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Bold Fantasy: The Macaronic Epic of Teofilo Folengo Between Ariosto and Rabelais

by

Matthew Lane Mason

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requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Albert Russell Ascoli, Chair
Professor Diego Pirillo
Professor Timothy Hampton

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Abstract

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The *Baldus*, a lengthy macaronic epic crafted over the course of a lifetime by one of Italy's greatest poets, is a masterpiece of Christian *serio ludere* which presents to readers a rousing and protracted rebuttal to the Platonic critique of poetry. This dissertation performs a three-chapter examination of the language, genre, and text of the four editions of the *Baldus*, those curated by Teofilo Folengo, with the aim of illuminating how the diachronic and synchronic features of his epic, as well as his use of a mixed-language style, Macaronic, in dozens of texts linked to this central project, are not simply 'symptomatic' expressions of the convergence and conflation of humanist cultures, vernacular literary traditions, and ancient and medieval Latinities in a single text, but are rather highly generative, extraordinarily influential, and totally coherent parts of an *anti-epic* whose fictitious author, Merlin Cocaio, aims to outdo both Virgil and Homer—the greatest poets of the Western classical tradition—in macaronic verse. I demonstrate how three aspects of this poem—its language, genre, and textual presentation—interact with 'para'- and intertextual materials in the macaronic book and with an encyclopedic range of sources, to form a poem, collection, and even formalized prosodic system for Macaronic. Known to modern readers by way of the final, posthumous edition (1552), the *Phantasia Macaronicon* (as the *Baldus* was titled in the 1521 'Toscolana' edition) was not only read by many of the most prominent Italian poets of its moment, but is alluded to and imitated by important writers operating outside of Italy's tightly-controlled borders, including Rabelais and Cervantes.

To my father, causa fuit pater his

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the individuals who have helped me at various stages of this project. First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to Professor Albert Ascoli, whose generosity and patience with this *cavaliere errante* have been endless, and in whose seminars I cultivated deep reverence for Italy's immense literary, linguistic, and intellectual traditions. I would like to thank Professor Diego Pirillo for many stimulating conversations and seminars which shed light on the religious, informational, and political crosscurrents of the premodern Italian world. Conversations, readings, and a course on the Baroque with Professor Timothy Hampton have left me with questions about Macaronic and its place in the history of Renaissance literature, both without and outside of Italy, to which I attempt to furnish an answers in these pages; his knowledge of the writings of Rabelais, Montaigne, and many other authors and critics have both tempered *and* emboldened the interpretive lenses I have used in this investigation of the evolution of a text and language both fundamentally embedded within political and social realities, as well as "tutta sua". Conversations and a course on Triumphs with Dr. Henrike Lange have proven to be tremendously useful for honing my understanding of the iconographic and pictorial traditions that converge in certain episodes of the *Baldus*, and that reflect the enviroments of Mantua, Ferrara, and Venice through which the poet passed, thank you. Stimulating discussions, a trip to the Bancroft, and a course on post-ancient and medieval Latin with Professor Frank Bezner in my first year at Berkeley was an immensely valuable aid for writing this dissertation. Without this introduction to the infinite richness of the material, textual-paleographic, and scholastic cultures and traditions which comprise late ancient and medieval Latinity, as well as the mountainous scholarship dedicated to its study, the quality of this work, and particularly my translations and close readings, would have greatly suffered. The late Steven Botterill was to me a kind and knowledgeable guide to Dante's treatise on the vernacular as well as the extensive commentary tradition surrounding the *Commedia*; and his advice in the early years of my time at Berkeley greatly benefited this project's confrontation with the presence of Italy's greatest poet in Macaronic. I would not have arrived where I have in this project if it wasn't for the many graduate and undergraduate students who helped me along the way. Your intellectual collaboration and professional encouragement is invaluable and this peership is a crucial and deeply undervalued component of university life. To you I am unable to express the full extent of my gratitude and thanks. I want to thank particularly Jennifer Mackenzie, whose seminar on the Ferrara of Boiardo and whose work on chivalric heraldry made me think in new ways about Folengo's Gonzaga patrons; Brenda Rosado, for her indefatigable commitment to early modern languages and humanist literary traditions; to Kristen Keach, for endless optimism and hard work, to Kate Driscoll, for peerless wit, endless grace, and close camaraderie in the trenches of seminar work; to Elisa Russian, for illuminating conversations in the department library; to Margherita Ghetti, for laughs and tears. I wish to express my infinite thanks to Kristen Hook, Zachary Bekowies, Emily Rabiner, Bianca Facchini, Fred Dulson, Rachel

Chapter 1

Introduction

> Una lingua tutta sua, trasformabile a sua posta secondo il bisogno del suo orecchio e della sua immaginazione, dico la lingua maccaronica... tra lui e la natura non ci è nulla di mezzo.
>
> Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*

> Quisquis es, o tu qui meum hoc grassiloquum perlegendo volumen ridere paras, ride, sed non irride. Quia si dementer irridendo rides, alter Marguttus rideas irrisus.
>
> Merlin Cocai, *Apologetica in sui excusationem*

The origins of the critical and historical reappraisal of the life and works of Teofilo Folengo (1491-1544), Mantuan citizen and Benedictine monk celebrated for his compositions in Macaronic, a flexible and highly artificial style poetry which mixes Latin, Italian, and regional dialects from across northern Italy, may be attributed to a single chapter in the second volume of Francesco De Sanctis' *Storia della letteratura italiana* (1870). Despite De Sanctis' censorious characterization of the poet's (pseudo-)biography across this section of the *Storia*, he credits the author of the *Baldus* with an original poetic voice and powers of representation that stand out in a century of literary giants. It is a remarkable and under-appreciated fact that Folengo merits an entire chapter in De

Sanctis' epochal study of the history of Italian literature, which is also noteworthy for its placement between chapters dedicated Ariosto and Machiavelli. De Sanctis' treatment of Folengo functions as an essential bridge linking the *italianità* of two tremendously important writers of Renaissance vernacular literature (and history and political philosophy) from different regions of Italy (Florence and Ferrara) as well as a 'diverting' pause in macaronic 'realism' between longer considerations of Ariosto's divine control of "form" and Machiavelli's troubling mastery of "content".[1] Characterizing the author of the *Baldus* as a "scapestrato" and an incorrigible skeptic, he concedes that Folengo's "freshness" of vision in this poem, and his other macaronic and non-macaronic works, makes up for the faults of his biography; for De Sanctis, the *Baldus* is the product of an unique imaginative spirit who deploys an abrasive and peculiar language, described as "tutta sua" ("all his") to craft a masterpiece of Italian literature, even if this poem is *not* written in Italian. Macaronic and the *Baldus* are, in De Sanctis' limited knowledge of the chronology and print history of the poem, projects which developed in tandem.

This assessment is, of course, flawed in its assumption that a very worldly Benedictine monk, student of Pomponazzi, and interlocutor with Ariosto, *invented* the technique of inserting vernacular words into Latin hexameters, or that the poet adopted the macaronic style after failing to write a Romance in the language of Bembo. Such errors are due partly to the inaccuracy of his sources for the poet's biography (some of which were fabricated by Folengo in the prefaces to later editions of the *Baldus*), and partly to his own Romantic view of fiction in early modern Italy. What is less forgivable is De Sanctis' ignorance of the macaronic tradition, which was certainly not the discovery or invention of the writer of the *Baldus*, but which dates back as least as far as the Roman poet Ausonius, and was very popular among Paduan academics in the late 1400s.[2] His misgivings are an understandable reaction to a text and a goliardic tradition that prizes the mixture of languages, the vulgarity, obscenity, ribald humor, parody of corrupt religious institutions and medical profession

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[1] De Sanctis' interest in Folengo began during his 1848 imprisonment in Naples. During this period, he appears to have read Karl Rosenkranz's *Hanbuch einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Poesia*, which contains an apocryphal biography of Folengo (studiously debunked by Giuseppe Billanovich and others in the following century). See Carlo Cordié, "Notta Introduttiva a Teofilo Folengo" (Milan: Riccardi, 1977). Albert Sbragia writes that the chapter constitutes "an uncharacteristic indulgence towards a minor author whom De Sanctis locates at one of the most critical points in the Storia's unfolding saga of the Italian national-literary consciousness", *Carlo Emilio Gadda and the The Modern Macaronic* (Gainesville, FLA: University of Florida Press, 1996), p. 10. While it may have been the case that De Sanctis' inclusion of the chapter was "uncharacteristic," and that the chapter certainly occupies a central position in the design of the *Storia*, Sbragia is incorrect to characterize Folengo as a *minore* (either to his sixteenth-century audience or, even, to nineteenth-century ones, like De Sanctis, informed or misinformed as they might have been by the inheritances of literary misinformation—a claim that I will defend at length in what follows below.

[2] For the history of macaronic writing in Italy, see Ivano Paccagnella, *Le macaronee padovane: tradizione e lingua* (Padua: Antenore, 1979). For the history of macaronic in mixed-language sermons, see Ivano Paccagnella, "Mescidanza e macaronismo: dall'ibridismo delle prediche all'interferenza delle macaronee," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 150 (1973): 363–81. and Lucia Lazzerini, "'Per latinos grossos...': studio sui sermoni mescidati," *Studi di filologia italiana* 28 (1971): pp. 219–339.

in Italy, and subversion of humanism both as a cultural artifact and as a living rhetorical tradition. De Sanctis also anticipates the unwillingness of modern readers—including this critic—to revive a poem and tradition of signs in which misogyny is not only prevalent, but an overarching theme. Nevertheless, what De Sanctis began to acknowledge in his chapter on Folengo was the indelible mark this epic and poet left on the literary consciousness of Italy, Europe, and the many worlds beyond these places.

Changes to the language and textual presentation of printed material in sixteenth-century Italy transpired so quickly, and were often so profound, that a primarily printed poem such as the *Baldus* can, and has, served as an interesting case study for measuring the extent that print transformed the literature and literary culture of Italy over the course of these two decades (1510-1530). This is most clearly the case for the 1517 and 1521 versions of the *Baldus*, if not for the two later versions (printed in the 1530s and, finally, in 1552). On the one hand, due to the paucity of documents outside the editions of the macaronic books themselves, it is no easy task to account for why this poet elected to compose and revise his anti-epic in Macaronic, when most other notable Italians— most notably Ariosto—had already adopted the archaizing Florentine of Petrarch's lyric poetry and Boccaccio's prose to write all things literary. Nor do Folengo's editorial practices conform to the recasting of chivalric epic in the Florentine of Cardinal Bembo, as in the case of the Francesco Berni's *Rifacimento of the Orlando innamorato* (1541), or even Ariosto's Petrarchizing revisions to the *Orlando furioso* (1521, 1532). Especially after the *Poetics* of Aristotle became the sine qua non for the writing of epic poetry in Italy, the poem that became the *Baldus* suffered little in popularity. The unconventionality of the macaronic language, its fictitious author, enormous length, and quixotic generic and textual features, make Merlin Cocaio's most celebrated epic a difficult object for readers and critics to assess with complete expertise and critical impartiality: the first two editions (among the most popular among the poet's immediate readership) remain almost entirely unedited to this day.

