

## Chapter 16

### The Rose and the Joust. Giovan Battista Marino's *Adone* and the Chivalric Tournaments of the House of Savoy

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Between 1608 and 1609, Neapolitan poet Giovan Battista Marino (1569—1625) settled at the court of Charles Emanuel I, and became the official poet of the House of Savoy. According to the critics, Marino owed his success primarily to his most recent literary endeavours. First, the epithalamia *Il letto* (The Bed) and *Il balletto delle muse* (The Ballet of the Muses), written for the 1608 nuptials of the Savoy *infante*, Margherita and Isabella, who married Francesco IV Gonzaga and Alfonso III of Este, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Then, the panegyric dedicated to the Duke of Savoy, the *Ritratto di don Carlo Emanuele* (1609).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Maria Alberti's chapter in this volume, pp. XX-XX.

<sup>2</sup> The texts were printed in Giovan Battista Marino, *Epithalami del cavalier Marino. All'illustrissimo et eccellentissimo Signor Marescial d'Ancre* (Paris: Toussaint du Bray, 1616); Giovan Battista Marino *Il ritratto del serenissimo don Carlo Emanuele, duca di Savoia* (Turin: 1608). Critical edition with commentary by Giuseppe Alonzo (Ariccia: Aracne, 2011); Giovan Battista Marino, and *Panegirici et Epithalami*. Critical edition with commentary by Laura Madella, Luana Salvarani and Diego Varini (Lavis, Trento: La Finestra, 2012); and Pierre Bertelot, *Abrégé de ce qui s'est passé en la Cour de S.A. durant la Caresme prenant de l'année 1609* (Turin: Fratelli de Cavaleris, 1609). See also Michele Dell'Ambrogio, 'Tradurre, imitare, rubare: appunti sugli *Epitalami* del Marino', in Ottavio

These ‘official’ texts certainly had a great impact at the court in Turin. Nonetheless, the poet’s prestigious appointment there also depended on other factors. Indeed, Marino had gained that trust by ‘working on the spot’ or, in other words, contributing to the preparation of courtly festivals organized by the House of Savoy for the marriages of the *infante*, in 1608, and to some other festive events to be held during Carnival the following year. Bearing witness to his endeavours are two texts belonging to a different genre (allegedly not as noble as the panegyric or the epithalamium) – cartels to be declaimed in a joust.

Through an analysis of two cartels by Marino, this essay aims at showing the importance of equestrian tournaments and jousts in the cultural policies of the House of Savoy, and at highlighting the relations between courtly spectacle and encomiastic poetry, which have often been overlooked. The two cartels would be included in Marino’s book of rhymes, *La lira* (The lyre), published in 1614.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, these verses would also be incorporated into his masterpiece - the poem *Adone* (1623), and would become part of one of the most famous pieces of European Baroque poetry – the so-called ‘Praise of the Rose’ (*Adone* III, octaves 156-160).<sup>4</sup>

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Besomi, Giulia Gianella, Alessandro Martini and Guido Pedrojetta (eds), *Forme e vicende per Giovanni Pozzi* (Padova: Antenore, 1988); Danielle Boillet, ‘Les Epitalami de Giovan Battista Marino. Le livre et sa fabrique’, in Danielle Boillet and Liliana Grassi (eds), *Forme e occasioni dell’encomio tra Cinque e Seicento* (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2011) pp. 181-212; and Marco Corradini, *In terra di letteratura. Poesia e poetica di Giovan Battista Marino* (Lecce: Argo, 2012), pp. 15-68.

<sup>3</sup> Giambattista Marino, *La Lira* (1614). Critical edition with commentary by Maurizio Slawinski (Turin: Res, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Gian Battista Marino, *Adone* (Paris: Oliviero di Varano, 1623). Critical edition with commentary by Emilio Russo (Milan: Rizzoli, 2013). Two English translations of Marino's work have been published in recent years: *Adonis* (1623), trans. with introduction and notes

## Mantua, 1608

Jousts, and also tournaments in which knights fought in mock cavalry battles, were some of the Savoy court's favourite activities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, chivalric exercises revived Arthurian and Carolingian legends, which suited the House of Savoy's propaganda. The latter also created triumphal chariots, stage machinery, and ephemeral architectures which reflected that taste for lavishness which was typical of the Baroque period. By this time, the word 'joust' had come into use to define different kinds of chivalric combat *à plaisance* (for leisure). One was the quintain, or Saracen joust, in which each mounted knight had to strike an inanimate target attached to a pole; an ill-placed blow would cause the arm of the quintain, or Saracen [puppet] to swing round and hit the back of the horseman, and even disarm him. Another option was 'running at the ring', which involved riding at full speed with a lance and aiming to unhook small wooden rings from a pillar with the head of the lance. In addition, mounted knights could ride against one another with blunted lances, either in an open field or in designated areas known as the lists, which were separated by a barrier named 'the tilt'. Chivalric skills were also displayed through carousels, quadrilles, mock combat on foot or on horseback, or in one-to-one duels (*singolar tenzone*).<sup>5</sup>

