THE SYMBIOTIC MUSE:

The Case of Neo-Latin and Vernacular Poetry in Renaissance France

By Philip Ford

This article explores the various ways in which translation and imitation between Latin and the vernacular functioned in sixteenth-century France. In the literary climate of Lyon, Italian models, notably Petrarch, were influential in introducing certain erotic themes into neo-Latin compositions which, in their turn, found their way into French vernacular poetry. Later, in the middle of the century, the Pléiade worked in both directions, Latin to French and French to Latin, often with the aim of establishing their credentials as important, 'classical' writers. In either case, there is a mutual enriching of poetic texts rather than a one-way traffic.

When we think of literary imitation in the French Renaissance, we tend to assume that the direction of imitation was largely one way: from classical and neo-Latin sources into the vernacular. Yet when we look at the practice of poets during this period, it is clear that the situation is more complex. Renaissance Lyon, with its cosmopolitan population, appears to offer one example of a literary community in which imitation can work in various directions: from the vernacular into neo-Latin, from neo-Latin into the vernacular, and from the neo-Latin writing of one country into the neo-Latin writing of another. The community of poets associated with the Pléiade offers a similar example in Paris in the middle years of the century. This paper sets out to examine some examples of imitation in both these groups, and to assess the underlying motives for the literary exchanges which were going on in this period.

The area which I intend to concentrate on in the case of Lyon is love poetry, and there can be no doubt that the city was at the forefront of developments in this genre in the early decades of the sixteenth century. In particular, the large Italian population resident in the city ensured that many of the trends and fashions which had previously developed in Italy became known to a French audience before their popularity developed elsewhere in France. Of the various traditions of amatory verse, Petrarchism appears to have made its first French appearance in the city.

Compared with its long tradition in Italy, French Petrarchism had a relatively brief period of popularity. François Lecercle, for example, in his excellent study of the Petrarchan portrait, limits himself to an examination of a period of some twelve years in France, for in his view "il suffit de ne considérer que les débuts de cette vogue et de se limiter à la totalité des recueils parus de 1549 à 1561"[1] (it is enough to consider the beginnings of this trend and to limit our research to all the collections which appeared between 1549 and 1561) to take full account of this literary phenomenon on French shores. Even then, at the same time that Petrarchism was in vogue, certain poets were already being attracted to an anti-Petrarchan movement which called into question the poetic and emotional values which they seemed to champion elsewhere in their love poetry. I am thinking, for example, of the poem *Contre les pétrarquistes* by Du Bellay,[2] published in 1553, just three years after his Petrarchan work *L'Olive*.

But if we can establish the beginnings of the Petrarchan tradition in vernacular poetry towards the end of the 1540s, French neo-Latin poetry appears to have served as a kind of Trojan horse by introducing certain themes and images to a learned audience which, in the end, would make up part at least of the public that vernacular exponents of Petrarchan poetry were targeting. Before looking at some examples of neo-Latin Petrarchism, I propose first to establish the criteria which might be seen as distinguishing Petrarchan poetry from other forms of love poetry.

In his study of Petrarchism, *The Icy Fire*,[3] Leonard Forster identified three groups of themes which for him characterised Petrarchan poetry: external themes, especially descriptions of the lady, but also celebration of the lovers' meeting place, and the topos of meeting the beloved in dreams; internal themes, including poetry on the psychology of love and its effects on the poet; and finally the idea of love as a cosmic force, a theme in which Petrarchism meets up with neo-Platonism. Of course, some of these themes could already be found in the elegiac poetry of classical Latin poets, and in considering neo-Latin examples, it will be necessary to avoid seeing in every amorous swallow a Petrarchan summer. To escape this temptation, I propose to concentrate here on three aspects of the Petrarchan style which appear to be the most characteristic and least likely to be confused with other traditions of love poetry: the portrait of the beloved; the contradictory feelings experienced by the poet, expressed in terms of antithesis; and the description of the idealised settings which form the backdrop to the lovers' meetings.

[1] Lecercle 1987, 1.
[2] Du Bellay 1908–1931, V 69–77.
[3] Forster 1969, 8–23.