What is equally concerning is the failure of the *Baldus* to provoke a single serious critical analysis by critics in Italy during most of the 1500s—a century in which textual criticisms of all sorts and varieties was produced. This does not correspond with the poem's wide-spread popularity: the books containing the *Baldus* went through at least four editions before 1550 and were republished eleven times over the course of the 1600s (no *Orlando furioso*, but still an impressive feat for the son of a Mantuan notary). Merlin Cocaio was translated into Spanish, French, Florentine, and German, and some even speculate that a Turkish translation was made, and his poetry is imitated or alluded to in the works of Rabelais, Bruno, the Spanish picaresque writers, and Cervantes.[3] Aside

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[3] For specific allusions to Folengo in the works of Bruno, see Barberi Squarotti "Bruno e Folengo," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 127 (1958), pp. 97-103, and Marco Faini, *La cosmologia macaronica: l'universo malinconico del Baldus di Teofilo Folengo* (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2010), pp. 54–64. Rabelais' debt to Folengo is recorded in the title of the earliest French translation of the *Baldus*, which has been recently edited by Carole Primot. For the history of this translation and Folengo's macaronics in France, see *Histoire macaronique de Merlin Coccaie, prototype de Rabelais* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021), pp. 7-55.

from a few passing allusions by Doni, however, Merlin is almost willfully ignored by the critics towards which Aquario Lodela—the author's playful heteronym—deliberately thumbs his nose in the preface to the first two editions.[4] In later centuries, Merlin and the *Baldus* is referenced simply to prove a point, as in the case of the mention Merlin receives in Alessandro Manzoni's *Della lingua italiana*.[5] As the interlocutor in the dialogue struggles to define the necessary requirements for a national language, Merlin's macaronic style becomes an exception which serves to define the rule: not every manner of communicating, what the speaker refers to as a "mezzo d'intendersi", possesses the special one that marks a distinct language. Unlike for De Sanctis, who, ignoring its origins in the artificial neo-Latin culture of Italian humanism, regards Folengo's language as an organic, living entity which responds to the issues of his generation (thus placing his chapter on Folengo at the structural "heart" of sixteenth-century literature in Italy, between Ariosto and Machiavelli), for Manzoni, Macaronic is nothing more than an artificial *kunstsprache*, which played no important role in contributing to the development of the Italian (national) language. In both cases, Macaronic is an anomaly, threat, or dead-end for the projects of literature and languages in Italy, a linguistic *non plus ultra* beyond which the poetry and language itself threaten to unravel, or disappear entirely.

In the twentieth century, the *Baldus* experienced a breakthrough when it became identified with "espressionismo," something of a critical buzz word popular in literary circles of the 1980s and '90s to characterize the novels Carlo Emilio Gadda, like *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana*. In a number of essays and in an introduction to Gadda's *Cognizione del dolore*, Gianfranco Contini suggested that a lineage of macaronic poetry might be traced from Folengo's macaronic poetry to the Scapigliati and then to Gadda of the post-WWII years, a lineage in which the "expressive" use of dialect to animate the language of literary texts is traced first to Macaronic. Because the poet's language preserves so many words from dialects in the matrices of Latin syntax, morphology, and meters, Macaronic came to be identified with later movements which reevaluated and revitalized Italy's vibrant multilingual literatures. In his essay on Folengo, Cesare Segre writes that "Italian is substantially the only great national literature whose production in dialect constitutes a visceral and

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[4] The first to discuss Merlin's poem is Iacopo Mancini, *Lezzione sopra alcuni dubbi in Poesia, intorno due versi di Merlin Cocai Poeta Mantovano*, in *Alcune lezzioni di Iacopo Mancini Poliziano* (Genova: 1591), 71-118. Intriguingly, his analysis of the first line of the *Baldus* also contains a brief defense of poetry. See also, G. Parenti, "Phatasia plus quam phantastica e l'inspirazione del Baldus in le tradizione del testo," in *Studi di letteratura italiana offerti a Domenico de Robertis*, ed. F. Gavazzeni and G. Gorni (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1993), pp. 147–50.

[5]"Ditemi, infatti: quando, nel leggere le *Fourberies de Scapin*, voi v'abbattete a quelle parole: 'Dites moi un peu, fous, monsir l'homme, s'il ve plait, fous savoir point où l'est sti Gironte que moi cherchair,' non le intendete voi come il rimanente? Direte però che siano lingua francese, o una lingua qualunque? Sono sicuro che intendete ugualmente le *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* d'Ulrico de Hutten, o chiunque sia l'autore di quella facile e superficiale buffoneria, e le poesie maccaroniche di Teofilo Folengo, e che non vorreste chiamar nè l'une, nè l'atre, lingua latina, nè lingua. E quando si dice a uno: voi possedete la tal lingua; e quello risponde: no, no; mi farei intendere in quella lingua, ma possederla, no; vi par egli che facia una distinzione senza fondamento?" *Opere inedite o rare di Alessandro Manzoni*, vol. 4 (Milano: Rechiedei, 1883-98), pp. 150-1.

inseparable corpus with the rest of the patrimony," and even suggests that the Scapigliati were truer to the original spirit of macaronic composition (defined by what he narrowly defines as "linguistic interference"), as opposed to the unspecific alternation of multiple languages, as in the cases of Pasolini and Arbasino.[6] While this lineage omits the considerable diachronic distance between the languages of Gadda and Folengo, it synchronically associates their styles, which are now characterized by a "linguistic ecumenism".[7] In a strange twist of fate, the failure of the *Baldus* to rise to critical importance in Italy now seems to be replaced by the task of situating the poem and the collections of macaronic poetry containing it within the history of the development of dialects literatures and novel form itself. Efforts like those of Sbragia have showed some success in this regard, but much work remains to be done to adequately account for the extent of Folengo's influence on later writers both inside and outside of Europe.[8] Admittedly, Folengo's macaronic poetry can be quite challenging to translate into a monolingual settings; thus calling for a particular kind of interdisciplinary expertise that one finds, for example, in the scholarship dedicated to Folengo's most important reader in France, Rabelais. And despite scholarly awareness of the influence of the ancient novel (like those of Lucian, Apuleius, and Heliodorus) on Renaissance long-form poetry and proto-novelistic forms, including *Baldus*, the opacity of this language belie the tremendous of the book in early modern Italy and beyond.[9]

The dissertation summarized below aims to provide both a new reading of the *Baldus* as well as a succinct description of the contexts (political, social, literary, and philosophical), that gave rise to Macaronic and to the four books composed by Merlin Cocaio and edited by Aquario Lodela. It attempts to account for why this poet came to be known as *l'Estremo*, the "Extreme One," and to

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[6] The quote is a translation from the introduction of Albert Sbragia, *Carlo Emilio Gadda and the The Modern Macaronic* (Gainesville, FLA: University of Florida Press, 1996), originally in Gianfranco Contini, *Quarant'anni d'amicizia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989). See also the "Saggio introduttivo," in *La cognizione del dolore*, by Carlo Emilio Gadda (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), pp. 19–22. For macaronic as a technique of interference (Folengo, Gadda), as opposed to a general form of polylingualism (Pasolini), see Cesare Segre, "La tradizione macaronica da Folengo a Gadda (e oltre)," in *Cultura letteraria e tradizione popolare in Teofilo Folengo*, ed. Ettore Bonora and Mario Chiesa (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1979), pp. 62–74.

[7] Cesare Segre, "La tradizione macaronica da Folengo a Gadda (e oltre)," *Semiotica filologica*, 1979, p. 187.

[8] Barbara C. Bowen has referred to works like the *Baldus* and the Pantagruel as "narratopedias" in her "'Fabulous' Heroes: Baldus, Pantagruel, Alector," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini, Memoria Del Tempo 36 (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012), p. 202. For macaronic as a site of rupture and continuity in this history of the novel, Sbragia's book has proven useful, if longsighted: "the macaronic is the preconscious of the modern novel. Hidden away in the forgotten folds of a prehistory, the macaronic would reappear in the novel's moment of ontological crisis" (p. 19).

[9] For a study of this history, see Guido Mazzoni, *Teoria del romanzo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011). Folengo's episode of the whale in book 22 of the poem indicates his extensive familiarity with Lucian's *Vera Historia*, among other sources.

answer the questions that naturally arises from his outlier status: extreme to what degree?[10] Indeed, why extreme at all, if macaronic literature existed long before this Merlin dipped his proverbial quill in ink, or supervised the typesetting of priting forme from a manuscript at the printing houses of Alessandro Paganini in Venice and on shores of Lake Garda? Extreme when compared to what textual traditions, philosophical positions, political stances, and learning practices? How does this author's fringe position engage with the tremendously fertile linguistic and textual cultures of his period? The longest extent poem in Macaronic is not *so* far removed from humanist typologies so as to be unrecognizable to readers as a Renaissance epic in the macaronic style; indeed, its core innovations spring from what is a carefully masked, even deliberately falsified, classical education—from the meters, content, commonplaces, conventional uses of metaphor, programmatic statements, use of irony, the list goes on. As I trace the goliardic, and specifically Paduan, genealogy of Macaronic as it arrives to this Mantuan rival of Vergil (and the entire humanist Vergilian tradition), I will show how the existence of the pre-Folenghiani serve to mitigate the notion that this poet is "extreme", and indeed to support the claim that he is, instead, a foundational author both for the tradition of anti-Augustan poetry in the world, for his own particular 'macaronic' lineage, and for the poetry of Renaissance and Renaissances in general.[11]

Scholarship on Folengo is not unsubstantial and may be divided into several camps of interpretation which differ primarily in their definitions of precise nature of Macaronic and Folengo's contribution to it. While most of the criticism concerns the *Baldus*, Merlin also composed verses in a range of different styles and linguistic formats, which include poems also in Macaronic, a polylingual autobiography (the *Caos del tri per uno*, 1527), a mini-chivalric poem dedicated to upbringing of Orlando (the *Orlandino*, 1525), and poems on religious subjects composed during the latter half of the poet's life.[12] For the purposes of this project, I have drawn intertextually from the *Chaos*, *Orlandino*, and the 'minor' macaronic poems, keeping with scholarship of the past thirty years. Decidedly more is written about the poem in Italian than in English: I have primarily worked from an edition of the *Baldus* edited by Mario Chiesa, together with my own transcription of the first, so-called Paganini edition of the poem. Chiesa's essays on the *Baldus* bridge the gap between those who view Folengo as a faithful Benedictine monk (Ugo Renda and Giuseppe Billanovich)

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[10] For the epithet, found by Luigi Sbaragli next to Folengo's name in the catalogue of members of the *Accademia degli Intronati*, see Alessandro Capata, *Semper truffare paratus: Genere e ideologia nel Baldus di Folengo* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000), 194–98.

[11] For further comparison of Folengo to his precursors, see Ettore Bonora, "L'incontro di tradizioni linguistiche nel maccheronico folenghiano," in *Retorica e invenzione: studi sulla letteratura italiana del Rinascimento* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1970), 79–89; Ivano Paccagnella, *Le macaronee padovane: tradizione e lingua* (Padua: Antenore, 1979); Luca Curti, "Sul macaronico," in *Teofilo Folengo nel quinto centenario della nascita* (1491-1991), ed. Giorgio Bernardi Perini and Claudio Marangoni (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1993), pp. 141–82.