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by Thomas E. Mussio (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019); and *Adone/Adonis* (1623), trans. with commentary by Marie-Frances Tristan (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014). On Marino's work in relation to festival, see Alessandro Metlica, *Le seduzioni della pace. Giovan Battista Marino, le feste di corte e la Francia barocca* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> On chivalry in courtly etiquette and not only in Turin, see Kate Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Jessica Goethals, 'The Patronage Politics of Equestrian Ballet. Allegory, Allusion, and Satire in the Courts of Seventeenth-Century Italy and France', in *Renaissance Quarterly*,

In the days preceding a joust, the so-called ‘challengers’ presented their cartel, a challenge to be recited publicly. Composed on commission by poets or court writers, the cartel outlined the allegorical dramaturgy of the joust, whereby organizers and participants impersonated fictional characters from chivalric romance, exotic tales, and classical mythology. The challengers' cartel stated the day, place, and rules of the joust, and challenged the assailants to compete in one or more of the planned chivalric activities.

Many were the equestrian festivals included in the celebrations programme that was planned for the marriages of the two daughters of Charles Emanuel I, Duke of Savoy, and Catalina Micaela of Spain, which took place between February and April 1608. Two tournaments were organized by the Duke of Savoy’s cousin, Henry I of Savoy-Nemours.<sup>6</sup> More particularly, the latter patronized a mock combat on the Piazza Castello and a joust in open field at Miraflores, where Charles Emanuel I had a sumptuous palace being built. Those events added to the main joust, in which the Duke of Savoy’s sons, Victor Amedeo I and Emanuel Philibert, acted as defenders. The joust lasted for three days, 18 -- 20 March. Military parades and themed pageants with allegorical chariots, music, and fireworks enlivened the first day. A quintain joust took place on the Piazza Castello on the following day. Finally, a tilt took place on the third day, at

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LXX-4 (2007), 1397—1448. Many are the seventeenth-century treatises on jousts, for example Marc Vulson de la Colombière, *Le vray théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie, ou le miroir héroïque de la noblesse* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1648); and Claude-François Ménestrier, *Traité des tournois, joustes, carrousels et autres spectacles publics* (Lyon: Jacques Muguet, 1669).

<sup>6</sup> On the Dukes of Savoy-Nemours, particularly Henry I’s father Jacques, see Matthew Vester, *Jacques de Savoie-Nemours. L’apanage du Genevois au cœur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2008).

night, in a hall where an ephemeral architecture representing the *Rocca della Fortezza* (Fortress of Strength) had been installed for the occasion.<sup>7</sup>

The bridegrooms, Francesco IV Gonzaga and Alfonso III of Este, both took an active part in the jousts. The former was very impressed with them as such equestrian games were not habitual in Mantua's festival tradition. Mock combats and quintain jousts had taken place on the Piazza San Pietro (today's Piazza Sordello) since the middle ages, but in the form of popular entertainments rather than court spectacles and had, as a consequence, been considered of lesser importance by the ruling dynasty. With a view to celebrating the nuptials of Francesco IV and Margherita of Savoy, following the bridal entry in Mantua, the Gonzaga also planned a festival programme in the city. It was different from that of Savoy, although it essentially envisaged a series of theatrical performances to be staged between May and June 1608. These included *Arianna*, an *opera* with *libretto* by Ottavio Rinuccini and music by Claudio Monteverdi; a play by Battista Guarini, *Idropica*, with specially composed *intermezzi* by Gabriello Chiabrera; and

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<sup>7</sup> Pompeo Brambilla, *Relazione delle feste, torneo, giostra ecc., fatte nella corte del Serenissimo di Savoia* (Turin: Fratelli de Cavaleris, 1608). See Franca Varallo, *Le feste alla corte di Carlo Emanuele I e G.B. Marino*, in Giovanna Ioli (ed.), *Da Carlo Emanuele I a Vittorio Amedeo II*, proceedings of the conference held at San Salvatore Monferrato on 20—22 September 1985 (San Salvatore Monferrato: 1987), pp. 159-66; Franca Varallo, *Il duca e la corte. Cerimonie al tempo di Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1991); Franca Varallo 'Le feste per il matrimonio delle *Infante* (1608)', in Sergio Mamino, Mariarosa Masoero and Claudio Rosso (eds), *Politica e cultura nell'età di Carlo Emanuele I. Torino, Parigi, Madrid* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1999), pp. 475-90.

two ballets: the *Ballo delle Ingrate*, also with lyrics by Rinuccini and music by Monteverdi,<sup>8</sup> and the *Balletto d'Ifigenia* by Alessandro Striggio.<sup>9</sup>