However, this perhaps raises the question of why neo-Latin poets would have been attracted to Petrarchan poetry before their vernacular counterparts. In the first place, it is clear that, for northern European humanists, Petrarch represented quite simply the start of the restoration of classical letters in Europe. Johannes Despauterius, for example, in his *Ars versificatoria*, states that "post hunc [i.e. Petrarch] coepit lingua latina mirum in modum instaurari"[4] (after him, the Latin language began to be renewed in a startling fashion). Secondly, the city of Lyon, with its large population of Italians, undoubtedly played a part in this, as all the neo-Latin poets I shall be looking at in the first part of this paper had lived or passed through the city. Finally, the 'discovery' by Maurice Scève in 1533 of Laura's tomb must certainly have inspired humanist poets in the city, as he and his cousin Guillaume Scève regularly frequented learned circles in Lyon.[5]

Amongst these poets, one of the best and the most original is, undoubtedly, Jean Salmon Macrin (1490–1557), who was clearly revered by the young poets and humanists of the city.[6] The many poems which he addressed to his young wife, Gelonis, make up a veritable *canzoniere*, and it is interesting to note in his poetry a mixture of the neo-Catullan style, developed in Italy by Michael Marullus, as well as a number of Petrarchan features.[7] It is hardly surprising, of course, that poets associated with Lyon should have imitated the Italian neo-Latin poets as well as vernacular ones, but Macrin's own influence in its turn was notable on various French writers, including Nicolas Bourbon (*c.* 1503–?1550) and Jean Visagier (1510–1542) amongst others.

Tangible evidence of the interest in Petrarch may be seen in Bourbon's *Nugae*, first published in Paris in 1533 by Michel Vascosan,[8] where there is a Latin version of Petrarch's sonnet *Pace non trovo*:

Non pacem inuenio, at bello me nemo fatigat:		Pace non trovo, e non ho da far guerra;
Et spero & timeo, glacie circundatus uror:		e temo, e spero; et ardo, e son un ghiaccio;
In terra iaceo, at uolitans feror aethera supra:		e volo sopra 'l cielo, e giaccio in terra;
Mens mea nil stringit, totumque amplectitur orbem:	4	e nulla stringo, e tutto 'l mundo abbraccio.

[4] Despauterius [*c.* 1511], f. 2r.
[5] See, for example, Maira 2003.
[6] For an excellent edition of his works, see Macrin 1998. Quotations of Macrin refer to this edition. See too Schumann 2009.
[7] *Ibid.*, 52. On Salmon Macrin, see also McFarlane 1959–1960, and Ford & Jondorf 1993, and Ford 1997.
[8] On Bourbon, see Sylvie Laigneau's recently published *habilitation* thesis (Bourbon 2008). See too Clay Doyle 1995, as well as the excellent article by Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, (Lauvergnat-Gagnière 1991), where the author analyses an edition of the *Epigrammata* by Bourbon, published in Lyon in 1530, whose existence had been previously ignored. Quotations will be taken from Bourbon 1533 and 1538.

Qui me in carcere habet, mihi nec clauditue aperitue:
Nec uult esse suum, cuius me uincula nectunt:
Nec me occidit Amor, set nec me compede soluit,
Nec uiuum superesse sinit, nec quaerere pacem:
Absque oculis clare uideo, clamo sine lingua:
Et pacem fugito, precibus mihi & illa roganda est:
Denique qui me odi, alterius consumor amore:
Rideo suspirans, me pasco doloribus ipsum:
Mors & uita mihi grata est, placet utraque iuxta:
Sic ego sum pro te, pro te sum talis Amica.
(Bourbon, *Nugae*, 1533, f. $m5^{V}$)

Tal m'ha in pregion, che non m'apre né serra.
né per suo mi riten né scioglie il laccio;
e non m'ancide Amore, e non mi sferra,
8 né mi vuol vivo, né mi trae d'impaccio.
Veggio senza occhi, e non ho lingua e grido;
e bramo di perir. e cheggio aita;
et ho in odio me stesso, et amo altrui.
12 Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido:
egualmente mi spiace morte e vita:
in questo stato son, donna, per vui.
(Petrarch, *Rime* 134)[9]

(I find no peace, and have no wish to make war;
I both fear and hope, and burn and turn to ice;
I both fly above the heavens and lie on the ground;
I grasp nothing and embrace all the world.
He has me in prison who neither opens nor locks me out,
neither keeps me for his own nor loosens the bonds;
Love does not kill me and does not unchain me,
he neither wishes me alive nor pulls me from the tangle.
I see without eyes, I have no tongue and yet cry out;
I both wish to die and I ask for help;
I both hate myself and love another.
I feed on pain, and laugh amidst my tears;
death and life are equally displeasing to me.
I am in this state, Lady, on account of you.)