[12] For his minor macaronic compositions, see Teofilo Folengo, *Macaronee minori: zanitonella, moscheide, epigrammi*, ed. Massimo Zaggia (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), used extensively in this dissertation. The religious works include *La Humanita' del figliuolo di Dio* (1533), *La palermitana* (1539) and a *Hagiomachia* (1540-4).

and those who prefer him to be a radically "secular" libertine operating outside of religious ortho-doxy (Alessandro Luzio, Cesare Goffis, Lucia Lazzerini).[13] For biographical and socio-cultural details, I have referred to Giuseppe Billanovich's *Tra Don Teofilo Folengo e Merlin Cocaio* and the *Vita e costume della rinascenza in Merlin Cocai* by Luigi Messedaglia.[14] A 2009 conference at Indiana University produced a collection of essays which has proven to be useful for under-standing of the poem in new ways, as has a recent conference at the Scuola Normale Superiere in 2017. Nevertheless, criticism of the 1517 and 1521 versions of the "Phantasiae Macaronicon" (the title of the 1521 Baldus) are scanty. Ann Mullaney, the translator of the final edition of the *Baldus* into North American English, has repeatedly claimed to have decoded the "erotic" code present in Folengo works, much of it concerning sodomy and various homoerotic acts.[15] In her 2009 book chapter, Angela Capodivacca argues that the character Manto is a "figure of the author" for Merlin, who uses Macaronic to synthesize and transform pre-modern theories of philosophical skepticism and the imagination.[16] Chiesa's commentary and essays have also clarified key issues of language and conventional tropes in the poem, as has Marco Faini for the poet's cosmological and metaphysical imagery in *La cosmologia macaronica: l'universo malinconico del Baldus di Teofilo Folengo*.

   Folengo's dual status as both a poet with reformist inclinations and a faithful Benedictine monk distinguish him from other dialect authors of the period, such as the playwright Angelo Beolco ("il Ruzzante") and the pornographer, 'scourge of princes,' and imitator of Folengo, Pietro Aretino. With regards to Macaronic itself, the definitive study is clearly Ugo Enrico Paoli's 1951 *Latino maccheronico*, still the standard tool for scholars hoping to learn about the macaronic code and Folengo's transformation of it into a fully-fledged poetics. Massimo Zaggia's *Macaronee minori* and separate articles containing the *editio princeps* of the first four books of the Paganini and Toscolana poems also provide a clean and reliable source for citing parts of the different versions and the additional materials from each these two editions. Ettore Bonora's chapter on the poet's linguistic erudition has proven very illuminating, as has Folena's chapter on the languages of the

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[13] See Mario Chiesa and Simona Gatti, *Il Parnaso e la zucca: testi e studi folenghiani* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1995). For a description of Folengo's time in Sicily, where he composed religious poetry, see Massimo Zaggia, "Teofilo Folengo e il suo soggiorno in Sicilia," in *Tra Mantova e la Sicilia nel Cinquecento*, vol. 3, Biblioteca Mantovana 2 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003), 785–929.

[14] Giuseppe Billanovich, *Tra Don Teofilo Folengo e Merlin Cocaio* (Naples: R. Pironti, 1948); Luigi Messedaglia, *Vita e Costume Della Rinascenza in Merlin Cocai*, ed. Eugenio Billanovich and Myriam Billanovich (Padua: An-tenore, 1973).

[15] Ann Mullaney, "Proposal for an Allegorical Reading of Folengo's Baldus and Chaos del Triperuno," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini, Memoria Del Tempo 36 (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012), as well as Ann E. Mullaney, "Ariosto's Pathway to Posterity," MLN, 133, no. 1 (2018): 100–111.

[16] Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse: Macaronic Fantasy and Skepticism in Teofilo Folengo's Baldus," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012), pp. 2012.

Chaos.[17] Clarification of the Teofilo's language may finally be found in Chiesa's 2013 collection of essays, one containing observations on macaronic poetics that is now found under the subheading "L'ars macaronica." Importantly, Chiesa notes that both Folengo and more modern scholarship tends to refer to his style as *macaronico* (as opposed to "Latino macaronico," a convention the poet started and that I willfully adopt in what follows.

Lastly, Roberto Galbiati's several articles on the Paganini and Toscolana *Baldus* have provided extremely insightful readings of important episodes from the first two editions of the poem, to which I refer and respond in the fourth chapter. I raise the stakes of Galbiati's claim about what the macaronic poem really "is" by reading it in a way that makes legible to self-described *moderni* what such an artifact and poet might have been doing to silence his interpreters (and inquisitor-censors). In addition to these author-specific resources, I am indebted to scholarship on Renaissance polylingualism produced by Carlo Dionisotti and Gianfranco Folena: their work patches a hole in the study of local and regional literatures of Italy that rejected the commercializing dialect and mercantesca script of Florence, thus shifting critical attention and awareness back onto poets like Folengo and Ruzzante.[18] These resources, along with many others, have been very useful for confronting the elegance and the force of a poem whose disproportions and linguistic excesses conceal great beauty and even knowledge, like so many pearls cast before swine.

The initial component of my dissertation evaluates macaronic as language and generic and textual approach to writing, or style. My comparative approach frames the *Baldus* and other macaronic texts from the double perspective of both Latin(s) and the vernacular(s), and from a variety of different interpretations of language that are evidenced within the texts and its para-texts. In the first chapter, I investigate how Folengo's poem can be seen to vastly expand the parameters and ambitions of Tifi Odasi and his famed *macaronea secta*, transforming what *was* originally a local goliardic or university tradition into a trans-regional and trans-temporal poetics, fully capable of nimbly traversing and transgressing literary codes of all sorts, and even altering the course of linguistic history itself, by directly engaging with the matter of history as well as participating in "linguistic interference". In this view, the *Baldus*, in its different versions, is both Italy's "shock of the modern" as well as its "shock of the ancient", a text that disrupts and pushes forward literary innovation from the very forefront of the literary innovation and avant-garde-production, while anticipating its own retreat from this vantage point, particularly in the third and fourth versions, to safer, more temperate, 'conservative' grounds.

I then assess the 1517 publication of the poem as an decisive, if overlooked, turn in the history of the printed book in Europe, before I turn back to my discussion of this language from more

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[17] Bonora, "L'incontro di tradizioni linguistiche nel maccheronico folenghiano." Gianfranco Folena, "Il linguaggio del 'Caos,'" in Cultura letteraria e tradizione popolare in Teofilo Folengo, ed. Ettore Bonora and Mario Chiesa (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1977), 230–48.

[18] See Carlo Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1967); Gianfranco Folena, *Il linguaggio del caos: studi sul plurilinguismo rinascimentale* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991).

"theoretical" perspectives. Furnishing a definition of Macaronic as a poetics in the next chapter, I argue that the *Phantasiae Macaronicon* can not be said to be an epic, nor any other distinct genre of poetry, including the kind of macaronic poetry that preceded it in Italy: this poem is, rather, best conceptualized as a synthesis of poetics styles that conflates systems of writings and thought—many of which are not poetic—in order to form an unprecedented anti-Vergilian bulk-work against the genocidal threat of classicism and the poetics of empire. By way of stylistic and generic alchemy, the *Baldus* vastly expands the limits of macaronic Latin poetry in Italy. It sets an important literary precedent for the picaresque which may qualify this text as its most important generic progenitor (and Folengo as its "inventor"). Moreover, at the same time that the poem generates new forms by blending together, and systematically contaminating, classical and other high forms with many other kinds writing, it responds to the greatest Christian satire in the Italian vernacular tradition—Dante's *Commedia*—by rendering horizontal the verticality of the famous Florentine poet's 'divine' satire.[19] After assessing the uncompromising originality of this poem's contribution to Western Literature, I present a new, anti-Bakhtinian method of tracking its development between editions: Merlin's macaronic muses.

In this section, entitled "The Art of Grotesque Muses", I argue that Folengo's muses have been read backwardly by his critics (who generally view the *Baldus* of the final edition of the macaronic text as the most 'developed', because of how these muses organize the text from the third edition onward). Merlin's muses call not only to be examined as the principle *generic* feature which guides the 'development' of the macaronic text, but as a generic and textual mechanism that allows Folengo to effectively invent the literary grotesque, or *grottesco letterario*. In short, I argue that the *Baldus* is not only a *successful* syncretic and eclectic artifact in each of its versions, but that it is also a *coherent* one that, in each version, is the 'same' despite many changes and alterations; and that the textual design of this "anachronic" artifact, as well as the sources that are continually cited by the poet in the glosses, recommend that it be understood as an anti-epic that deliberately and ostentatiously subverts the imperial project of the *Aeneid* and the colonial model of *Translatio imperii* by way of Christian piety and humorous folly. From the first edition onward, the *Baldus* is unmistakably a response to both the romances of chivalry as well as to the *Aeneid*; it can neither be defined as a simply parody of the one, nor the other; nor can it be simply labeled a hodgepodge of the two, with a sprinkling classical and local literary models and genres. Put simply, within the topsy-turvy universe that is Macaronic, Merlin holds a mirror up to the mixtures of literary cultures present in Mantua, Ferrara, Venice, and Roman courts of 1500s Italy.

In the fourth chapter, I show how the first two editions of the macaronic book perform a range of functions that are both new and old respective to the print culture of humanism in Italy. My decision to examine not only the textual features of first two editions of the poem—which are the most heavily encrusted with glosses, prefaces, letters, and other non-poetic, 'para'-textual features—is

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[19] See also my discussions of Folengo's Sordello and Manto in chapter 1, as well as my discussion of Merlin's address to poets in book XXV in chapter 3, section 1.

the result of the interpretive position I have developed over the course of the dissertation, which hopes to confront and interpretively encompass the full dimensionality of the poem and its first two version in their fullness, rather than to philologically isolate and ontically particularize each of their constituent parts, whether they be individual words, generic tropes, or textual features. In the two sections of the final chapter, I show how the poet constructs different heteronyms to situate the collection and the *Baldus* in what might be understood as a trans-historical temporality: whereas his Merlin writes in a post-medieval 1300s Italy and iconoclastically pokes fun at Dante (possibly also his contemporary) as well as Vergil, Lodela and the other herbalist-editors carefully package Merlin's poetry while aggressively publicizing him as a newly discovered Trecento humanist author in the prefaces and glosses. These engagements with the poem's textual features, which includes a brief examination of Seraphus, a wily alter-Merlin, leads to a set of close readings of some of the poem's more textually engaging episodes, in which both the poet Merlin and the "hidden author" reflect on what is happening in the present of the poem's composition—or even to descend into it, both greeting and delivering the sacrament of the Holy Confession to his characters. My claim in this chapter is that the *Baldus* in the first two editions was the most popular because it was accompanied by so many non-poetic textual features, precisely the features that exit the poem in the third, mid-1530s edition.

What this critical reevaluation of the language, genre, and text of the *Baldus* hopes to achieve is to furnish for readers who have lived through the second decade of the twenty-first century a 'new' reading and interpretation of a very difficult poem yet again on its 'own terms' (as well as the terms of texts that the author can be presumed to have read and to be incorporating within this wild and wily work), terms which involve changes (the earliest whisperings of Reformation in Italy, the emergence of new and powerful technologies like the printing press) that may be reasonably compared to changes that are radically and irrevocably transforming, for better or for worse, "our" world. What textual, generic, and linguistic transformations between the versions of *Phantasia* make clear is that what might at first seem to be a radical or original Christian epic in 1517 may eventually be greeted as a classic by authors great and small, a work that is both "worthy of faith and obedience" and that, as a classic, may be easily pointed to as a progenitor of new genres, and new narrative forms, for vernacular and macaronic/neo-Latinizing literatures inside and outside of Italy.