Things would change, however, during the final phase of the preparations. In order not to cut a poor figure in the eye of his powerful father-in-law, Francesco IV Gonzaga decided to organize two tournaments – a mock combat on foot, and a quintain – echoing the equestrian festivals that Charles Emanuel I and Henry I of Savoy-Nemours had just arranged in Turin. He thus commissioned Chiabrera (who was already in Mantua) to write the jousting challenge. That cartel, which Francesco would take with him to Turin, was published in Federico Follino's official account of the 1608 marriage celebrations in Mantua.<sup>10</sup>

Written in prose, the cartel featured the allegorical figure of Love praising the defenders – Francesco IV Gonzaga and Alfonso Guerrieri Gonzaga, Marquis of Montebello – to whom Love

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<sup>8</sup> *Mascherata dell'ingrate. Ballo del Sereniss. Sig. Duca, danzato per le nozze de' Serenissimi Principe di Mantova et Infanta di Savoia*, libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini, music by Claudio Monteverdi (Mantua: Heredi di Francesco Osanna, 1608). See Tim Carter, 'New Light on Monteverdi's *Ballo delle Ingrate* (Mantua 1608)', in *Il Saggiatore musicale*, 6, no. 1/2 (1999), 63-90; and Cecilia Nocilli, '*Ballo delle Ingrate*, 1608--1638: la musica per il balletto teatrale tra tradizione e innovazione monteerdiana', in *Philomusica on-line*, 17 (2018), 345-82, <http://www.danzeantiche.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2014-9151-1-PB.pdf>; 23 August 2020.

<sup>9</sup> See Paola Besutti, 'Giostre, tornei, fuochi e naumachie a Mantova tra Cinque e Seicento', in Paolo Fabbri (ed.), *Musica in torneo nell'Italia del Seicento* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1999), pp. 3-32; and Paola Besutti, *Il matrimonio dell'infanta Margherita: le feste a Mantova*, in Mamino, Masoero and Rosso (eds), *Politica e cultura*, pp. 491-506.

<sup>10</sup> Federico Follino, *Compendio delle sontuose feste fatte l'anno 1608 nella città di Mantova* (Mantua: Aurelio & Lodovico Osanna, 1608), pp. 2-4.

would reserve special treatment: *‘non come tanti prigionieri io gli traggio a piedi incatenati, ma sciolti su ’l mio carro proprio gli conduco’* (not like prisoners with chained feet I draw them, but free on my own chariot I do drive them).<sup>11</sup> That is exactly what was enacted during the tournament with knights fighting on foot in the courtyard of the *Corte Vecchia*, the old residence of the rulers of Mantua. A stunning bridal entry procession, inspired by Petrarch’s *Triumphus Amoris* (yet also bringing in elements from other sources), featured a multitude of historic, heroic, and mythological figures. The pageant ended with an allegorical chariot carrying a *tableau vivant* with Love triumphant over the Prince of Mantua and the Marquis of Mombello on two golden seats.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, Charles Emanuel I of Savoy had to commission a cartel to respond promptly to his son-in-law’s jousting challenge. Giovan Battista Marino, who had come to Turin with his patron, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, was entrusted with the task.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the cartel that Marino wrote for the Duke of Savoy is remarkable for the incisiveness of its prose, by far more elegant than the parallel text production for jousts. The title, *‘agli Effeminati d’Amore vergogna, sangue, strage, uccisione e morte’* [onto Love’s effeminates shame, blood, slaying, and death], may sound inappropriate within the framework of wedding festivities as it expresses the love-and-war *topos* with a surprisingly harsh register. The usual cascade of oxymorons such as *‘assalti’/‘scherzi’*, *‘risse’/‘paci’*, *‘catene’/‘braccia’*, *‘morte’/‘vita’* (assaults/jokes, riots/peace, chains/arms, life/death) leads to an unexpected outcome: unlike in his lyrical production, Marino here deprecated the *‘colpi [...] di due begli occhi’* (strikes... of two beautiful eyes) and the wounds

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<sup>11</sup> Follino, *Compendio*, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Follino, *Compendio*, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> On Marino’s biography see Emilio Russo, *Marino* (Rome: Salerno, 2008), pp. 23-33; and Alessandro Martini, ‘Marino, Giovan Battista’, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (DBI), LXX (Rome: Treccani, 2008).

made by *‘due tenere labbra’* (two tender lips). Instead, he celebrated the *‘valorosa mano’* (valorous hand) and the *‘tagliente brando’* (sharp sword) of the *‘cavalieri di Bellona’* (knights of Bellona). Reading between the lines, we can even perceive a gracious teasing of the Gonzaga’s ‘heroic’ interests through the wording *‘sappiamo che siete a più dilettevoli imprese avvezzi; ma la vera gloria è figlia della fatica, e del pericolo’* (we know that you are keen on more enjoyable endeavours, but true glory takes birth from effort and danger).<sup>14</sup> Such a proposition would be reiterated within the tournament held on 3 June 1608: as opposed to the allegorical chariot of the challengers, the Savoyard quadrille’s chariot did not carry Love triumphant, but the Roman goddess of war. With wit and irony, which a *‘principe poeta’* (prince and poet) such as Charles Emanuel I must have appreciated, the chivalric spirit of the House of Savoy was thus exalted.

