critical commentary. His acknowledged qualms about tricking out the truth in borrowed plumage certainly evince his post-Tridentine edginess about anything less than rigorous fidelity to the accepted facts of his story and faith of his times. But the source of his self-justification contains an obvious irony that can obscure an interesting stage in the transmission of the classical rationale that Tasso cites to sanction his poetic
practice. In his own self-defense, the conscientious Christian poet does indeed turn to the foremost pagan proponent of the Epicurean philosophy of pleasure. However, in doing so, Torquato also relies on the more intimate example of his father Bernardo's recourse to Lucretius in Bernardo's efforts to resolve a similar conflict at the mid-point of his massive L'Amadigi:

Come talor un medico che vuole
Gabbar l'infermo, per dargli salute,
Celar l'amaro sotto il dolce suole;
Acciò ch'egli di ber non lo rifiute:
Così sotto figmenti di parole,
Di chimere da noi non conosciute
Danno i Poeti molti documenti
Al volgo ignaro, e a l'inferme menti.

(II, 1)

Of course, Bernardo Tasso was a forerunner of Torquato's in the mid-Cinquecento efforts to discipline what many deemed the moral and aesthetic vagaries of Ariostean romance into more acceptable doctrinal and formal terms. Tasso's second invocation in Canto I warrants association with that process in the light of his concern for historical authority. When the poet appeals to what he calls "Mente" (GI I, 36, 1), editors usually gloss that word with "memoria," the faculty which the ancients personified as the mother of the Muses, Mnemosyne. Tasso's vocative, however, intends to summon no such mythical figure but rather dramatically to affirm his earnest bid for accurate recall of the past events that he aims to recount and, thereby, to gain the credence of his readers. Such seriousness, however, was no more than a joke to the romanzatori like Ariosto, Boiardo, Pulci and, ultimately, the cantastorie from whose burlesque performances they derive something of their tone. That joke wore the mask of Turpin, the supposed biographer of Charlemagne, whom these poets routinely invoke to defend their most preposterous claims.

Furthermore, another of Tasso's dominant ambitions makes itself eminently clear at this moment, which could easily serve as a paragon of this poet's dedicated classicism as it shows forth in such works as the Discorsi dell'arte poetica. For a comprehensive muster of the soldiers of the cross has prompted Tasso's second invocation, which, in its turn, leads him to catalogue the Christian forces in direct imitation of Homer's presentation of the Greek forces en masse before their first intended attack on Troy in the second book of the Iliad. However, any pretense of historicity quickly founders on this definitively epic occasion if we summon William of Tyre as witness merely at the opening of Tasso's impressive catalogue. For example, Ugone of Vermandois, brother of the French King Phillip I, leads off the list (GI I, 37, 1) whereas William of Tyre informs us of his ignoble desertion of the Crusaders well before they had
reached this stage in their march (298–99). Almost directly thereafter, appears Ademaro, the Bishop of Puy and Urban II’s chosen ecclesiastical mentor of the Christians (Gl I, 38, 8). Unfortunately, we learn in the same passage from William of Tyre that the French cleric had succumbed to the plague that ravaged the soldiers of the cross immediately after their successful siege of Antioch. Other instances of this sort abound.

However, consideration of Tasso’s epic as a text for students of the historiography of the Crusades would mistake his intentions as wildly as the failure to consider William of Tyre’s history as a part of the imaginative story of that event would thoroughly miss the Archbishop’s motives and, in good part, his point. The first of Tasso’s early Discorsi shows him construing one of Aristotle’s precepts somewhat more strictly than Aristotle himself as Tasso makes clear his own desire to employ the authority of history as it resounds through the fame of well-known legends and records. But he does allow himself the freedom to invent. That he should exercise such license in defiance of established facts need not trouble him so long as he does not tamper with sacred history nor expect that authority in regard to debatable points of the recent past. The sort of “errors” that we have observed can claim in their defense the artistic ambitions that Tasso sought to justify in his early theories of epic composition.

II

Any thoughtful consideration of the first of Tasso’s early Discorsi and the light that it sheds on his epic masterpiece must take into account this poet’s acute sensitivity to questions of religion. The subsequent agonies that he experienced in this regard much later in his career signify both his own profound consciousness of the consequences that such matters entail and the keen awareness of such issues that characterized his age. His avoidance of what he deemed subjects too sacred for an epic poem indicates the strictness of his religious conscience and demonstrates his shrewd management of his options as an heir to the traditions of romance and as an imitator of exemplary classical texts. In fact, the early Discorsi tellingly reveal Tasso’s often deft adjustments to a challenging variety of pressures and exactions that his poetic ambitions forced him to accommodate.

One of Tasso’s most agile mergers of his potentially conflicting interests allows him to reconcile apparently rival claims of classicism and Christianity. Moreover, he achieves this feat in a manner that roundly satisfies all parties concerned because he manages to confirm the poetic value of contemporary religion on the basis of ancient philosophy. He makes Aristotelian aesthetics the justification of a Christian theme. For the Greek philosopher asserts that the poet intends to imitate an action, and, according to Tasso, such imitation aims to achieve verisimilitude. No modern reader, however, believes in the bygone gods of Greek and Roman mythology, so a Christian cosmology and
and the agents of its effects, like devils and angels, must supply the divine machinery that epic requires if the poem means to tell a credible tale (6–7).

Besides the obvious moments, like Tasso's first call upon the muse, his conscience in these matters makes itself felt on some surprising occasions once he puts such principles into practice in the composition of the *Gerusalemme liberata*. For example, in Canto II when Clorinda rides into town at the eleventh hour, the stakes are high indeed, for two lives rest in the balance as well as the future of a newly disclosed passion. In fact, the pitch of melodrama at this juncture has earned Tasso radically divergent praise and blame. But in the midst of this tension-fraught encounter we hear nothing less than a brief lesson from the catechism, and the Islamic catechism at that! Clorinda lectures Aladino on the Moslem prohibition of what the Judeo-Christian tradition terms "graven images" in the Mosaic commandment against them.

‘Fu de le nostre leggi irreverenza
quell'opera far che persuase il mago:
che non convien ne' nostri tempi a nui
gl'idoli avere, e men gl' idoli altrui.’

*Gl II, 5–8*

Among other things, Moslem strictures against idol-worship account for our lack of a trustworthy likeness of the Prophet Mohammed, who achieved hegemony for the new revelation he preached by supplanting a variety of local cults on the Arabian peninsula and replacing their idolatry with the unifying spirit of monotheism (Runciman 13–15). So, in the above passage from Tasso's poem, Clorinda appeals to one of the primary laws of her faith. But we also witness the Christian poet's acknowledged respect for Catholic dogma ironically emerging in principle, here, in the words of his heathen heroine. This momentary scrupulosity about the tenets of Islam mirrors the far more extensive and agonizing questions of faith that Tasso's reliance on classical models forced upon him.

Likewise, Tasso's recourse to Homer and Virgil as exemplars of his chosen art confronted him with the need for an historical subject and with the problems that arise in the imaginative adaptation of records of the past. He responded by making shrewd choices that placed his poem in an era and setting that satisfied not merely his religious requirements but also his predilection for chivalric romance, reflecting in the process the main currents of his literary heritage as well as the tastes of his age. He also rationalized these choices convincingly in the first of his early *Discorsi*, well in advance of most of his efforts to carry them out. Of course, Ariosto hardly succeeded so famously with his audience by scrupling over the sort of issues and standards that seriously preoccupied Tasso throughout his career. Rather, an irresistible playfulness permeates the *Furioso* and regularly inspires an irreverent disregard for both fact
and dogma. Ariosto's ideal reader may lack curiosity, and he certainly must lack piety, but he needs an almost infinite desire to be entertained.

Ariosto's customary indifference to the truth he sometimes claims for the facts of his stories makes itself known in his routine citations of Turpin. As bawdy and unlikely a tale as that of Astolfo and Giocondo in Canto XXVIII receives the stamp of the Archbishop of Rheims' authority while the poet himself disclaims responsibility and proceeds with his naughty fun. And just as Clorinda's aforementioned speech also betokens Tasso's rigorous concern for accurate detail with his foreign and heathen characters and settings, we can note a casual imprecision in Ariosto's presentation of similar aspects of his tale. For example, in an odd conjunction of supposed fact and real feeling, Ariosto suits out the Syrian knights at Damascus in the armor of the Crusaders and then proceeds to make an impassioned plea for a reconquest of the Holy Land as a means of uniting the strife-torn western Christendom of his time (Of XVII, 73-79). Perhaps an imaginative critic could find here a figurative call for the Gerusalemme liberata, for he certainly would be well justified in hearing in this outburst an invocation of the crusading spirit abroad in the European land that attained explicit expression in Tasso's epic. Ariosto felt its power enough to give word to it elsewhere in his poem and to admit its potential for uniting a divided western Christendom (Of XV, 99). But what could be further from Tasso's artistic conscience, as he elaborated its standards in the early Discorsi, than Ariosto's mistaken outfitting of Syrian knights in Christian arms?

Soriani in quel tempo aveano usanza
d'armarsi a questa guisa di Ponente.
(Of XVII, 73, 1-2)

Obviously Ariosto experienced the same impulse to take chivalry to its limits, geographical as well as spiritual, that Tasso felt and followed. However, he knew few of the latter-day restraints that inhibited his successor.

Ariosto also uses the superstructure and underpinnings of a conventional Christian cosmology to satirize religious institutions and Christian art. When God in His heaven commissions the archangel Michael to protect the auxiliary forces that Ruggiero has assembled on their march from Picardy to Paris (Of XIV, 75 and ff.), the divine intermediary's subsequent search for Silence meets with immediate frustration since the monasteries, which seem the likely abode of such a quality, no longer house it. Michael does, however, encounter Discord there in the company of Christ's devotees, and she serves him well in a later part of his assignment (Of XIV, 75 and ff.). In this case, Ariosto obviously targets the Church as the object of his satire. Elsewhere (Of XXXIII, 127-8 and XXXIV) he takes aim at Dante, the "divino poeta," to subvert whatever sacredness his text and the mythical otherworld depicted therein may have attained in the minds of its readers. Astolfo, the droll cavalier, follows
Ariosto's version of the pilgrim's itinerary from Hell on up, and his journey broadly parodies the Dantean pilgrimage. In the underworld long-winded Lydia, who could outtalk the most forthcoming shade in the *Commedia*, confesses her "sin" to the English knight: she was cruelly cold to her lover — hardly the sort of offense that the medieval poet dwells upon in the *Inferno*! And after his ascent to the moon, Astolfo hears from Saint John an allegorical explanation of the refuse accumulated in the "lunar junkyard," as a recent critic calls it (Quint 85), that makes the central method of Dante's art seem arbitrary to the point of whimsicality. The Evangelist matches up such an odd assortment of lost items from the valley of the moon with what he claims to be their corresponding earthly significance that only caprice could justify the meanings St. John assigns to various components of his curious collection. Taking them seriously means misreading the *Furioso*, while getting the joke puts Dante's poem, or at least one of its critical qualities, in what Ariosto evidently deems its less than holy place.

Tasso's early theories about what part history and religion should play in an epic poem certainly reveal that he meant to stake out a claim for himself in the realm of romance and to share some of Ariosto's prerogatives. However, the spirit of his Ferrarese predecessor's poem diverges so widely and consistently from the terms of his own aspirations that Tasso needed to look elsewhere among Cinquecento efforts in narrative poetry to find examples he might follow or improve upon. In his aim to compose an historical epic based upon classical precedents he found in Trissino a forerunner in his own century, though the popular failure of that poet's account of Belisarius' campaign against the Gothic usurpers in Italy constituted a grave caveat on the poetic hazards of pedantic classicism. Tasso, indeed, was prompt to acknowledge the magnetic attraction Ariosto's romance exerted upon the public while volumes of Trissino gathered dust on library shelves (*Discorsi* 22-23). However, he could also discriminate between viable options and certain dead-ends even in works that had enjoyed no happy fortunes, and he managed with comparable discernment to pick and choose his main chances among both the winners and the losers of the laurels of his immediate past.

For one obvious example, Tasso's ottava rima can readily appropriate some of the livelier rhythms of romance whereas Trissino's unrhymed hendecasyllables proceed at a notably duller pace than either the taut and polished Homeric hexameters or their compact Virgilian counterparts, both of which he aimed to evoke. Also, the stanzaic music of romance is lost to Trissino by default whereas Tasso makes it his own in his quite particular fashion while he still advances a serious historical theme from a Christian era in a poem that undeniably imitates the supreme paragons of ancient epic.

Reading the two texts in tandem reveals a further medley of congruences and divergences. In the word "liberata" Tasso's title echoes Trissino's *Italia liberata da' goti* and thus certainly manifests a consciousness of the earlier
epic. Yet prior to its publication, Tasso referred to his poem by a different name, that of its hero Goffredo; since it was originally published without the poet's consent or consultation, its title at that time was similarly unauthorized. Still, Tasso did not seek to eliminate the nominal connection between the two texts in subsequent editions of his poem over which he exercised greater control until the radical recasting of his original appeared in 1593 as the Gerusalemme conquistata. But it is the first word in each of these kindred titles that signals a key divergence of emphasis between these two works, for "Gerusalemme" readily indicates a spiritual place beyond history and geography yet very much a part of both. "Italia," of course, summons the "patria," and the strength of feelings associated with that word should not be underestimated. "Gerusalemme," however, can invoke both the personal immediacy and the ultimate transcendence of the profoundest religious sentiments while at the same time giving them a local habitation and a name.

Trissino opens his poem in patent imitation of the way Homer begins the Odyssey, with both Providenza and Onerio, a Christian concept and a Greek term, transformed into angels and sharing the role that Athena plays at the start of the ancient epic. The former appeals to God's mercy on behalf of "la misera Italia," and the latter then executes the divine command with which God responds to that appeal, setting in motion the series of events that subsequently frees Italy from barbarian dominion. Onerio, who takes Visione along on his mission, appears to the Holy Roman Emperor in a dream at dawn in the form of the Pope and promises him precisely what Tasso initially claims for the Crusade, a "glorioso acquisto" (Gl I, 1, 4; II I, p. 3). The Emperor Justinian reacts to this heavenly messenger by arranging a meeting of his top advisers and followers where, after an exchange of various opinions, he designates Belisarius as the head of his campaign against the Goths in Italy. At the outset of his poem Tasso parallels this process in the election of Goffredo as the sole supreme leader of the Christian army after that intention has been advanced by God in heaven, Peter the Hermit on earth, and the archangel Gabriel in between.

In his second invocation (II II, p. 20) Trissino specifies Homer's muse, or rather muses, as apt assistants for the task at hand, which is in itself described as a novel one and amounts to the same assignment Tasso undertakes after his second invocation, i.e. the enumeration of the Christian forces. Trissino explicitly acknowledges his admiration and his imitation of the ancient singer; and, in significant contrast to Tasso, he sees no noteworthy disjunction between the sources of inspiration both he and his pagan predecessor solicit, although he does suggest some limit to his artistic skill in comparison with the classical exemplar whom he follows. Unfortunately, convincing proof of his modest admission is not far to seek, for at just this point Trissino chooses to introduce a preliminary survey of the Empire, a substantial aside on its administrative structure and geographical extent, before he catalogues the troops.
Such discursive footnotes in the midst of his poetic text bespeak the cross-purposes that hobble his efforts repeatedly. Virtual sloughs of factuality retard the progress of his overall imaginative design, and they better address antiquarian interests than those of a poem's likely audience.

In his early poetics Tasso indicted Trissino for this very tendency, which soon enough recurs in a more flagrant form at another point in the *Italia liberata*. In fact, Trissino presents a series of catalogues that enumerate the imperial forces with needless redundance and a bureaucratic insistence on secondary, if not irrelevant, detail. First of all, a list of chosen leaders is read before the Emperor prior to his appointment of Belisarius as their supreme commander in his stead. Directly thereafter Belisarius reviews his mustered troops and, in the process, repeats the same sort of information contained in the foregoing list in much the same style as before. Trissino certainly could have compressed this two-stage procedure into one, and he would have demonstrated thereby a needed economy in exposition while still following the Homeric example of the catalogue and gaining its sense of the far-reaching consequences of the action he meant to describe. Tasso's election of Goffredo and the subsequent parade of the Christian forces manifest considerably more efficiency in carrying out his comparable purposes. But historicity further hampers Trissino at this juncture in ways that Tasso faulted in his early *Discorsi* (9-10). For, as Belisarius appoints his officers, he attends to details of equipment that unfortunately entail obsolete items and antique terminology which contemporary readers would generally find obscure and thus annoying.

Ironically, Trissino's fastidious concern for what he calls "romana usanza" (II II, p. 30) distracts him from the rich poetic potential in what amounts to merely an isolated observation at this stage in his narrative. For Belisarius intentionally makes these initial appointments in the name of the Emperor as though he were only relaying the news of his superior's choices. He thus aims to avoid envy and resentment, and he clarifies this motive to Justinian before he acts upon it (II II, p. 27). In human terms or those of character, this amounts to the most interesting information we hear for several pages which are mainly devoted to the minutiae of military protocol and outfitting. Tasso, of course, perceived in such conflicts over authority and precedence among his Christian leaders the opportunity to introduce into his epic the vagaries and amours of knight-errantry that constitute the well-spring of romance within the classical confines of his tale. He also saw in the challenge of unifying such divergent tendencies, the major theological dimensions of the universe his poem inhabits. Trissino's poem certainly contains episodic interludes, erotic interests, and the machinations of supernatural agents. However, an ill-assimilated and clumsy classicism frequently mars his efforts in these areas and stands in noteworthy contrast to the outcome of Tasso's struggles with similar material.

For example, in Book III of the *Italia liberata* Trissino patterns much of the sequence of incidents that makes up its plot on stories taken from Homer
and Virgil, and he introduces a pagan god and a demi-god as motivating forces behind the action. However, few of Tasso’s sort of qualms over acceptable use of such material manifest themselves in Trissino’s borrowings and adaptations; likewise, few of Tasso’s decisive resolutions to these conflicts deepen and clarify the terms of the narrative. Book III mainly tells the tale of Sofia, the Empress’s niece, and her passion for Justin, the heir-apparent. As the story unfolds, Sofia confides her anguish as an unacknowledged lover to her sister, Asteria, as Dido does to Anna in *Aeneid* IV. The Empress Teodora intercedes with Justinian on her behalf by seducing the Emperor as Hera similarly beguiles Zeus on Mount Ida in *Iliad* XIV. And Justin, returning home in haste from Brindisi to marry Sofia, nearly drowns at sea like Odysseus when he first sights Phaiakia in *Odyssey* V.

Among the divinities invoked or actively engaged in these events, “il Re de l’universo,” whom Belisarius calls upon to speed the imperial troops across the sea and help them prosper in their Italian mission (*II* III, p. 40), certainly must reign supreme. However, Amor melts the heart of Sofia and thereby sets the love story in motion, and Neptune assists the Christian fleet at sea and helps save the drowning Justin in his rush to reunite with his beloved. Yet none of the machinations of these pagan powers bears any relation to the apparent supremacy of the God invoked by Belisarius. They keep their own schedules and, evidently, come and go as they please or as Trissino arbitrarily summons them.

For instance, “l’angelo Nettunio,” trident in hand, expedites the voyage of the imperial armada from his post in the crow’s nest of Belisarius’s vessel, though hardly more than a dozen lines thereafter the same proper name applies simply to the sea upon whose back the boats are riding (*II* III, p. 40). Later, when Justin is caught in the storm and echoes Odysseus’s bitter claim of the bliss of those who died heroically in battle at Troy rather than obscurely at sea, Neptune fills Leukothea’s role in the *Odyssey* and takes pity on him, appearing in the form of a coot to reassure him (*II* III, p. 45). Of course, in the source none other than Poseidon stirs up the storm in his resentment against Odysseus, who seems about to escape the ordeal of the curse Polyphemus had called down upon him in his father’s name. While such a disjunction between an original and its imitation makes no perceptible difference to Trissino, an alert reader may reasonably wonder about the author’s attunement to some of the ramifications of the very art he practices.

The possibilities in imitating Hera’s beguilement of Zeus upon Mount Ida (*Iliad* XIV) achieve fuller realization as the sly delight of both Homer and the goddess resonate nicely in some of Trissino’s lines. In fact, as the Empress sets her tender trap and snares the Emperor, we may fairly sense a further range of Trissino’s irony and wit, for casting Teodora in Hera’s role allows him to suggest mixed feelings about the former. Procopius, his historical source, reserved such insinuations for his unofficial *Secret History*, which contains his less than reverential account of the regime he served and which attacks the Empress in
particular. Trissino may have followed his lead here in a fashion allowed by his chosen form, bringing Homeric myth tellingly to bear upon historical records and personal animosity.

Subtlety of this sort unfortunately does not last long, for Book III culminates in a crescendo of would-be suicides and erotic agons that could make a pagan blush. By turns, Sofia tries to take her own life, and Justin contemplates doing the same, as each hears of the other's ebbing heartbeat; they keep the palace doctor making rounds. With the extremes of these hysterics in mind, perhaps we can better appreciate the dimensions Tasso adds to similarly passionate melodramas in his poem and the ways he heightens and ennobles such emotions. Of course, we approach in the process some of the most questionable passages in his poem where the fullest effect of his abstract idealism makes itself felt, but this comparative context corresponds to that of the early Discorsi and places Tasso's efforts in relation to issues and authors very much on his mind during their composition.

Returning to Sofronia and Olinda's ordeal at the stake, which occasioned Clorinda's lecture on idolatry, we can see how Tasso employs martyrdom to sanctify erotic feeling. Though he risks thereby the strain of a stilted high-mindedness, he does make a place for the tensions and disclosures of secret passion while eschewing the morbid egotism that Trissino's momentarily star-crossed lovers descend to. As Judith Kates (101) has astutely claimed for the far more fully elaborated amours of Rinaldo and Armida, Tasso can actually enlist his Christian conscience as a cover and defense for indulging in the sensual sort of poetry that inspired his imagination. Rinaldo's coming confession and the subsequent reconstitution of his spiritual life literally buy him some time in Armida's garden, and they release the poet from the restrictions his scruples impose by means of a triumph in their very own terms. Obviously, Tasso's struggles with the various authorities that vied for interior dominion over his genius frequently cramped his style to crippling effect. However, he won some major victories far within what may sometimes seem enemy terrain.