The story of this transformation, which has been the task of *this* text to successfully recount, is, however, also the story of the deliberate corruption, censorship, and political repression, and uncontrolled alteration (in many cases by the writer, but very likely by many others as well), of the story of a poem which also narrowly escapes total destruction. Which is to say, in many cases, the exoteric surface as well as the esoteric readings disguised under the bark of the following work of criticism has undergone (and overcome) various mischievous activities quite like those which Folengo rebuffed and held at bay throughout his life, activities that stubbornly remain, for as long as mimetic literature and the critics who survive by interpreting it, retain the power to alter hearts

and minds, and do not succumb to the withering attacks waged against the Word by religious and philosophical authorities of all kinds, a very macaronic affair indeed.

Chapter 2

Language Macaronics

> But to have done instead of not doing
> this is not vanity
> To have, with decency, knocked
> That a Blunt should open
> To have gathered from the air a live tradition
> or from a fine old eye the unconquered flame
> This is not vanity.
> Here error is all in the not done, all in the
> diffidence that faltered
>
> Ezra Pound, from "Canto LXXXI"

2.1   The Languages of (the) *Baldus*

Halfway through the second decade of the sixteenth century, two poets from neighboring duchies in northern Italy set out to revise lengthy poems they had dedicated to sometimes ungrateful patrons. Ludovico Ariosto began his careful revision of the *Orlando furioso* almost as soon as it was printed, at his own expense, by Giovanni Mazzocchi in April of 1516. In an unprecedented gesture of authorial control, the book's opening passages disclose Ariosto's sole ownership of the printing privileges to the poem, which he scrupulously purchased in the hopes of preventing the circulation of unauthorized copies. The two-word title of the *Orlando furioso* alludes to the title of a play about Hercules by Seneca as well as the title of a vernacular romance written by Matteo Maria Boiardo, a lengthy poem whose celebration of the vibrant courtly and humanist culture of Ferrara Ariosto continues and expands. In concluding his poem with the marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero, the poet adapts and resolves the genealogical and dynastic plot thread begun by Boiardo, transforming

the characters, *topoi*, themes, motifs, and even language of the *Innamoramento di Orlando*, the Lombard vernacular spoken in the Po valley of Italy.[1] Ariosto also reuses Boiardo's figure of the author, Atalante, who he renames Atlante and juxtaposes with his own authorial figure, *Merlino*, whom he bases on the eponymous sorcerer of Arthurian legend.[2] Ariosto contrasts the actions and designs of Atlante with those of Merlin: whereas his Atlante struggles to prevent the death of Ruggiero by delaying his progress in a series of pleasure palaces, some inhabited by phantom knights and ladies who pursue the objects of their desires in vain, Merlin and his proxy, Melissa, endow Bradamante with the prophetic and genealogical knowledge she needs to successfully wed Ruggiero and bring the poem to its climactic conclusion. If Ariosto acknowledges and suppresses a considerable debt to a predecessor poet, he also does so at the level of the language of his poem as it evolves between 1516 and 1521: the northern Italian language of the *Innamoramento* and the first *Furioso* changes in the second edition, and by the third had fallen so out of style—at least for the composition of narrative poetry in the vernacular—that rewritings of Boiardo's poem into 'good' Tuscan Italian were soon being proposed by the mid-1500s (Berni's being only the most widely known).[3]

If the philologists of the *Furioso* and their minute examinations of the linguistic features and mutations of the 1516 and 1532 editions have shown it to stand, like a towering monolith, at the beginning of the triumph of the vernacular over Latin in sixteenth-century Italy, it a curious fact that Ariosto appears to have considered a handful of other possibilities before deciding to finish

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[1] Studies of the reception of Boiardo and Ariosto's poetry must consider that Renaissance and Early Modern readers like Folengo read and understood these two Ferrarese poems as a single, interconnected narrative. This is famously the case for Torquato Tasso, whose complex views on the relationship between the two poems are recorded in the second of his *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*. For the dynastic plotline in the *Furioso*, see Eleonora Stoppino, *Genealogies of Fiction: Women Warriors and the Dynastic Imagination in the Orlando furioso* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

[2] See David Quint, "The Figure of Atlante: Ariosto and Boiardo's Poem," *MLN* 94, no. 1 (1979): 77–91 and "Palaces of Enchantment," MLN, 133, no. 1 (2018): 9–31.

[3] Rewritings of the *Innamoramento* in Florentine or Tuscan dialect were popular during this century. For the projected reworking of the *Innamorato* mentioned by Folengo in the preface to the *Orlandino* and VC along with those of Francesco Berni and Ludovico Domenichi, see Elissa B. Weaver, "Francesco Berni's *Rifacimento of the Orlando Innamorato*: Why and How," *Pacific Coast Philology* 10 (1975): 111-112.

Boiardo's romance.[4] As opposed to a romance, Ariosto might have written a laudatory epic in Latin for his patron, Ippolito d'Este. This would have been in keeping with the example set by the *Borsiad*, an epic recounting the life of Borso d'Este written by the Ferrarese court poet Tito Vespasiano Strozzi in the generation immediately prior to Ariosto's. Or, instead of commencing an entirely new poem, Ariosto might have continued to work on a laudatory epic about the life of Obizzo d'Este in the meter of Dante that he had started to write during the first years of the 1500s, the *Obizzeide*, which survives in a single unfinished manuscript.[5] Fortunately, Ariosto chose to write a romance in rhymed octaves dedicated to Ippolito, beginning precisely where Boiardo left off when foreign armies invaded Italy. Ariosto's decision to write a chivalric romance was a strategic wager that leveraged his knowledge of the increasing power of the printing press against his need to promote the literary and linguistic prestige of Ferrara and his patron. In fact, Ariosto knew of and had perhaps even read the non-Ferrarese poem by Niccolò Agostini, the *Quarto libro*, whose first printing was in 1505. This 'commercialized' continuation of the *Innamoramento* threatened the legacy of the Ferrara's greatest chivalric poem. Competition between the city states of the peninsula was not to be underestimated, and as Agostini wrote the *Quarto libro* in Mantua, dedicating it to Francesco Gonzaga, the stakes were high for Ariosto, whose patron was a powerful duke and cardinal.[6]

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[4] Basing his claim on Giovan Battista Pigna's comparison of Ariosto to Virgil in chapter 2 of his *I romanzi*, considered by some to be modelled on the Donatian "Life" of Virgil, Tobias Gregory, in *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 128-9, has claimed that Ariosto's decision was more *linguistic* than stylistic-generic: "The conscious choice he made was not between epic and romance, but between Latin and the vernacular, and his poem's generic form should be considered in light of his choice of language." For the programmatic use of this biography in the prefaces of sixteenth-century editions of the *Furioso*, see Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: the Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 39-41, who quotes from this exact passage. Gregory ignores the point that Javitch is making about the polemical nature of the comparison of Ariosto to Virgil drawn by Pigna and later defended by other admirers of the *Furioso*, who are more than willing to look past his decision to write in the vernacular. Javitch makes this clear when he points out that the 1558 and 1560 Valgrisi editions of the *Furioso* included excerpts of book 2 of *I romanzi* that have been modified (corrupted?) by Girolamo Ruscelli in order to exaggerate Pigna's association of Ariosto and Virgil along stylistic lines. Whereas in the text of *I romanzi*, Pigna suggests that Ariosto became a "Virgil of his age" by following Boiardo's vernacular romance in the same way that Virgil followed the models of Homer's Greek epics, Ruscelli's intervention asserts that Ariosto composed *all* of his poetry in the order of the "tre stili di Virgilio" ["the three styles of Virgil"] (p. 41 and n. 25). For the significance of the notion of the 'Virgilian career' in the design of the *Liber macaronices*, see chapter 3.

[5] For the phenomenon of Quattrocento neo-Latin historical epic in the courts of Italy, see Kristen Lippincott, "The neo-Latin Historical Epics of the North Italian Courts: An Examination of 'Courtly Culture' in the Fifteenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 3, no. 4 (1989): 415–428.

[6] Alberto Casadei, *Il percorso del Furioso: ricerche intorno alle redazioni del 1516 e del 1521* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), 39: "Un fatto è comunque certo: la pubblicazione a Venezia della prima Continuazione all'Innamorato (che forse era già in precedenza nota o annuciata a Ferrara, essendo stata quasi sicuramente scritta presso la corte mantovana) minacciava la potestà estense sull'opera boiardesca." Francesco is the father of Federico II, Folengo's patron.

As he applied finishing touches to his draft of the *Orlando furioso* in the spring of 1516, another Mantuan was busy preparing a manuscript for print circulation. Unlike Ariosto, this poet composed a poem not the Lombard tongue, but in a mixture of Latins and vernaculars assembled from countless sources. Folengo attributes his collection of poems to a pseudonym whose name only coincidentally echoes Ariosto's author-wizard in *Furioso*: Merlinus Coccaius, the mysterious figure of medieval Arthurian legend who descends into the epic not only to guide Baldo and his friends, but to deliver the sacrament of the Holy Confession to them. The editor of this macaronic book, both a functioning pseudonym and a figure of the author who enters the narrative he writes, edits, and publishes, insists on the similarity between himself and Virgil, whose well-known biography or *Vita* by Aelius Donatus his editor uses as a model to introduce Merlin. The author of this book, however, spurns the Latin of the poet to whom he is compared (or compares himself), and even defends his *kunstsprache* in a preface attached to the second edition, published in 1521. At some point in late 1516, a printer of the well-established Paganini family in Venice came into possession of a manuscript of this lengthy preface, eclogues, and 17-book epic poem. Whether or not its poet personally delivered the manuscript to Alessandro cannot be easily determined, however he was more than willing to publish the book on the first of January, 1517.[7]

The small-format edition, which has thus far escaped critical 'emendation', contains two eclogues and a poem in "heroic verse" comprising 17 books, or what its fictional editor refers to as "macaronices". The preface, eclogues, and stand-alone "*Phantasiae Macaronicon*" are all written in the same mysterious blend of languages variously identified by its critics as macaronic Latin, macaronic poetry, or, simply, Macaronic. The editor uses the term autotelically for his as well as Merlin's language or "*macaronesca lingua*", each macaronic word, or "*macaron*", each macaronic poem, or "*macaronicen*", and the book containing these macaronic sub-units. The writer of the preface to the *Liber Macaronices* advertises that the poetry contained in the book is based on a manuscript discovered while scouting for treacle near Armenia.[8] The source manuscript used by the editor to form his edition of macaronic poetry contains two eclogues and a 5-book epic which have been expanded to 17 "*macaronices*" and given headings, verse summaries, and glosses. In the second version of the collection, working in tandem with the printer, the editor-poet adds eclogues,

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[7] See Massimo Zaggia, "Saggio di un'edizione critica della redazione Paganini delle macaroneee folenghiane," in *Teofilo Folengo nel quinto centenario della nascita. Atti del Convegno, Mantova-Brescia-Padova, 26-29 settembre 1991*, ed. G. Bernardi Perini and Claudio Marangoni (Firenze: Olschki, 1993), 409 and Jean Du Verger, "'Believe me when I swear, for I cannot tell a single lie': Teofilo Folengo's Calculated Publishing Strategies," *Moreana* 53 (2016): 225–268. Zaggia suspects that the author supervised the printing of P: "In generale, peraltro, il testo dell'edizione principe della Paganini risulta piuttosto corretto, il che fa presupporre senz'altro l'utilizzazione dell'autografo come antigrafo immediato della stampa, e fors'anche la sorveglianza diretta dell'autore. La presenza dell'autore in tipografia e un'ipotesi da prendere in seria considerazione, tanto più quando si tenga presente che essa è pressoche sicura per la successiva edizione principe della Toscolanense, e anche la mirabile correttezza testuale dell'edizione principe della Cipadense fa sospettare quanto meno la vicinanza dell'autore."