The importance given by Marino himself to the cartel he wrote in 1608 can be deduced from its publication in the author’s collection of poems, *La Lira* (1614)<sup>15</sup> where it is paired with the cartel written by Chiabrera, and included in the section *‘Capricci’* (Caprices). Its inclusion is not surprising as in many early seventeenth-century books of rhymes, including those by poets such as Antonio Bruni and Ridolfo Campeggi (who were close to Marino), there is plenty of material composed for jousts and tournaments.<sup>16</sup> It would therefore be wrong to consider those writings as ephemeral trials, merely composed for courtly leisure. Rather, Marino was well aware of the significance of his cartel from a political and cultural standpoint, and would take pride in joining that text with his lyrics in a printed edition.

## **Turin, 1609**

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<sup>14</sup> Marino’s cartel was published in full in Follino, *Compendio*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>15</sup> Marino, *La Lira* (2007 edn), vol. II, pp. 333-34.

<sup>16</sup> See Boillet, *‘Les Epitalami’*, p. 207.



Early in 1609, Charles Emanuel I's birthday (22 January) and Carnival following shortly after, was enlivened with banquets, masques, and sledge races. Henry I of Savoy-Nemours played a decisive role on those occasions too. In addition to taking care of most festive events personally that year, he made sure that they would be neither forgotten nor overshadowed by the previous year's double marriage celebrations. He therefore commissioned an official account of the early 1609 festivities, to be written by his secretary, Pierre Bertelot. Born in Montargis, in 1581, the poet had followed his patron to Turin and attended the marriages of the Savoy *infante*.<sup>17</sup>

Bertelot certainly knew Marino at that time. He had composed a sonnet in his honour, printed as a preface to Marino's *Ritratto di don Carlo Emanuele*. He had also translated into French Marino's famous chanson, *Amori notturni* [Nocturnal Loves].<sup>18</sup> Not by chance, therefore, the Neapolitan poet's name appears in Bertelot's 1609 festival book, entitled *Abrégé de ce qui s'est passé en la Cour de S.A. durant le Caresme prenant*. Little attention has been given to this work, perhaps because copies of it are very rare. The reasons for its importance, especially for what concerns Marino, will be discussed below.

Printed in a book of nearly two hundred pages, Bertelot's *Abrégé* is a text in octaves describing in detail the festive events that took place at the Savoy court between 11 January and

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<sup>17</sup> Bertelot, *Abrégé*. See Franca Varallo, 'Sieur Bertelot alla corte di Torino. Note su un poeta cortigiano', in *Studi piemontesi*, XVIII-2 (1989), 459-67; and Gianni Mombello, 'Un poeta francese alla corte di Carlo Emanuele I: Pierre Bertelot (1581—1615)', in Mamino, Masoero and Rosso (eds), *Politica e cultura*, pp. 227-62.

<sup>18</sup> Bertelot's sonnet is in Marino, *Il ritratto*, n.n. [†<sup>12</sup>v]. A translation of *Amori notturni* is in MS 534 at the Musée Condé in Chantilly. See Antoine Adam, *Théophile de Viau et la libre pensée française en 1620* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1935), pp. 443-54; and *Histoire de la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. I, *L'époque d'Henri IV et de Louis XIII* (1948) (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997), p. 63.

3 March 1609.<sup>19</sup> Amongst these, different *ballets de cour* were patronized by the Duke of Nemours, who performed in those spectacles, and also took part as a challenger in the last joust of the celebrations programme. Henry I of Savoy-Nemours, who impersonated ‘Altimauro prencipe de’ monti Arimaspi’ (Altimauro, prince of the Arimasp mountains), recited a cartel addressed ‘*a i generosi Cavalieri delle selve alpine abitatori*’ (to the generous knights inhabiting the Alpine woodlands).<sup>20</sup> The author of that jousting challenge was Ludovico d’Aglié, Charles Emanuel I of Savoy’s right-hand-man for cultural politics. The Duke of Savoy’s cartel in reply to that challenge was by written by Marino and entitled ‘*I Cavalieri della Rosa al prencipe Altimauro, campione della Incostanza*’ ([From] the Knights of the Rose to Prince Altimauro, Champion of Inconstancy).<sup>21</sup> These two texts would also be included in Marino’s *Lira*, III, amongst his ‘Capricci’.<sup>22</sup>

The cartels had an important role in the joust. Henry I of Savoy-Nemours’ quadrille of challengers entered the list first, preceded by six trumpeters in silver-and-azure liveries, two camels carrying jousting lances, and twelve pages riding horses disguised as griffins to pay tribute to the Duke of Nemours’ coat of arms. Another page was carrying a painted shield with the motto ‘*Quinci l’armi e l’amore*’ (from here, arms and love). He was followed by a chariot with palms and laurel trees, which was drawn by a huge griffin, and surmounted by the allegorical winged figure of *Amoroso Ardire* (Amorous Daringness), wearing a feathered helm

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<sup>19</sup> Bertelot, *Abrégé*.