This poem in dactylic hexameters – one might have expected elegiac couplets for a love poem – follows very closely the Italian original. The antitheses characteristic of Petrarch's feelings — peace–war, hope–fear, heat–cold, ascent–descent, etc. — are presented in an identical manner by Bourbon. At times the French writer is a little more precise than Petrarch, for example in line 4 where he says that it is his "mind" (*mens*) which "touches upon nothing, and which embraces the whole world". On the other hand, in lines 10 and 13, Bourbon offers variations on Petrarch's poem: in line 13, he in fact asserts the opposite of what Petrarch says, and in line 10, it is a question in Bourbon of fleeing or finding *peace*, as opposed to *death* in the case of Petrarch. However, it emerges from this that clearly, already in the 1530s, there existed amongst French neo-Latin poets an interest in the Italian works of Petrarch, and that in translating them into Latin, they are introducing new

[9] The text is taken from Petrarch 1976, 293.

themes into amatory verse in France. Amongst the topoi mentioned above, it is undoubtedly the physical description of the beloved which provides one of the most important criteria for determining the influence of Petrarchism. Amongst Roman poets, descriptions of the beloved are quite rare, and, for the most part, suggestive rather than explicit, as in this Ovidian example:

> ut stetit ante oculos posito uelamine nostros,
> in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit.
> quos umeros, quales uidi tetigique lacertos!
> forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!
> quam castigato planus sub pectore venter!
> quantum et quale latus! quam iuuenale femur!
> (Ovid, *Amores* 1.5.17–22)[10]

(As she stood before my eyes with drapery laid all aside, nowhere on all her body was sign of fault. What shoulders, what arms did I see – and touch! How suited for caress the form of her breasts! How smooth her body beneath the faultless bosom! What a long and beautiful side! How youthfully fair the thigh!)

Clearly a very sensual description – even the Loeb translator seems excited – but it is the readers who must supply the details from their own imagination.

On the other hand, when we turn to the poetry of Salmon Macrin, we find far more detailed descriptions. As an example, I propose to consider the opening of this hendecasyllabic poem addressed to his wife, *Ad Gelonidem*:

> Lydis candidior puella cycnis
> Getuloque ebore Indicisque baccis,
> quae lac, Sithonias niuesque uincis
> et marmor Parium, rosas et albas,
> uerno et lilia uerna cum ligustro et
> si quid candidiusque puriusque est,
> o flauos, precor, explica capillos
> astrictos rutilo decenter auro.
> Amplexabile succulentulumque
> da collum hoc mihi, uita, suauiandum.
> Hasce, quaeso, genas negare noli
> infusas Tyrii rubore fuci,
> stellatos oculos, puella, pande
> et supercilii nigrantis arcum,
> da corallina labra, quae lepore

[10] The text and translation are taken from Showerman 1947.

dulcis nectareo Melissa tinxit.
(Salmon Macrin, *Odes* 2.11.1–16)

(Beloved, whiter than the swans of Lydia, and Gaetulian ivory, and Indian pearls, surpassing milk, Thracian snows, and Parian marble, white roses, and spring lilies mixed with spring privet flowers, and whatever is whiter and purer, please let down your golden hair, elegantly bound up with a shining gold clasp; Give me this embraceable and juicy little neck to kiss, my love. And please do not refuse these cheeks, tinged with the glow of Tyrian purple; reveal your starry eyes, my sweet, and the bow of your dark eyebrow, offer your coral lips, which the sweet Melissa has imbued with delightful nectar).

When we take into account the fact that this poem was published in 1530, it is clear that Petrarchan descriptions, with more than a hint of Marullus's neo-Catullan style, had entered French neo-Latin poetry long before they were popularised by the Pléiade. The symphony in white which opens the poem conjures up various fields of imagery: the exotic and the precious ("Gaetulian ivory", "Indian pearls", "Parian marble"), the world of nature ("swans of Lydia", "Thracian snows", "white roses", "spring lilies", "spring privet flowers"), as well as the literary world, since these images have been chosen as a result of their intertextual allusions to pseudo-Gallus (Maximian), Virgil, and neo-Catullan poetry.[11] After this monochromatic opening, colour enters the poem with the "golden hair" echoed by the "shining gold clasp", the ruddy cheeks which resemble Tyrian purple, the star-like eyes, the bow formed by the dark eyebrows, and the coral lips. The Petrarchan quality of these images is obvious, emphasising as they do the precious and exotic nature of the various terms of comparison.