NOTES

1. Baldassari provides the most recent and thorough discussion of the uncertain date of the early Discorsi.
2. Lanfranco Caretti, for example, sees this whole episode as an authentic and lofty expression of inspired idealism (Gerusalemme liberata, p. 41), whereas it has drawn adverse criticism from Galileo through B. T. Sozzi.
3. In his later revised and expanded Discorsi del poema eroico, Tasso asserts that he wrote the first version during a break from composing the opening books of the Liberata. See p. 62 in the Poma edition.
4. Note, for example, such terms as the following: triari, catafrati, decurie, schiniere (II II, pp. 28-29).
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Sidney’s Debt to Machiavelli: A New Look

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“I wish not there should be / Graved in mine epitaph a poet’s name,” asserts Astrophil late in Sidney’s sonnet sequence (AS 90.8–9), and on this point at least we may safely assume that Astrophil speaks for Sidney as well. Indeed, recent scholarship emphasizes that Sidney was drawn more to the arena of politics than to the world of letters, a world that he himself called only his “unelected vocation” (Works 3: 3). James M. Osborn, for example, in his Young Philip Sidney 1572–1577, stresses Sidney’s patient preparation for and lifelong commitment to the theory and practice of statecraft. Richard McCoy finds that Sidney’s poetics were shaped, in part, by certain crises of state within Elizabeth’s court during the 1570s, while Andrew D. Weiner reads all of Sidney’s works in the light of an identifiable “Protestant poetic,” as hammered out in the smithy of the Leicester-Walsingham political faction. Other recent studies reveal that Sidney undertook the composition of the Arcadia only because his urgent objections to Elizabeth’s proposed match with the Duke of Alençon had brought about a hiatus in his own political activity at court.

If it is true, then, that Sidney was a poet who was centrally concerned with politics, it is surprising that so little has been written about his relation to Niccolò Machiavelli, the most influential political theorist of the Renaissance. A study of this relation might shed some useful light on the political implications of Sidney’s own works and on those of the Pembroke circle; it might add also to our understanding of Machiavelli’s impact on Protestant thinkers generally during the latter decades of Elizabeth’s long reign.

II

What little work has been done on the extent of Sidney’s debt to Machiavelli suggests that the poet was quite sympathetic to the ideas of the Florentine Secretary. However, the evidence upon which this view has been based is often
scanty and deceptive. For example, Edwin A. Greenlaw, in an early study, surmises that Sidney considered Machiavelli his "friend" (187); he alludes to (but does not quote from) an exchange of letters in 1574 between the poet and his mentor, the Huguenot propagandist Hubert Languet. But the texts of the letters, composed originally in Latin, argue against Greenlaw's conclusion. Here is Sidney in the relevant passage:

I never could be induced to believe that Machiavelli was right about avoiding an excess of clemency, until I learnt from my own experience, what he has endeavoured with many arguments to prove. For I, with my usual vice of mercy, endured at your hands not only injustice, but blows and wounds. . . . [B]ut I shall substitute wholesome severity for this empty show (for so in truth it is) of clemency. What! have you really persuaded yourself, that you may not only in safety laugh at the Welsh, paint the Saxon character in its own colors, set down the Florentines and Savoyards for thieves and robbers, but you must go a step further and threaten the English (Pears 53-4)?

Languet replies:

I admire the candour with which you warn me to beware of you, for that is the meaning of your fierce threats. But there you do not follow the advice of your friend Machiavelli, unless perhaps it is fear that has extorted those big and sounding words, and you thought that so I might be deterred from my intentions (Meyer 19).

Clearly, Greenlaw's sober reading of these bantering and sardonic letters is excessively literal. Sidney pretends distress at some comments by Languet and laments that Machiavelli's fabled cynicism has been born out in his friend's "betrayal"; Languet playfully responds that Sidney should heed the Secretary's caveat against threatening one's enemy. Nothing serious is intended here, and all we fairly can conclude from the amicable exchange is that Sidney, in common with most Oxonians of his day, had read his Machiavelli.

Later, Irving Ribner takes up the same theme in a series of four articles, all of which maintain that Sidney was a Machiavellian, at least in several important respects. Ribner contends that the revised Arcadia and Sidney's famous letter to Elizabeth in opposition to the Alençon match exhibit principles and
methods which parallel those of the Florentine, owing to the fact that Sidney and Machiavelli share "commonplaces" of Renaissance thought—ideas which proceed from an intellectual milieu shared by both men ("Discourse" 152-72; "Machiavelli and Sidney" 152-5). To support this argument, Rihner cites excerpts from the works of both writers which, he claims, reveal "similarities [that] are striking." Here, for example, are Machiavelli and Sidney on the subject of political corruption, in passages selected by Rihner ("Machiavelli and Sidney" 168):

**Sidney**

For they having the power of kings, but not the nature of kings, used the authority as men do their farms, of which they see within a yeere they shall goe out: making the kinges sword trike whom they hated, the kings purse reward wom they love: and (which is worst of all) making the Royall countenance serve to undermine the Royall sovereaintie . . . . Men of vertue suppressed, lest their shining discover the others filthiness.

*Old Arcadia*

**Machiavelli**

When full power is conferred for any length of time . . . it is always dangerous, and will be productive of good or ill results, according as those upon whom it is conferred are themselves good or bad. . . . Absolute authority will quickly corrupt the people, and will create friends and partisans to itself. . . . Superior men in corrupt republics . . . are generally hated, either from jealousy or the ambition of others.

*Discourses 1: 35, 2: 22*

Rihner admits that "The parallels are . . . not exact, but they are sufficiently similar to illustrate that what Sidney conceived of as the marks of corruption in government were not essentially different from Machiavelli's ideas on the same subject" ("Machiavelli and Sidney" 169).

But do the facts warrant even so modest a proposal? Sidney, in the passage cited by Rihner, maintains that those who are not born to rule may use delegated power in a narrow, spiteful manner toward their personal enemies, with the result that royal authority itself is undermined; Machiavelli, on the other hand, argues that absolute power generates various effects, depending upon the nature of the possessor of that power, and that such authority represents a danger to common people, not to kings. Further, it is easy to put together excerpts from the writings of undisputed anti-Machiavellians which bear at least as much similarity to Machiavelli's thought in this respect as do Sidney's. As one example, here is Huguenot Philippe du Plessis-Mornay in his *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579) on the identical topic:

A tyrant nourishes and feeds factions and dissensions amongst his subjects, ruins one by the help
of another, that he may the easier vanquish the remainder. . . . Where particular designs and private ends prevail against the public profit, there questionless is a tyrant and a tyranny. . . . The tyrant hates and suspects discreet and wise men, and fears no opposition more than virtue, being conscious of his own vicious courses (Laski 186, 189, 185).

A comparison between this passage and those offered by Ribner shows that Sidney's comments are appreciably closer to Mornay's, both in tone and content, than they are to Machiavelli's. Further, to the degree that Mornay in this citation does resemble the Secretary, Ribner's notion of a common Renaissance pool of ideas becomes a largely meaningless and even misleading conception: Mornay loathed Machiavelli and believed that Huguenot political philosophy proceeded from root assumptions that were diametrically opposed to those contained in The Prince; indeed, Mornay's works have been justly termed "a confutation of the tyrant-breeding doctrines of the atheistical Florentine" (Briggs, "Political" 142). If even Mornay is "not essentially different from Machiavelli," then there is no such thing as a contest between ideas.

Ribner seeks to evade this difficulty by resurrecting the venerable idea that Renaissance political theory was informed by not one but two distinct "Machiavellisms"; the first consisted of the insights that Machiavelli himself recorded in The Prince and the Discourses, while the second reflected an ignorant, prejudicial, and inflammatory misreading of those works. "[A] careful distinction must be drawn," Ribner maintains, "between the popular conception of 'Machiavellianism' and the political philosophy contained in the Florentine's actual writings" ("Sidney's Arcadia" 225). This distinction allows Ribner to be untroubled by the plain fact that Sidney stocks the 1590 Arcadia with its fair share of Elizabethan "Machiavels," including the tyrant kings of Phrygia and Pontus, the surreptitious poisoner Plexirus, and the seditious Amphialus. Ribner is confident that these characters are merely the result of Sidney's "misunderstanding of certain ideas in the Florentine's writings," a misunderstanding which Sidney shares, asserts Ribner, with other Elizabethan writers, including Thomas Kyd ("Sidney's Arcadia" 229, 225). But elsewhere Ribner is at pains to document Sidney's familiarity with Machiavelli's works ("Sidney's Discourse" 178n, 187), and from other sources we know that Kyd owned an early manuscript translation of The Prince, quite likely the product of his own hand (Morris 416). Clearly, then, Ribner's "two Machiavellisms" theory is not applicable in this context, and his argument that "there is little disagreement between Machiavelli and Sidney in matters of statecraft" ("Machiavelli and Sidney" 172) remains strained and unpersuasive.2
But if the traditional idea of Sidney-as-Machiavellian cannot stand, what is to take its place? Recent historical and biographical studies, some of which I allude to above, portray a Sidney who was associated all his political life with Protestant religious factions at home and abroad that were characteristically (and often ferociously) opposed to Machiavelli and his doctrines. The natural inference, therefore, is that Sidney himself must have been an anti-Machiavellian. There are problems with this conclusion as well, but at least the idea rests on a firmer evidential foundation than does the opposing view.

For instance, there no longer can be much doubt that the revised *Arcadia* reflects Sidney's unvarying allegiance to Huguenot political thought. This fact is hardly surprising: Sidney was a radical Protestant internationalist, one who had tied his ambitions at court and his conception of God to that particular sort of Calvinism he shared with the likes of Languet and Mornay on the continent and with Fulke Greville at home. Further, to be such a Protestant was to be, *ipso facto*, an opponent of Machiavelli.

There are sound historical reasons behind this linkage. In 1572, for example, Sidney traveled to France in the train of the Earl of Lincoln, who had been commissioned to discuss with Charles IX the proposed match between Alençon and Elizabeth; Sidney was actually in Paris with Mornay during the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, witnessing there the politic slaughter of thousands of his fellow believers (Sells 130–1; Pears xiv). The massacre itself was instantly labeled "Machiavelli's Holiday" by the people (Symonds 25), owing to the perceived influence of the Secretary's writings on Catherine de' Medici, the queen mother. "The Huguenot thesis," notes Donald R. Kelley (554), "... was that the real guilt for France's plight in general and the massacre in particular lay neither with the tiger [Charles] nor with the whore [Catherine] but with Machiavelli himself." Prior to the killings, Huguenot writers occasionally had seen Machiavelli as a sort of ally, mainly because of his anti-papal pronouncements. But the Florentine's supposed connection with the murders changed all that and established a permanent Protestant enmity toward Machiavelli. G. Cardascia observes that:

Le calendrier machiavélique ne devient dense qu'après 1572. Cette année est une date capitale dans l'histoire de la pensée de Machiavel. Elle marque le début d'une ère où l'auteur du *Prince*, connu la veille par un petit nombre d'érudits et d'italianistes, acquiert brusquement une popularité de mauvais aloi (130).

The atrocity occasioned such Huguenot tracts as Innocent Gentillet's *Contre-Machiavel* (1576), in which Machiavelli is characterized as "an exponent of a
villainous atheistical tyranny designed solely for the malicious pleasure and selfish advancement of the prince" (Phillips 32); François Hotman's *Franco-gallia* (1573), which views Machiavelli's influence as a threat to historical French constitutionalism (Laski 35-7); Mornay's *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579), which sees Machiavelli as having forever removed considerations of morality from the arena of politics; and Lambert Daneau's epistle dedicatory (1577) to a Latinizing of the *Contre-Machiavel*, in which English Protestants are urged to equate Machiavelli with Satan himself. Even Jean Bodin, who had been complimentary to Machiavelli in his *Methodus* (1566), attacks the Florentine's works as "slow poison" in his post-Massacre *République* (1576) (Salmon 360-1). Antonio D'Andrea sums up Protestant reaction to Machiavelli in the wake of the Bartholomew carnage:

Anti-Machiavellism thus finds a justification in strictly orthodox Calvinist terms. Machiavellism is the very evil Calvin had foreseen as inevitably awaiting those who travelled the road of ill-advised moderation, incredulity, lust, and merry living. The fight against Machiavelli is the fight against Satan: and this is no metaphor nor a figment of popular imagination, but the result of a well thought out doctrinal perspective. . . ("Machiavelli” 167, 161).

The various stock Machiavels who parade through the *New Arcadia*, accordingly, are not there by accident or because Sidney misreads Machiavelli's texts. They are there because of a general Protestant revulsion toward Machiavelli following the events of 1572, a revulsion which Sidney—given his politics, friends, and religion—may well have shared, at least in part.

IV

As I mentioned above, however, there are problems with this view of Sidney as a staunch anti-Machiavellian. Among these difficulties is the fact that such a portrayal is necessarily fashioned out of evidence which exists at one remove from the poet himself. On those few occasions when Sidney does write directly about Machiavelli, his exact attitude toward the Secretary is difficult to pin down; but it is surely not a posture of unthinking hatred. In an affectionate letter (1580) to the young Edward Denny, for example, Sidney recommends Machiavelli's writings (meaning, no doubt, the *Art of War*) as a guide to military tactics (Osborn 539). Further, when his uncle Leicester was libeled in a long tract published in 1584, Sidney disputed the charges in words which seem to betray a bitter sympathy for the low estate of Machiavelli's own reputation and an active concern for the ways in which his texts were commonly
being used: “[W]hen [a slanderer] plays the statist,” writes Sidney, “wringing very unluckily some of Machiavel’s axioms to serve his purpose, then indeed—then he triumphs” (Campbell 326, 331). So Sidney’s own comments about Machiavelli, in contrast to the litany of hysterical abuse sung by his fellow Calvinists, are temperate to the point of neutrality.

It is true, nonetheless, that Sidney took part in the fashionable Protestant xenophobia of Italian culture. In a letter to Languet (1574), he refers to Italy as “that rotten member” of the Christian community, a “baneful” place that would “contaminate the very Turks” (Pears 48). A month later, Languet writes back to support his friend’s critique:

> Whatever nations have in my memory followed [the Italians’] counsels in the administration of their government, they have involved their country in the most dire calamities. Of their wickedness I say nothing. Are not those persons most commended in Italy, who know how to dissemble, how to flatter, . . . and [how] to accommodate themselves to the passions of such men . . . (Zouck 79)?

It is indeed likely, therefore, that Sidney and his closest associates would have agreed with Roger Ascham that “Inglese italianato e un diavolo incarnato” (Richmond 224).

Yet no reader of *The Defence of Poesie* can fail to note Sidney’s kinship with and emulation of a host of contemporary and near-contemporary Italian critics, including Bembo, Scaliger, Castelvetro, Mazzeo, and many others. And it is to belabor the obvious to cite the Italian pastoral conventions of the *Arcadia* and the Petrarchanism of Sidney’s sonnet sequence as evidence that his distaste for Italy was quite selective. For Sidney, as for his compatriots, Italy harbored as many delights as dangers.6

We are left, therefore, with a Sidney whose relation to Machiavelli is clouded, ambiguous. Unlike many of his Calvinist brothers, Sidney seems reluctant to follow the easy road of Machiavelli-baiting. Given the times, his reluctance is perhaps surprising; given the clarifying view of history, however, Sidney’s stance is natural and comprehensible. For there are many ways in which Machiavellism and Sidney’s Calvinism—however contentious they may have been in the sixteenth century—are actually parallel historical movements.

For example, both Machiavelli and the Calvinists were in fundamental agreement about the theoretical origins of government and about the practical implications of those origins. In the *Discourses* (1: 2), Machiavelli surmises that earliest man lived “dispersed . . . like wild beasts,” until,

> . . . when their numbers multiplied, they gathered together and . . . began to search among them-
selves for one who was stronger and braver, and they made him their leader and obeyed him. . . . But when they began to choose the prince by hereditary succession rather than by election, the heirs immediately began to degenerate from the level of their ancestors and, putting aside acts of valor, they thought that princes had nothing to do but to surpass other princes in luxury, lasciviousness, and in every other form of pleasure. So, as the prince came to be hated he became afraid of this hatred and quickly passed from fear to violent deeds, and the immediate result was tyranny (177-8). 7

Sidney, singing a song “old Languet had me taught,” similarly describes the genesis of government in the “Ister Banke” ecologue, a poem included at the end of the first book of the Old Arcadia. In that poem, a beast fable, the animals of an idyllic, prelapsarian world pray to a reluctant Jove and receive man as their king, but man quickly (and inevitably, according to both Machiavellian and Huguenot theory) devolves into a despot who begins to “swelle in tyrannie” and to kill the beasts for “sport” and “glutton taste.” In the view of both Sidney and Machiavelli, therefore, the origin of the state comes about within an amoral context and with the consent of the governed; further, in both cases the princes’ subjects, who contractually participated in forming the state, have been unjustly denied any similar participation in the conduct of government. As Ernest William Talbert points out, Sidney consistently believed in the “mixed state” idea, in that “the exercise of authority should correspond with its public origin” (110). This belief, of course, was shared by the Huguenots and by the other radical Protestant thinkers surrounding Sidney, who stubbornly clung to the idea even in the face of Elizabeth’s occasional proclamations of absolute power. The contract theory of governmental origin and the concept of the mixed state obviously carry with them ramifications which touch upon the whole complicated matter of sovereignty and the right to popular resistance. For our present purposes, however, it is enough to note that these ideas run along similar channels in both the Arcadia and the Discourses.

Moreover, Machiavelli and Sidney are in accord about mankind’s essential nature: Calvin’s dictum that “all the desires of men are evil” is echoed in the works of both writers. Machiavelli is very clear on this point:

[I]t is necessary for anyone who organizes a republic and institutes laws to take for granted that all men are evil and that they will always express the wickedness of their spirit whenever they have the
opportunity; and when such wickedness remains hidden . . . time, which is said to be the father of every truth, will uncover it. (Discourses 1: 3; 181–2)

In The Prince, as well, Machiavelli pictures man as a creature who is driven by the flames of infinite and insatiable desire, pursuing his narrow and always selfish ends with monomaniacal intensity. And, as Joseph Mazzeo points out, Machiavelli’s understanding that “men are born bad and generally do not do good unless they are forced to do so” links him with a well-established tenet of Christian thought (147). Machiavelli’s conception of man and the universe, of course, has little to do directly with Christianity, but Mazzeo correctly concludes that there is scarcely any psychological difference between the Secretary’s idea of ambizione, for instance, and the Christian concept of concupiscencia; both speak to man’s “limitless will, whether that will is held to be corrupted through a fall,” as Calvin believed, or is “defined as naturally and, as it were, properly limitless,” as Machiavelli would have it (96, 96n).

Because man is hopelessly corrupt and endlessly selfish, any political order which seeks to control him must take that corruption into account. For Machiavelli, as for Sidney, the mixed state offers the best chance a ruler has to orchestrate the competing and selfish wills of men, playing one off against the other, and thereby checking a naturally entropic drift toward political chaos. Both Machiavelli and Sidney are suspicious of democracy, a system which, in their view, merely sets loose the raging dogs that are men’s wills. And, on similar grounds, both writers normally oppose tyranny—Sidney throughout the New Arcadia and Machiavelli in The Prince (9) and the Discourses (1: 10): despotism is inherently unstable, because it seeks utterly to quash the irrepressible viciousness of man (Mazzeo 148, 148n).

Finally, this concern of Sidney’s for political order is another trait he shares with Machiavelli, or, more accurately, that Machiavelli shares with the Elizabethan world. Nor is the inherent depravity of mankind the only threat to such stability: for both the Calvinist and the Florentine, the world and all its institutions are, by nature, subject to wrenching periods of cyclical declination. “Worth must decay,” Greville laments in the Monarchy treatise, “and height of power declyne”; and, in his much-quoted commentary on the Arcadia, Greville makes it clear that Sidney shared this view:
Indeed, the *Arcadia* describes a world in which even "the strongest buildings and lastest monarchicals are subject to end" (*Works* 1: 486) and "wherein there is nothing so certain as our continual uncertaintie" (1: 26). For Machiavelli, too, such are the ways of the world. Recurrent floods and plagues expunge old religions and old tongues (*Discourses* 2: 5), while whole races of men are periodically erased from the face of the earth. Moreover, for Machiavelli history "tends to repeat itself in progressively degenerate form[s]," and "the repetition of history will always be retrograde, for all things are equally subject to the law of decay" (Mazzeo 150). Therefore, Calvinism and Machiavellism share in this respect a common world view, one in which the only still point in an otherwise shifting and declining universe is the nature of man, a nature which itself is hopelessly corrupt (Mazzeo 133, 149-50).

Nor are these the only parallels between Machiavelli and Sidney. For example, both figures urge a restrictive role within the state for positive law and for the established ("outward") church. Further, both thinkers believe, as Howell points out (215), that the state should serve to benefit the larger community. And there are even times when Sidney's Christian understanding of "virtue" is closely allied to Machiavellian virtù: both ideas can refer to what Talbert calls "an amoral forceful accomplishment" (94) which is quite divorced from ethical considerations.

V

Nonetheless, this sort of parallelism can be carried much too far; there remain whole worlds of thought and belief in which Machiavelli and Sidney are clearly poles apart. For example, Sidney's world view is based upon an embracing of natural law, a concept which Machiavelli repudiates or, more correctly, ignores. "I know there is a hyer power that must uphold me," writes Sidney to Walsingham, "[and] I trust I shall not by other mens wantes be drawn from my self" (*Works* 3: 166-7). Machiavelli has no such confidence. Hiram Haydn emphasizes that "Machiavelli divorces history—as he divorces man, the state, justice and law—from revelation and divine purpose and unity," pointing to "the breakup of the Thomist synthesis of divine and natural law . . ." (153-4). Machiavelli's universe, notes Mazzeo, is "open-ended," "beyond ideology," and is filled with an appreciation for "ethical irrationality" (162), but Sidney's world, however fallen, is always open to the possibility of divine mystery and the certitude of reason and absolute values (Talbert 116). Indeed, Machiavelli favors paganism over Christianity, seeing the passivity of the latter as inimical to a bold participation in the affairs of state (Mazzeo 110-11). There is a sharp discrepancy as well between Christian providence on the
one hand and Machiavellian *fortuna* on the other, a gap not likely to be blinked by a believer in the purposeful confines of Calvinist predestination.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the political program advocated by Sidney and his Protestant faction was conspicuous by its ideological rigidity. While Elizabeth and Cecil sought painstakingly to maintain the mercurial balance of power existing on the continent between Spain and France, Sidney and his group urged an outright assault against the Spanish forces gathered in the Low Countries. The same Sidney who rashly criticized Elizabeth's proposed French match, who fought with the Earl of Oxford over a tennis court, who challenged his uncle's slanderer to a duel, and who cast aside his armor in a fit of neo-chivalric bravado on the plains of Zutphen—this was the Sidney whose aims threatened to precipitate a hopeless English campaign against Europe's two mightiest armies. In all these cases, Sidney was confident that God was on his side and that He would be quick to uphold an England which pursued a radical Protestant foreign policy. In Walsingham's words, England's welfare "dependeth on God's goodness who is so long to extend his protection as we shall depend of his providence and shall not seek our safety (carried away by human policy) contrary to his word" (Weiner 24; Howell 66, 98). For Sidney, in short, "politics is ultimately an appendage of religion" (Weiner 4).