<sup>20</sup> Bertelot, *Abrégé*, pp. 72-78.

<sup>21</sup> Bertelot, *Abrégé*, pp. 124-37.

<sup>22</sup> Marino, *La Lira* (2007 edn), vol. II, pp. 325-30.

and holding an arrow. Before singing a madrigal, the actor impersonating that character handed over to the judges the cartel written for Henry, *alias* Altimauro, by Ludovico of Agliè.<sup>23</sup>

Charles Emanuel I of Savoy, who led the first quadrille of assailants, entered his list presenting himself as the ‘Cavalier della Rosa’ (Knight of the Rose). As was customary in Baroque jousts, not only did a knight’s motif (in this case the rose) appear in his cartel, but it was repeated on the whole decorative apparatus. Hence, silver roses were embroidered on the black jackets worn by the trumpeters who preceded the chariot of the Sun, featuring the twelve zodiac signs and drawn by four horses of a different colour (like Phaeton’s mythical fire-breathing animals). Charles Emanuel and his ‘men at arms’ were more extravagantly dressed, and each wore a golden turban with heron feathers and a short neck-length veil. Like the Amorous Daringness had done before, the actor impersonating the Sun sang a madrigal after giving the judges the cartel of Charles Emanuel *alias* the Knight of the Rose. Written by Giovan Battista Marino, that text was partly in prose and partly in octaves.

Writing an impressive cartel must have been important for the Neapolitan poet also because his bitter *querelle* with Gasparo Murtola, a prominent author at the Savoy court, had just come to an end. The rivalry between Marino and Murtola, which had started in Mantua during the 1608 nuptials of the Savoy *infanta* Margherita and Francesco IV Gonzaga, and had worsened thereafter through a poetic *tenzone* (challenge), resulting in the authors’ ‘*fischiate*’ (boos) and ‘*risate*’ (laughters), to become known as *Murtoleide* and *Marineide*, respectively. The Duke of Savoy’s verdict on the winner of that challenge was made explicit by bestowing on Marino the cross of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus immediately after the publication of his *Ritratto*, on 11 January 1609. Murtola reacted badly: he assaulted his rival and shot him in the streets on 1 February 1609. The attack failed, and yet generated suspicion about Marino’s

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<sup>23</sup> On this poet, see Renzo de Felice, ‘Agliè, Lodovico San Martino di, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (DBI), LX (Rome: Treccani, 1960).

character in Charles Emanuel of Savoy. Marino responded to these circumstances in a long letter written to explain what had happened and to justify himself in the eyes of the Duke of Savoy, who would finally appoint him a court poet.<sup>24</sup>

Thereafter, Marino obviously had to show his skills and loyalty to the House of Savoy. That explains the high quality of his verses. The inclusion of Marino's cartel in Bertelot's *Abrégé* meant publishing the octaves with Marino's 'Praise of the Rose', which would later be incorporated in his *Adone* (III, 156-159) and become one of its most famous works. Within that poem, the 32 verses of the cartel were the central part of a longer sequence (octaves 6-9, out of 12 in total), set within a narrative referring to the festive context in which the 'Praise of the Rose' originated. Indeed, the first audiences to enjoy it were not the readers of Marino's *Adone* (which was still an unfinished poem in 1609), but the judges of a quintain joust and the avid readers of Bertelot's *Abrégé*.

Marino's octaves 7-9 were transposed from Bertelot's 1609 festival book into the third part of Marino's *Lira*, and from there into his *Adone* (III, 157-159) without significant change.

Octave 6 (III, 156), however, is an exception, as shown below.

***Abrégé*, oct. 6, p. 133  
(1609)**

*Rosa, riso d'amor, del ciel fattura,  
di Venere delizia e meraviglia,  
pregio del mondo e fregio di natura,  
de la terra e del sol vergine figlia,  
d'ogni ninfa e pastor diletto e cura,  
onor de l'odorifera famiglia,  
tu tien d'ogni beltà le glorie prime,  
tra la plebe de' fior donna sublime.*

Rose, twinkle of love, work of Heaven,  
of Venus delight and marvel  
pride of the world and frieze of nature,  
of the earth and sun virgin daughter,  
of every nymph and shepherd  
enjoyment and care,  
honour of the scented family,

***Lira*, III, 'Capricci', 58, oct. 6  
(1614)**

*dal piè di Citherea fatta vermiglia  
d'ogni ninfa e pastor delizia e cura  
sopra il vulgo de' fior donna sublime*

by Citherea's foot made vermilion  
  
of every nymph and shepherd  
delight and care

***Adone*, III, 156  
(1623)**

*rosa del sangue mio fatta vermiglia  
d'ogni ninfa e pastor delizia e cura  
tu tien d'ogni beltà le palme prime  
sopra il vulgo de' fior donna sublime*

rose by my blood made vermilion  
  
of every nymph and shepherd  
delight and care

<sup>24</sup> See Russo, *Marino*, pp. 96-116.

hast thou first the glory of every beauty,  
amidst the plebs of flowers lady sublime.

above the vulgus of flowers lady sublime.

hast thou first the palms of every beauty,  
above the vulgus of flowers lady sublime.