In another hendecasyllabic poem, also addressed *Ad Gelonidem*, the poetic description sets out to compare the beloved to a divinity:

Dentes candiduli minutulique,
uertex auricomus, corusci ocelli,
tinctae Puniceo rubore malae,
os spirans casiam Syrosque odores,
pressi lingua fluens liquore mellis
te non esse hominem arguunt, sed unam
Nympharum e numeroue Gratiarum…
(Salmon Macrin, *Odes* 2.8.24–30)

(Your tiny little white teeth, your golden hair, your bright eyes, your cheeks tinged with Punic purple, your mouth with its breath of cinna-

[11] See the notes to this poem in Macrin 1998.

> mon and Syrian perfume, your tongue dripping with the flow of thick honey, all prove that you are not mortal, but one of the band of Nymphs or Graces…).

Once again, this mixture of the neo-Catullan and the Petrarchan produces a striking image of Gelonis which appeals, as is often the case with Salmon Macrin, to the sense of taste and smell as well as that of sight.[12]

It is clear, then, that Salmon Macrin introduced into his Latin love poetry images which were typical of Petrarch and his Italian followers. If he is not alone in exploiting this field of imagery, it is nonetheless true that poetic portraits are somewhat rarer amongst other neo-Latin poets at this time in France, though we do find some examples in the poetry of Nicolas Bourbon, such as the following which presents the reader with an evocation of his *innamoramento* with Rubella:

> Sola mihi occurrit soli pulcherrima uirgo,
> Non mihi mortalis, set dea uisa fuit:
> Obstupui, attonitusque diu vestigia pressi,
> Illa quoque obstipuit, continuitque gradum:
> Extemplo exarsi, sensique per ossa calorem,
> Nostra graui telo pectora fixit Amor:
> Olli uestis erat de pura candida tela,
> Aurea praeuiridi fronde reuincta coma:
> Omne genus uiolas gremio gestabat, at illae
> Ante pedes dominae procubuere suae.
> (Bourbon 1533, f. n6^{r})

> (A most beautiful girl, all on her own, stood before me, all on my own, resembling not a mortal but a goddess. Stunned and amazed, I followed closely on her heels for some time. She too was amazed, and continued on her path. All of a sudden I was on fire, and I felt the heat pervade my bones. Love transfixed my heart with his harsh arrow. Her white dress was made of a pure cloth, her golden hair was bound with a garland of greenery, her breast was adorned with all sorts of violets, but they flung themselves before their mistress's feet).

[12] See too *Odes* 4.4.1–9 for another description of Gelonis, "cuius / ceruix florida, cuius ora, cuius / occultae in tenero sinu mamillae / uincunt Indicum ebur niuesque puras / et marmor Parium et ligustra uerna et / nondum lilia macerata sole, / ecquando tibi solus ipse soli / sugam florem animae suauioris?" (whose beautiful neck, face, and breasts, barely visible on your tender bosom, outstrip Indian ivory, and pure snow, Parian marble and spring privet, and lilies still unwilted by the sun; will I one day, one to one, suck in the flower of your sweet breath?).

All this is very reminiscent of Petrarch: the poet's sudden *innamoramento*, the presence of the god of Love who wounds the poet's heart, even the garland of greenery makes us think of the laurel tree and Petrarch's Laura.

Thus, the theme of the portrait of the beloved can be found in various guises in these neo-Latin poets, but the topos of the contradictory feelings engendered by love is, if anything, even more frequent. It goes without saying that neo-Latin poets were acquainted with the Catullan *locus classicus*, "Odi et amo…", but the Petrarchan version of this theme is accompanied by various images which are not to be found in the Roman poet. In the case of Salmon Macrin, as the legitimate husband of the object of his affections, one might have supposed that this theme would be less frequent, but this is far from being the case. Macrin often expresses the intensity of his feelings in such terms, and his periods spent away from Gelonis, caused by his court duties, also give rise to the expression of feelings of grief. Consider, for example, the start of the following hendecasyllabic poem:

Quo, suauissima, quo, puella, philtro
incautum haud ita pridem inebriasti,
ut sic perditus atque amore caeco
uecors, nec moriar nec ipse uiuam,
sed longis cruciatibus supersim,
larua pallidior nouaque cera,
cui durum fuit ante contumaxque
has ad delicias iocosque pectus,
seu curas potius molestiasque
uero nomine si liceret uti?
(Salmon Macrin, *Odes* 1.24.1–10)

(What drug, sweetest of girls, what drug have you unexpectedly intoxicated me with, so that lost and insane with blind love I neither die nor live, but cling on in protracted torment, whiter than a ghost or freshly made wax? Before, my heart was hard and unyielding in the face of such delights and sporting, or rather in the face of these torments and pains, if I might call them by their true name.)