This sort of blind, ideological rigidity—this notion that "politics is God's art, not man's" (Weiner 24)—is, of course, distinctly non-Machiavellian. To Machiavelli,

the exercise of *virtù* requires constant flexibility, knowledge of how circumstances alter cases, and, above all, the knack of always avoiding rigidity . . . . [H]is is essentially a literary intelligence, aware that life escapes all the abstract schemes we may construct to control it. He would have said that a systematic approach to experience would have disastrous practical consequences, for no single principle is always, in every instance, good. It is the prime necessity for flexibility in statecraft . . . that leads Machiavelli . . . [to embrace] concepts like *fortuna* and *virtù* . . . (Mazzeo 156–7).

Clearly, then, there are ample reasons for Sidney's ambiguous stance toward Machiavelli. As we have seen, Machiavelli's and Sidney's views are in harmony at some points and are wildly discordant at others. It is at least to Sidney's credit that he did not dismiss out-of-hand the Florentine Secretary, who had become by Sidney's day what one observer calls "the bogeyman of the Western world" (Kelley 559). Sidney's struggles with the promises and pitfalls
of Machiavelli’s legacy make the poet seem even more our contemporary; for we, like Sidney, must come to terms in our own day with the forbidding realities of power politics.

NOTES

1. This and all subsequent references to Sidney’s works are from Feuillerat’s four-volume edition.

   In the same sentence, Sidney explains that he only “slipt into the title of a Poet . . . .” Nor should this self-deprecation be dismissed as a convention: for a convincing account of Sidney’s devotion to a life of action, see Levy 5-18. To his admirer Gabriel Harvey, Sidney’s “sovereign profession” neither courtier nor poet but soldier (Howell 166).

2. The idea of two “Machiavellisms,” which dates back at least to Meyer’s groundbreaking work and which has early roots in Etienne Pasquier’s comment in the 1560s that “there be a great many Machiavels among us at this day, who never read his books” (Kelley 555, 555n), remains alive and well in the scholarship; for recent outcroppings, see Mazzeo (157-9) and Lever (9). Other critics, however, are more willing to suggest that Machiavelli’s evil reputation in the Renaissance was deserved. “That for us [Machiavelli] is no longer of the Devil’s party,” notes Spivack (375), “means chiefly that we have got rid of the Devil . . . .” Also see Meinecke, passim. For a more recent assertion of Sidney’s Machiavellism, see Levy (12-13), where Levy argues that it was possible by Sidney’s day to see Machiavelli as a liberating influence.

3. This topic has been much discussed and most often leads to the question of how willing Sidney is in the Arcadia to countenance a popular rebellion against a legitimate ruler, a subject I do not want to pursue here. The conflicting articles by Briggs and Ribner, cited below, constitute an opening shot in this debate. For more recent views, see McCoy (38-41, 184-99, et passim), Walzer (67, 88-9), and, for a conservative stance, Talbert (89-117); also see my “Fulke Greville and the Myth of Machiavellism,” Diss. South Florida 1983, 112-34. The most convincing short summary I have seen of Sidney’s political position is in Bergbush (27).

4. This is an overstatement, however, for Catherine does not utterly escape culpability at the hands of the Huguenot writers; see the epistle dedicatory to Gentillet’s Contre-Machiavel, for example. Likewise, Charles is held accountable for the massacre in the anonymous Reveille-matin des Francois et de leurs voisins (1574); see D’Andrea “Context” 403-4, 404n.

5. For the text of the attack against Leicester, see Burgoyne.

6. I borrow a phrase here from the University of Toronto’s Kenneth R. Bartlett, who presented his paper, “Dangers and Delights: English Protestants in Italy in the Sixteenth Century,” at the Fifth Annual Conference of the American Association for Italian Studies, meeting in Tampa, Florida, April 11-13, 1985. I read the present essay at that same conference.

   According to his memorialist Greville, Sidney expressed the hope—in words which echo the final chapter of The Prince—that Italy, with help, might “chase away” the foreign armies that had long oppressed her (Pears 104-5). For a good account of Sidney’s visit to Italy—and his mixed reactions to things Italian—see Howell 145-9; for a general statement of his debt to Italian literary models, see Sells 129-49; and see Hale, passim, for a delightful survey of British reaction to Renaissance Italy.

7. This and all subsequent references to Machiavelli’s works are drawn from Bondanella and Musa’s edition.
WORKS CITED


Barnabe Googe’s Zodiake of Life: 
A Translation Reconsidered

by

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Marcellus Palingenius’ Zodiacus Vitae in twelve books (Venice [1535?]) was exceedingly popular in Reformation Europe. In nearly 10,000 lines of Latin hexameters

are conteined twelue seuerall labours, painting out moste liuely, the whole compasse of the world, the reformation of manners, the miseries of man-kinde, the pathway to vertue and vice, the eternitie of the Soule, the course of the Heavens, the mysteries of nature, and diuers other circumstances of great learning, and no lesse judgement,
as Barnabe Googe summarized it on the title page of his translation of 1576.¹

The ZV saw over sixty editions as well as translations into French, German and English,² and it was a schooltext both on the Continent and in England, where it was taught along with Terence and Mantuan in the third form.³ Ten editions of the ZV were printed in England between 1569 and 1639.⁴

Barnabe Googe (1540–1594), a minor poet, published a volume of original verse and several translations. He was among the young men, most of them Protestants, at the inns of court who made the period 1558–1572 the most prolific of the century for translation.⁵ The first three books of Googe’s Zodiake of Life appeared in 1560, the first six in 1561, and all twelve in 1565. A revised edition with extensive marginal glosses came out in 1576 and was reprinted in 1588.⁶

Since the only other English translation of the ZV, an anonymous prose version ([London] 1896), is extremely scarce, the choice for those who wish to familiarize themselves with the poem is between one of the old Latin editions and Googe. Sixteenth-century Englishmen were more likely to have been
acquainted with the Latin version than Googe's translation. It is true that the first Latin edition printed in England (1569) postdates Googe's translation, but copies of the numerous editions from the Continent must have found their way to England before that date.\footnote{7}

Most students of Tudor literature meet Palingenius, if they meet him at all, through Googe's translation. What will they find in Googe? How accurately does he present Palingenius? In what ways does the *Zodiake of Life* depart from the *Zodiacus Vitae*? Googe's contemporaries praised his translation, though only in general terms: Roger Ascham, William Webbe, Francis Meres, and Gabriel Harvey all mentioned it approvingly, if briefly.\footnote{8} In the eighteenth century Thomas Warton wrote: "Googe seems chiefly to have excelled in rendering the descriptive and flowery passages of this moral Zodiac."\footnote{9} To illustrate Googe's better work Warton quoted part of the description of spring (opening of Book III) and the description of one of the demon kings (Book IX). The latter passage will be examined below. C. S. Lewis thinks little of the *ZV* and of Googe's translation: "The original, a diffuse and tedious satirical-moral diatribe in hexameters, lost little in Googe's fourteeners. Perhaps it gained."\footnote{10} Rosemond Tuve assesses Googe's poetical practice as follows:\footnote{11}

> His translation is spare; minute compressions of phrase will mount gradually to a saving of a hundred lines in a book. He does not force the opinions of his original by sly choices in the coloring of phrases. He wrenches syntax, he uses rhyme-fillers (though in this he is no egregious sinner).... Except perhaps in the very earliest part of the book, he takes care not to miss opportunities for particularity, and slight differences from his original frequently take that direction.

Brooke Peirce accepts without comment Tuve's judgments.\footnote{12} William Sheidley finds that "Googe frequently adds to the concretion and particularity of his original through colloquial diction" and suggests that Googe's own poetry has greater concision than his contemporaries, a concision which he learned from Palingenius.\footnote{13}

By closely comparing two representative passages and summarizing Googe's practice elsewhere, I will show that Googe does not make the poem more concrete and concise, that he bowdlerizes, and that he eliminates or tries to dilute Catholic elements in the poem. I will also discuss his practice in the context of his own age. The point of this is not to argue that Googe has done a disservice to Palingenius but to show twentieth-century readers how his poem differs from Palingenius'. This is of some importance, for while the influence of Palingenius on Shakespeare has been well examined, his influence on other
English writers, largely unexplored, appears more clearly when one uses the Latin text rather than Googe's. If Tuve is referred to frequently here it is because her study is the most thorough, though still inadequate. She may have had in mind generalizations about Elizabethan translators such as those of F. O. Matthiessen:

His diction was racy and vivid. . . . [He enjoyed fullness of expression, the free use of doublets and alliteration, the building up of parallel constructions for the sake of rhythm. . . . Whenever possible he substituted a concrete image for an abstraction, a verb that carried the picture of an action for a general statement.

Tuve's comments on the comparative lengths of the Latin and English versions imply that Googe has improved on the Latin, that he is more economical than his original. It is true that he reduces the number of lines by nearly 9% (from 9937 to 9103). But there is another explanation for this reduction. J. P. Postgate, who translated a great deal of Latin verse into English verse, says that the English ten-syllabled line carries nearly the same amount of information as the Latin hexameter. If Postgate is right, we can expect Googe to use fewer lines than Palingenius simply because he was translating Latin hexameters into English fourteeners. And this is in fact the case, as the following analysis will show. At the same time, however, it must be admitted that if Googe does not "compress" Palingenius, he does not expand as much as Arthur Golding, whose translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1565–67), also in fourteeners, contains 2500 more lines than the original.

The passages chosen for analysis should give us a clear picture of Googe's abilities since they are very different: the first is an argument for the existence of angels, the second a description of a demon king, Passage I is 29 lines in the *ZV* and 23½ lines in Googe:

19

Quid demum ratio dictat? viventia multa
Esse quidem, nostros fugiant quae tenuia sensus.
Nam nisi fecisset meliora et nobiliora,
Quam mortale genus, fabricator maximus ille,
Nempe videretur non magno dignus honore,
Nempe imperfectum imperium atque ignobile haberet.
Infra etenim naturam hominis, pecudesque feraeque
Existunt, viles omnes ac mente carentes,
Et miserae, et ventri tantum somnoque vacantes.
Quod si nullum animal melius natura creasset,
Quidnam aliud foret hic mundus, quam turpe ferarum

(295) (300) (305)
Ac pecudum stabulum, spinisque fimoque refertum?
Quidnam aliud foret ipse Deus, quam pastor herusque
Multorumque gregum, multorumque armentorum?
Atqui hominem fecit: nimirum maxima laus haec;
Nimirum satis hoc. Ohe, fieri melius nil
Debuit aut potuit? iamiam perfectior orbis
Esse nequit? fuit haec Iovis infinita potestas?
Sed videamus, utrum sit fas, hoc credere. Non est,
Non est hoc, inquam, fas credere, nec ratio vult.
Nam quid homo est? animal certe stultum atque malignum,
Praeque aliis miserum, si se cognoscat ad unguem.
Quis non sponte malus? Vitiorum lubrica et ampla
Est via, qua properant omnes, ultroque feruntur;
Nec prohibere valent monitor, lex, poena, metusve:
Contra virtutis salebrosa, angusta, nimisque
Ardua, qua pauci tendunt, iidemque coacti.
Quis sapit? an mulier? numquid puer? aut cerdonum
Tota cohors? Eheu stultorum maxima turba est.

(ZV VII)

But what doth Reason byd me write, that many creatures framed
Aliue there are that we can not by senses understand:
For if that God should not haue made, wyth hye and glorious hand,
More noble creatures than the state of fading mortall kinde:
He had not then deserued such prayse, as is to him assignde,
Unperfect eke had bene his reigne: for underneth the kinde
Of Man, the wilde and sauage Beastes consist of brutish minde,
To sleepe and foode, addicted all. And if he had not framed
No better things than here we see, the worlde might well be named,
A folde of filthy feeding flocks, with thornes and donge set out.
What should we then this God account, a mighty heardman stoute?
But he created man besides, now sure a goodly thing:
Was this his best? is this the power of that Almighty king?
But let vs trye if thys be true, if we may credite giue:
It is not good nor reason will, that we shall this beleue.

For what is Man? a foolishe beast, a creature full of spight,
And wretched farre aboue the rest if we shall jUDGE vpright.
Who is not of his nature nought? the way to vice is wide,
Wherin the feete of mortal men continually doth slyde:
No Warning, Lawe, no Payne, nor Feare can cause them for to stay.
Againe, the path of vertue is a straight and painfull way,
Wherin but fewe doe vse to walke, and them you must constraine.
Who is wyse? the woman? or the childe? or all the Common traine?
The most (alas) are foolishe doltes.  

(Googe p. 114)

(In the following notes, the formula “4:3 1/2” and so on means four lines of Latin are rendered by 3 1/2 lines in English. The periods are numbered according to the Latin; Googe’s significant changes are given after the corresponding Latin word or phrase.)

295-96 1st period 1:1 “tenuia” (not trans.)
297-300 2nd 4:3 1/2 “fabricator maximus ille”—“God” (loss of epithet), “wyth hye and glorious hand” (addition—synecdoche), “melliora et nobiliora”—“More noble” (singular noun for doublet), “imperfectum . . . atque ignobile”—“Unperfect” (single adj. for doublet)
301-03 3rd 3:2 “viles omnes ac mente carentes, / Et miserae”—“of brutish minde” (change of meaning)
304-06 4th 3:2 1/2 “natura”—“he” (changed subj.), “animal melius”—“better things” (less particular), “ferarum” (omitted for allit.), rhetorical question—statement
307-08 5th 2:1 “herusque / Multorumque gregum, multorumque armentorum” (omitted—less redundant?)
309-10 6th 1 1/2:1 “nimirum maxima laus haec; / Nimirum satis hoc”—“now sure a goodly thing” (compression)
310-11 7th 1:1/2 “Ohe, fieri melius nil / Debuit aut potuit?” — “Was this his best?” (Elimination of distinction between “debuit” and “potuit”)
311-12 8th 1:0 “iamiam perfectior orbis / Esse nequit?” (omitted)
312 9th 1/2:1/2 “fuit haec lovis infinita potestas?”—“is this the power of that Almighty king?” (pagan “lovis” omitted)
313-14 10th & 11th 2:2 “Non est, / Non est hoc? (Latin repetitive but G. does not improve)
315-16 12th & 13th 2:2 “animal”—“beast, a creature” (2 nouns for 1)
317 14th 1/2:1/2
317-21 15th 4 1/2:4 1/2 “omnes”—“feete of mortal men” (more particular?) “lubrica,” “properant,” and “feruntur”—“slyde” (1 word for 3—less detail)
322-23 16th & 17th 2:1 1/2 “aut cerdonum / Tot cohors?”—“or all the Common traine?” (less specific)

Googe does reduce his material here, but departures from the original are nearly always simply omissions rather than “minute compressions of phrase.” In some cases he has eliminated redundancy by translating only one of a pair of words, e.g., 297, and for the same line his introduction of synecdoche adds concreteness. But in other cases he eliminates helpful distinctions, making arguments less rather than more “particular.” In 310-11 he has the general
phrase "Was this his best?" where Palingenius is more dramatic, more anguished: "Oh, couldn’t He or wouldn’t He make anything better?" Googe’s description of the road to vice (317–18) does not have the force of the Latin because he translates two verbs and an adjective with the one verb “slyde.” The Latin is more particular, its sense closer to the following: “Slippery and broad is the way of evil, by which all hasten and are borne away.” Two lines show Googe’s fondness for alliteration, sometimes at the expense of intelligibility: “A folde of filthy feeding flocks” is unobjectionable, but “Who is not of his nature nought?” will likely puzzle the reader who does not have the Latin (“Quis non sponte malus?”) before him. In this particular passage Googe does not use as many of the so-called *Flickwörter* (auxiliary “do” and adverbs such as “whenas”), nearly meaningless words for filling out lines, as he does elsewhere. 20 Although space here does not allow its presentation, analysis of the first part of Book XI, an exposition of the constellations which Googe renders very literally, confirms what the above examination indicates, namely that Googe’s fourteeners simply carry more information than Palingenius’ hexameters, and this, rather than any greater terseness, accounts for the number of lines Googe “saves” in his translation.

Passage 2, a test case for the quality of Googe’s poetry, was one of the two passages Warton singled out for praise:

Pandite nunc vestros fontes, vestra antra, sorores, (330)
Quae iuga lauriferi Parnassi excelsa tenetis,
Et mihi (namque opus est) date centum in carmina linguas,
Ut possim aereos reges populosque referre,
Ludificatores hominum, scelerumque magistros,
Qui assidue vexant mortalia cuncta, suisque (335)
Artibus humanas tradunt in tartara mentes.
Hic, ubi puniceo coniux Tithonia curru
Oceano emergit primum, primumque nitescit,
Nocturnas abigens rubicunda luce tenebras,
Ingentem vidi regem, ingentique sedentem (340)
In solio, crines flammanti stemmate cinctum.
Pectus et os illi turgens, oculique micantes,
Alta supercilia, erectus, similibus minanti
Vultus erat, latae nares, duo cornua lata,
Ipse niger totus: quando nigra corpora pravis (345)
Daemonibus natura dedit, turpesque figuras.
Dens tamen albus erat, sannae albæ utrinque patentes,
Alae humeris magnae, quales vespertilionum,
Membranis contextae ampli, pes amplus uterque,
Sed qualem fluvialis anas, qualemve sonorus (350)
Anser habere solet: referebat cauda leonem.

*(ZV IX)*
Now open wide your springs, and plaine your caues abrode displaye,
You Sisters of Parnassus hill, beset about with baye,
And unto me (for neede it is) a hundred tongues in verse
Sende out, that I these Aierie Kings, and people may rehearse,
Deceiuers great of men, and guides of vice, which all that liue
Did stil molest: and by their craft mans soule to hell do giue.
Here first whereas in chariot red Aurora fayre doth ryse,
And bright from out the Ocean seas, appeares to mortal eyes,
And chaseth hence the hellish night, with blushing beauty fayre,
A mighty King I might discerne, plaste hie in lofty chaire,
His haire with fierie garland deckt, puft vp in fiendishe wise,
With browes full broade, and threatening loke, and fierie flaming eyes.
Two monstrous hornses and large he had, and nostrils wide in sight,
Al black himself, for bodies black to euery euell spright
And uggly shape, hath nature dealt, yet white his teeth did showe,
And white his greening tuskes stode out, large wings on him did growe
Framde like the wings of Flindermice, his feete of largest sise,
In fashion as the wilde Duck beares, or Goose that creaking cries,
His taile such one as Lions haue.

(Googe p. 165)

In the first six lines Googe is very literal. Beginning in [7] he is freer, omitting the epithet and translating “Aurora fayre” instead of “Tithonian spouse”; Googe regularly eliminates epithets. “Ocean seas” in [8] is a doublet, yoking a Romance with a native word (this will be dealt with below). “To mortal eyes” may be considered a more concrete detail or dismissed as a conventional tag employed as line filler. “Bright . . . appeares” in [8] is a colorless rendering of “nitisct” (“begins to glisten”). There is no reason (other than metrical) for “hellish night” in [9] instead of a more literal “nocturnal shadows,” a point to which Googe himself was sensitive, for he added this sidenote: “Hellish because it is darke.” “Blushing beauty fayre” is a good rendering of “rubicunda luce.” In [10] “hie in lofty chaire” is no more vivid than the Latin, which could be rendered “I saw a monstrous king seated on a monstrous throne.” “Puft vp in fiendishe wise” in [11] is less specific than the Latin, which tells us the demon’s chest and mouth were puffed up. In [12] Googe uses a pair of redundant alliterating adjectives, “fierie flaming,” and does not translate “erectus.” In [13] he again has two adjectives (“monstrous” and “large”) for one in the Latin, and again he ignores Palingenius’ intentional repetition of words (“primum, primumque” [338], “Ingentem . . . ingentique” [340], “latae . . . lata” [344]). “In sight” at the end of [13] is line filler. The meaning of the next two lines [14 and 15] is not as clear as it could be because Googe has partially followed the Latin word order: “for nature gave black bodies and base figures to depraved spirits” renders the idea more readily in English; separating “turpesque figuras”
from "nigra corpora" does not cause the hesitation in Latin, with its free word order, that the corresponding separation causes in English. "Grenning tuskes" in [16] may be an improvement on the Latin, which says merely "he had white teeth, and white grimaces were evident on either side." The next phrase, "large wings on him did growe," is less exact than the original, which specifies that they come from his shoulders. "Framde" in [17] is less specific than "Membranis contextae amplis" (349).

A characteristic of Googe's translation which Passage 2 makes clear is his use of a pair of synonyms for a single Latin word. Other examples, both from Book V, are indicative of his practice throughout the poem: "last and finall ende" for "ultimata meta" (V.656) and "Doth scale and clime" for "scandit" (V.879). If in such instances Googe diffuses rather than compresses the poetry, it is only by today's standards, for he was following a translating tradition. It is perhaps significant that he uses the old practice, employed by Caxton, of pairing a Latinate word with a Saxon one, whereas Golding, his contemporary, nearly always uses two native words in his doublets.21

These passages have some awkward syntax, though nothing as difficult as many of Googe's lines, which are sometimes nearly opaque unless the reader has the Latin before him. For example, in the following it is impossible to tell if "best" modifies "seede" or "grounde," though in the Latin "optima" can modify only "semina":

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semina quamvis
Optima, si terrae fuerint mandata sinistris
Sideribus . . .
(VI.364–66)
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If seeede amyd the grounde
Though best be cast, and therto starres agreeing not be founde . . .
(Googe p. 92)

Googe has some tendency to bowdlerize. Several examples could be cited, but the clearest is the following:

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Hinc uxor pulchrum et generosum saepe maritum
Odit, et immundi penem calonis adorat,
Aut aliquem externum, quem vix bene noverit, ardet.
(IV.369–71)
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By this the wife disdaines
Hir husbande faire of gentle bloud, and greater ioy sustaines
A lither lousy loute to haue, or vnaquainted wight.
(Googe p. 49)
Hence the wife often hates her handsome and noble husband and adores the penis of a filthy slave or burns for some stranger whom she scarcely knows. (my translation)

Gooe makes the poem less Catholic by invoking God instead of the angels or saints. This he does simply by rendering plural nouns (e.g., “divos”) in the singular. There are, however, two categories of references to deities which do not fall under this heading of Protestantization. In the first, Palingenius follows the practice of Renaissance Latinists by referring to the Christian God as “Deus” as well as “Juppiter” and “Tonans.” Gooe usually translates “God,” the natural equivalent in English. In the second category, he translates plural oaths in the singular; e.g., “pro superi” (VI.442) becomes “O God.” This too is idiomatic English, as is clear from the entry “deus” in Thomas Cooper’s Thesaurus (London 1565), in which are the following examples among others: “Iuvantibus diis—Cicero—With gods helpe . . . Dii faciant—Cicero—God graunte: woulde to God.”