The changes made to verses 5-8 show Marino's painstaking *labor limae*. The word 'delizia' (delight) is deleted from verse 2, but introduced in verse 4. In the 1609 text, verse 8 echoes Giovan Vincenzo Imperiali's strophes in his *Stato rustico*:

*l'infiammato garofolo e gentile,*

*e da la plebe d'altri fior lontano.*

[Carnation, inflamed and gentle,

and far from the plebs of other flowers.]<sup>25</sup>

Less dependant on this source, however, are Marino's variants in the 1614 and 1623 works.

The major change can be noticed in Marino's verse 2. As soon as 1614, that verse was re-written to conform with mythological narrative in *Adone*, whereby the rose is red because it is tinged with the blood of Venus, who accidentally wounds herself while staring at her young lover asleep. Such an etiological element, which is important in any reconstruction of the history of Marino's *Adone*, was unknown until the final version of the poem.<sup>26</sup> It is also likely to have

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<sup>25</sup> Giovan Vincenzo Imperiali, *Lo stato rustico* (1607). Critical edition with commentary by Ottavio Besomi, Augusta Lopez-Bernasocchi and Giovanni Sopranzi (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2015), X, verses 1010-11.

<sup>26</sup> A variant of the myth is that Venus stung her foot on the thorns of a rose. That did not happen during her first encounter with Adonis, however, but while she was trying to defend her lover from Mars. See Giovanni Pozzi, *La rosa in mano al professore* (Friburg: Edizioni Universitarie, 1974), p. 122.

been absent in the early draft of its *Canto* III, dating from 1605.<sup>27</sup> The change in the same verse, marking a difference between Marino's *Lira* III and *Adone*, derives from the place in which the account in octaves is situated within the poem since it is Venus herself who recites the 'Praise of the Rose'.

We do not know whether Marino had already decided to include this group of octaves in *Adone* by the time he was finalizing his *Lira* III. What is certain, however, is that by 1614, when the *Lira* was about to be published, the author aimed to present a mythological narrative that was coherent with that of the poem in progress. To succeed in his intent, he would revise published material thoroughly. Not by chance, the only correction made to the part in prose of the cartel: which, in 1609, the Knight of the Rose's flower was 'dedicated' to Venus, in 1614 and 1623, it was instead 'tinged' with her own 'blood'.

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<sup>27</sup> On the 1605 dating, see Marino's letter to painter Bernardo Castello in Giambattista Marino, *Lettere*. Edition with commentary by Marziano Guglielminetti (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), XXXIV, p. 53.

***Abrégé*, p. 128 (1609)**

*Non conviene che la nostra Rosa, fiore  
dedicato alla madre d'Amore,  
resti macchiata del sangue  
d'un sì disleale amante.*

[It is not convenient that our Rose, a flower  
dedicated to the mother of Love,  
e stained with the blood  
of such a disloyal lover.]

***Lira III, Capricci 58* (1614)**

*Non conviene che la nostra Rosa, fiore  
tinto del sangue della madre d'Amore,  
resti macchiato di quello  
d'un sì disleale amante.*

[It is not convenient that our Rose, a  
flower tinged by the blood of the mother  
of Love, be stained with that  
of such a disloyal lover.]

Also showing verse recurrence in Marino's work is the fact that octave 2 from his 1609 cartel reappears in *Adone* (XI, 7), as shown below.

***Abrégé*, oct. 2, pp. 130-131  
(1609)**

*Già la caliginosa aria notturna  
spogliava l'ombra e rivestia i colori  
e col canestro uscita era e con l'urna  
la condottiera de' novelli albori,  
da gli aurei vasi e da la mano eburna  
versando perle e seminando fiori,  
e precorreano e prediceano il giorno  
la stella innanzi e gli augelletti intorno.*

The caliginous air of the night was hitherto stripping shadows and covering colours while exiting was, with a basket and urn, the carrier of new dawns. And from golden vases and her ivory hand, she was throwing pearls and flowers. Yet, anticipating and announcing daybreak was the star ahead and the little birds around.

***Lira III, Capricci 58*, oct. 2  
(1614)**

*la condottrice de' novelli  
albori,*

the conductress of new dawns,

***Adone XI, 7*  
(1623)**

*Uscita col canestro era e con l'urna  
la condottrice de' novelli albori,  
da l'aureo vaso e da la mano eburna  
versando perle e seminando fiori.  
Già la caliginosa aria notturna  
spogliava l'ombra e rivestia i colori  
e precorreano e prediceano il giorno  
la stella innanzi e gli augelletti intorno.*

Exiting with a basket and urn was the conductress of new dawns, and from her golden vase and ivory hand she was throwing pearls and flowers. The caliginous air of the night was hitherto stripping shadows and covering colours. Yet, anticipating and announcing daybreak was the star ahead and the little birds around.