Petrarchan themes abound here: the unexpected nature of love, which acts like a poison; the poet's insensitivity to love before he met the beloved; and above all the use of antithesis. The poet is neither dead nor alive, love is both a delight and a torment, his previous imperviousness to love has changed into passion.

Bourbon, too, exploits the Petrarchan contrast between fire and water in an epigram dating from 1531:

Quaeris aquam virgo? Duo sunt mea lumina fontes:
Ex quibus (oro) vide flumina quanta fluunt.
Quod si ignem quaeris, mea sunt praecordia flammae,
Sic, ut aqua in me ignem suscitet, ignis aquam.
(Bourbon 1538, 56)

(Do you wish for some water, beloved? My eyes are two fountains; see, I beg you, what rivers flow from them. But if you wish for fire, my heart consists of flame. So, just as water produces fire in me, so does fire produce water.)

This conceit of the opposing elements coexisting in the lover would be frequently exploited by later poets in the vernacular.

In the case of another neo-Latin poet associated with Lyon, Jean Visagier, the excuse of an exchange of letters is used in order to represent the poet's feelings:[13]

Tuas cum lego literas, vel ipse
Ad te scribo aliquid, manus tremiscit,
Occurrunt lachrymae, dolorque mentem
Inuadit grauis, abripitque sensus
Omnes, quodque meas leuare curas
Debet, id cumulum molestiarum
Adfert, me sinit esse nec quietum
Nostri, Clinia, caeca vis amoris,
Et Musam iubet esse contumacem.
(Visagier 1538b, f. 35^{r})

(When I read your letter, or write something to you myself, my hand begins to tremble, tears well up, and a sharp pain penetrates my mind and robs me of all my senses. The very thing which ought to relieve my cares adds to my troubles, and the blind strength of my love affords me no rest, Clinia, and forces my Muse to be unyielding.)

This paradox, then, forms the theme of quite a long poem in which, towards the end, Visagier concludes:

Anceps langueo totus, atque viuus
Simne an mortuus haud scio, non dolore fractam
Nullam corporis esse portionem,
Tuas cum lego literas, vt ante
Dictum est, scribere vel iubet Cupido.

[13] Quotations of Jean Visagier (Iohannes Vulteius) are taken from Visagier 1538a, and 1538b.

(I am completely languishing, uncertain, and I have no idea whether I am alive or dead; there is not a single part of my body which is not broken with pain when I read your letter, as I said, or Cupid orders me to write to you).

Although at times this poem verges on the prosaic, it nevertheless shows that the topos of the contradictory feelings of love was spreading in the 1530s, perhaps even being reduced to a collection of formulas.

The last theme I propose to examine under the heading of Petrarchism, the *locus amoenus* where the poet meets his beloved, is more promising from a poetic point of view. Indeed, in Salmon Macrin, the erotic landscape is one of the main aspects of his poetic vision, which I have analysed elsewhere in an article on his *Epithalamiorum liber*.[14] In this collection, the poet is mainly concerned with mythological landscapes, inhabited by nymphs and satyrs, and the Dutchman, Johannes Secundus, would later exploit the *locus amoenus* in his own love poetry.[15] We also find an example of this in the opening lines of a poem by Nicolas Bourbon which we have already looked at:

Liquerat in croceo Tithonum Aurora cubili,
Et cristata diem significarat auis:
Visebam frondes & amoena rosaria solus,
Graminibus terra luxuriante nouis:
Multimodis volucrum resonabat cantibus aër,
Et Zephyro multus flante canebat olor.
(Bourbon 1533, f. n vi^{r})

(Dawn had left Tithonus in their crocus-coloured bed, and the crested cock had announced daybreak. Alone, I was gazing on the leaves and lovely rose-beds, and the earth teemed with fresh plants. The air re-echoed with the birds' polyphony, and many a swan sang in the gentle breath of Zephyr).

This spring scene, a prelude to the *innamoramento*, is reminiscent of certain early compositions of the Pléiade.

In a final example, an epigram by Jean Visagier, *De se et puella quadam*, the *locus amoenus* is this time a garden:

[14] See Ford 1997.
[15] See Ford 1993, 116.