[8] For discussion of the ways the author-editor relationship draws from the Italian auto-commentary tradition, beginning with Dante, see chapter 4.

epigrams, a four-book mock-epic, and other peri- and paratextual elements.[9] For the sake of clarity, in what follows, I refer to the "*Librum De Gestis Magnanimi Baldi*" or "*Phantasiae Macaronicon*", as it is titled in the index to the first and second editions, as the *Baldus*.[10]

The first chapter of this study of the *Baldus* examines the 'language of the poet', Macaronic, as it evolves in the first and second versions of the poem together with the neo-Latinizing revisions of the third and fourth editions, basing its analysis on close readings from the poem as well as defenses and descriptions of the language that rest outside of it. On the one hand, treating the *Baldus* as a diachronic as opposed to a synchronic artifact—as a printed work that exists in multiple, different versions, but that we refer to as a single poem—allows my analysis to account for how the poet's language changes over time and to holistically describe the ways in which the poem provides an intertextual description of what this language is and how it developed. On the other hand, treating the poem as an object that changes over time means to acknowledge that each author-curated edition is a distinct instance of experimentation, interference, or porousness of language, genre, and text, each interacting with different intertexts and containing different paratexts which can never be wholly reconstructed. In the second part of the current chapter, I give a definition of Macaronic, whereas in the third, I argue that the *Baldus* is an extended, elaborate allegory of the creation of this language. In the last, fourth part, I perform an extended and interlocking set of close readings of the poem's macaronic 'signs', an analysis that is informed by grammars and literary texts available to and often referenced by the poet.

Previous treatments of the *Baldus* have noted that Macaronic is a literary construct in which a number of different languages are erroneously adapted to and interpolated by the grammatical and syntactic forms of 'classical' Latin, and that Folengo is responsible for a massive expansion of the generic, linguistic, and literary potentialities of this style, transforming, almost single-handedly, what might be called a regionally-restricted university idiom into a fully-fledged poetics. His poem appropriates and mocks the language and motifs of the popular and erudite chivalric of this period just as readily as it subverts the thematic and verbal texture of the *Aeneid* and other strictly classical texts; it is the invention of a scholar trained in the humanist schools of the famed Mantuan and Ferrarese educators, Guarino da Verona and Vittorino da Feltre, while simultaneously an iconoclastic blending of the principal texts of this training with the material of many other textual traditions. The surprising novelty, indeed the exceptionality, of the macaronic project can only be accounted for by taking into consideration the massive literary-linguistic experimentation of the first two decades of sixteenth century in Italy.

Indeed, both Macaronic and the macaronic tradition had their competitors. For example, a

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[9] See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[10] In C, the title that is normally used to refer to the poem, *Baldus*, appears for the first time. In T, the description of the poem in the table of contents divides them into macaronic books, or *macaronices*: "Phantasiae macaronicon, divisum in vigintiquinque macaronicis, tractans de gestis magnanimi e prudentissimi Baldi".

clear rival was the so-called "*lingua pedantesca*" invented by Francesco Colonna in the *Hypnero-tomachia Poliphili* and continued in the famous *Cantici di Fidenzio*, compositions in which rare words from Latin and Greek appear in vernacular prose and verse.[11] Carlo Dionisotti and Gianfranco Folena have contextualized Macaronic in the frameworks of multilingual and regional literatures, including drama, farce, and the *Commedia dell'arte*. To generalize for the sake of necessity, the multiplicity of the sources of the language of the *Baldus* is representative, if not emblematic, of the non-Bembian and non-teleological history, or histories, of sixteenth-century literature and language in Northern Italy. This language challenges modern critics, myself included, to account for them in the full range of linguistic, cultural, literary, historical, performative, and ideological conclusions and assumptions that are and have been made about it since the sixteenth century.[12]

Because the language of the macaronic book is not only artificial but also diachronic, evolving incrementally over decades, the task that the current chapter sets out to accomplish is to describe the poet's language in the broadest possible historical, literary, and linguistic terms, from those of humanism proper, to the vogue for multilingual and macaronic writing at the end of the fifteenth century. Instances in which the poet explicitly discusses his language provide material for understanding how he discursively situates and develops Macaronic over time. When reviewing these peri- and para-texts, I place emphasis on how they have been interpreted as indicating the poet's increasing awareness and response to the fact that the *Baldus* was, and debatably still is, at the center of an ongoing transformation in the relationship between Latin and the vernacular, whereby a culture of linguistic experimentation in the first part of the century in which Latins could freely mingle with vernaculars and vice versa, was gradually replaced by a regime of poetic and stylistic norms that strictly regulated and delimited the ways languages could interact in serious long-form poem. Although the *Baldus* was, and is, considered to be an example of *vernacular* literature, it is possible that it has indeed suffered from the long-term success of the vernacular. Indeed, it has proven to be difficult to read even to those who read Latin well, and its particularly convoluted philological history has made it a challenge to critically edit. In spite of the extrinsic, if not subjective, difficulties this boundary-traversing language creates for itself, however, critics have long noted that the *Baldus* reaches the acme of literary achievement in this style. Folengo fully realizes

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[11] For Gianfranco Contini in *Letteratura italiana del Quattrocento* (Florence: Sansoni, 1976), the *lingua pedantesca* is an "invertito macaronismo" or "inverted Macaronic".

[12] Critics of the *Baldus* who are professional philologists (Ugo Paoli and Mario Chiesa, for example) often note that the poet refuses to "Tuscanize" Macaronic and that he "classicizes" the *Cipadense* edition. For Folengo's resistance to Tuscanization, see Mario Pozzi, "Teofilo Folengo e le resistenze alla toscanizzazione letteraria," in *Cultura letteraria e tradizione popolare in Teofilo Folengo: atti del Convegno di studi promosso dall'Accademia virgiliana e dal comitato Mantova-Padania 77, Mantova 15-17 ottobre 1977*, ed. Ettore Bonora and Mario Chiesa (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1977), 209–229. For vernacular and Latin imitation more generally, see Carlo Dionisotti, *Gli umanisti e il volgare tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968) and Martin L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

the potentialities of blended-language composition in Renaissance Italy, a fact that is not lost on some of his most famous readers, including Rabelais, Giordano Bruno, and Cervantes, who were more than equipped to read and comprehend, at least in part, the poem's Babelic word play and the place of its original narrative in the history of literature.[13] Whether or not they were aware of the writings of the *prefolenghiani*, these authors were also doubtlessly aware that the poem's genuine originality was due, in no small part, to Merlin's exceptional language, in which neologisms or 'word monsters' dot almost every verse, using Latin hexameters and other meters to form a space of verbal freeplay in which what is erroneous reveals itself time and again to be not just correct, but the work of genius.[14]

A book like the one printed by Alessandro Paganini in the winter months of 1516 (published only on the first of January, 1517, *more veneto*) is an outlier when compared to Italian-region macaronic and multilingual long-form narrative poetry composed between 1500 and 1520. Like Ariosto, Folengo wrote the *Phantasiae* knowing that it would be printed and thus worked diligently to design and typeset the final product, likely directly intervening in the process of its editing and printing. The resulting book, a 'faux' miniature classic replete with all the bells and whistles of early printed critical editions of ancient poetry, is of central importance for understanding how early modern readers encountered, consumed, recited, and exchanged this object with other readers. The poet's earliest fans were pleased by the veritable parade of eye-catching features that are packed into the book: 24mo size, a pioneering cursive Italic typeface, and not just one macaronic poem, but two whole eclogues. This spunky macaronic Vergil was 'popular' indeed, for copies of his edition immediately sold out and were reprinted (without the author's permission) at least twice before the release of the second, authorized, version of 1521.[15] As in the case of the *Furioso*, the language and form of the macaronic book evolved considerably between 1517 and the early 1540s: close comparison of the second and third versions suggests that both authors are well attuned in-

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[13] See the introduction.

[14] A series of studies have shown that this poet's 'regular expressions' are more consistent inside the *Baldus* than in previous mixed-language sermons and smaller macaronic compositions. See Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Il latino maccheronico* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1959). Several poems written in the macaronic style circulated in late 1400s Padua and Venice. See the introduction to Ivano Paccagnella, *Le macaronee padovane: tradizione e lingua* (Padua: Antenore, 1979). These poems typically feature the figure of the quack doctor or herbalist. Indeed, macaronic is essentially a parody of the faulty knowledge of Latin possessed by these travelling salesman-healers. A notorious Venetian doctor is the subject of one such macaronic poem, possibly known to Folengo. See William Schupbach, "Doctor Parma's Medicinal Macaronic: Poem by Bartolotti, Pictures by Giorgione and Titian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978): 147–350.

[15] In chapter 4, I argue that the textual history of the *Phantasiae* may only be understood in the context of its developing language as well as the terminology the text uses to define itself. These three evolving features, of which language is perhaps the most important, makes this poem an example of a "self-consuming" and "anachronic" object. See Stanley E. Fish, *Self Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) and Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *The Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

deed to changes to linguistic conventions and seek to adapt their poems to these new conditions. The changes Ariosto and Folengo made to their poems were extensive: the 1521 *Orlando furioso* saw the removal of regionalisms and the substitution of words from Florentine authors following the recommendations of Pietro Bembo.[16]

Well before the publication of the *Prose della vulgar lingua* (1525), Ariosto began to update the language of the *Orlando furioso* to Bembo's preferences, which were limited, respectively, to Petrarch and Virgil for the vernacular and for Latin poetry. As a number of studies of the poem have revealed, the 1521 version of the poem both adheres to as well as implicitly denigrates Bembo's prescriptive notion of literary language and style.[17] While Ariosto expressed reservation about Bembo's ideas in *Satire* VI, the *Furioso* became more 'Bembian', and therefore archaic, in the 1521 and 1532 editions. Bembo and Ariosto were close friends and exchanged letters; they even appear to have met each other in Ferrara, where they likely debated the issue of Latin *imitatio* and the *questione della lingua*. A sense for what they discussed may be ascertained by reading the first book of the *Cortegiano*, in which Bembo appears as an interlocutor. Like Ariosto, Folengo was aware of Bembo's views on language and imitation well before the publication of the *Prose*; his macaronic writings have often been seen to harbour an explicit rejection of Bembo's stylistic conservatism. Whereas Ariosto recognized by the end of the decade that the *Furioso* would not survive in its original linguistic form, Folengo doubles down on his conflation of tongues in Macaronic, at least in the *Toscolana* edition. Changing standards of acceptable style do eventually catch up with the poet, however, as his extensive edits to Macaronic in the *Cipadense* edition clearly indicate. This 'updated' edition not only classicizes his language but, as I discuss in chapter 4, make it even more comparable to a printed edition of neo-Latin poetry, analogous to the *opera omnia* of Battista Spagnoli or Marco Girolamo Vida.[18]

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[16] See, respectively, the editions of the 1516 version edited by Marco Dorigatti (Florence: Olschki, 2006) and by Tina Matarese and Marco Praloran (Turin: Einaudi, 2016). See also Praloran, *Le lingue del racconto: Studi su Boiardo e Ariosto* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2009) and Maurizio Vitale, *Lingua padana e koinè cortigiana nella prima edizione dell'Orlando Furioso* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2012).