In those cases, however, where Palingenius is attempting to prove the existence of angels or telling how to communicate with them, it makes a difference if his words are translated in the singular or plural. The climax of the ZV is a final treatment of the summum bonum, this time defined as the invocation of and communication with angels (XII.329-535, pp. 235-40 in Gooe). Palingenius uses a number of words to refer to the angels (“dii,” “superi,” “numina,” “caelicolae”) and two (“daemones” and “manes”) to refer to demons. Gooe often translates these in the singular. Line 519, in which singular and plural are mixed, is illustrative: “Posse hominem affari divos coram, atque videre” becomes “That men may come to speake with God, and them in presence see.” Gooe may simply be sloppy, as Golding sometimes was in his handling of deities. But he has added sidenotes, not in the Latin text, which explicitly refer to the one God: “God careth not . . . God regardeth not . . .” and so on. In this passage Gooe has often, though not consistently, blunted the Catholic impact of the poem by eliminating many of the exhortations to pray to the saints (or angels, depending on how one wishes to translate “dii,” “caelicolae,” and so forth) and recommending instead that one pray to God Himself.

An anti-Catholic bias is evident in other sidenotes. In Book VI, which has a meditation on death, Gooe adds this note next to a passage on the underworld: “The description of Hell according to the opinion of dreaming Dolts” (p. 104). And next to a brief exposition of metempsychosis is this note: “The fond opinyon of Pythagoras which sauoureth of the musty leuen of Purgatory.” In IX.749-58 Timalphes exhorts the poet to pray to the angels (“cives caeli, angelicasque cohortes/ . . . sanctosque ministros”), for they can aid one by driving away danger and interceding with God. Gooe leaves none of this out but adds this note: “This doctrine would be read, but not followed: for it is derogatorie to gods glory and maiestie” (p. 175).
Googe makes clear which aspects of the ZV most appealed to him in the “Epistle dedicatorie” to the 1565 edition. Palingenius, he says, was

a man of such excellent learning and Godly life, that neither the vnquietnesse of his time (Italie in those dayes raging wyth most cruell and bloody warres) ne yet the furious tyranny of the Anti­christian Prelate (vnder whose ambitious and Tirannicall gouernaunce he continually liued) coulde once amase the Muse, or hinder the zealous and vertuous spirit of so Christian a Souldiour. I haue many times much mused wyth my selfe, howe (liuing in so daungerous a place) he durst take vpon him so boldely to controll the corrupte and vnchristian liues of the whole Colledge of con­temptuous Cardinalles, the vngracious overseings of bloudthyrsty Bishops, the Panchplying prac­tises of pelting Priours, the manifold madness of mischeuous Monkes, wyth the filthy fraternitie of flattering Friers.

As we have seen, Palingenius needed help to be the thoroughgoing Protestant Googe wanted to present to England. This is not surprising, for while Palingenius criticizes abuses in the Church he is not clearly Protestant. In fact, he was Catholic enough that the Tridentine commission for reforming the Index recommended that he be rehabilitated, although the recommendation was not taken.\(^{24}\)

In sum, Googe is no more “spare” than Palingenius. If he omits some redundancies he introduces as many of his own. He does not consistently eliminate or alter things he is uncomfortable with (e.g., sexual references or praying to the angels), though he often employs sidenotes to warn his reader about doctrines in the text he considers unsound. His syntax can make passages incomprehensible, and if he sometimes uses a concrete image for an abstraction in the original he frequently does the reverse. Like his contemporaries, he uses doublets and alliteration freely. In translating Palingenius, then, Googe inevitably put him in English dress. But that Protestant, Tudor poet is not the Palingenius schoolboys encountered along with Mantuan in the third form at their grammar schools.

NOTES

4. This list looks suspiciously short, but the only Latin editions printed in England are those listed in STC, 2nd ed. Neither Wing nor NUC nor the British Library Catalogue lists any editions after 1639. Perhaps the revision of Wing or the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue will uncover later printings.
8. For the first three, see Foster Watson, The Zodiacus Vitae of Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus: An Old School-Book (London: Wellby, 1908), pp. 81–82. For Harvey, see Gabriel Harvey, Marginalia, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head P, 1913), pp. 61, 231.
16. Giuseppe Borgiani, “Pier Angelo Manzolli,” Enciclopedia italiana (Rome 1929), counts 9939 lines in the Latin poem; Weise’s edition, used here, has 9937.
19. All quotations are from Marcellus Palingenius, Zodiacus Vitae, sive, De hominis vita libri XII, ed. Karl Weise (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1832).
20. Braden, p. 27.

Read at the Nineteenth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, May 1984.
The Sense of an Ending in Shakespeare's Early Comedies

by

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About Shakespeare's endings, Samuel Johnson wrote:

in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labor to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented. (71–72)

In the twentieth century, Ernest Schanzer has echoed Dr. Johnson’s opinion in his commentary on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: “For sheer economy and multiplicity of effect it [the first scene] has no equal in any of Shakespeare’s opening scenes, on which he generally bestowed more thought and care than on any other part of his plays” (242). I would suggest, however, that Shakespeare’s endings, particularly in the comedies, show a vigorous exertion of effort rather than a remittance, a heightening rather than a shortening of labor. It is, moreover, formal integrity, not the ends of plot structure *per se*, that governs the effort and labor.¹

In a study of *The Merchant of Venice*, James Siemon claimed that Shakespeare’s construction of the final act so as to form “a complete ritual restatement of the body of the play” was experimental and unique, for none of his plays, whether written before or after, made use of the final act to reprise the whole (208–209). According to Siemon:

Act V begins again with Act I, with the hero’s pursuit of the heroine, and reenacts, in precisely legalistic terms and in a social ritual (that is a trial),
the legal impediment of the hero's success. Bassanio has sworn that "when this ring/Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence," and has then promptly given away his ring to an importuning stranger. Portia's case is airtight, as Shylock's had seemed to be, and it finds its resolution in charity and love, in reconciliation. . . . The last act . . . festively and ritually reenacts the pattern of threat, release, and reconciliation which the preceding acts have dramatized. (208)

But certainly the seeds for such a "complete ritual restatement" are present in earlier comedies. A Midsummer Night's Dream, in fact, might just as easily lay claim to being the first comedy to provide a fifth act reprisal as MV. Consider, for example, the order in which the four major groups of characters (Theseus and Hippolyta, the young lovers, the mechanicals, and the fairies) make their appearance, an order which parallels the way they were introduced in the play. The tripartite division of the act also mirrors the play's movement from daylight to night and back to day by the end of Act Four, and the spatial movement from Athens to the wood and back again to Athens. Lines 1-105 recall the opening conversation between the royal lovers, Hippolyta's demonstration of feminine intuition and common sense, and Theseus' charge to Philostrate to provide revels. At the beginning of the play, Theseus wanted entertainment to pass the days and nights before the nuptial ceremony; in the final act he wants something to pass away the three hours between "after-supper and bed-time" (5.1.35). The second division (lines 106-370), also the longest, parallels the longest section of the play, the nighttime world of the wood which extends from Act Two through the first ninety-four lines of Act Four. Just as disorder, confusion, and disharmony prevailed in the wood, so now, for all Theseus' gracious words, theatrical chaos erupts. As others have noted (Clemen xxxiv-xxxvii and Mehl 46), the interlude dealing with Pyramus and Thisby, which like the middle acts of the play is about love in the moonlight, burlesques the story of the four young lovers lost in the wood. The final part of the scene from line 371 to the conclusion brings the benedictional arrival of the fairies, which corresponds to the arrival of order in the fourth act when Theseus' appearance accompanied the dawning of a new day. Where that order was diurnal, social, and legal, the final order resonates with the eternal, natural, and spiritual.

Key iterative images like moon, eye, play, and dream are present, as is one of Midsummer's chief compositional principles, antithesis. The first twenty-seven lines of Theseus' and Hippolyta's dialogue deal with such opposites as illusion and reality, falsity and truth, the ordinary and the strange. The performance of
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the interlude itself raises questions concerning the relation between art and life, imagination versus fact. The “palpable-gross play” is immediately juxtaposed to the wondrous, strange entry of the ethereal world of the fairies. The bergomask, a lively rustic dance, stands in sharp contrast to the lyrical music of Oberon and Titania and their entourage. Puck’s references to shrouds and graves, pointing to the end of the life cycle, counter Oberon’s blessing of the bridal beds and prayerful good wishes for healthy children, the beginning of the cycle.

But as David Young has so cogently shown in his study of MND, a principle of fluidity also permits a commingling of opposites without abandoning the individual makeup of the elements so commingled. While Young’s focus is not the final act per se, I think this principle of interpenetration clearly pervades the scene from beginning to end—perhaps never as graphically as in the Fairy Queen’s embrace of Bottom in Act Four, but present nonetheless. I have in mind such moments as the Prologue’s failure “to stand upon points” (5.1.108–18) which results in lines and sentences running into each other; the synaesthesia informing “I see a voice/I can hear my Thisby’s face” (192–93); the direct interaction between the actors and the newlyweds which blurs the dividing line between illusion and reality; and finally, the invoking of the imagination so as to allow the courtly audience, after its numerous interruptions of the show, to enter into its spirit and to be caught up in the story:

Theseus: This passion, and the death of a dear friend would go near to make a man look sad.

Hippolyta: Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man. (5.1.289–90)

In moving from mockery to commiseration, the audience moves from detachment to engagement, from separation to oneness with the actors. What Theseus said earlier about “musical confusion” (4.1.110) and Hippolyta about “so musical a discord” (4.1.118) accurately describes the final scene, where opposites are set up in a way that admits but rises above juxtapositions to suggest interpenetration, one antinomy “translating” into another. In the much-quoted line about the strange “story of the night” which grows to something of great constancy” (5.1.23–27), Hippolyta taps right into the compositional rhythm of the play, acknowledging contrasts while sensing a fluid commingling that precludes rigid polarization.

Like the charade depicted in the fifth act of MV, the final act of MND does not so much resolve the plot structurally as provide us with divertissement, an elaborate entertainment to while away the time between the technical resolution of the plot (which occurred in Act Four) and the actual point of closure. In MND, the entertainment takes the form of a play within a play. And like
the conclusion of MV, the final act of MND goes beyond the level of divertissement to suggest a formal microcosm of the whole.

In the present essay, I would like to discuss how Shakespeare anticipates the fulness of these fifth act reprisals in two apprentice comedies, The Taming of the Shrew and Love's Labor's Lost, where in neither case is the final scene crucial for the "deknottting" of the action. By the end of the penultimate scene of Shrew, Petruchio has happily tamed his Kate, and Lucentio has securely won his Bianca. In LLL the quadruple forswearing of the young men (4.3) shows clearly that the academy, if it ever really existed, is now most certainly a thing of the past. The final scene of each may also be described as divertissement, taking the form of an extended wager in Shrew and a masque and a pageant in LLL. But as with MND and MV, divertissement fails to penetrate their formal value as microcosms of their respective wholes. Let us now turn to a closer examination of the microcosmic "sense of an ending" (Kermode) in Shrew and LLL.

Throughout The Taming of the Shrew, as part of his method, Petruchio subjects Kate to a series of tests or, more accurately, obstacle courses: the indecorous behavior on their wedding day, the deprivation of food and sleep, the less than chivalrous rescue from a "miry" place, the peremptory dismissal of the tailor and the haberdasher, the catechism on the moon versus the sun, and the "mistaken" perception of an old man as a "fair lovely maid." He favors the imperative as his general mode of utterance, giving commands left and right. Gradually Kate moves from feistiness to a more tempered state, appearing quite tamed by the end of Act Five, scene one. That they have made their peace by this point is clear from the words they direct at each other. Sensing a good show in the making in the comic confrontation between the false Vincentio and the true, Petruchio says to Kate: "Prithee, Kate, let's stand aside and see the end of this controversy" (5.1.61). The volitive subjunctive softens the imperative force; Petruchio does not so much command Kate as express a wish that they stand together and watch. Near the end of the scene, when Baptista and the legitimate Vincentio venture indoors with Bianca and Lucentio, Kate echoes Petruchio: "Husband, let's follow, to see the end of this ado" (5.1.141). They both know a good entertainment when they see one. Petruchio is perfectly agreeable but does make one small request. He wants a kiss. Kate, standing on principles of decorum, is reluctant to oblige. Her hesitancy has nothing to do with the object of the kiss, only with its propriety. But as soon as Petruchio threatens to leave, she lovingly replies: "Nay, I will give thee a kiss; now pray, thee love, stay" (5.1.148). The word "love," the first time Kate has thus addressed Petruchio, connotes affection and endearment. Petruchio, it seems responds in kind: "Is not this well? Come, my sweet Kate: Better once than never, for never too late" (5.1.149-50). These lines, particularly in their couplet formation, suggest a close, a completion. The shrew has been tamed and all looks promising.
But Shakespeare does not end the story there. Instead, he provides an additional 190 lines that manage to replay the major action of taming a “froward” woman. In the final scene, Petruchio once again engages in his typical _modus operandi_, a series of tests couched in the imperative mode:

Say I command her come to me.  
(5.2.96)

Go fetch them [the other woman] hither. If they deny to come,  
Swinge me them soundly forth unto their husbands.  
Away, I say, and bring them hither straight.  
(5.2.103–05)

Katherine, that cap of yours becomes you not.  
Off with that bable, throw it under-foot.  
(5.2.121–22)

Katherine, I charge thee tell these headstrong women  
What duty they do owe their lords and husbands.  
(5.2.130–31)

Come on, and kiss me, Kate.  
(5.2.180)

Moreover, these tests occur in the context of a wager. Since the whole play has been in some sense a wager—a betting to see if anyone could or would marry Kate—this final gamble to determine who has married the “veriest shrew of all” (5.2.64) reprises the entire action of the play. And while the contest is technically won by line 99 when Kate enters, and formally recognized as such at line 112, Petruchio is not yet ready to call it a day. The show goes on as he milks his triumph for all its worth in his continued tests of Kate’s obedience. There is something hyperbolically extravagant about this wager, a point accentuated by Baptista’s raising the winnings from one hundred crowns to twenty thousand (5.2.112–113). To this financial extravagance, we may add the extended, almost never-ending contest itself, and the rather exaggerated overkill of Kate’s final speech; all of which captures the hyperbolic strain that permeates the play, most notably in the discourse and conduct of Petruchio and Kate.⁵

The banquet scene shows the essential qualities of the two leading characters in microcosm. We see both Petruchio’s zest for living and wiving it well in Padua, and Kate’s independent spiritedness, most visibly apparent in her conduct toward the other women. As she does in the fourth act, Kate acquiesces to each of Petruchio’s commands, not in any meek or docile manner but in energetic, confident, and strong fashion. Although her final speech articulates the Renaissance doctrine of order and the orthodox view of marriage, Kate
appears dominant rather than subordinate. Given the chance to exercise her tongue, she makes the most of this new-found opportunity; her speech, filled with imperative force, is the longest in the play. No one shuts her up until she is ready to be silent.

The finale also recapitulates patterns of thought and imagery. For example, competition—whether it be of husband versus wife, suitor versus suitor, or bride versus bride—runs throughout the play from the induction where the vying is among animals (Ind.1.16-29) to the last scene where the competition is to determine who has won the best wife. Petruchio’s talk of hawks and hounds (5.2.72), along with similar references in lines 52-56, continues the hunt imagery first introduced in the Induction and then reiterated in Petruchio’s second soliloquy (4.1.188-196). The play’s commercial motif pervades the banquet scene in references to crowns (5.2.70, 71, 113), marks (35), losses (113), dowries (114), cost (128), payment (154), and “assurance”:

Petruchio: Well, I say no; and therefore for assurance
Let’s each one send unto his wife
And he whose wife is most obedient,
To come at first when he doth send for her,
Shall win the wager which we will propose.

(5.2.65-69)

Iterative words like “shrew,” “froward,” “duty,” and “obedient” reverberate throughout the last scene. Finally, there is the pattern of changing places, roles, and identities. It began with the trick played on Christopher Sly. It continued through Tranio’s disguise as Lucentio, the substitution of a new couple for the abruptly departed new bride and groom in Act III (Berry 62), Petruchio’s becoming a “shrew” in order to “kill Kate in her own humor” (4.1.180), the mistaking of a false Vincentio for the true, and the trompe l’oeil that took the sun for the moon and an old man for a “budding virgin” (4.5.37). The pattern culminates in the major inversion of Kate and Bianca, when the supposed shrew exchanges places with the supposed ideal woman. Nowhere is exchange or inversion more succinctly summed up than in Baptista’s promise of a new dowry for Kate: “Another dowry to another daughter, / For she is chang’d, as she had never been” (5.2.114-15).

Early in the play, Tranio provides the prototypical line for the main action: “Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends” (1.2.271-275). There is much mighty striving in The Taming of the Shrew—physical, mental, and verbal. The commands “to her Kate” and “to her Widow” (5.2.33-34), uttered with gusto in the last scene, capture the farcical pugnacity informing the play’s plot, characterization, and thought. But there is also much eating and drinking, activities that suggest a social truce, a communal accord. The concluding scene, which brings together all the characters except the tailor and the haberdasher (and those of
the Induction), depicts both striving and feasting along with the emotional states associated with such conduct, tension and amiability. In doing so, it manages to reiterate words, phrases, motifs, and characteristic behavior. Through its series of tests and imperatives, its hyperbolic vein, and its competitive, wagering spirit, the conclusion captures the energy and dynamism of the play’s rhythm. In short, it reprises the whole process of the taming of a shrew.

By the end of the fourth act of Love’s Labor’s Lost, what action there is in the play is virtually over. The young men, having been found out, are willing to ring the death knell for their academy. They intend to go wooing in an atmosphere of “revels, dances, masks, and merry hours” (4.3.376). The final scene becomes one long interlude of merry pastime—wooing games, wit combats, and two theatrical presentations (the Masque of the Muscovites and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies). As C. L. Barber noted in his seminal study of Shakespearean comedy, the play is filled with a sense of game:

What is striking about Love’s Labor’s Lost is how little Shakespeare used exciting action, story, or conflict, how far he went in the direction of making the piece a set exhibition of pastimes and games. ... Shakespeare is presenting a series of wooing games, not a story. Fours and eights are treated as in ballet, the action consisting not so much in what individuals do as in what the group does, its patterned movement. (89)

This spirit of game and festivity is crystallized in the final scene, beginning at line twenty-five where we find a compositional metaphor for the entire play, the tennis match: “Well bandied both, a set of wit well played.” There follow references to cards (67), hunting (69), dice (233 and 326), backgammon (462), pastimes and pleasant game (360), and Christmas comedy (462). Games and sports, as Barber’s statement indicates, are marked by a principle of patterning that penetrates to the heart of the play’s very rhythm. This patterning results from the abundance of verbal schematization and the numerous symmetrical pairings of characters, repeated situations, and stylized encounters, all of which suggest artifice and formality rather than naturalness and spontaneity. The play is extremely repetitive, to the point of rigid symmetry, appearing—as Margreta de Grazia has so aptly noted—“syndronomic.”

The final scene is no exception. In it, we find four sets of wit combats in which each courtier is paired with the wrong lady (220–261). In each case, the gentleman is verbally dominated by the woman. Boyet, as mediator (178–194), personifies the repetitive principle when he goes back and forth between Rosalind on one hand and the King and Berowne on the other, repeating their words verbatim until he arbitrarily stops (194). The second instance of quadruple
forswearing in the play is noted by the ladies in serial fashion (281-285). We find not one theatrical production but two, and at the conclusion, not one song but two. Rhyme and schemes of repetition flourish. In their reiteration of phrases, lines like the following underscore the pattern of symmetrical repetition:

Boyet: Prepare, madam, prepare!
Arm, wenches, arm! . . . (81–82)
Princess: But what, but what, come they to visit us?
Boyet: They do, they do; and are apparell’d thus,
(119–120)
Boyet: They will, they will, God knows, (290)
Princess: How blow? How blow? speak to be understood.
(294)

Rosalind succinctly sums up the pattern when she says, “We four indeed confronted were with four” (367).

A major pattern informing the play (and one, to the best of my knowledge, noted elsewhere) is that of separation and departure. It is first introduced in the opening scene when Berowne appears, at least for a while, as an outsider: “Well, sit you out; go home, Berowne, adieu” (1.1.110). It is echoed in the second act when the ladies speak of completing their task quickly and then returning to France (2.1.109–10). They never entertain the possibility of an extended stay in Navarre, let alone the thought of any permanent union with the men in the future (2.1.112). Throughout this scene we find passages showing alienation rather than détente: the confrontation of the Princess with the King (90–113 and 128–178), that of Katherine with Berowne (114–127), and that of Rosalind with Berowne (180–193). All three encounters end abruptly with sudden departures, the last two standing upon no ceremony whatsoever (127 and 193). Thus, the only meeting of the ladies and gentlemen before the final one in the last scene shows them at odds with each other. By the end of Act Two, scene one, there is a stalemate, each side waiting until the next day when the necessary documents will be delivered. At the end of the play there will again be a stalemate, each man being forced to wait until a year has passed before challenging the ladies anew. When the women reappear in the fourth act, they repeat their plan to depart for home: “On Saturday we will return to France” (4.1.6). Holofernes accents this pattern of quick departure and going off in different directions when he says, “Away, the gentle are at their game, and we will to our recreation” (4.2.165–66). The King’s words at the end of Act Four: “Away, away no time shall be omitted” (4.3.378), along with those of Holofernes at the end of the penultimate scene: “Most dull, honest Dull! to our sport; away!” (5.1.155), not only continue the pattern of quick exiting but constitute a prologue of sorts for the concluding scene.