Quae me in amore suo tam longo tempore torsit,
Langoris tandem est illa miserta mei.
Et me gaudentem spatiosum duxit in hortum,
In quo cuncta virent, flos quoque multus adest.
(Visagier 1538a, f. 17^r)

(She who for so long tortured me when I was in love with her has finally taken pity on my languishing. She has led me rejoicing into her spacious garden, where everything is fresh and where many a flower is to be found).

As is often the case with neo-Latin poets, the 'garden' here can only have an erotic sense: one thinks of another poem by Salmon Macrin, *Odes* 2.11.32–3, where, after an allusion to Gelonis' breasts, the poet exclaims: "This blessed garden of yours is filled with cinnamon and all sorts of sweet flowers" (Ille cinnama fert beatus hortus / et florum genus omne suauiorum…).

I have suggested that the poems considered so far are predominantly inspired by Italian vernacular or neo-Latin models, and this is entirely to be expected, given the French recognition of Italian cultural dominance in the first part of the sixteenth century. However, it is interesting in the Lyon context to note that French vernacular poems also found their way into Latin, and I will conclude this section by referring to examples of imitations of Clément Marot's poetry in Latin. If the Pléiade were dismissive of the poetic efforts of their predecessor, it is clear that he was held in considerable esteem in Lyon, with several poets punning on his name to suggest that he was a second Maro, or Virgil.

Thus, for example, one of Marot's early poems, a *rondeau* (*Au temps passé Apelles Painctre sage*) which was first published by 1527 in *Rondeaux en nombre troys cens cinquante*, re-appeared in 1533 in Nicolas Bourbon's *Nugae*, in the form of a Latin epigram (*Olim qui Veneris vultum depinxit Apelles*).[16] Bourbon's treatment of the *rondeau* is interesting. While keeping the sense of the original, a complimentary poem to the daughter of an artist from Orléans, as the French title informs us, Bourbon's version is far more compressed, dispensing with all that is inessential in the French poem, but producing a *pointe* which is more wittily expressed, and entirely in keeping with his other epigrams. This borrowing from Marot is typical of a number of neo-Latin poets in this period.

[16] See Marot 1990–1993, I. 169–70: "A la fille d'ung painctre d'Orleans, belle entre les autres", and ibid., notes pp. 560–61 on the dating, and Bourbon 1538, 92 for the Latin text. Defaux does not mention the Bourbon version in his notes. I discuss this poem elsewhere in Ford [2009].

To conclude this section, I wish to suggest that Renaissance Lyon offered the opportunity to both vernacular and neo-Latin poets to meet and to interact on equal terms, and that the kind of literary hierarchy which existed later elsewhere in France appears not to have been present here. Latin poets draw their inspiration from both vernacular and Latin poets from Italy, but they also draw on the poetry of their French vernacular counterparts, just as they in their turn do not hesitate to imitate neo-Latin works. Indeed, even without the evidence for this collaboration, we would expect it just by looking at their collections and the people to whom they dedicate their poems. Marot's *Adolescence Clementine* is preceded by a liminary epigram written by Nicolas Bourbon. Both poets write poems addressed to each other, and this network of like-minded writers extends much further: both poets address works to Jean Salmon Macrin, and Marot translated one of the latter's epigrams into French (*Ainsi qu'ung jour au grand Palays tes yeulx*, Marot 1990–1993, II 271); both had poems addressed to Rabelais and Scève, and members of the Budé family. Just as, a couple of decades later, Lyon would see the rise of women poets such as Pernette Du Guillet and Louise Labé, it would seem that its unprejudiced cultural climate allowed an easy interaction between Italian, neo-Latin, and French literature in a symbiotic rather than parasitic relationship.

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I now wish to move forward a couple of decades to the Paris of the 1550s. By this point, the group of poets associated with the great Hellenist Jean Dorat, which was originally known as the Brigade but is now better known as the Pléiade, was firmly established as part of France's literary elite. Its central core – Dorat, Ronsard, Baïf, and Du Bellay – shared a common esteem of Greek literature as well as of Latin, and they were associated with other humanist and poetic circles in Paris and elsewhere. Like the Lyon poets of the 1530s, they constituted a distinctive literary community.

Within this community, then, as in Lyon, interaction between neo-Latin and the vernacular was a common feature, and I wish to explore a few examples of this in the second, shorter part of this paper. One of the Pléiade's main aims as set out in Du Bellay's 1549 manifesto, *La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse*, was to establish the status of poetry as a vital element of national identity.[17] In a book whose title inspired the title of this paper, Dorothy Coleman showed how raising the prestige of French vernacular writing involved the systematic imitation of Roman models of a

[17] Du Bellay 1904.

suitably lofty register.[18] But in addition, the Pléiade set out to mark national events by creating verse collections – on births, marriages, deaths, military victories, etc. – normally of a collaborative nature. This offered the opportunity for various compositions to be presented, in a range of languages (Greek, Latin, and French), around a central theme, serving the dual purpose of immortalising the event and of showcasing the Pléiade's talents.