[17] See Albert Russell Ascoli, "Ariosto's "Fier Pastor": Form and History in *Orlando Furioso*," in *A Local Habitation and a Name: Imagining Histories in the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 237: "The underlying point is that the crisis that dominated the first two decades of the sixteenth century was such because it was not only a time of military-political upheaval—in this sense, it is hard to find a time in human history which is not in crisis—but also one of a radical destabilization in ideological assumptions, in naturalized cultural boundaries. By the time of the appearance of the third and last *Furioso* the project of ideological recuperation and reinstantiation was well under way—brilliantly represented by such transitional works as Castiglione's *Cortegiano* and Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua*."

[18] The first version of the collection is the *Paganini* (P), 1517, followed by *Toscolana* (T), 1521; *Cipadense* (C), c. 1534-5; and the *Vigaso Cocaio* (VC), 1552. The *Vigaso Cocaio* is still considered the standard edition of the text by Folengo's modern critics. See Mario Pozzi, "Le quattro redazione delle macaronee di Teofilo Folengo," in *Teofilo Folengo nel quinto centenario della nascita (1491-1991). Atti del convengo Mantova-Brescia-Pavia 26-9 settembre 1991*, ed. Giorgio Bernardi Perini and Claudio Marangoni, Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana di Scienze Lettere e Arti - Miscellanea 1 (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 33–47.

The *Liber Macaronices* was not the first instance of macaronic poetry printed in Renaissance Italy. At least one critic has noted that the title of the *Arrivabene* reprint explicitly identifies the *Baldus* with a pre-existing tradition of macaronic poetry popularized by the *Macaronea*, a 700-verse macaronic poem written by a certain *Tiphys* or "Tifi" Odasi and printed in Padua.[19] Beyond macaronic poetry, Italian printers are known to have produced innumerable copies of hundreds of texts that display alternation between two or more languages. The perception of linguistic borderlessness in this period, the notion that it was acceptable to freely alternate between or even to combine a few different languages in either prose or poetic contexts, made a natural target for parody. For example, in his *Epistola eloquentissima oratoris ac poetae clarissimi d. Marii Aequicolae in sex linguis*, the Mantuan humanist and courtier Mario Equicola reproduces six writing styles, or what he refers to as "*lingue*", one of which blends vernaculars and Latins together. In the margin of this tongue-in-cheek repertoire of different writing styles, Equicola includes glosses: the first entry is a "Lingua antiqua Latina" (a Ciceronian language), the second an "Apuleiana sive del Pio" (The Apuleian style of Giovanni Battista Pio), followed by a "Mariana Latina" (his own style of writing in Latin), a "Lingua Poliphylesca" (the language of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*), "Toscana" (the archaic Tuscan language of Bembo), and "Mariana volgare" (the vernacular he uses to write the *Libro de Amore*). Carlo Dionisotti cites Equicola's letter as evidence that, in the very early 1510s at least, the *questione* concerning the nature the vernacular in Italy overlapped with the debate in humanist circles regarding the nature of Latin *imitatio*.[20] Equicola's ability at writing in multiple "*lingue*", at least one of which has been termed an inversion of macaronic, points to his immersion within the vibrant multilingual soundscape of the courts of 1510s Italy.[21] Had the collection been published, the Macaronic idiom of Teofilo Folengo could have easily been on Equicola's list, perhaps glossed as a "*Lingua macaronesca di Merlin Coccaio*".

Equicola's letter is worth closely considering before we turn to the case of the language of the poet, since, as the tutor to Isabella d'Este and prominent Mantuan courtier, Equicola is likely to have to have met Folengo, or to have at least been familiar with his macaronic poetry following their publication. The glosses indicate that the list of his "lingue" is perhaps not entirely serious and that the passages modulate between faithfully recording different 'personalized' writing styles and

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[19] See chapter 3, as well as Verger, "'Believe me when I swear, for I cannot tell a single lie'," 262: "It seems therefore a fair assessment to believe that the publisher wished to ride on the tail of Odasi's successful work which bore not only the same title but had also been reedited in 1520."

[20] Dionisotti, *Gli umanisti e il volgare*, 122: "Questo documento ha importanza decisiva per la storia della questione della lingua nel primo Cinquecento." For Equicola's parody of the "lingua Poliphylesca", see Pietro Trifone, ed., *I cantici di Fidenzio* (Rome: Salerno, 1981), who notes at pp. xii-xiii that the phrase "bamba oppenione" is used in Bembo's *Asolani*.

[21] Why Equicola does not name Bembo when he includes in the list a passage that openly cites Bembo's *Asolani* is debatable. However, we may presume that his readers understood that he meant the imitators of Tuscan when he glosses the passage as "Toscana", a clear allusion to the Petrarchan style adapted Bembo. The avoidance of mentioning Bembo's name in the gloss suggests that Equicola thought better than to produce the name of a powerful Venetian noble and future Cardinal in the letter.

parodying the arbitrariness of their imitative and stylistic choices. If we read the Tuscan passage as a glancing and perhaps mocking reference to Bembo's experimental prose, it anticipates Ariosto's and Castiglione's objections to Bembo's ideas about language and imitation—ideas that Equicola saw in action in the *Asolani* as well as in Bembo's letter on imitation to Pico. To briefly summarize Bembo's position: between the letter to Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola—composed around the same year—and the publication of the *Prose* in 1525, Bembo's main innovation was to confer a set of stylistic assumptions about the formal excellence of the writings of Virgil and Cicero, assumptions that were by no means his alone, to two poets, Boccaccio and Petrarch, who wrote in the Florentine dialect many centuries later. From his letter to Pico in 1512, to the publication of the *Prose* in 1525, Bembo's views on the matter change very little. The symmetry of the Latin and Italian models necessarily excludes the 'third crown' of Florence, Dante, whose linguistically heterogeneous poem Bembo attacks on several grounds. Indeed, his disapproval of similar 'mixed' vernacular compositions in the *Prose* is anticipated by his disapproval of the 'eclectic' Latin of Gianfrancesco, Poliziano, and Giovanni Battista Pio, whose vocabularies draw heavily from the Latin of Apuleius, Seneca, and other Silver Age stylists, all of whom Bembo deems to be inferior to Virgil or to Cicero stylistically.

Equicola's surreptitious parody of Bembo's efforts to write in the Florentine of Boccaccio and Petrarch is an early example of the growing reluctance among the serious writers of Northern Italy to adopt Tuscan usages. But this will change; and it will come to eventually include Folengo himself among the number voluntarily or involuntarily 'Tuscanized'.[22] Indeed, the publication of the *Prose* arguably spelled the denouement of the vibrant and multilingual world that witnessed the publication of the first edition of the *Baldus* and the *Orlando furioso*. Yet, whereas Ariosto's poem shed its Lombardism between 1517 and 1521 to satisfy a future Cardinal, Folengo's Macaronic experiences a transformation and expansion that was nothing short of extraordinary.

2.2 What is Macaronic?

A language that draws freely from many vernaculars and Latins, Macaronic is the antithesis of the monolingualism advocated first by Petrarch, and then by Bembo. Like the hero of the *Baldus* who learns Latin in the third book of the poem only to have his education rudely 'disrupted' by the temptations of vernacular romances, Merlin and his macaronic editor expose Latin to the cacophony of the *vulgus*. The macaronic style ignores and even deliberately soils the puristic *imitatio* practiced by the neo-Latin stylists of the quattrocento and early cinquecento, to whom the poet addresses an exhortation in the final pages of the *Toscolana* edition. His anti-epic is filled with words from local dialects and his longest poem draws from the resources of a completely new order of muses, corpulent sisters who compel him to sing of Baldo and his daring mission from Mantua/Cipada

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[22] Both the *Orlandino* and *Umanità del figliuolo di Dio* adopt usages from the Tuscan dialect.

across the seas, under the Mountain of Moon, through the realm of the witches, and into the jaws of Hell itself.[23] In a preface, Merlin elaborates on the method by which he meticulously crafts the rough and "rustic" words that dot the collection, anticipating the unpolished and abrasive 'antico rozzore' that Poliziano and then Bembo attribute to Dante's verses.[24] Because macaronic displays two or more languages at the same time, it is difficult to ascertain which language is doing the translation or the inscription of words and phrases. He does give us a few hints as to what his neologisms and catachreses are up to. For example, he uses the verb *compaginare* in the *Merlini Cocaii Apologetica in Sui Excusationem* to define macaronic as a linguistic "concoction" comparable to a dough of cheese, flour, and butter used to make dumplings, in what is a clear allusion to the Roman tradition of *satura*. The preface asserts that these word-things are "*compaginatum*", bound together or fastened together from the stems and endings of words so as to be "*rude et rusticanum*" ["crude and rustic"]:

> Ars ista poetica nuncupatur ars macaronica a macaronibus derivata, qui macarones sunt quoddam pulmentum farina, caseo, boriro *compaginatum*, grossum, rude et rusticanum, ideo macaronices nil nisi grassedinem, ruditatem, et vocabulazzos debet in se continere.[25]

> *This poetic art is named the macaronic art, derived from macaroni, which are a certain kind of large, course, and rustic dumpling made from flour, cheese, and butter. Therefore Macaronics should not contain anything in it other than greasiness, roughness, and vocabuluzzos.*

The legibility of this passage depends on the culinary metaphor that the poet is using to define macaronic, which he draws from the ancient etymology of satire from the Roman word for a plate of mixed food, or *satura*.[26] The 'surface' of the poem is honeycombed with what Merlin calls "vocabulazzos", expressive "word-things" that he then sets out to define in the remainder of the

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[23] For Bembo's imitative purism, see Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 176: "Bembo chose to suppress the diachronic dimension of the word because his flawless classicism served as a shield against the misery of public history."

[24] For the negative appraisal of Dante in the preface to the *Raccolta Argonese*, known to Bembo, see Simon Gilson, *Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy: Florence, Venice, and the 'Divine Poet'* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 63-4: "Bembo himself, who knew the *Raccolta* well, evidently saw the potential of the judgement to make Dante 'undivine'" (64). See also Maria Clotilde Camboni, "Paradigms of Historical Development: The *Raccolta Aragonese*, Landino, and Bembo's *Prose*," *MLN* 134, no. 1 (2019): 22–41.

[25] Mario Chiesa, ed., *Baldus di Teofilo Folengo*, vol. 1 (Torino: Classici Utet, 1997), 29.