In Act Five, scene two, the sense of (what we might call) “awaying” is most
prominent, not only in the frequency of the word “away” itself, but also in the rapid proliferation of other words and passages that either denote or connote departure or division. A listing of such references follows: depart (1, 156), go (60, 280, 478, 509, 625, 794), cross (138), divorce (150), gone (174, 182, 183, 311, 671, 672), part (57, 220, 249, 811), adieu(s) (227, 234, 241, 265), farewell (264, 736), break off (261), withdraw (308), leave (418, 872, 882), take away (572), and stand aside (587). To these we may add the Princess’s “whip to our tents” (309) and “liberal opposition of our spirits” (733), along with Berowne’s “I will not have to do with you” (428) and “Neither of either; I remit both twain” (459). Not once but several times in the last scene does Shakespeare show that the matches desired by the men do not seem to be in the cards. Separation rather than togetherness is constantly stressed. When Mercade appears with his grim tidings, the Princess’s response is directly opposed by the King’s. Where one insists on departing for home, the other insensitively urges remaining in Navarre. The required tasks or penances which will separate the ladies and gentlemen for a year soon follow. After the rigidly juxtaposed seasonal songs, reminiscent of medieval débat, Armado pointedly verbalizes this pattern of parting: “You that way; we this way” (931). Apartness, separation, and alienation, instead of fusion, harmony, and togetherness, have enjoyed more than adequate preparation. Shakespeare has not suddenly pulled the rug out from under the gentlemen or, for that matter, the audience. The signposts have been there all along, only to be magnified and multiplied in the concluding scene.

As in The Taming of the Shrew, all the main characters are present for the grand finale and conform to the self-image projected in earlier scenes. Berowne, from the beginning, has functioned, at least in part, as a choric figure pointing up the foolishness of the academy. So in the last scene he chorically comments on the men’s verbal folly of:

\[
\text{Taffata phrases, silken terms precise,} \\
\text{Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affection,} \\
\text{Figures pedantical . . . .} \\
\text{(406-408)}
\]

At the end of the play, it is he who notes the atypicality of the conclusion: “Our wooing doth not end like an old play: / Jack hath not Gill” (874). Boyet repeats his role as middle-man (174–194), a role in which he has had much practice (2.1.81–88, 194–214). The ladies remain as witty and sharp as ever, and the men as a group are as obtuse and superficial as they have always been. Thinking that one can secure “a world-without-end bargain” in a matter of moments—and right on the heels of a death announcement—is both foolish and gauche.

Key patterns of imagery and topics of thought are also reiterated. The martial imagery of Boyet (261) in its reference to arrows and bullets is most
appropriate since the play depicts not merely a battle of the sexes but of wits. In such a battle, words are the weapons and must be rapier sharp. Boyet’s words recall the Princess’s talk of “civil war” (2.1.225-26) and the battle cries of the King and Berowne (4.3.363-66). The word “roes” (309) harks back to the hunt episode in the fourth act. The witty banter of the women (11-20) and the verbal skirmish of Rosalind, Berowne, and the King (200-06) replay the light/dark imagery so prominent in the opening scene. From the beginning, in the concept of “devouring Time” (1.1.4) and in words like “tombs” and “death,” there has been an underlying serious strain; the whole point of the academy, after all, is to allow the young men a way of achieving immortality. The divertissement marking the end of the play brings on the figure of death in the person of Mercade and resounds with sobering concepts and percepts: gallows (12), melancholy (14), death (146, 810, 815, and 855), butcher (255), sickness (280), shrouds (479), plague(s) (394, 421), grief(s) (752, 753), lamentation (809), groans (864), mourning (744, 808), and hospital (871).

The play’s concern with fame and immortality is graphically parodied in the young men’s response to the “Pageant of the Nine Worthies.” This concern with fame points up a temporal motif that runs through Love’s Labor’s Lost. Time is recognized as limited and quantifiable on one hand, and as eternal and immeasurable on the other. In the first four acts, the characters speak of tomorrow (2.1.165), a week (1.1301), a month (1.1.302), three days (1.2.129), and three years (1.1.16, 24, 35, 52, 115, 130). But they also speak of legendary figures who have achieved immortality, and of the seasons (1.1.99-107). So too in the final scene, we find mention of a clearly demarcated temporal span of one year (eight times in the eighty lines from 797-877) as well as of a more rhythmically expansive time in “world-without-end bargains” (789) and the concluding seasonal songs.

A motif of failure or labors lost is a strong undercurrent in the comedy. Berowne, in his disparagement of the academy, first articulates it. Then, we hear of the violation by Costard and Jacquenetta. The first meeting between the gentlemen and the ladies does not bode well for future relations. Misdelivered letters indicate labors gone awry. The final scene gives more of the same, only on a larger scale; in fact, the last scene is a prolonged series of labors lost or “thwarted expectations” (Carroll 81): the Masque of the Muscovites, the catastrophic Pageant of the Nine Worthies, and the courtiers’ ultimate failure to secure the ladies in marriage. The Princess calls attention to this pervasive pattern of failure when she says: “Their form confounded makes most form in mirth, / When great things laboring perish in their birth” (520-21).

Finally, if the play is a “feast of words,” as Ralph Berry notes in his claim that “words compose the central symbol of LLL” (73), then the last scene is quite fittingly word conscious. This is evident in Berowne’s speech on “taffata phrases” and “russet Yea’s,” and in the ladies’ preoccupation with linguistic precision (188-190, 195-97, 234, 321). Moreover, the very words that are
iterative in the scene—"wit," "mock(s) (d) (ing)," "mocker," "mockery," "challenge," and "word" itself—sum up the major concerns of the play as a whole. Formality, artifice, stylization, symmetry, and repetition are at the center of Love's Labor's Lost and they are "choreographed" most appropriately in the final scene. In reminding us of the vows that marked the beginning—only now to be taken more seriously—and in having the women urge the gentlemen to come and challenge them again in the future, Act Five, scene two reiterates the play's mythos, or perhaps I should say its dianoia (i.e., the element of thought or what Aristotle in his Poetics describes as "the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion" (232). Like the comedy which it ends, the scene is largely an interplay of word and idea, not event and action.

Like the final movement of a symphony, which repeats earlier themes, the endings in the texts under discussion recall what has gone before. Each concluding scene dynamically synthesizes the individual elements that make up its respective play, with verbal echoes, reprisals of action, and restated ideas coming together to yield a miniature of the whole. Helen Gardner has said, "In Shakespeare's four great tragedies, when his imagination was working at its highest pitch, Shakespeare relates his beginnings to his ends particularly closely" (48). It would seem that in his early years Shakespeare was capable of doing the same thing. Contrary to James Siemon's claim, the ending of MV is not unique; nor is it the first in Shakespeare's canon to make use of the final scene as both divertissement and microcosm. What comes to fruition in the earlier MND was well anticipated in Shrew and LLL. In all three, Shakespeare's sense of an ending shows not as lacking of effort but an outpouring that vies with his distinguished opening scenes in providing a key to each play's form. The endings reveal a sustained comprehension of design—no small talent, especially for a style that had not yet reached maturity. Look again, Dr. Johnson, wherever you are!

NOTES

1. By "formal" I mean the Aristotelian principle of uniqueness that shapes and informs matter and is thus responsible for the "whatness" of the object in question; for example, "the Midsummer Night's Dreamness" of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Plot structure, however, deals specifically with the process of tying and untying dramatic knots of complication. Form is inclusive of but not limited to such a process. Formal integrity, then, is not any mechanical sum of parts but a dynamic synthesis that yields the totality to which we respond.

2. The Riverside Shakespeare. All subsequent references to the plays will be from this edition.

3. The term is Harry Levin's. At a 1980 Folger Institute seminar, Professor Levin referred to the final scene in LLL as divertissement.

4. As Anne Barton states, "In terms of plot, this fifth act is superfluous. Almost all the business of the comedy has been concluded at the end of Act IV" (219).
5. For a fuller treatment of this hyperbolic mode, see Ralph Berry (63–71).

6. The verb “assure” and the noun “assurance” occur at several points in the play, and always in the context of betting, bargaining, and vying for supremacy. See, for example, 2.1.123, 343, 345, 379, 387, and 396.

7. The following figures are taken from the Spevack Concordance. In this and subsequent notes, wherever two numbers are indicated, the first refers to the frequency of occurrence in the play as a whole; the second, to the frequency in the last scene; shrew (8, 2), froward (8, 4), duty (16, 7), obedience/obedient (8, 5).

8. The word “eat” (and by extension its variant “eaten”) occurs eleven times in the play; “feast” and “drink/drinking” occur six times each. In no other comedy do the words “eat” and “feast” appear as often. The comedy that leads in its references to drinking is Twelfth Night (fifteen times).

9. Harry Levin has suggested that Act Four, scene three is the denouement, the final act serving as a kind of epilogue (Folger Institute Seminar, 1980).


11. The word “away” occurs twenty-seven times in the play as a whole, eleven times in the last scene. Only Measure for Measure and All’s Well That Ends Well, two problem or dark comedies, have a higher total frequency of twenty-eight and twenty-nine respectively. Both, however, fall short of the eleven occurrences in the final scene of LLL, each having only nine. A survey of the Concordance’s entries for a small sampling of words—away, exit, part, leave (as in taking one’s leave), depart, farewell, adieu, and go/gone—shows that in no other comedy does the final scene reverberate with so many references to departure as does the conclusion to LLL. The total figure for the words listed above is forty; The Comedy of Errors has the next highest total (eighteen), followed by The Merchant of Venice (sixteen) and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (fourteen).

12. William Carroll believes that LLL “can profitably be read as a debate on the right uses of rhetoric, poetry, and the imagination; extraordinarily self-conscious, the play ultimately exemplifies and embodies, in the final songs, what has only been discussed before. The term ‘debate’ is justified by Shakespeare’s use of the medieval conflictus between Spring and Winter at the end, but it defines a principle of structure in the play as well” (8). Where Carroll has incisively focused on the microcosmic quality of the final songs, I have chosen instead to deal with the final scene as a totality.

13. The actual figures are as follows: wit (32, 11), mock/s’d/ing (16, 15), challenge (7, 6), and word/s (48, 18). The words “mocker” and “mockery” occur once and only in the final scene.

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A Moral Voice for the Restoration Lady: A Comparative View of Allestree and Vives

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Following the civil strife of the 1640s and the Interregnum of the 1650s, Anglican England felt the necessity of spiritual housecleaning to tighten its hold on the godly and to ferret out dissenting influences. Evidence of renewed authoritarianism is seen in Richard Allestree's early appointment in the 1660s as a lecturer for the city of Oxford, where his task was to establish the faith and to root out schismatical opinions propagated by "false" teachers of the Interregnum. In 1662 Charles was to pass measures, albeit reluctantly, requiring strict conformity concerning practices in the church not unlike those enforced by Laud. The surplice and the organ re-entered the church at Oxford and adherence to a stricter prayer book was a requisite for a preacher's position in the church. Further, the two thousand "schismatics" who were ejected at this time were, in 1665, forbidden to come within five miles of their former parishes. As Nicholas Jose has stated in his recent book on "ideas" of the Restoration,

The backlash against the rule of the saints, and even against the moderate presbyterians who, despite their loyalism, were suspiciously regarded as instigators of the rebellion, was triumphant, forceful and authoritarian . . . (21).

Important as a support to returning "order" was a popular new devotional treatise by Allestree setting out a complete rule for one's conduct, a treatise which had appeared in 1658 under the title The Whole Duty of Man. This tract was the parent of six anonymous treatises intended to return the age of Charles to a pre-war morality. The seven titles indicate something of the tracts' concerns: The Whole Duty of Man (1658), The Gentleman's Calling (1660), The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety (1667), The Ladies Calling (1673),
The Government of the Tongue (1674), The Art of Contentment (1675), and The Lively Oracles or the Christian's Birthright (1678). In all except The Causes of Decay and The Art of Contentment (which are religious tracts rather than conduct books), Allestree pursues ideal deportment for the “correct” gentleman and the “pious” lady. The aim of the moral or didactic conduct book was to be revived and to flourish again, producing advice not unlike that delivered to the Restoration Englishman’s progenitors for generations and to the patristic, Biblical, and classical world before that.

In 1673 John Fell, the editor for all seven of The Whole Duty tracts, expressed jubilation on acquiring a manuscript, The Ladies Calling, which he correctly saw as a new combatant, not for the feminists who had recently become very visible in print but for traditional Christian values. The new tract would provide practical rules for a moral woman’s conduct in a Christian community. Allestree, himself, believed this book for women was closely allied to his other tracts on conduct, and if he saw the woman as a weaker vessel than the man, he was unaware that it was an illogical bias. He explains he is writing a treatise addressed to women not only because their special needs require it but also because he feels it to be “Civility to their humor.” That is, as he rather ungraciously concludes, “Ladies are used to think the newness of any thing a considerable Addition to its Value . . .” (The Ladies Calling, 1). By now fifteen years had passed since The Whole Duty of Man had appeared and thirteen since his last conduct book, The Gentleman’s Calling, had been published. In the opening lines of the new tract, Allestree claims that the kinship of The Ladies Calling to The Gentleman’s Calling is close. In fact, he declares that for the most part a new title and a few “razures” in The Gentleman’s Calling would save him the “labor of a new Book” (LC 1).

The sameness that Allestree sees in the books reflects two of his attitudes: one, that there is a basic equality of the sexes regarding spiritual and moral matters, and two, that the course of human history shows that men and women have learned and relearned the same lessons. Regarding this point, Joanna Martindale says of some germane sixteenth-century writers, “The assumption that human nature remains the same, so that the lessons of history are applicable to the present was shared by Machiavelli, Sir Thomas Elyot and the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives” (37). A summary statement of the two “callings” tracts, however, shows that the author clearly differentiates the spheres of influence nature has designed for each sex. The Ladies Calling wishes women to pride themselves for their sense of divine worth and not in earthly titles or earthly beauty. Their calling is essentially a religious matter. To this end, the book is divided into two parts, the first addressing the issues in five sections on a woman’s need to be modest, meek, compassionate, affable, and pious—virtues for which Allestree believes a woman is peculiarly suited by nature and by God’s will. The second part of the book develops these and other proper rules of conduct for women in life’s three conditions ordained to
woman as a virgin, wife, and widow. The Gentleman's Calling, on the other hand, sees men in a more active arena where their responsibilities are broader and spiritually more perilous.¹

The Ladies Calling largely avoids the war of the sexes which had gained special attention in England during the last three decades of the century. Instead, the tract is able to maintain its balance principally through its emphasis on piety and the importance it places upon divine and natural law. Moreover, there is a timeless quality in its theme which deals with the rules for human conduct that remain surprisingly like those of many tracts and moral treatises from the time of Juan Luis Vives and earlier. Linda Woodbridge's scholarly assessment of some writers on women's deportment is equally true of Allestree. She believes that "the feminist tendencies" of early humanists "Agrippa, Castiglione, Erasmus, More, Colet, Vives, and others . . . has been overestimated . . ." (16). Certainly, The Ladies Calling does not descend into the fray of battle with tracts as some contemporary ones do whose titles mark the feminist controversy—Female Preeminence, or the Dignity of That Sex (1670), A Friendly Apology in Behalf of the Woman's Excellency (1674), The Woman as Good as the Man: or the Equality of Both Sexes (1696).² And certainly Allestree, and most of his contemporaries, would have been horrified had they been able to look forward in history to a writer as bold as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1726) who could satirize Dean Swift's scatological The Lady's Dressing Room, producing poetic lines as vigorously obscene as Swift himself had been able to devise. It is true that one can discern defensive postures regarding established norms for women both in Vives' rather enlightened representative sixteenth century tract, Instruction of a Christian Woman, and in Allestree's important conservative Restorative tract, The Ladies Calling. But neither is belligerently reactionary toward the gradually encroaching social liberties advocated in print and practiced at court and among the gentility in the sixteenth as well as the seventeenth centuries.

Like the very strong influence of the pietistic Whole Duty series on the Restoration period, Vives' Christian piety and stirring humanism made a mark on the sixteenth century that had an apparent influence in practical rules of conduct and deportment for the Christian family, regardless of denominational antagonism. From 1514, when Vives took a "decisive turn toward humanism" (Noreña, 43), and again in 1519, in his treatise against the sophistical dialectics of scholasticism which elicited admiring remarks from Erasmus and More, Vives' career established him as an important humanist educator and innovative and pious Christian scholar. He was to become, in fact, one of "the most read Humanist[s] of Northern Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century" (Noreña, 1). That his theories of education would be read so broadly must have pleased Vives, for he writes in De Tradendis Disciplinis (1531), that "we must transfer our solicitude to the people . . ." (278).

Vives' dedication to Henry VIII of his Commentaries on the Civitas Dei in
1522 received a warm and flattering response from Henry and an invitation from Cardinal Wolsey to come to London. Having completed De Institutione Foeminae Christianae, commissioned by Catherine, Vives arrived in London in 1523, received royal pensions from the king and queen, an LL.D. and a reader-and lectureship from Oxford (besides living quarters at Oxford), the latter appointments resulting partly from Wolsey's influence. Besides these tangible receipts for his scholarly activities, Vives found a place in the royal household as tutor to Princess Mary. The five years that marked all of these favorable circumstances in England were to be, of course, undone by his involvement in Catherine's marital trials in the stormy divorce proceedings of the royal couple in 1528.

The pious humanism of Instruction was stimulated by the pious queen, by Vives' own well-known piety, and by the liberal humanist curriculum that Thomas More administered to the family of his household. The classical training of Margaret, particularly in languages, was innovatively broad for the times, so innovative for women that Retha M. Warnicke concludes that More's program was unique; such training was to be narrowed or ignored by Vives and by Protestant factions (133, 200). Warnicke writes, "Despite his [Vives'] suggestion that some women might advance more quickly than some men, Vives clearly did not advocate an equal education for both sexes" (35).

In classifying Vives' particular kind of influence, Carlos G. Noreña identifies Vives' piety in a way that helps account for a similarity of sentiment that this study will investigate in Allestree's Restoration piety. Noreña believes that Vives cannot be comfortably classified into any of the traditional groupings for sixteenth century educators. Rather than belonging to the "stylists," the "scholars" or the "verbal realists," Noreña concludes Vives is appropriately classified a "moralistic Humanist": "There is little doubt that the ethical education of Vives' academy stressed Christian ideals and piety" (179-180). In his theories on education, Vives writes that every art must follow rules that seek predetermined ends; otherwise there is no art. Even without such learning, Vives makes it clear that man can find happiness in perfecting his nature—and since piety is the only way of perfecting man . . . piety is of all things the one thing necessary" (*Disciplinis*, 18).

It is from such men as Vives, as learned educator and pious and ethical Christian, that continuing conservative conventions dominate conduct literature and appear in a garb only slightly changed for the Restoration. Just how morally derivative *The Ladies Calling* is, how much a part of a long tradition it is, can be properly appreciated by observing the striking number of parallels which exist between it and Vives' *Instruction*, first published in 1523. The immediate occasion for Vives' book was to supply Catherine of Aragon, to whom he dedicated his book, with instructions for herself and Princess Mary on women's deportment. A larger audience is implied in the title, and the book went through many editions being translated into English in 1529 by Richard Hyrede
and reviewed approvingly by Thomas More. It is likely that Allestree—as a moral philosopher, a clergyman, and a writer of conduct books—would have been acquainted with Vives’ book, since the tract remained more or less accessible into the eighteenth century. That this tract was read much in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is attested to by the number of editions of Hyrde’s translations. Vives’ modern editor states that “we see that Vives was held in high recognition, contemporaneously by More and Erasmus; in the 17th century by Andreas Schott; in the 18th by Morhof . . .”

Yet Allestree probably does not draw specifically from the early tract because he does not mention Vives as, for instance, does Peacham in his Complete Gentleman, who besides naming Vives lists Erasmus, Elyot, Ascham, and others. Moreover, Allestree generally does cite his sources specifically; and like many contemporary tract writers, he draws copiously from a broad range of authorities. It is all the more surprising, then, that he never makes an overt reference to Vives, whose influence is apparent. It is possible that Allestree’s Catholic antagonism would keep him from citing Vives by name. In fact, Allestree warns unwary women away from “Popery”; for if they are too confident of their ability to resist “every teacher with a strong mind,” they will find themselves, as some have, in the “midst of Samaria”—that is, in the very “Religion from which alone they design’d to fly” (LC 13). As will be seen later in a closer comparison of Vives and Allestree, Allestree, the staunch Reformationist, seems to contradict his fear of Catholics when he laments that the Reformation has dissolved nunneries for women whose chaste white virginity deserves a holy vocation. Whatever his real feelings may be, Allestree’s tract is filled with Vives-like advice and with common sources from which the writers draw. What the following parallels between Allestree and Vives will show is that it is appropriate to see a close association between books as late as Allestree’s in the Restoration period with a moral humanist lineage exemplified in Vives of the previous century.

A tract like The Ladies Calling, then, is not an exclusively seventeenth-century phenomenon. Instead, it reflects the fondness of an age for doctrines which are colored by an inherited view of society. Because of the conservative quality of the rules and ethical code for the gentlewoman in a stratified society that feared it had perhaps lost its hierarchical sense of order during a period of civil war, this tract and its immediate predecessors were written to fill a pressing social need, thereby receiving popular acclaim during their own day. The highlights taken from The Ladies Calling and the older Instruction demonstrate an interestingly similar code spanning a century and a half, as well as illustrate the honor that a conservative Restoration writer continued to accord the classic-patristic world.

In the prefaces of the respective tracts, Allestree and Vives introduce themselves by promising not to cite many authorities from antiquity—for such is, Allestree says, “too high a strain” for ladies and for the subject under
consideration. Rather than be scholarly, the respective writers promise to
deliver practical advice. Both men do discuss practical matters, but not
without citing, contrary to their promises, many classical and religious authorities—
Vives more copiously than Allestree. Both list women from classical times who
have been as virtuously good as they have been learned. Vives' list also includes
women from early church history and from contemporary times; but Allestree,
who mentions these periods, says he will restrict his list to classical times. After
high encomiums to the virtues of womanhood, both retreat to place woman in
her accepted role—inferior to and dependent upon man as the head, intellec
tually and socially (Vives, C2r-C5r; LC, preface).

As the general matrix for conduct-courtesy literature for women, the tri-
partite organization which is used by Vives and adopted by Allestree in the sec-
ond part of his tract is traditional; thus both Allestree's and Vives' tracts
explain that it is appropriate to consider a woman's life under the three states
which she may experience (after Paul and Tertullian) as a virgin, a wife, and a
widow. Both bestow lavish praise on those who prefer a virgin state. In fact,
Noreña believes the convent of Syon, which he calls "a focal point of humanist
education for women," to be an important influence on Vives (87). However, if
Vives approved of the houses established for women, he is cautious about their
administration. As he says in Instruction, "it neither becommeth a woman to
rule a Schoole nor to live amongst men" (Vives C6r).12 As mentioned earlier,
Allestree finds the convent an attractive stronghold for chaste virgins; nostalgi-
cally he wishes that "those . . . with[in] the Reformation [had chosen] rather
to rectify and regulate, than abolish them" (LC 57). But Allestree ends by con-
ceding that a personal rather than an ecclesiastic vow is less presumptuous.