One such event was the death of Marguerite de Navarre in December 1549, which resulted in a *Tombeau*, published in Paris in 1551.[19] One of the works in this collection was a Latin ode by Jean Dorat, which was turned into French by Ronsard.

Qualis quadrigis raptus ab igneis
Sublime Vates in liquidum æthera
  Venit, manu flammante frenos
  Ignipedum moderans equorum,
	Ainsi que le ravi Prophete
	Dans une brulante charette
	Haut elever en l'aer s'est veu,
	D'un braz enflammé, par le vuide
	Guidant l'étincelante bride
	De ses chevaux aux piedz de feu:

Cum fulguranti lapsa Senis sinu
Vestis supinas decidit in manus
  Vatis minoris, flammeosque
  Visa cadens rutilare tractus
	Lors que de ce Vieillard la robbe
	Qui du sein flambant se derobe
	Coulla dans les braz attendans
	Du jeune Prophete, & glissante
	Par le vague fut rougissante
	Loing derriere en sillons ardans:

A tergo, ut olim quum ruit, aut procul
Visum superne proruere incitum
  Sydus, serena nocte, longos
  Pone trahens per inane sulcos,
	Comme on voit une etoille emeue
	Qui tumbe, ou qui tumber est veue
	Du Ciel, sous une clere nuict,
	Attrainant derriere sa fuitte
	Une longue flambante suitte
	De longs trais de feu qui la suit:

Sic nunc amictus Margaris horridos
Grauata, fecis participes suæ
  Natalis, exuto ueterno et
  Corporeæ grauitate molis,
	Ainsi MARGUERITE fachée
	De sa robbe humaine entachée
	Du premier vice naturel
	Ruant bas de prompte allegresse
	Le voile, engourdi de paresse
	De son gros fardeau corporel:

[18] Coleman 1979.
[19] Denisot 1551.

Sublimis orbes attigit igneos	Disposte au ciel est arrivée
Nitens quaternis ad Superos rotis:	Sur quatre rouës elevée
Spe cum Fideque et Charitate,	Foy, Esperance, Charité,
Vique malæ patiente sortis.	Et Patience dure & forte
	Qui courageusement supporte
	Toute maligne adversité.
His uecta sursum Diua iugalibus,	D'un tel chariot soutenue
Iam nunc beatis cœtibus interest,	Faitte Deesse elle est venue
Regina non paruæ Nauarræ	En la trouppe du Roy des Roys,
Sed patuli solidique regni.	Qu'ores elle embrasse & contemple
	Royne d'un monde bien plus ample
	Que n'estoit pas son Navarrois.

(Just as the enraptured prophet saw himself soar aloft in a burning chariot into the air, guiding upwards with flaming arm through the void the shining bridle of his fiery-hoofed horses; when the old man's cloak, slipping from his flaming breast, dropped into the waiting arms of the young prophet, and gliding through the void glowed far behind in trains of fire ; as we see a shooting star falling, or seeming to fall, from the sky, on a cloudless night, drawing in its wake a long blazing train of long streaks of fire behind it; just so, Marguerite, wearied with her human cloak, stained as it is with primeval sin, joyfully casting down her veil, benumbed by sloth from the gross burden of the body, has nimbly arrived in heaven, raised on the four wheels of Faith, Hope, Charity, and hardened, strong Patience, which courageously endures all evil adversity. Carried by such a chariot and made divine, she has joined the band of the King of Kings, which she now embraces and observes as queen of a far greater world than her realm of Navarre).

Dorat's alcaic ode becomes in Ronsard's hands octosyllabic *sizains*, but his version of the Latin poem is extremely close to the original, while nevertheless making some elements more explicit. There is very little padding here – the most is in the penultimate stanza, where Dorat's last line, "Vique malæ patientis sortis", becomes three lines in Ronsard.