The only variant in Marino's *Lira III* is the word '*condottrice*' being replaced with '*condottiera*', in verse 4. In Marino's *Adone*, instead, there is a powerful change in syntax so as to avoid a

triple contraction in verse 3 ('*e col canestro uscita era e con l'urna*'). In addition, there is a simplification and rationalization of the passage, changing from a '2 + 4 + 2' structure to another configured as 4 + (2+2). The care with which these verses were revised and changed reveals the layered nature of *Adone*, a poem which took shape progressively through additions and revisions. Borrowing an image used by Marino himself to define his work, we can say that it is like an album of drawings.<sup>28</sup>

### **Annecy, 1612**

To understand the original meaning of the 'Praise of the Rose' it is important to remember that Marino's cartel had a clear political significance. As mentioned earlier, the octaves were written for a dynastic occasion, and were thus aimed at expressing the feelings of a court, especially with regard to the relationship between two mighty cousins. It is in that perspective that we should read the last octave of the cartel through which Charles Emanuel I of Savoy replied, with Marino's words, to the challenge of Henry I of Savoy-Nemours.

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<sup>28</sup> It was Tommaso Stigliani who affirmed that Marino compared his *Adone* to an album of drawing. See Andrea Lazzarini, 'Una testimonianza di Tommaso Stigliani. Palazzi e libri di disegno in una dichiarazione di poetica mariniana', in *Italianistica*, XL-1 (2011), 73-85; and Emilio Russo, 'L'*Adone* a Parigi', in *Filologia e critica*, XXXV-2/3 (2010), 282-87.



*Abrégé*, oct. 12, pp. 136-137

*Or tu de' fieri esserciti omicida,  
campion superbo e vantatore ardito,  
tu, che 'l secondo amor con fede infida  
seguì et essalti, e 'l primo hai già tradito,  
guardati pur da la mortal disfida  
del fortunato aventurier Fiorito,  
a cui convien che ceda ogni valore  
come cede a la Rosa ogni altro fiore.*

Thou, killer of intrepid armies,  
superb champion and daring braggart;  
Thou, who with untrustworthy faithfulness  
are chasing and praising your second love  
after having already betrayed the first one,  
beware of the mortal challenge  
from the fortunate Flowered adventurer  
whose primacy should be acknowledged  
since, to the Rose alike, all flowers abide.

*Lira III, Capricci 58, oct. 12*

*guardati da la morte, onde ti sfida  
l'aventuroso aventurier Fiorito*

beware of death, as thou art challenged  
by the adventurous Flowered adventurer

Why was the Knight of the Rose (Charles Emanuel) blaming Altimauro (Henry) for his 'untrustworthy faithfulness'? For the 'second love' of whom, or what, had Henry allegedly betrayed the 'first one'? Some critics believe that these verses actually express 'a challenge of knowledge' with 'an underlying, pervasive system of correspondences', through which Marino aimed to elevate himself to a 'champion of Constancy'. In other words, he would indulge in an allegorical discourse that was unrelated to the dynamics of the Savoy court. Faithfulness in love as a theme, however, has nothing to do with 'cosmic energy' and 'hidden *physis*', which some commentators saw lying behind the words in the cartel written by the Neapolitan poet.<sup>29</sup> Rather, Marino's challenge is a weapon being used in a dynastic controversy between two cousins, who fight against one another with courtly allegories according to the rules of Baroque jousting.

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<sup>29</sup> Giambattista Marino, *La Lira* (1614). Critical edition with commentary by Luana Salvarani (Lavis, Trento: La Finestra, 2012), p. 722.

From a letter written by Marino in early 1609 (although not dated), we know that the cartel for the Knight of the Rose (Charles Emanuel I of Savoy) was not the only encomiastic work that the poet was composing at the time. In fact, he was also working at ‘*un epitalamio incominciato parecchi giorni sono per le nozze*’ (an epithalamium that I started many days ago for the nuptials) of Henry I of Savoy-Nemours, ‘*a cui molto debbo e non posso mancare*’ (to whom I owe much, and cannot neglect).<sup>30</sup> That text, however, was never completed for political reasons.<sup>31</sup> The epithalamium should have celebrated the marriage of the Duke of Nemours with Charles Emanuel’s fourth daughter, Francesca Caterina. The Duke of Savoy had been longing for that wedding since 1608, despite opposition from both France and Spain. The French rulers would have liked Henry to marry Anne of Lorraine, Duchess of Aumale, whilst the Spanish crown was determined to prevent the Savoy from consolidating their alliances beyond the Alps. In Turin, the secretary of the Spanish envoys physically fought with the *Maître de camp* of the Duke of Nemours!