The duties outlined for the three estates of women (except for satirical por-
traits which Allestree cannot resist creating occasionally) are orthodox and
gravely considered. In the first estate as a virgin, education for the young girl,
fixed by Aristotle and other classic authorities, begins at age seven. Both Vives
and Allestree consider favorably debates that argue for a younger age, both
recommending crafts and other household training as relief from diligent read-
ing. Neither finds it important for women to continue formal training too long
aside from the mother's tutoring (Vives, B4r; LC, 77). Both agree, Allestree
somewhat reluctantly, that women's thoughts are prone to be unstable or facile
(Vives B5r; LC 14, 33). In the humanistic tradition, Allestree recommends that
women cannot do better than to live the dictate of a "heathen moralist, 'Revere
thyself.'" Allestree concludes, "and 'twas very wholsome council . . . ." (LC 9).
But after almost surcharging women with their excellencies, Allestree contra-
dicts what he seems to have believed regarding women's ability to learn by add-
ing that he will not oppose a "received opinion" that women's "intellects . . .
are below men." Finally, in a peculiar defense of women's intellectual endow-
ment, he sounds like the exasperated male moralist: "Women's natural imbecil-
ity . . . renders then liable to seducement . . . " but, he adds, not because
“so many of that sex” have “natural defect” but because they are simply “undiscerning,” having “loose notions” of “Religion” (LC 14). Vives, too, says “womans thought is swift and for the most part unstable,” adding that it is helpful to alternate reading with household work (Vives B5r).

Regarding managerial tasks, Vives recommends that young girls, besides developing the fine arts, should also work flax and wool and practice cookery. Drawing these together, Allestree advocates that young ladies employ themselves in “needlework, language, and music” (Vives B6r; LC 60). Vives is unenthusiastic about music, acknowledging comically in his Latin dialogues for students that he has the voice of a goose, not a swan (Dialogues 196). Both recommend training in the kitchen: Allestree attacks culinary concoctions that lead to hedonistic appetites and Vives similarly worries about “slubbing and excesse in meates” and in other “glotony” (Vives B 7v). As a general position, both insist the management of the house should not be below the fine lady.

Both writers exhibit a staunchly moral and male-oriented reaction to the young virgins’ grooming habits and associated behavior. Earlier, in The Whole Duty, Allestree establishes his philosophic base by aggressively attacking women’s as well as men’s generic pride: “How much does the whiteness of the Lilly, and the redness of the Rose exceed the white and red of the fairest face? What a multitude of creatures is there, that far surpas man in strength and swiftness?” 13 “A man’s judgment of himself,” says Allestree, “is of all others the least to be trusted” (WDM 54). Moreover, if a young woman goes to great length to enhance her physical appearance, she will cause the poor to envy and “add sin to misery.” “Nay farther,” says Allestree sentimentally, “when a poor wretch shall look upon one of these gay creatures, and see that any one of the baubles, the loosest appendage of her dress, a fan, and busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his bowels; will he not . . . repine at the unequal distribution of Providence?” (WDM 21). Linking beauty aids with compassion, Allestree remarks that a lady who washes her face clean with tears should not suppose it prepared for “paint and fucus.”14 And as he further says elsewhere, women who busy themselves with healing the sick with “unguents and balsoms” cause a better smell to go up to “God’s nostrils than do women who wear the costliest of perfumes.” Vives, citing Plautus, agrees that “a woman ever smelleth best when shee smelleth of nothing.”15 Vives also complains that the woman with rich adornments robs from the poor. Perhaps recalling More’s Utopia, Vives says, “thou carry golde about thy necke . . . when thou denyest a halfpeny unto them that have need & be an hungred . . .” (Vives F 6r).

More subtly, Vives and Allestree believe (as does Bacon, in his essay, “Of Beauty”) that a woman’s attractiveness is not in “favor” (features) nor in a spirited or animated behavior, but rather, as Bacon phrases it, in “decent and gracious motion.”16 Such beauty has little to do with physical appearance but is inward virtue. Allestree ascribes Bacon’s concept to Zeno. On a more practical
note of beauty in dress, both Vives and Allestree, naming Tertullian and the apostles as sources for their comments, desire that women wear proper clothing. As Allestree says, not “gaudy” finery as an “Idol’s” or, at the other extreme as Vives pronounces, not “sluttish and slubbered”; nor should they be too “bare necked” nor “too exceedingly covered.” Both warn that ostentatiousness or peculiarity of dress may cost a virgin a proper marriage (Vives F6r, G3r, M8r; LC 61–63). Allestree adds she must not “render herself less amiable than Nature has made her.” 17

Both men discuss the necessity of a chaperone when the woman, beautiful inwardly and outwardly, leaves her home to go visiting. Vives, sorry she should go abroad at all, recommends some “sad woman,” if not the mother. Allestree also recommends a “mother, or some other prudent Person,” but admits that the lady who has to go abroad with her mother in “this age” is considered to be “with her Jailor” (Vives L4r; LC 63).

Regarding the second estate wherein advice is delivered to a wife, Allestree and Vives believe the young woman should have little to say about marriage arrangements. Vives apparently represents a standard position when he writes that a maid shouldn’t talk when her “father and mother bee in communication about her marriage: but to leave all that care and charge wholly unto them” (Vives M2r). Such acquiescence is, Allestree writes, “the right of the parent,” the child’s obedience bringing the “Benediction” of “God” and “Parents” (LC 62–65). Allestree, writing earlier in the *Whole Duty of Man*, deals at some length with the obtaining of a fair dowry in order that the children’s marriage state be “comfortable.” He also observes scrupulous care be taken that family blood lines not be “interbred” (WDM 114). There is no reference to “love” in proposed marriage contracts, and Allestree mentions “mutual affection” 18 so cursorily that one may assume that lack of hostility between the contracted parties is adequate as a starting point.

Once married, however, the lady’s duty to her husband is very clear. Her obedience to him, essentially a Pauline enjoinder, corresponds to a man’s duty to God or a citizen’s duty to the King. The theme of both moralists is that a wife must be incredibly patient and even subservient. As Allestree says, she must be friendly and kind in conversation. She must avoid “sullenness and harshness, all brawling and unquietness.” When the man is “fractious,” her special sweetness and patience are to turn his anger. As Vives says, “If thy husband be foule, yet love his heart and mind . . .” (Vives Q1r). The modern reader may feel himself shudder at Allestree’s calm conclusion that nothing must break the woman’s fortitude: for, as he says, “We have naturally some regret to see a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a Swine diverts our pity.” 19 Vives, citing the nurse’s advice to Octavia, the wife of Nero, agrees that the wife may: “Vanquish [her] cruel Husband rather with obedience” (Vives S2v). After both tracts have advised the woman to conquer her unkind husband with kindness, they both pass oblique remarks on the
“prattling” woman who tries a husband’s patience. Thus, Vives thinks the “wife of Job was left him to make his adversity more painfull.” Allestree remarks that Socrates said he tested his own patience by marrying Xanthippe, his shrewish wife; yet, continues Allestree, “until we fall to an age of Philosophers . . . twill be hard for any of our Xanthippes to find a Socrates” (LC 18). Peter Malekin points out in Liberty and Love that the injunction that was to balance power and love between husband and wife was based on two of Paul’s admonitions: “‘Wives, obey your husbands’” and “‘Husbands, love your wives.’” But, says Malekin, “the resulting compromise was often [harsh]” (151).

In the marriage relationship of wedlock, both writers deal with the question of chastity and sex, Vives more rigorously. Vives believes “generation” is less important than “fellowship.” Sexual pleasure for the woman is replaced by “shamefast” and “chast behavior.” The true wife remains worthy of “dignity” and “reverence.” Vives is, in fact, so extreme that the begetting of children would seem to be problematical. Allestree also condemns all wantonness in the marriage bed; the woman in bed is “never to admit so much as a thought or imagination, much less any parley or treaty contrary to her loialty.” Allestree delicately refrains from saying loyalty to what and, after the language does some embarrassed side-stepping, plows boldly into a discussion of adultery (Vives N4r–S7r; LC 69).

It is naturally expected that a woman be totally faithful to her husband’s bed; for the corrupt wife, admonishes Allestree, “creates that most tormenting passion of jealousie” and “it may be the thrusting in the child of the adulterer into his family, to share both in the maintenance and portions of his own children” (WDM 87). Richard Steele approvingly cites this passage and Section II “Of Wives” from The Ladies Calling with a moralist’s words of reproof for such a female who would lead a man “to defile another man’s Bed . . . a crime of the blackest dye.” Vives’ ominous portrait of a jealous husband gives practical advice to a woman in a real world. She must avoid even the appearance of compromising friendships with other wives’ husbands. If she dissembles or sends secret missives to a lover—if she is indeed unfaithful—she can expect to be discovered. She is asked to remember, in this connection, that the lion will, “teare the Lionesse if he take her in adultery” and that the cock swan kills his hen when she follows another cock. Vives says everyone has seen this; and moreover, “we have read and heard tell of manye that have slain their wives” (Vives S8v–T1v).

Recognizing the need for diversion and representing a much more liberal position than that of the Renaissance. Allestree allows young women to play at cards and dice. Quite simply, he tells the ladies that when they play, it should be “meerly to recreate [themselves], not to win money,” for gaming should not be “a calling” (LC 60). By contrast, Vives observes no mitigating circumstances and says that for a woman to play at cards and dicing is a “foule thynge” (F2r). Nonetheless, Vives’ “Dialogue 21” for young Latin students describes in detail
the rules for a card game and treats the pastime as harmless—at least for young men in an approved setting (185–197). Thomas Elyot, like Vives in his sterner moments, condemns “dyce and other games named unlefull.” Indeed, the church, as early as 1240, prohibited by statutory law the playing at dice; and in the thirteenth century, John of Salisbury named no fewer than ten games of dice that were popular but prohibited. Associated with gaming, the question of drinking is raised, and both Allestree and Vives register stern admonitions against drunkenness in women; in fact, Vives insists on “water for women, unless it upsets their stomachs” (Vives E4r; LC 6).

Even in the apparently innocent pastime of reading, the young women, married or not, are warned to be cautious, both tracts discussing in detail how subtly the reading of romances infuses a desire in the reader to emulate the lives of the heroines who subdue young gallants. Allestree’s observations anticipate the novel-reading girl as a type in Restoration plays, bringing up to date the chivalric tales which Vives objected to as reading matter for the ladies of his generation. The part of Allestree’s passage given below illustrates best the tenor of Molière’s Les Precieuses Ridicules (1659). Allestree writes:

Those amorous Passions, which ’tis their design to paint to the utmost Life, are apt to insinuate themselves into their unwary Readers, and by an unhappy inversion a copy shall produce an Original . . . . And when she has once wound her self into an Amour, those Authors are subtil Casuists for all difficult cases that may occur in it, will instruct in the necessary artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power.23

Vives says that ladies “by little and little drinkest the entisementes of that poyson unknowingly, and many times . . . reading those bookes, doe keep themselves in the thought of love.” Vives gives a list of romances that should not be read from Spain, France, and Flanders. Hyrde adds to the list by naming English romances—altogether a valuable index for ladies who wished to test their willpowers (Vives D1r). Vives’ objection is not only to wanton lust, “filth & viciousness,” but also to the irrationality of the romances, in which he found no “goodness or wit.” As he points out, one hero slays twenty or thirty, receives a hundred wounds but rises the next day strong enough to carry treasure that would fill a galley (Vives D1r).

One of the most important duties of a wife was to care for her children. And among these duties, Allestree and Vives strongly advise that infants be breast fed by the mother rather than by a wet nurse, both authors quoting Plutarch and Favorinus for authority (Vives B2r; LC 74–75). An interest in
breast feeding by the mother was widespread and not at all considered a delicate subject by writers of morality and curiosities from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, who discussed the problem candidly. Usually English moralists dealing with this topic cited classical writers, among whom Plutarch and Favorinus (from Aulus Gellius) were most popular. Looking briefly at seventeenth-century commentators, one finds usually that they think it best that the mother give suck to her own child, but that if the mother is unable, a healthy nurse should be provided. Allestree names Gellius, as does Robert Burton, to obtain Favorinus' observations secondhand on breast feeding. Allestree also cites a contemporary treatise, *The Nursery*, by the Countess of Lincoln. Apparently the moralists' concern was two-fold: that the “delicate mother,” as Allestree phrases it, was exhibiting an “unnatural attitude” simply in order to preserve her shape and that she willingly risked the moral evil to which a subservient wet nurse might subject the child (LC 74–75). More boldly vehement than any of these regarding the cultured lady’s responsibility to breast feed her child is Daniel Defoe, who, though he cites no authority, obviously is using Gellius in stating that red blood and white milk are the same except for color. From this postulate, Defoe goes on to account for the corruption which he sees in England’s best families. As Defoe so energetically phrases it, “The son of a king should suck none but a queen, the son of a gentleman should suck none but a lady” (72, 78). None of these writers, however, equals the angry moralist seen in Ben Jonson’s Juvenallian epigram that makes a blistering attack upon the lady who hides her great belly and submits even to abortion to preserve her coquetish days at court.

Individually, these writers would scarcely have sought out classical authorities if copious references to authority were not part of an English moral tradition. In observing this single current, one can better see Allestree’s part in maintaining an ancient doctrine which had become thoroughly domesticated. For his opinions on breast feeding alone, Allestree looks back to Chrysippus, Quintilian, Jerome, Plutarch, Favorinus, Marcus Aurelius, and Aulus Gellius. Most contemporary tract writers were willing to do the same.

In prescribing for the last estate of woman—her duties as a widow—Allestree ironically observes that women, though belonging to the weaker sex, commonly have “fortitude enough” to consider marriage a second time. The first adventure, if “prosperous,” should warn them away from attempting to equal the first or, if “adverse,” should more surely make her avoid entanglement “after the rod is taken off.” Vives warns that, in a second marriage, the widow “bringeth upon her children an enemy, and not a nourisher: not a father but a tirant” (Dd 5v). Therefore, widows should fix their memories on their dead husbands rather than on “cheer” from the present world and its circumstances. Allestree’s treatment, like Vives’, is vigorously rhetorical, the mood established by Allestree occasionally reminding one of Jeremy Taylor’s best passages from *Holy Dying*. In fact, Allestree appears to
contradict Marvell’s well-known lines to his mistress that love does not dwell in the tomb:

*Love is strong as death,* and therefore when it is pure and genuine cannot be extinguished by it, but burns like the Funeral-lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houses. The conjugal Love transplanted into the Grave, (as into a fine Mould) improves into Piety...  

Somewhat more sedately, Vives recommends that the aged widow should “beholde the heaven whither her minde should flit, and lift up all her sense, her thought, and all her minde unto God and prepare and applie her selfe wholy to her journey...” (Vives Bb 2v). Altogether, this section on the deportment of the widow, in both books, is the briefest of the three sections because the over-riding advice is that the widow remain a widow and keep her mind fixed upon her future in the next world. Vives, vehemently advising against second marriages, concludes his tract with stern warnings that there is great misery for the woman who takes part in such a “heretical” act. The attitude of both writers perhaps recalls some two dozen handbooks totalling more than fifty editions that were staple reading before 1600. Such books as *The Art of Dying Well, Preparation For Death, Salve for a Sicke Man, Christian Exhortation in the Agony of Death* all lay out orderly plans whereby men and women were to for-tify themselves against a graceless death through fixed meditational exercises that would exalt them if they finally could say, with a full heart, “Into thy Hands, O Father, I commend my spirit.” In fact, good Christians were to have prepared themselves all their lives for a kind of moral victory over the grave by holy living and holy dying—both emphasized by moralists.

Thus in terminating his advice to widows, Allestree strikes a pose dictated by the pious, law-centered universe of the Elizabethan order to cool the reckless spirit one associates with the Restoration period. Allestree warns the widow that attempting to contract herself in a second marriage with a socially equal partner is fraught with worldly dangers. For either she will marry a Lord with a portentous family name, who will squeeze her, “an inferior” widow, like a “spunge”—or, if she marry beneath herself socially, she will feel the disgrace of a “serviler spirit.” The seriousness of this action, as Allestree makes clear, lies in disrupting an established hierarchy of rank, which exists by natural law (LC 92).

Moreover, if the worldly course is pursued, differences in the ages of a betrothed couple might violate natural law. Allestree remarks that though “positive law” may be allayed and an old widow marry a young man, “tis indeed an inversion of seasons, a confounding the Kalender, making a mungrel month of May and December: and the conjunction proves fatal as it is
prodigious.” Gay old widows Allestree compares to “Alhallontide Springs” which will meet “Frosts,” the consequences of supposing they can distort nature.28 Allestree’s description of a frivolous grandmother presents a humorous picture of the superannuated beauty, who was to become a popular type for eighteenth-century satirists. Allestree writes:

How preposterous it is for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, such as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with spectacles, and be at masks and Dancings, when she is fit only to act the Antics? These are contradictions to Nature, the tearing off her Marks, and where she was writ fifty or sixty, to lessen (beyond the Proportion of the unjust Steward) and write sixteen. (LC 94)

Although such a course was not inevitable, Allestree appears to believe it is all too possible. Pursuing Paul’s advice, Allestree relents, grumblingly and pre-emptorily allowing that “gay widows, wandring planets,” should remarry (LC 90). Also, citing Paul’s words to the Corinthians, Vives makes a similar concession, but only under certain conditions. The widow should not wish “yong men, wanton, hot & full of play, ignorant & riotous, that can neither rule their house, nor their wife ne their selfe neither: but take an husbande something past middle age, sober, sad, and of good wit . . . (Vives Dd 8r–v).

In light of the similarities between rules of conduct in Allestree and in Vives and their classic and patristic predecessors, one can see that the popularity of The Ladies Calling made this tract a great disseminator in the Restoration age of conservative “morality.” A difference in the emphasis, of course, does exist in Vives and Allestree, partly in Allestree’s occasionally less conservative strictures—though equally pious attitude—and in his awareness of the contemporary scene. Parenthetically, it should be emphasized that this awareness does not jar him from his trust in the ancient order of stratified English society nor from a philosophy whose prime concern is obedience to a ruling deity.

One may ask, in conclusion, what The Ladies Calling had to offer its age that caused it to be so attractive to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The answer is that the Allestree book was associated—through content, reference, and editor—with The Whole Duty of Man, which had the good fortune to head the Restoration Period. And equally important, Allestree desired a resurgence of the venerable piety he associated with the preceding century. Moreover, The Whole Duty of Man and its progeny were supported by sympathetic contemporary tract writers and moralists, who were anxious for such conservative rules of deportment.

The common interests of the Ladies Calling and Instruction of a Christian
Woman lead to surprisingly similar advice. Both reassuringly (and didactically) preached a classic-Biblical doctrine that would produce a sainted woman—one who was intelligently educated especially at home by her mother, who was capable and willing to manage a household, who was beautiful and appropriate in a spiritual and temporal sense, who was serious in her reading habits, who sought judicious recreation, who was patient, loving, faithful, and even subservient toward her husband, and who would preserve the memory of a good husband and avoid the scandal too often seen in attempting to re-enter the world only to make an ill-advised remarriage. She was, in short, the perfect Christian gentlewoman, nurtured by Pauline and Patristic precepts and humanistic morality. Indeed, the sought-after perfection for the lady was to Christianity what the idealized portrait of a gentleman was to humanism—as so glowingly epitomized by Gabriel Harvey from Castiglione’s *The Courtier*. Harvey writes:

Above all things it importeth a courtier to be graceful and lovely in countenance and behavior; fine and discreet in discourse and entertainment; skillful and expert in letters and arms; active and gallant in every courtly exercise; nimble and speedy of body and mind; resolute, industrious and valorous in action; as profound and invincible in execution as possible; and withal ever generously bold, wittily pleasant, and full of life in all his sayings and doings. His apparel must be like himself, comely and handsome, fine and cleanly to avoid contempt but not gorgeous or stately to incur envy or suspicion of pride, vanity, self-love or other unperfection. Both inside and outside [he] must be a fair pattern of worthy, fine and lovely virtue.29

For his own time, then, Allestree was to help dictate a Vives-like function of the gentlewoman within a cohesive, God-monarchial society, pious in an age, which, despite the reputation of the court, prized piety and religion. Paralleling moral demands from the *Whole Duty*-tract series made upon gentlemen, *The Ladies Calling* was successful in adding to a wave of morality for ladies with their special callings and responsibilities from God which washed through an age popularly renowned for its rakish King and for its scandalous court and gentility.

**NOTES**

1. Richard Allestree, *Forty Sermons . . . the Greatest Part Preach’d Before the King And on Solemn Occasions . . . To these is prefixt an account of the Author’s Life,*

2. Though all of the tracts were published anonymously, they have been most frequently attributed to Richard Allestree by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars, who did battle for decades over the question of authorship.

3. As Philip Warton (1698–1731) recalls about the first of these tracts, “I remember what my father told me, that after the restoration, almost all profession of seriousness in religion would have been laughed out of countenance, under pretence of the hypocrisy of the former times, had not two very excellent and serious books, written by eminent royalists, put some stop to it; I mean *The Whole Duty of Man*, and Dr. Hammond’s *Practical Catechism.*” Cited from Philip Warton, *Works* I, 10, by Nicholas Pocock in *The Miscellaneous Theological Works of Henry Hammond*, ed. Nicholas Pocock. 3 vols. (London, 1847–1850), I, xxxin. Hobbes’ comments on the former book further recommend it almost as an official organ of the Royalists. Thus, in a dialogue, Hobbes has Speaker B say that he should like to see “a system of present morals written by a divine of good reputation and learning, and of the late king’s party.” Speaker A, Hobbes himself, answers: “I think I can recommend unto you the best that is extant, and such a one as (except a few passages I mislike) is very well worth your reading. The title of it is *The Whole Duty of Man . . .*” Henry Morley, *A First Sketch of English Literature* (London, Cassell and Company, 1912), p. 692. (Hobbes’s words are taken from *The History of the Civil Wars of England . . . from the year 1640 to the year 1660.*)

Hobbes probably voices what had been the desire for stability after the Interregnum. For Hobbes, as Basil Willey points out, pragmatic truth made “right”—and living in an ordered, stable commonwealth under God and a sovereign power became “right”; “‘truth’ ” must maintain “what is established.” Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background, Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion* (New York: Chatto 1934), p. 116.

4. *The Gentleman’s Calling* goes on to say that, in spite of the peril, the calling of the gentleman in this world offers him five advantages. From a superior education, he can refine his mind and character; from his wealth, he can succour the poor; from his free time, he can restore himself to the “primitive luster” enjoyed by Adam before the fall; from his authority over domestics and political charges, he can serve the commonwealth; and from his reputation as a gentleman, he can encourage those beneath him to emulate virtue and to curb vice. The most obvious common denominator between the tracts, then, is that both sexes are to be pious; the most obvious difference is in the domain of each sex—the woman’s duties are mostly domestic and private, the man’s public.