However, the point of referring to this pair of poems is not so much to explore Ronsard's translation technique, which is excellent, as to question why he felt the need to do a translation in the first place. The obvious answer that suggests itself to the present-day reader is: in order to make the Latin text available to a broader audience. Yet if we consider the likely readership of the *Tombeau*, it is by no means certain that translation into the vernacular would have been necessary. Most people able to read would have learnt Latin. This notion is reinforced by the fact that Ronsard's was not the

only version. Du Bellay also produced in the same volume an *Immitation de l'ode latine de Ian Dorat*, of which the first stanza (heptasyllabic *huitains*) is:

Comme en un char qui bruloit,
Ravi parmi l'air liquide
Le grand Prophete voloit,
Et commandant à la bride
Des chevaux audacieux,
D'une main etincelante
Guidoit leur trace brulante
Par la carriere des cieux.
(Du Bellay 1908–1931, IV 40)

(Just as the mighty prophet flew in a burning chariot, snatched up into the liquid air, and governing the bridle of his bold horses, with shining hand guided their burning steps through the path of the heavens).

In addition, there was another French version by Jean-Antoine de Baïf, and an Italian version by J.-P. de Mesmes, another indication of the French desire to rival the literary reputation of Italy. What appears to be going on here seems akin to the kind of virtuoso exercise often seen with Greek epigrams in the sixteenth century, where multiple Latin versions were produced of a single composition, often by the same poet.

The suspicion that reasons other than vulgarisation are involved in the Pléiade's particular version of poetic interchange is confirmed by another example of translation between Ronsard and Dorat, this time, however, from French into Latin. In 1555, in *Les Meslanges*, Ronsard published his first mythological hymn, centred on Bacchus.[20] That same year, the *Hymne de Bacus* appeared in a separate *plaquette* printed by André Wechel, but containing Jean Dorat's Latin translation.[21] Is this an example of vulgarisation in a slightly different sense, making Ronsard's French vernacular poem available to an international audience, or, again, is something else also happening here?

It seems to me that the Pléiade are more concerned in these ventures in establishing their prestige as humanist poets than they are in bringing their poetry to a broad audience. As printers, the Wechel family was very much involved in serious humanist texts, printing in Greek as well as Latin and French, often for the courses given by the *lecteurs royaux*.[22] The format of

[20] Ronsard 1555b.
[21] Ronsard 1555a.
[22] At the prompting of Guillaume Budé, François Ier had established the Collège des lecteurs royaux in 1530, whose primary mission was to teach the three ancient languages,

the *Hymne de Bacus*, too, makes it resemble a classical text, interestingly with the Latin translation on the left and the French original on the right. Just like Ronsard's slightly earlier *Amours*, with their (French) commentary by the renowned humanist Marc-Antoine Muret, these printed texts are all quite consciously presenting Ronsard as a classical author.[23]

Yet at the same time, the exchange of texts which is going on within the group also points to a community of interests, which is reinforced in the print culture of the times. Paratexts in particular offer examples of this practice, where, typically, liminary verses will appear in several languages, often by different poets.

* * *

We have seen, then, two quite different ways in which neo-Latin and vernacular culture interact in sixteenth-century France. In the cosmopolitan intellectual climate of Lyon, neo-Latin writers can be seen to introduce poetic traditions from both classical and (Italian) vernacular verse, while at the same time drawing on native French vernacular and neo-Latin sources. The relatively loosely knit nature of Lyon culture no doubt encouraged this multi-directional exchange since, despite the existence of reasonably permanent *cénacles*, the city's central position at the crossroads to Italy and its important book fairs and printing industry saw the arrival of more temporary visitors such as Salmon Macrin and Clément Marot, who were nevertheless welcomed into the literary establishment. The result, however, was a fertile dissemination of ideas, which benefited both neo-Latin and the vernacular. The case with the Pléiade poets is different. Through a shared education and social background (a number of them came from the minor nobility), they formed a more coherent group, with a specific aim: the raising of the status of a classically-inspired, deliberately elitist French poetry, in rivalry with the best compositions of Italy. Vernacular collections were often given the same kind of treatment afforded to classical Greek and Latin texts, including an elaborate multilingual paratext, translations into Latin, and commentaries. At the same time, these activities helped to cement relations between the members of the group, and to contribute to the myth of a unified school of poets. But here too, the interchange between neo-Latin and the vernacular works in both directions, and for a group of poets capable of writing as readily in either French or Latin, the language of compositions may partly be determined by the intended audience, national or international, but may

Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The Wechels produced a number of texts for the College which were used by students for lecture courses.

[23] Ronsard 1553.

also be seen in the context of the friendly rivalry which existed between them as they participated in shared projects, inspired by a shared vision of the role of poetry in the world.

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