The issue dragged on for years, until 1612, when Charles Emanuel I of Savoy gave in to France and Spain by not consenting to the nuptials of his daughter and cousin. Scorned, the Duke of Nemours left Turin and returned to his castle at Annecy. A few years later, Henry I of Savoy-Nemours would plot with Don Pedro of Toledo, Governor of Milan, to depose Charles Emanuel. The conspiracy was discovered in time and failed, but it definitely compromised the relationship between the two cousins.

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<sup>30</sup> Marino, *Lettere*, XLV, p. 70.

<sup>31</sup> On the events recounted in these paragraphs see Ercole Ricotti, *Storia della monarchia piemontese* (Florence: Barbera, 1861—1869), 6 vols, (1865), vol. 4, pp. 20-28; Gaudenzio Claretta, *Il principe Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia alla corte di Spagna* (Turin: Civelli, 1872), pp. 101-21; Samuel Guichenon, *Histoire généalogique de la royale maison de Savoie* (Lyon: Guillaume Barbier, 1660), p. 1066.

In March 1609, the marriage negotiations between Charles Emanuel I of Savoy and Henry I of Savoy-Nemours were still ongoing. This can be inferred from the quintain held on the Piazza Castello. In particular, the Duke of Nemours' alter-ego declared, through his cartel composed by Ludovico of Agliè, to have crossed the Alps in order to admire the ladies of Piedmont, 'e particolarmente una' (particularly one), Francesca Caterina, 'la qual tanto quella che già mi vinse vince in bellezza, quanto questi campioni quelli che già furono da me vinti' (who [outshines] the one who had won me with her beauty earlier on, in the same way I have won over these champions).<sup>32</sup> Through chivalry *topoi*, Henry expressed his intention not to pursue an engagement with the Duke of Aumale's daughter so as to strengthen dynastic ties with Charles Emanuel's daughter instead. Thus, the allegorical structure of Henry's cartel emphasized Constancy as the virtue of the challenger:

*Venga pure a provare la fermezza della mia lancia chi non approva la fermezza della mia fede; ch'io nel corso farò ben tosto altrui vedere, come poichè solo seppi così bene cangiare, solo altresì saprò bene e costantemente amare, e fortemente armeggiare*  
[He who does not believe in the firmness of my faithfulness shall come and try the firmness of my lance; through the course, I will indeed make others see that in the same way as I was able to change so well, I will be able to love well and constantly, and also fight strongly].<sup>33</sup>

Charles Emanuel's cartel answered those solemn promises with sarcasm, often present in Marino's words, and addressed his opponent as the 'champion of Inconstancy' by alluding to his double-play in marriage politics. It appears that, by the time joust was being held, the Duke of

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<sup>32</sup> Marino, *La Lira* (2007 edn), vol. II, p. 325.

<sup>33</sup> Marino, *La Lira* (2007 edn), vol. II, p. 326.

Nemours was yet again thinking about marrying Anne of Lorraine – and he would actually tie the knot in 1618. Marino's lines were thus centred around the concept of unreliability in love, expressed through binary opposites. For instance, Altimauro's '*rozzo e selvaggio petto*' (rough and wild chest) was as '*sterile di fede e povero di costanza*' (barren of faithfulness and poor in constancy) as '*d'oro e di gemme sono ricche e feconde*' (fruitful and rich in gold and gems) were the mountains from where he affirmed that he came. Likewise, the griffins in the insignia of 'the most inconstant Prince' were '*simulacra*' of his 'light-heartedness' as Henry would neither have been '*men leggiro [...] nella fuga, che [...] nella fedeltà*' (less airy in fleeing than in faithfulness), nor '*più saldo [...] in sugli arcioni che in sugli amori*' (better set on the saddle than in love).<sup>34</sup>

Particularly impressive are the bitter tones of these apostrophes, some of which are almost forms of derision, as can be seen in Marino's concluding remark: '*Or poiché di cangiare così spesso pensiero vi diletate, non dovrete di quest'altra mutazione dolervi, cioè che la vostra superbia sia abbassata e il vostro valore abbattuto*' (Now, as you indulge in changing your mind so often, you should not suffer for this forthcoming mutation, which is your pride being lessened, and your value being subdued). While it is true that a provoking tone was customary in joust and tournament challenges, it is also true that atypical irreverence showed through Marino's cartels. His mocking attitude, permeating his courtly writings as well as major works, is likely to have pleased Charles Emanuel I of Savoy - at least initially. Accepting the cartels that Marino had written for him, the Duke of Savoy must have approved of the poet's aggressive, impertinent approach to jousting challenges, and permitted any such *lusus* in his courtly world.

In Spring 1611, however, some satirical texts which Charles Emanuel believed were addressed to himself circulated and made him change opinion about his *protégé's* witty *verve*. Marino thus ended up in jail for more than a year (from April 1611 to June 1612), and could not

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<sup>34</sup> Marino, *La Lira* (2007 edn), vol. II, pp. 326-27.

witness the Duke of Nemours failure in his marriage negotiations in Turin, and his haughty return to Annecy.

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