5. A. H. Upham, “English Femmes Savantes at the End of the Seventeenth Century,” *JEGP*, XII (1913), 273. The last-named tract, written by William Walsh and prefaced by John Dryden, raised the feminists’ ire, for while the tract is ostensibly a defense of women, the feminists saw obviously that Walsh gave more of “‘an Edge to his Satyr [of women] than force to his apology.’” *Ibid.* Walsh’s tract was probably the one which Stephen Penton links with *The Ladies Calling* in a reference in *The Guardian Instruction* in 1688, although he refuses to name it for fear of angering his mistress. Mary Astell’s vigorous and sincere *Defense of Women* (1696) also comments on the double-dealing of the Walsh tract.

6. Warnicke also believes classical scholarship for women was “on the wane in the 1580s and the 1590s.” However her findings seem to indicate greater attention to classical training for Catholic than Protestant women.

8. Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman Fashioning him . . . concerning Minde or Bodie . . .* (London: F. Constable, 1622); see Peacham's words, "To the Reader." Peacham acknowledges that his work is only a "small Taper among so many Torches." Allestree names almost no "modern" authorities in his treatises.


11. Vives, A3v–A4r; *The Ladies Calling*, p. 56. However, Allestree’s plan to introduce briefly a few universally necessary virtues in Part I of *The Ladies Calling* is not followed too well. As he himself observes, Part I "is spun out to a length very unproportional to [Part II]." *Ibid.* Part II describes the three states of a woman's life.

12. See *The Art of Contentment*, p. 10. Noréna says it is a mistake to suppose Vives ever intended to organize an "ecclesiastical or denominational school" (181).

13. *The Whole Duty of Man laid down In a plain and Familiar Way . . . With Private Devotions for Several Occasions* (London, 1684), p. 54. (This tract first appeared in 1658 as *The Practice of Christian Graces or The Whole Duty of Man.*) Also see *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), pp. 62–63. Lovejoy, of course, cites Montaigne's specific comparison of man and animal (*Apologie de Raimond Sebond*). *Ibid.*, p. 66. If Allestree were following a current trend, he would, as a churchman and scholar, have been equally aware of Aristotle's or Seneca's words on the subject. In one epistle Seneca writes: "Why, pray, do you foster and practice your bodily strength? Nature has granted strength in greater degree to cattle and beasts. Why cultivate your beauty? After all your efforts, dumb animals surpass you in comeliness. Why dress your hair with such unending attention? . . . You will see a mane of greater thickness tossing upon any horse you choose, and a mane of greater beauty bristling upon the neck of any lion. And even after training yourself for speed, you will be no match for the hare. Are you not willing to abandon all these details . . . and come back to the Good that is really yours?" "Epistle CXXIV," trans. Gummere in *The Loeb Classical Library*, III, 449.

14. *The Ladies Calling*, p. 46. Also see William Cave's *Primitive Christianity* (London: By J.M. for R. Chiswell, 1675), which is much more austere than The Whole Duty tracts; yet when Cave writes about matters of apparel, adornments, and, as he phrases it, "fucus's and paintings," his wording is much like Allestree's. And both remind one of Tertullian and Gregory whom Cave translates as his authorities for the few pages which he designed for foibles before continuing with his "weightier" matter. See particularly pp. 65–67, 70.
15. The Ladies Calling, p. 23. In this picture, one is reminded of the benevolent Lady Bountiful of George Farquhar's The Beaux Strategem (1707). A great many handbooks of recipes and treatises describing medicinal concoctions were in vogue during the Restoration. The remedies might be of a homely, useful, fanciful, or superstitious nature, which, when once distilled, labeled, and put in a bottle, would cure everything from deep consumption to the falling sickness.

16. Vives, B3v; The Ladies Calling, p. 2; Bacon "Of Beauty" XLIII. Beacon, in fact, believes "decent motion" in older women makes them more amiable: "Pulchrorum autumnus pulcher." This adage occurs in at least three passages in Plutarch.

17. Also see Richard Baxter's comments on the flubbered (slubbered) condition in A Call to the Unconverted (London: Nevil Simmons, 1678), p. 40, and Sermon XII (1684) by Allestree.


21. Allestree's observation on dice and cards here and throughout the tracts as well as in a parenthetical remark in a sermon concedes these pastimes to be lawful.


24. Vives, C8r–C8v. Suzanne Hull's chapter on recreational literature indicates that romances were not considered appropriate for women in the sixteenth century by some moralists: "Joannes Vives (as translated by Richard Hyrde), Thomas Psalter, and Thomas Powell specifically condemned romantic fiction. . . ." Chaste, Silent & Obedient (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), p. 71. Hull also indicates that "by 1640, reading by women was seldom attacked" (131). Even Allestree, with his sober conservatism, reluctantly allows the reading of Romances when the woman is very young, but after making the concession, he can think of nothing good to say about such reading. Rather he worries about the bad initial "impressions" made on the young mind (LC 61).


26. The Ladies Calling, p. 84. The italicized words are from "The Song of Solomon" 8:6. Also see Vives, Bb8r–Bb8v.
27. Beach Langston, "Essex and the Art of Dying," *Huntington Library Quarterly* XIII, no. 2 (Feb., 1950), p. 113. This article gives excellent classified lists of pertinent titles.

28. *The Ladies Calling*, pp. 92-93. The comments of the *OED* on this phrasing add to an already interesting passage. The word "Alhallonide" may be dated specifically as November 1, Allhallows' Day. The phrase "Alhallontide Spring" is a variant of allhallowon summer, defined by the *OED* as a season of fine weather in the late autumn. Less literally, a brightness or beauty lingering or reappearing in old age. The *OED* gives only two examples of the phrase: from Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, I.ii.178, "Farewell, the latter Spring! Farewell, Allhallow Summer!"; and from Walton's *Angler*, "About allhallontide . . . you see men ploughing up heath-ground. . . ."


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Review Article

On Ferrara and Chivalric/Epic Poetry in Italian Criticism Today

by

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For the past ten or so years I have witnessed, both in Italy and North America, a proliferation of courses, congresses, symposia, and publications on Italian Renaissance epics. A most deserving testimony to the seriousness of American scholarship is the recent publication of R. J. Rodini and Salvatore Di Maria, *Lodovico Ariosto: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1956–1980* (1984), which was designed to continue Giuseppe Fatini’s *Bibliografia della critica ariostea* (1958) of 3624 items annotated chronologically up to 1956. Out of the 930 items of the new Bibliography, 237 are in English and 608 in Italian. This “torrent” of critical scholarship has its negative aspects, as observed by J. V. Mirollo in *Renaissance Quarterly* 36 (1983), 620, and by A. N. Mancini in *Forum Italicum* 19 (Fall 1985), 345. Still the extensive scholarship should be registered as a form of vitality, an index showing that Renaissance chivalric and epic poetry, when approached with new methodologies, may reveal to contemporary readers previously unnoticed aspects.

The Rodini/Di Maria Bibliography ends with 1980. During the past five years many new works have appeared in Italian and English, some of which should be mentioned in order to present the three books I here propose to evaluate in the proper context. Among the Italian books, I list first a trio I plan to review shortly elsewhere: Guido Baldassarri’s *Il Sonno di Zeus: Sperimentazione...*
narrativa del poema rinascimentale e tradizione omerica (1982), Francesco Espamer’s La biblioteca di Don Ferrante: Duello e onore nella cultura del Cinquecento (1982), and Sergio Zatti’s L’uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano: Saggio sulla “Gerusalemme liberata” (1983). Other recent book-length studies include L’Ariosto la musica i musicisti: Quattro studi e sette madrigali ariosteschi (1981), edited by M. A. Balsano; Raffaele Manica, Preliminari sull’“Orlando furioso”: Un paradigma ariostesco (1983); and Giuseppe Della Palma, Le strutture narrative dell’“Orlando furioso” (1984). During this same period notable articles on Ariosto have appeared in Italian by Giulio Ferroni, Edoardo Saccone, Remo Ceserani, and Giovanni Sinicropi, and in English by Daniel Javitch, Peter De Sa Wiggins, and Marianne Shapiro. The most meaningful Italian contribution, however, is the edition of the Orlando furioso by Emilio Bigi (1982), an excellent instrument for scholarly research as well as for classroom use. Preceded by a critical introduction, which is predominantly but not exclusively linguistic, and by a varied and classified bibliography, Bigi’s edition is enriched by the most exhaustive kind of notes one might desire: they list meticulously not only sources and influences but also the variants among the poem’s three versions (A, B, C).

How does the Italian criticism differ from the American? The difference is not simply in methodology but also in a general attitude towards the Renaissance epic itself. In Italy the Orlando furioso, to cite but one example, has long been a classic that a student reads in high school and carries with him for life. In the United States, in spite of the increased recent interest in Ariosto’s poem (not to speak of Boiardo’s Orlando innamorato), the Orlando furioso is affirming its presence as a great work of universal literature with great difficulty. For instance, it still does not classify as one of the “great books” in a rather sophisticated course of literary humanities at Columbia University. It is still a poem for an American elite; and even this elite, mainly made of scholars, views it differently from the corresponding Italian elite. Ceserani, in a recent review article (Forum Italicum 19 [Fall 1985], 322–32), defines, through an analysis of three American studies, what he calls “Ariosto in America.” (By contrast a major concern of my review article is what I would call “Ariosto in Italy.”) Ceserani first cites a sharp American interpreter of Ariosto, D. S. Carne-Ross, who attributes the unreachability of the Furioso in this continent to its classical quality, consisting mainly in Ariosto’s great faith in the capacity of language to take the place of human experience. (Carne-Ross himself admits, however, that Ariosto’s impenetrability in this sense is more apparent than real.) According to Ceserani, what actually distances the American reader from the Furioso is not an historically objective “distance” but a subjective way of reading the poem: not directly but via Spenser and Shakespeare, impeded by prejudices diffused and deeply rooted in the collective, middle-class Anglo-Saxon culture. The Furioso does not escape from the prejudices still involving the Italian Renaissance as a whole. The recent Pocket Books
edition of *Ariosto Furioso: A Romance for an Alternate Renaissance*, a “fantasy” by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (a pseudonym), is a pointed example of this misdirected attitude. The third American approach which Ceserani details is by Patricia Parker and is, in my opinion, the most germane in my effort to visualize American versus Italian criticism in the specific case of the *Furioso*.

In the chapter dedicated to Ariosto (pp. 16–53) in *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (1979), Parker offers a type of analysis of the *Furioso*, within the wider context of the romance tradition, which is inspired by the Yale School of criticism and at the same time influenced by Northrup Frye’s strong inclination to recapture romantic literature as an integral part of today’s belles-lettres. By means of an attentive textual approach, she concludes that the *Furioso* anticipates some of the problems concerning modern textuality. By stressing the complex meanings and implications of the term *errore*, of the tension internal to the poem, and of *perdere se stesso* as *uscire di sè*, Parker points to the deconstruction by Ariosto of the idea of narrative fiction as deprived of error, even when one deals with a privileged genre or work, such as Dante’s *Commedia*, or the Holy Scriptures. I am reminded of Valla’s appeal in *On Pleasure*: “non esse semper habendam auctoribus fidem... qui... more hominum lapsi sunt.” Ariosto is, as he describes himself, a weaver who, by employing a multiplicity of material from other texts, suggests that he does not privilege any authority whatsoever. Irony in this context is a cognitive phenomenon. With Parker’s point of view in mind let us now explore three recent Italian books on Ferrara and chivalric/epic poetry.

The three books I have chosen to examine have some external and internal elements in common. Their authors all recently participated in a Barnard/Columbia course on “Italian Chivalric Poetry” under the auspices of the Barnard Center for International Scholarly Exchange (CISE). (CISE’s main aim is the direct exchange of ideas among scholars in a specific course on both sides of the Atlantic; among its American Associates is one institution in the Rocky Mountain region, Brigham Young University.) The three authors presented at Columbia the methodological principles that inspired them, defining not only the topic they had chosen for their American course but also the methodology that inspired their research in the field. Each of the three books presents a collection of essays with an underlying common method and theme. As for method, all three authors can be defined as historically oriented, in that the chivalric and epic material—the *Orlando innamorato*, the *Orlando furioso*, and the *Gerusalemme liberata*—is viewed as deeply couchèd in an historic-literary tradition and is examined accordingly. Yet, each of the three scholars is strongly aware of new methodologies, as I hope to show. A viewpoint the three share is that of the “city of Ferrara” as the *humus*, to use Giovanni Getto’s terminology from an old seminal article, for the blooming of the Italian chivalric/epic poems. The three poems unveil, through a study of literary
and historical documents a “new” Ferrara, a most vital locus, literally and historically, because of the vital cultivated gentry that inhabited it.

Gennaro Savarese, a Professor at the University of Rome, condenses in 94 pages and four chapters, a series of lezioni—classroom lectures or presentations at congresses (the second essay at Columbia)—on Il “Furioso” e la cultura del Rinascimento. The booklet is a masterpiece of elegance and conciseness. His aim is to identify what he intuits to be present in the poem: “alcune rilevante concomitanze dell’imaginario ariostesco con episodi aspetti ed autori della cultura rinascimentale nel suo complesso” (p. 9), a concomitance of ideas between Ariosto’s fantastic inventio and episodes, aspects, and authors of Renaissance culture. A historically and philologically objective reading of documents of the “high” Ferrarese culture contemporary to the poet denies the image of the poet as “sublime smemorato,” oblivious of the “serious” culture around him.

Savarese shows, while dealing with various documents, a clear awareness of modern critical theories (such as those of Cassirer, Barthes, Foucault, Vittorini, and Svevo). His originality of approach can be seen in his discriminating use of some of these theories. For instance, in opposition to a kind of impressionistic reading of the poem he suggests an application of the theory of “parallelisms” (as he finds described by Cassirer) to the philosophical cosmology of a Cusanus, in a non-Aristotelian/scholastic world, and the poetic cosmology of an Ariosto; in both cases we are faced with a unique empirical cosmos, homogeneous in itself and counterpoised to the absolute. Aware of Barthes’ derision of a “filosofia del tempo,” Savarese suggests the identification of “campi di concomitanza,” as defined by Foucault, as a means of complementing old-fashioned source studies.

By reading the Furioso in the light of the culture that nourished it, Savarese’s purpose is, on one hand, to recapture the dynamic quality of the poem that even such a negative critic as Jacob Burckhardt could not deny; on the other hand, he intends to destroy the prejudices that from De Sanctis to Burckhardt to Lewis tend to identify the poem’s greatness with the idea of “harmony” and with an absolute technical supremacy. Savarese asserts, at the same time, that he does not in any way wish to condition Ariosto’s poetry within a scheme of rigorous, paradigmatic formulas. Hence Platonism, Neoplatonism, and Aristotelianism should be studied only in their cultural significance as ideological movements, stimuli to new curiosities and forms of knowledge (p. 14).

The philosophy of behavior of the characters of the Furioso points specifically to some “colori e fantasie” typical of Renaissance culture. In this sense specific ethical-philosophical trends can be traced as far back as Lorenzo Valla’s dialogue On Pleasure. Within this historical climate irony acquires a new (Vallian, I am tempted to add) type of identity. Passages on the figurative arts are found by Savarese to be connected with the figurative culture of the time, especially with the discovery of Vitruvius. Even sections of the poem that
clearly classify as poetic *inventio*, such as the episode of Astolfo on the Moon, reveal by close analysis that Ariosto worked within a specific historical pattern.

The first essay of the book focuses on some very basic errors of interpretation of a passage of the dialogue *EQUITATIO* by the Ferrarese scholar Celio Calcagnini. By integrating the passage in question in the *real* situation in which the poet found himself in an historically well-determined literary crisis (the conversion of the *doctus* to a chivalric poet), we are made to discover Ariosto's attitude towards the *doctrina* of the humanists and his own *inventio*. The second essay treats some concordances, at times literal, between passages of Valla's *On Pleasure* and observations by Ariosto concerning the behavior of his characters, with the challenging conclusion that I fully share: “Dal riso de' Valla che incontrerà lungo la sua strada e quello di Erasmo nasceranno l'ironia dell'Ariosto e la risata di Rabelais” (p. 47). The third essay is dedicated to Ariosto's literary mimesis of a figurative phenomenon. The final chapter focuses, along the line Valla/Alberti/Erasmus, on the Ariostean *inventio* of Astolfo on the Moon. While accounting for Lucian's presence, Savarese suggests that “sarebbe più giusto parlare di un lucianesimo di secondo grado, passato attraverso Lorenzo Valla ed Erasmo.”

Riccardo Bruscagli, Professor at the University of Florence, reveals in the title *Stagioni della civiltà estense* the theme underscoring the six essays of his book: a study of Ferrarese Renaissance literature within the context of Italian courtly literature from 1400-1500. Focusing on specific texts—the *Orlando innamorato*, the *Orlando furioso*, the tragedies of G. B. Giraldi Cinzio, and the *Gerusalemme liberata*—and complementing the study of the texts with the literary theories of the respective authors, Bruscagli succeeds in giving us an Estense literary history in which the historical events appear in a dialectical relation with the literary text. Both the literary critic Getto and the historian of Ferrara Werner Gundersheimer should be pleased with the results and the implications of this type of study.

In the second essay of the book, “Il romanzo padano di M. M. Boiardo,” Bruscagli attempts to discover Boiardo's poetic of the chivalric novel, as hidden mainly in the *proemi* to the *canti*. At the opening of Book II of the poem Boiardo announces a return of *allegrezza* and *cortesia*, after a period of darkness, to the world of the poet and of his public (p. 38). The *Innamorato* projects through exemplary myths a kind of utopia, the return of the golden age, a new “season of history,” a periodic return of the *primavera* or spring (p. 43). Through the adventure the world of chivalry is strictly connected with the one of nature (p. 49). This is the meaning of the Arthurian fable with which the poet passionately identifies his own era, even in the comic alienation of an Astolfo. In the third essay, “Ventura e inchiesta tra Boiardo e Ariosto,” the relation between the two major chivalric poets is identified with the prevalence in the *Furioso* of *inchiesta* (investigation) over *ventura* (fate), easily visible in the case of Orlando. Next, in “La corte in scena: genesi politica della tragedia
Ferrara and Chivalric/Epic Poetry

The emphasis is on the appearance of the tragic genre, a kind of intellectual ventura, clearly traceable from Giraldi's Orbecche back to Ariosto's comedies. The influence of Orbecche's ideological horror can be seen in Pomponio Torelli's tragedies on the ragion di stato and in the anti-courtly polemic of Federico Della Valle. In the essay on "G. B. Giraldi: comico, satirico, tragico" we witness the division between the political element, the only issue potentially capable of generating tragedy, and the private feelings which are the subject of melodrama and bourgeois comedy. This separation denounces an unresolved problem of Italian sixteenth-century literature which the theater will circumvent precisely by making the private feelings the subject of the pastoral drama and the political passions the subject of tragedy.

The contradiction implied in this particular unresolved issue emerges powerfully with the Gerusalemme liberata, treated in Bruscagli's most inspired chapter, "Il campo cristiano nella Liberata." The campo, or military camp, in the epic of the crusades affirms itself with a clear-cut physiognomy of its own, between the sacro of the besieged Jerusalem and the profano of the selva, the civitas Dei against the civitas diaboli. The campo cristiano becomes the civitas hominis, the lay space of history open to the painful exercise of will; the Christian camp presents, in fact, the drama of free will.

From Chapter I to VI Bruscagli penetrates more and more deeply into the proposed theme, a study of Ferrarese culture through literature; he overcomes in the end the barriers of literary genres in a supreme effort to capture the essence of such civilization.

Rosanna Alhaique Pettinelli is a Professor at the University of Rome. The four essays which constitute her L'immaginario cavalleresco nel Rinascimento ferrarese represent her work over a fifteen-year period along two well-defined lines: the research of sources for the poems of Boiardo and Ariosto and the study of minor poets as a useful means to acquiring an awareness of the cultural ambiance in which the two major poets operated. Her originality consists in pursuing, through concrete textual analyses of characters and situations and language, the dynamic relation between the Innamorato and the Italian chivalric tradition in ottave. Such dynamism, which Bigi and Mengaldo have studied in its linguistic interrelationship with the popular genre, has escaped critics of the old historical school, such as Rajna, Bertoni, and Foffano. What Pettinelli proves with ample textual documentation is that Boiardo uses the popular tradition with great originality. In the brief Chapter II (pp. 137-51), "Di alcune fonti del Boiardo," we have a laboratory proof of what she intends by use of sources in contrast with those of the old historical school. Within a new methodological perspective the study of sources can be useful if they are considered actively as part of a conscious choice on the part of a poet. In the specific case of Boiardo, he used sources so different among themselves as Boccaccio's Filocolo, Fazio degli Uberti's Dittamondo, and Ovid's Metamorphoses because he was searching for exotic elements typical of the cultural ambiance in which
he lived. The case in question actually proves that the chivalric genre allowed the poet a much greater freedom of choice than, for instance, the lyric genre.

In her third essay, “Tra il Boiardo e l'Ariosto: il Cieco da Ferrara e Niccolò degli Agostini,” the author faces a field of research previously dealt with by her teacher Walter Binni. The vast number of romance sources of the Furioso proposed by Rajna are limited here to two Ferrarese sources: Niccolò degli Agostini and il Cieco da Ferrara, whose poems connect the Innamorato to the Furioso. These two poets, famous in their own times, were later obliterated by the success of the two great ones. The attentive reading of the two “minor” poems as sources of the Furioso reveals that Ariosto in the composition of his book made very precise and courageous choices with the specific intent to recreate and modernize the genre. As Carlo Dionisotti proves in his Appunti sui “Cinque canti,” from the middle of the fifteenth century on there is in Northern Italy a blooming of Carolingian poems which should be considered as more probable sources of the Furioso than the interminable French romances that Ariosto did not have available in printed form. Of Niccolò’s Innamoramento di Orlando (1525) Pettinelli examines mostly Book IV as having more direct contacts with the Furioso. Ariosto asserts his originality versus the Innamoramento and Cieco’s Mambriano, which tends to heavy moralization, in his precise references to what is real and concrete. (See, for example, his treatment of Fortune, the use of Turpino, and the connections between cantos.) The greatest form of originality is visible in Ariosto's recapturing of old themes, such as the flight of Angelica from the Christian camp or Bradamante and Ruggero after their marriage or the relation between Orlando and Atlante or the episode of Alcina (pp. 194-201). The last field of study, the military events, is mostly linguistic in character. Also in this case Pettinelli's documentation is very full. Through comparisons, analyses, and annotations, she succeeds in proving (1) that Ariosto draws much from Carolingian chivalric material and (2) that the image of a “classical” Ariosto, whose poetry is thickly interwoven with classical poetry should be supplemented—if not replaced—by the one of a poet who thematically, linguistically, and stylistically is tightly connected with the literary world of chivalry that precedes him.