[26] See A. Cavarzere, "*Ars Ista Poetica Macaronica Nuncupatur*," *Quaderni folenghiani* 1 (1995): 55–61. For the ancient etymology of *satura* as a ground meat, i.e. a *farcimen*, and Diomedes Grammaticus' definition of satire, see Anna Zago, "Alcune glosse grammaticali nel *Baldus* dell'Edizione Paganini," *Rinascimento* 51 (2011): 98.

defense.[27] Macaronic *verbum* is governed by a *combinatory* logic, for *compaginare* denotes the binding of parts to wholes, limbs to bodies, and quires to books, and is roughly synonymous with the Italian typographic term *impaginare*, evoking the material page and the measuring out of long and short syllables.[28] The verb "compaginare" is not coincidentally synonymous with *alligare*, the verb used to describe poetry by Dante in an important passage in the final canto of *Paradiso*.[29] The codicological sense of verb *legare* here refers to the creation of the world as an enormous *volume* whose quires God binds with love:[30]

> Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
> legato con amore in un volume,
> ciò che per l'universo si squaderna:
>> sustanze e accidenti e lor costume
> quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo
> che ciò ch'i' dico è un semplice lume. (*Paradiso*, 33.85-90)

> In its depths I saw internalized, bound with love in one volume, what through the universe becomes unsewn quires: substances and accidents and their modes as it were conflated together, in such a way that what I describe is a simple light.[31]

Where this combinatory logic is most useful for defining the language of the poet is the case of the macaronic neologism, of which Merlin is undoubtedly the master. Across the three versions of the *Baldus*, Folengo is responsible for coining the largest number of neologisms of any Renaissance poet.[32] An individual "*macaron*", Merlin tells us, is contained within a larger "*macaronicen*"; the

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[27] For the Erasmian word-thing, see Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 21.

[28] Cf. *Baldus* 25.576, "qui macaronica verba misurant". When the verb appears in the *Baldus*, Cingar uses it to describe the cosmic and generative force of music:

> Musica continuo versatur in ore deorum,
> musica concordi fert circum cardine coelum,
> musica nascendo humanos compaginat artus. (21.100-3)

> *Music is the constant language of the gods, music makes heaven circle its axis harmoniously, music forms humans as they are born.*

[29] For Dante's use of Uguccione da Pisa's etymology of author from *aveio*, see Albert Russell Ascoli, *Dante and The Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 150.

[30] The verb also suggests the physical form of the collection, which is bound and unbound in time by the poet.

[31] I quote from the English translation of *Paradiso* in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling and Ronald Martinez, vol 3 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 665.

[32] The most comprehensive study of the formal features of macaronic Latin is Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Il latino maccheronico* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1959).

more rustic or "*grossolania*" a word-thing is, the more macaronic ("*magis macaronicam*"), intelligible ("*plus intelligibilia*") and eloquent ("*adducunt eloquentiam*"). As for their purpose ["sed cur, inquam, fuit repertum macaronicon?" "but why, I ask, was a macaronic word created?"], this is to solicit the laughter of the reader: "*causa utique ridendi*". Merlin then responds to the objection of pedagogues that he invents words out of full cloth ("*figere*") from languages comprehensible to small groups of people. His response is important for understanding the positionality of his book and its language in 1521. First, Merlin-Teofilo asserts that he is the *auctor* of macaronic words and the sole author of his macaronic poem, not its *interpres* or secondary scribe, translator, or interpreter.[33] Merlin then makes an assertion about his interpretive responsibility as the creator of this language that collapses the distinctions not just between Latin and the vernacular, but between all languages, (playfully) throwing into the vertiginous doubt of interpretive relativism the entire poetic-linguistic project that has Macaronic up to this point. In fact, Merlin's parodic evasion of the fact that historical and social distinctions clearly demarcate languages, as well as their reader and users, can be said to be the 'enabling error' of the macaronic project in the *Baldus* and the rest of Merlin's strictly macaronic compositions:

> Respondeo, quod veluti non omnes aut grecum, aut hebreum, aut arabicum, aut chaldeum, aut denique latinum simul intelligunt, ita nil mirum si cuncti mantuanicum, aut florentinicum, aut bergamascum, aut todescum, aut sguizzarum, aut scarpacinum, aut spazzacaminum minime sciunt pariter intelligere. Ut quid ordinantur commentatores ac linguarum interpretes? Ut quid translatores? Procul dubio causa splanandi linguarum incognoventiam. Ergo non fas est meipsum auctorem interpretare.[34]

> *I respond that, just as not everyone understands Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldean, or Latin, it comes as no surprise that others are similarly unable to grasp Mantuan, Florentine, Bergamasque, German, Swiss, Shoemaker, or Chimney-sweep. Why are commentators and interpreters of languages employed? Why are translators? Without doubt for the purpose of explaining the riddles of language. Therefore, it is not proper that I, an author, should have to explain myself.*

This passage stylizes Folengo's authorial persona, Merlin, as a medieval contemporary of Dante who pedantically asserts that he is an *auctor* not only "worthy of faith and obedience" but, unlike Dante, unwilling to gloss his own poetry, which he leaves to Lodela. The list contributes to the framing fiction of the book as a copy of a 'medieval' manuscript by alluding to Dante's aborted

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[33] The *interpres* is Acquario Lodela, who, as this study will suggest in chapter 4, is also Folengo. Walter Stephens writes in "Mimesis, Mediation and Counterfeit," in *Mimesis in Contemporary Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 238-275, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984), 259, that the introduction of the corrupter Scardaffus to the second edition "completely garbles any idea of responsibility, and textual tradition or integrity".

[34] Chiesa, *Baldus di Teofilo Folengo*, 30.

treatise on poetic language, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.[35] The addition of the apology to the maca-
ronic book juxtaposes the pride of this macaronic writer, who refuses to explain the languages that
appear in his poem (Merlin), to the historical author of the *Commedia*, who wrote extensively about
the status of the vernacular and his own vernacular poetry throughout his career. In other words, the
reference to Dante contributes to the fictive displacement of an author of a multilingual anti-epic to
a 'medieval' past, while at the same time accounting for the author's language rhetorically, mock-
ing the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century discussion of the vernacular in Italy and the efforts of a few
of the more bold writers to compose their own auto-commentaries, such as Lorenzo de Medici's
glosses on his own lyric poetry, Boccaccio's commentary on the *Teseida*, or Alberti's commentary
on his *Philodoxus*. Merlin's refusal to "explain himself" also rings in the ear of this critic as a
distinct echo of Poliziano's assertion in his famous letter to Paolo Cortesi: "Quid tum? Non enim
sum Cicero. Me tamen (ut opinor) exprimo" ["So what? I am not Cicero. Yet I do express myself, I
think"].[36] The *De Vulgari Eloquentia* could have been known to Folengo in any number of ways.[37]
The clear division between classical languages and regional, municipal, and professional dialects
in Merlin's list is comparable to Dante's famous taxonomy of language, which examines the 14
dialects of Italy after assessing Latin, French, and Spanish.[38] In light of this list of languages, the
sentence preceding it ("quando quidem vulgare eloquium est macaronicis poëtae latinizare") forms
a pun on the title of the *De vulgari eloquentia* and is being made at Dante's expense. The point
here is to parody the efforts of Florentine and sixteenth-century theorists to discover or create a
courtly vernacular by reframing this language in the anachronistic terms of an imagined medieval
contemporary of Dante who absurdly asserts the superiority of Macaronic to all vernacular writing
of any sort: "a truly vulgar eloquence is the Latinizing of a macaronic poet". Merlin's apology

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[35] While Folengo does not comment on the "incorruptibility" of Latin versus the "instability" of the vernacular,
which Dante discusses at *Convivio* (1.5.9), this distinction influences his use of many "little-known" dialects in Mac-
aronic. I have not found any suggestion in the preface that Folengo read or knew of the *Convivio*, but a point of
similarity between the it and the *Apologetica* is the theme of food and digestion as a metaphor for learning: Dante
compares the knowledge contained in his vernacular commentary or "banquet" to *pan degli angeli* ["bread of angels"]
consumed by readers of commentaries written in Latin about Greek works (Convivio 1.1.7). Neither is there a direct
allusion to the *Cena Trimalchionis* episode of Petronius in any of the four versions of the *Baldus*, though it is probable
that Folengo was familiar with the *Satyricon* as one of the more racy of the Roman 'milesian tales', alongside the
Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

[36] Text and translation is from JoAnn DellaNeva and Duvick Brian, eds., *Ciceronian Controversies*, The I Tatti
Renaissance Library 26 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 2-3.

[37] And possibly the *Convivio* as well. See the introduction to Steven Botterill, *De vulgari eloquentia* (Cambridge,
UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a "criteria of classification" and a summary of the debate, see Robert
A. Hall, *The Italian 'Questione della lingua': An Interpretative Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
Press, 1942), 36-8. For the circulation of the treatise in the Cinquecento, see Gilson, *Reading Dante*, 62-90. For the
marginal annotations made by Bembo in a copy of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, now housed at the Vatican Library, see
Camboni, "Paradigms of Historical Development."

[38] Folengo's *scarpacinum* and *spazzacaminum* are distantly echoed by Rabelais, when he makes the inhabitants of
the underground civilization of Laternland speak their own "Lantern Language" in the *Pantagruel*.

for Macaronic thus situates his book and language among, even at the center of, highly contested notions of linguistic authority and poetic originality at the beginning of the sixteenth century by displacing his language into the imagined past of Dante and the proto-humanists, which is also the present the protagonist of the poem, Baldo.

The rough conflation of Latins and vernaculars in Macaronic not only runs counter to the alignment of *res* and *verba*, content and eloquence, sometimes identified as the unconscious goal of humanist eloquence, but also rejects and even scrambles systems of grammar, rhetoric, and knowledge. This has provoked a mixture of negative and positive responses over the centuries. For example, macaronic texts like the *Baldus* may have invigorated the efforts of some writers to graft or 'transfer' grammatical forms and rules from classical sign systems, like those of Latin and Greek, onto vernacular ones: at the level of the poem's narrative, the antipathy that Baldo displays for learning Latin grammar in book 3 echoes the poet's dismissal and even vandalism of classroom material and grammatical textbooks in book 25, books that depict the poet and his protagonist burning the pages of grammars to cook sausages—'eye-raising', if not 'flag-raising'— details. These are very serious textual jokes indeed, jokes that place Macaronic at the threshold of what amounts to a systematic desacralization of the basic texts of humanist pedagogy as well as medieval systems of learning that would enable Baldo to pursue a career in the early modern professional world. The glosses that the editor includes in the margins of his book, which inaccurately cite the same grammars that Baldo desecrates, are directed at competent sixteenth-century humanists, some of whom produced vernacular grammars from Italy before the print circulation of Bembo's *Prose*. For example, a few months prior to the publication of *Liber Macaronices*, Giovanni Francesco Fortunio printed a vernacular grammar in Ancona (1516) based partly on editions of Petrarch and Dante's poetry edited by Bembo. Fortunio thus anticipates the *Prose* by almost a decade, while using Bembo's own foundational work on the Trecento masters to compose Italy's first printed vernacular grammar.[39] The humanist Marcantonio Flaminio, known today for having edited an important document of the reform movement in Italy, the *Beneficio di cristo*, and who moved in the same circles as Folengo in Mantua, managed to publish a vernacular grammar shortly after Fortunio's (1521).[40] The widespread popularity of new, printed vernacular grammars in Italy is a clear response to the pressures on and potential dangers of, an 'unbridled' multilingualism witnessed in the *Liber Macaronices*.