In her last chapter, “Una descrizione di Ferrara nell’Angela innamorata del Brusantino,” Pettinelli offers us an interesting first-hand view of Ferrara in the middle of the fifteenth century that is more of a photograph, than a description, of the city with the genti onorate that inhabited it. The Appendix, entitled “Dal ‘divino’ Ariosto all’umanissimo Ariosto,” crowns and climaxes the book with a special homage to Walter Binni as the critic who contributed much to humanize the author of the Furioso. The new approach to the text that Binni introduced, from the early Poetica, critica e storia letteraria to the more recent Metodo e poesia, is based on a study of the personality of the artist as well as on an attentive reading of his poetry. By discovering Ariosto’s most complex humanity, Binni in the end recaptured even an episode he had formerly
criticized, that of Ruggero and Leone. Within this context Binni tried to identify the substantial connections between life and poetry.

With Savarese, Bruscaglia, and Pettinelli we have three examples, I should like to conclude, of the directions Italian criticism on chivalric/epic is taking today. One of the results obtained is a Ferrara not photographed—as it is in Brusantino's poem—in a crystallized, static position, but rather one portrayed as the center of vital historical experiences whose essence is best revealed in poetry.
Book Reviews

MEDIEVAL

David Nicholas, The Domestic Life of a Medieval City, University of Nebraska Press, 1985. $26.50

This excellent study of domestic life in Ghent in the fourteenth century begins with a useful assessment of the literature of historical demography. David Nicholas rejects the theories of Philippe Aries and Edward Shorter concerning the family in favor of the models suggested by Peter Laslett and Jean-Louis Flandrin. He subscribes particularly to the model of Flandrin, who found that the extended family was powerful only if its members lived in proximity. Families in Ghent conform to Laslett’s four characteristic features of the Western family: nuclear, comparatively older childbearing mothers, small age gap between spouses, and servants as part of the household. The author finds the medieval family much closer to the modern one than is commonly realized.

Concentrating on women, children, and the family, Nicholas provides an informative study based on limited though sufficient sources. Women, although regarded in Ghent as intrinsically inferior to men, were very active in the economic life of the city while at the same time they had no political rights. They held no office but did manage businesses. The business activity is partly explained by inheritance in Ghent which was absolutely partible affording no special rights for males or for the eldest. The author asserts that neither legal nor ecclesiastical prohibition had profound impact on sexual life in Ghent.

Children in Ghent were a sufficiently important part of family life to refute Aries’ claim that childhood did not exist in the medieval mind, according to Nicholas. Special records were kept of property belonging to orphans, physical abuse of children was prosecuted by the magistrates, and interest was allowed on the investments of minors in usury-conscious Ghent.

Nicholas has found that high death rates, frequent remarriage, wetnursing, and apprenticing made the nuclear family less self-contained than today. Several generations frequently lived together. Clans were important where alienation and inheritance of property were concerned. They functioned as peacekeepers too, through holding the right to commit offensive and defensive violence on behalf of clan members.
Nicholas’ study helps to destroy several misconceptions concerning medieval society: that childhood was discovered only in modern times; that the conjugal family in preindustrial Europe was an economic but not an emotional unit; that affection and sexual attraction had little place in marriage; and that women were either systematically oppressed or overly protected.

Ghent, the fourth largest city of Europe at the time, is often neglected because of attention to the more famous Bruges. Nicholas illuminates social life in Ghent and contributes significantly to our understanding of the European family. However, one would wish to learn something of Jews in this center of commerce and industry. The author is always sensible about the available evidence and does not fall to the temptation to say more than the evidence allows. The book has ample notes, 12 tables and 4 graphs, and a nearly comprehensive index. The few typos it contains detract only a little from its handsome presentation. Nicholas’ readable book will occupy a respected place in medieval social history.

Francis X. Hartigan
University of Nevada, Reno

James Weisheipl, *Nature and Motion in the Middle Ages*, Catholic University of America Press, 1985. $31.95

The late Professor James A. Weisheipl’s *Nature and Motion in the Middle Ages* is Volume II in the *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* series published by the Catholic University of America Press. It is made up of eleven essays that were originally published between 1954 and 1981, a small portion of Weisheipl’s contribution to the literature of the history of and philosophy of science. Although each of the essays was originally written as a separate study, the collection is unified and a coherent whole because of its limited focus: the concepts of nature and motion in the Middle Ages. Many of the essays can be read with profit by anyone interested in medieval science. Weisheipl was a gifted writer who, without simplifying or distorting, was able to make clear many of the complexities of the medieval science of motion.

It should be pointed out, however, that the scope of the book is limited, not only by its concentration on the problems of nature and motion, but also because of its focus on the natural philosophies of St. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. The collection is not a history of the concepts of nature and motion in the Middle Ages, but a discussion and clarification of those concepts from the point of view of a Thomas. *Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* appears as an almost Wagnerian *leitmotif* in almost all the essays. But the author’s refined and sophisticated discussion of that Aristotelian-Thomist principle can also serve as an object lesson to students and historians of science.
and philosophy. One must take great care to read sources correctly and to understand them as they were originally intended. "... [P]ractically all historians, and many philosophers interested in medieval thought, have mistranslated and misunderstood the Latin phrase. It does not mean, and never did mean, that everything here and now moving needs a mover" (pp. 123-4).

The essay, "The Principle Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur in Medieval Physics," corrects the erroneous interpretations of the phrase that have been made by modern historians of medieval science.

One essay in particular I would recommend to be included in the syllabus for any medieval history course: "Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought." It is a very useful history of the development of a medieval curriculum of study as well as an analysis of the evolution of the idea of what scientia was.

The book is cleanly printed, and it is free of the sort of typographical carelessness that seems, unfortunately, to have become standard in recent book production. William E. Carroll, the editor, is to be congratulated. There is also a very useful, selected, bibliography of Weisheipl's works. The Index is limited almost exclusively to proper names, which, because of the limited focus of the work, is not a great handicap to the reader.

Richard Harper
University of Wyoming

Stephen C. Ferruolo, The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and Their Critics, 1100-1215, Stanford University Press, 1985. $45.00

In his classic Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, first published in 1895, Hastings Rashdall concluded that the origins of the University of Paris were rooted above all in the assumption that there is an essential unity to knowledge. He believed it was generally recognized in Paris that university studies should reflect the full cycle of learning, as best embodied in the medieval liberal arts tradition.

But recent studies of Paris University beginnings have shifted the focus from the ideal of liberal education to more practical questions such as what particular groups or interests seem most significant in the coalescence of a true university out of the local cathedral schools. In this respect, the "lucrative arts" of law and medicine, as well as the cultivation of logic, have been accorded a decisive role in professionalizing and narrowing the new Paris curriculum. This view also holds that the university emerged largely out of the struggles of the Paris corporation of masters and scholars for academic freedom against the pressure of outside authorities, both church and state.

Professor Ferruolo reacts to this conventional interpretation by reviving
and expanding the Rashdall thesis. To this end he draws upon a wide variety of letters, sermons and treatises by critics of the creeping vocationalism at Paris during the formative years, ca. 1150-1210. The author contends that the nascent University of Paris responded less to the "pragmatic need of scholars to ... secure their interests against an external adversary" than to the preservation of "certain exalted educational principles and values." These principles transcended narrow professional self-interest by aspiring to benefit society generally through the cultivation of educational goals much broader than those encompassed by the "lucrative arts." In a sense the struggle was for the soul of the emerging university, with internal pressures for more specialized and practical programs successfully resisted by advocates of the liberal arts and of teaching excellence.

More particularly, Professor Ferruolo ascribes the crucial role in the victory over excessive specialization to the cumulative impact of a diverse collection of monastic contemplatives, satirists, humanists and moral theologians. These critics the author ranges along a continuum from the "Evangelical Cistercians," like Bernard of Clairvaux, to humanist scholars like John of Salisbury and the canonist-prelates like Stephen of Tournai. Whatever their differences, these critics were at one in their opposition to subordinating the arts in general to any single discipline like logic, law or medicine.

While the author has significantly illuminated the complex intellectual milieu out of which the University of Paris emerged, there is a serious difficulty with the book's thesis. The identification of a decisive influence by the critical opposition on those with the power to make educational decisions is not persuasively sustained. There is no consistent, direct evidence that the verbal assaults of the many critics, mostly outside the university, were effective in reversing or modifying the trend toward more pragmatic and professional studies. The accumulation of testimony, however interesting and valuable in itself, thus remains largely circumstantial, attenuated by the scantiness and ambiguity of the data at crucial points.

Donald Sullivan
University of New Mexico


This book studies narrative and pictorial dimensions of medieval iconography and examines Chaucer's use of this tradition in the first five of the *Canterbury Tales*. The first chapter explores an unrecognized aspect of medieval aesthetic principle and demonstrates (with wide reference to literary and pictorial evidence as well as to faculty psychology) that medieval poets saw
themselves as creating images in the minds of their readers and hearers. Images, Kolve argues, serve as means both of recognizing and of remembering essential truths. Since we no longer respond directly to these images, Kolve's subsequent chapters seek to train the modern eye and awaken the modern mind to the variety of meanings in selected images and image patterns of the first five *Canterbury Tales*. For each of the selected images, Kolve offers an illustrated iconographical history. The permanent value of this volume surely lies in these histories and in the nearly two hundred pictures drawn from late medieval manuscripts.

In his chapters on the first five tales of *The Canterbury Tales*, Kolve identifies (usually two) dominant or controlling narrative images for each tale; images, he claims, that "organize and clarify" its meanings. After surveying traditional possibilities—both symbolic and literal—for these narrative images, Kolve assesses their significance for the specific interpretive problems posed by the tale. With respect to the *Knight's Tale*, for example, Kolve argues that Chaucer's text accepts much of the moral meaning of its narrative images but resists their specifically Christian meanings. Set in ancient Athens, the tale becomes a "noble and dignified" presentation of pagan experience, a sympathetic view of an alternate mode of life "culturally and historically [separated] from knowledge of the true God." *The Miller's Tale*, Kolve argues, excludes both the moral and the Christian meanings of its narrative imagery and so counters the *Knight's Tale* with a view of experience "lived outside of morality" and completely uncomplicated by "any sense that life is lived under the aspect of eternity." The partial experiences of life projected by these two tales and those of the Reeve and the Cook are then countered and completed, according to the author, by the last, *The Man of Law's Tale*. This tale, unlike the other four, embraces the full literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical meanings of its narrative images. Grounded in historical and Christian truth, *The Man of Law's Tale* becomes an "authorial self-correction" of the preceding fictions and a commentary on their spiritual *ydelnesse*. Each tale, thus, presents a different view of human experience, but together, they make up a small whole, complete with preliminary *retraccioun*.

Kolve's study of the iconography of narrative thus synthesizes two antithetical approaches to medieval literature. Like those who insist on the full moral and religious significance of Chaucer's work, he insists that Chaucer's narratives, finally, deal with the "serious business" of Christian truth. Like those who insist on the centrality of the literal fiction and its truths, he insists on the primacy of the letter, permitting traditional images to carry extraliteral weight only to the extent and in the precise way that the letter of each separate tale itself does. As a result, Kolve presents Chaucer as standing "at a point of momentous change in the history of narrative," combining the rich iconographical tradition of the past with the "liberating possibilities"—both literary and religious—of the future.
Chaucerians will find much to disagree with in Kolve's theory, selection, and interpretation of narrative images, as well as his understanding of Chaucer's position in cultural history. Nevertheless, this study and its marvelous pictures contribute to our understanding of the visual and narrative iconography of the late Middle Ages. All Chaucerians of whatever critical persuasion will recognize the independence, comprehensiveness, and wholeness of this personal, inevitably partitive, but rich assessment of Chaucer's fiction.

Charles R. Smith
Colorado State University

David C. Fowler, *The Bible in Middle English Literature*, University of Washington Press, 1984. $25.00

This study traces patterns of scriptural influence on the vernacular literature of late medieval England, particularly the fourteenth century. The author proceeds through a close textual analysis of a variety of literary works, culminating in a novel thesis on the meaning of *Piers Plowman*.

In the first two chapters Professor Fowler examines cyclic dramas like the Cornish *Ordinalia* and selected lyric poems that range in inspiration from the creation themes of *Genesis* through the doomsday motifs of the *Book of Revelation*. He finds both forms of religious literature closely linked in their origins with the liturgical cycle of the medieval church. In particular, he sees the wide-ranging cyclical dramas as receiving crucial stimulation from the contemporary vogue of the great illustrated Bibles.

The next chapters focus on poems of Chaucer and the *Pearl* poet. Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*, for example, is construed as a creation poem based on *Genesis I*, as glossed in the hexameral commentaries of St. Ambrose. Fowler here advances a persuasive new theory of the poem’s deeper structure. He then identifies the resonant biblical themes in the various works of the *Pearl* poet, above all in the uses of the *Book of Revelation* in the *Pearl* itself.

But if a serene faith and a calm rationality infuse the works of the *Pearl* poet, *Piers Plowman* clearly mirrors the “agony of its age.” It is precisely the troubled historical context of the poem that Fowler seeks to evoke. He has long argued for at least two distinct authors of the poem’s separate versions. Thus the “A” version, generally regarded as preceding the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381, presents a striking contrast to the “B” and “C” versions composed in the decade or so after the failure of that revolt. For Fowler, the tone, emphasis and style of the “A” version differs so markedly from the others as to convince him of their separate authorship.

He contends that the “A” poem’s praise of the simple faith and spiritual vitality of the English peasant, coupled with fierce attacks on the corruption...
and the abuse of wealth and power by the churchmen and politicians, provided substantial fuel to the fire of the Peasant’s Revolt. John Ball himself acknowledged the poem’s influence on his leveller ideology.

But if the “A” version revolves around the prophetic denunciation of present ills in the optimistic hope of a future amelioration, the “B” version, coming after the shattered rebellion of 1381, reflects a disillusionment that, despairing of any reform of society, concentrates on the reform of the individual. Fowler discerns here an almost tangible longing for the end, and a sense of imminent divine intervention as in the Book of Revelation. Thus the overriding concern of the “A” version to reform a bad situation is superseded by the apocalyptic conviction of the “B” poem that all such efforts are futile given the impending Second coming.

While Fowler has offered some suggestive new arguments and evidence for his multiple authorship thesis, the great majority of scholars continue to subscribe to the William Langland tradition of single authorship as most concisely stated by George Kane in 1965. Professor Fowler’s concern with the historical dimensions of medieval English literature is nonetheless to be welcomed in what is, generally, a very readable and stimulating book.

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RENAISSANCE

Warren Threadgold, Renaissance Before the Renaissance, Stanford University Press, 1984. $28.50

Although the Renaissance, and “renaissances,” have been much studied, Warren Threadgold’s collection of essays is the first attempt at a comprehensive survey of the revivals of Western culture which took place between the first century A.D. and the Renaissance.

Scope and methods of the study are discussed in a lengthy introduction which also places the various rebirths in their historical and cultural settings. The individual essays, by accomplished scholars in either Classics, Literature or history, include copious notes with selected annotated bibliographies.

As a survey of the cultural revivals selected (Second Sophistic, Fourth-Century Latin, Carolingian, Macedonian, Anglo-Saxon, Twelfth-Century and Palaeologan), this work is penetrating in its analysis of each period in terms of why and how it arose, what it accomplished, and whether or not it qualifies as an actual renaissance. Occasionally editor and contributors do not agree.
What to the one, for instance, is “renaissance,” is to the other only a “revival” (p. 171). But as the writers themselves point out, “renaissance” is an elusive concept, and the fine line between survival and revival of a culture is difficult to determine. In a study where each contributor is dissecting a unique set of circumstances from the perspective of his own particular discipline there are bound to be differences. Rather than detract from the quality of the work, these merely serve to emphasize the complexity of the phenomenon that we call renaissance.

Two areas in which this study falls short of its intended goals, however, are that it is both inconsistent and incomplete in its coverage. One is surprised, for example, to learn from a casual comment that there were also Vandalic, Ostrogothic and Isidorian “renaissances” (p. 60), of which the Introduction gives no notice. The flourishing of the Northumbrian monasteries in the seventh and eighth centuries is treated as an early stage of the Anglo-Saxon Revival, even though it is acknowledged that the two movements were separated by an interval in which “attempts at cultural renewal were scattered and . . . soon dissipated” (p. 103). Moreover, since these revivals are treated as one, then why not do the same with the Carolingian and Ottonian? Instead, the Ottonian renaissance is dismissed on the grounds that it was too narrowly based, “unless perhaps we include in it the contemporary cultural activities of the monasteries” (p. 16). Since other renaissances which depended on monastic cultural activities are given thorough treatment, surely the Ottonian deserves similar consideration, even if it should, like the Palaeologan, turn out to be only a revival. Also, a broadly based study such as this can hardly be considered complete without the inclusion of classical culture’s revival under Islam, especially since this is acknowledged by one of the contributors (p. 137). It is hoped that a future edition would fill these lacunae.

For the renaissances it covers, however, this pioneering work is both informative and penetratingly analytical, and should prove a stimulating guide to further inquiry into these and other rebirths of culture.

Gunner Freibergs
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Hans Baron, _Petrarch’s “Secretum”: Its Making and Its Meaning_, Medieval Academy of America, 1985. $22.00

In eight chapters, Baron traces the history of the _Secretum’s_ composition (its genesis, growth, and chronology) with the stated aim of defining the six-year period in the middle of Petrarch’s humanistic career when “his thinking differed from both the humanism of his youth and from the mature thought of his last two decades” (vii). The focus, as in Baron’s earlier studies on Petrarch,
is on chronology and historical certainty and the goal is to correct the "imperfections" of other scholars, in this case primarily Francisco Rico's conclusion that the *Secretum* was entirely rewritten in 1353.

Remigio Sabbadini, whose 1917 study on the gradual composition of the *Secretum* was disparaged by Baron in a 1963 article as having disappointing results (see *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni*, 1968, pp. 53–54), now turns out to have pointed in the right direction after all. And Baron's earlier affirmations, based firmly on traditional dating—("There can be no doubt about when the original draft was composed. . . [We] may surely be more definite in our dating than the vague '1342–43' usually given for the *Secretum* and regard it as almost certain that the dialogue was composed between October, 1342 and March of the following year." [p. 52])—must now be doubted in light of Rico's redating of the *Secretum*'s first draft to 1347.

Baron, who accepts Rico's redating but disagrees with his assertion that the final version of 1353 is a complete recasting, aims to reconstruct the text as it appeared in the 1340s and quite often his analyses of the *Secretum*'s textual layers do lead to felicitous conclusions. But, just as often, the negative features, the intricacies of argument (see, for example, pp. 24–28), the use of positive terms when proof is tenuous, the sometimes logically baffling conclusions, and the tedious efforts to gain so little (as when the dating of sections of the *Secretum* could apply equally well to either 1347 or 1349), illustrate perhaps why Rico foregoes an attempt to deconstruct the *Secretum* into its stages of composition. In the end, the quarrel with Rico comes down to whether or not one wishes to call the final version of the *Secretum* a "rearrangement" (Baron's more convincing argument) or a "recasting."

Readers will judge for themselves the accuracy both of Baron's hypotheses regarding the dates of the *Secretum*'s various sections (often convincing) and of his conclusion that "In all three books substantial additions and corrections were made in 1349 and 1353, but the discovery of these insertions does not change the fact that the bulk of the work consists of a largely untouched older draft" (p. 151), and will evaluate as well his criticism of those who deny to Petrarch a "schema evolutivo" or who see the Franciscus of the *Secretum* as a literary fiction rather than an autobiographical figure. Let me merely note in conclusion that this is a rich work, detailed in its analyses, that will appeal, however, primarily to a narrow audience—those interested in the *Secretum*'s evolution from 1347 to 1353—rather than to the general student of Italian or Trecento studies.

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David Bergeron, *Shakespeare's Romances and the Royal Family*, University of Kansas Press, 1985. $25.00

David Bergeron devotes *Shakespeare's Romances and the Royal Family* to what he terms a “re-presentation” of many of the court personages with whom he identifies play characters. According to Bergeron, the Jacobins for whom Shakespeare wrote these plays were politically pleased, as they had not had the opportunity to be for more than half a century, with the existence of a royal family and royal children in whom the public foresaw future political stability through a secure succession.

Bergeron makes the continuing point that the secure succession of this government had descended through the female line—a clear compliment to James I since his mother was Mary, Queen of Scots. Through the celebration of inheritance rights through female descent, Shakespeare emphasized in play and life political security and continuity brought by royal children to James’ people.

Mr. Bergeron uses *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest,* and *Henry VIII* as the basis for his theories. In *Pericles*, there are two generations of kings’ daughters, who, having endured harrowing experiences as young women, serve as rulers’ wives in cities other than their native ones. In *Cymbeline*, the king’s lost three children are discovered; they are of an age to provide succession to the throne. In *The Winter's Tale*, the lost royal Perdita is found, and is, through her adventures, on the verge of marriage to the heir of her father-king’s former friend-king; the two kings have been estranged for sixteen years. In *The Tempest*, play-goers discover on a remote island the rightful ruler of Milan and his now grown daughter together with the enemy king of Naples and his son. Naturally, the young pair will love, wed, and inherit. In *Henry VIII*, the play ends joyfully with the birth and baptism of the baby Elizabeth, Henry VIII’s youngest daughter whose reign was christened that of “Gloriana.”

In each of these plays, there are definite parallels to be made with James’ three surviving royal children. The romances end just before the death of Prince Henry, the heir of hope for the English people, and the foreign marriage of the lovely and popular Princess Elizabeth. The disappearance of the two older surviving children leaves only the sickly Charles—about whom and the promise of his future reign nothing is prophesied. The elimination from the English scene of Prince Henry in 1612 and the Princess Elizabeth in 1613 coincides with the last of Shakespeare’s hopeful romances in which the king has children representing the happy future and who are recovered after a prolonged absence during which they are “lost.”

Bergeron does not speculate, but it is feasible to do so, concerning the possibility that the unfortunate disappearance from the English scene of Prince Henry and the Princess Elizabeth, the source of so much English joy, had perhaps some effect on the closure of Shakespeare’s writing career.
Shakespeare could write no more utilizing the happy expectation brought by royal children.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Philippa Brown, *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters*, Boydell & Brewer, Suffolk, 1985. $29.50

Liana Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism and Medici Humanism in Botticelli’s Mythological Paintings*, University of America Press, 1985. $22.50


Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare Contrasts and Controversies*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. $18.95

Gail Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*, University of Georgia Press, 1985. $24.00


John Steane, *The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales*, University of Georgia Press, 1984. $27.50