By the third revision of the macaronic collection, however, it has become clear that Folengo's language is adhering to one controlling grammar more than others: classical Latin. In the *Cipadense* edition, released sometime in the mid-1530s, the prefatory material is suppressed. Folengo removes dialect words and excises from the edition the many titles, glosses, and sonnets included in

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[39] Bembo finished composing the first dialogue of the *Prose* in 1512.

[40] Flaminio read Fortunio's grammatical treatise and at one point ironically referred to it as "lungha et tediosa" ["long and tedious"]. See a reproduction of his handwritten notes in Brian Richardson, "The Creation and Reception of Fortunio's *Regole Grammaticali*," *The Italianist* 36, no. 3 (2016): 369.

the previous editions. He bookends the collection with a short introduction and a table of contents that somberly lists each macaronic poem with simple, one-word titles and a postface written in vernacular prose.[41] Writing in his own voice and not in Merlin's, the poet expresses regret ("pentimento") for the scandal that the circulation his book created in elite circles. Modern critics claim that this regret is dissimulated.[42] Perhaps. What is more important for our investigation of the language of the poet is that Folengo defends macaronic as *his* language in spite of the neo-Latinizing changes he has made to it. He repeats that Macaronic distinguishes the *Baldus* from texts written in other languages and that his method for correcting his idiom is analogous to the changes Ariosto introduces to the *Furioso* in these years. His revisions use Macaronic to make even it better and less blameworthy, or (to use the words of the pseudonym writing this preface) "con questo istesso chiodo cacciasse l'altro" ["with this very nail drive out the other"].[43] The preface discusses Macaronic in the terms of one of the basic types of allegory; the traditional metaphor of poetic language as an *integumentum* or bark-like surface concealing hidden (im)moral truths that are "embarassing to some" appears in full view, lending a literary-critical voice to this author-editor. Writing the preface in his own vernacular voice, and not as Merlin, Folengo joins the reader in interpreting with them the "ruvide scorze" ["rustic bark"] festooned with *vocaboluzzos* by his Macaronic writing heteronym, uncovering the "ingeniossime allegorie" ["ingenious allegories"] this rough exterior hides, like a Rabelaisian marrow, within. Some readers are offended by these hidden meanings, but the poet reassures them that he has purged all the formerly blameworthy elements and that his language has been made "più limata, più gioconda e men rinchrescevole" ["more polished, more lighthearted, and less regrettable"]. He concludes the preface with a striking image of literary dissemination in which his language departs from the printing press to circulate in the countryside and silence his critics:

> Perché se la greca o pur latina o tosca lingua in ciò fallato avessero, saria molto ben ragione che essa medesima ne riportasse penitenzia e vergogna di dover ritrattare i detti sconciamente interpretati; ma questa, tal qual è, macaronesca lingua, sí per aver

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[41] See the comments by Cordié in *Macaronee minori: zanitonella, moscheide, epigrammi*, ed. Massimo Zaggia (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), 176: "Il testo macaronico si presenta così senza più alcun faceto festone; e all'interno di esso, un minuto lavoro di rielaborazione formale ha attenuato molte ruvidezze dialettali ed estrosita metriche, accentuando dall'altra parte la componente latina, anche con l'inserzione di interi brani di latino umanisticamente corretto." A slight point of clarification is needed here: it is not true that the poem can be said to contain more passages in "correct" Latin, a point that I make in chapter 4, in which I have provided translations of the speeches of Guido and Merlin in the Paganini version which do happen to be written in perfectly acceptable Latin with very few, if any, macaronic words or phrases added. This said, C does appear to contain a number of passages that are acceptable by "humanisitic" standards, as Zaggia indicates.

[42] Massimo Zaggia, "Posizione della Cipadense," in *Tra Mantova e la Sicilia nel Cinquecento*, vol. 3 (Florence, 2003), 795–809.

[43] Ariosto is praised at the end of the preface. For the poet of the mid-1530s, this new, updated version of macaronic might be said to function as a kind of Derridean *supplement* for an older, less state-of-the-art version.

essa dato occasione di mal giudicare, sí per meritare di essere letta in restituzione de la non involata altrui fama, sí eziandio per disporre gli stampatori a dovere accettare la nova impresa, i quali a lo ristampare della prima non acchinavano, sará quella che ricompensi il danno ricevuto, uscendo voluntieri alla campagna, non per essere (come è) piú limata, piú gioconda e men rincrescevole della prima, anzi per la sola giá antedetta cagione, cioè di far mentire coloro che dicono lo autore aver detratto agli altrui onori.[44]

Because if a work written in Greek, Latin, or Tuscan language failed in this respect, it would have been correct for that same work to show regret or shame for having to retract the words that were shamefully interpreted. But this, as it were, macaronic language—for having provided others the grounds to misconstrue it, for being worthy of being read in return for the unwanted notoriety it brought upon others, and for hesitating to order printers to accept the new version, who refuse to accept the first— will be the one that repays all damages it inflicted, going willingly into the countryside not for being, as it clearly is, more polished, more joyful, and less regrettable than the first, but only for the already mentioned reason, that is, to make liars those who says the author has detracted from the honor of others.

This preface not only discloses that Folengo wishes to control the interpretation of his book's language by his readers, but that he thinks of Macaronic as no different than the changes made to an edition of Greek, Latin, or Tuscan poetry. This allows him to frame the interpretation of the first two editions in the normative vocabulary of allegory and to compare his changes to those of non-Macaronic works. For the scandalized readers of the first edition of the *Baldus*, Macaronic is no different than poetic writing in any other language: the language of the poet is at once capable of concealing and revealing meanings through speaking other than what is meant, i.e. being allegorical. As macaronic *verbum* evolves across each edition, this allegory become both more imaginative and further detached from the circumstances that inspired the first edition, yet it too is grounded in history. The (a)moral meanings or interpretations of macaronic words and phrases in the first two editions were understood by some of Folengo's more powerful readers to be allegorical.[45] More than make obscene puns, macaronic words and phrases form an extended representation of

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[44] Alessandro Luzio, ed., *Le maccaronee*, vol. 2 (Bari: Laterza, 1911), 206.

[45] For example, the poem's vernaculars can serve in the interest of one of the modes of allegory—one of the two Venuses, for example—while its Latins control the literal meaning, or vice versa. See my analysis of Sinibaldo's speech, below. For the view that the poem's allegory is primarily an erotic burlesque, see Ann E. Mullaney, "Proposal for an Allegorical Reading of Folengo's *Baldus* and 'Chaos del Triperuno'," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini, Memoria del Tempo 36 (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012). While insightful, this view tends to diminish or ignore the allegory of the construction of Macaronic that extends across the poem and whose contours I trace in part 4 of this chapter.

the very post-medieval, Early Modern landscape known to and inhabited by the poet and his immediate readers, the spaces in and between Mantua and Venice inhabited by rapscallions, corrupt municipal officials, and gluttonous clerics. The displeasure the poem has caused to some of the Folengo's more 'informed' readers have caused him to censure this language and to respond to their various concerns in the third edition. Biography as well as 'autobiography' therefore supply the core or *medulla* of significance that is disguised by Macaronic's abrasive surface:

> La cagione che indusse il nostro poeta a poetare in questa sí degna opera fu la prodezza, il valore, la generositá d'un scolaro mantoano della famiglia Donesmonda, chiamato Francesco, come il gran cavalier Francesco Gonzaga, ultimo marchese di Mantova, ordinò fosse nominato del nome suo, tenendolo proprio desso al fonte del battesimo. Essendo egli pur in studio di Bologna, era un stupore della sua valorositá, gagliardezza, liberalitá, bellezza, leggiadria, animositá, con un ingegno prontissimo ad ogni quantunque difficultosa impresa. Pertanto, tirandosi come fina calamita tutti e'buon compagni dietro, diede con molti fatti materia e soggetto al nostro Merlino di fingere questo volume, si come una scorza sotto la quale sta occulta la veritá di molte e molte cose. E cosí per la sua baldanza chiamollo Baldo, e li compagni secondo il vario costume loro nominolli chi Cingaro, chi Falchetto e il resto.[46]

> *The reason that induced our poet to poetise in this worthy work was the strength, valor, and generosity of a Mantuan scholar of the Donesmond family named Francesco, as the great cavalier Francesco Gonzaga, the last Marquis of Mantua, ordered be named after him, linking the boy to the source of his baptism. While at the university of Bologna the poet was taken aback by the valor, vigor, liberality, beauty, gracefullness, liveliness of this man, whose ingenuity could surmount any difficult task. Therefore, pulling himself and his brave companions like a fine magnet pulls everything behind it, he gave with many facts matter and substance to our Merlin to make this volume, just as bark under which the truth of many, many things is hidden. For example, for his boldness he calls the protagonist Baldo and he names his companions after their various roles, like Cingar, Falchetto, and the rest.*

In this passage from the "Argomento sopra il *Baldo*" in C, we learn that Macaronic is inspired by the facts of history: real historical, individuals provided the model for character Baldo and his companions, supplying the few with ready explanation for why the "many" would have found it to have be problematic indeed, even scandalous, in spite of the *Argomento*'s explicit use of the language of fiction ("fingere questo volume"). Indeed, in the material added to the macaronic book from the second edition forward, we learn that Baldo's education in Latin, his 'disruptive'

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[46] Alessandro Luzio, *Studi folenghiani* (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1899), 202. My italics.

behavior in the classroom, descent into delinquency, and eventual roguery, all hearken back to events to which the poet himself was witness, and therefore able to clothe in the language of allegory. The *Baldus* is, in other words, a roman à clef *avant la lettre* whose allegory both conceals and reveals (and is both concealed and revealed by) an unprecedented configuration of macaronic signs.[47] As the need to account for the historical basis of the poem fades, the need to account for Macaronic as a linguistic and literary artifact becomes more necessary; whereas Francesco Folengo insists the *Baldus* is an extended allegory that has its basis in historical figures and real events in the preface to C, the preface written by "Vigaso Cocaio" in V entertains a prolonged comparison of the *Baldus* to the *Orlando furioso*, implicitly suggesting that the evolution of its language (if not its relationship with previous examples of macaronic poetry) may be compared to the linguistic changes Ariosto introduced to the second and third editions of the *Orlando furioso*, which distanced *it* from "*Le fine de l'Orlando innamorato del gran Boiardo, composta pel suo discepolo messer Lodovico Ariosto*".[48]

2.3   The *Baldus* as Allegory of Macaronic

Notwithstanding the poet's repeated affirmations outside the poem that his language is allegorical, its rustic surface concealing ethical and moral meanings that are interpreted in different ways by different communities of readers and that had to be adjusted in the third edition, in this section I will argue that, within the poem, Baldo's education in macaronic signs stages an explicit critique of allegory as tool for didactic instruction and that this reservation about the truth value of poetry expands in each version. My investigation reveals that the education of the poet and his protagonist in macaronic 'signs' transforms the 'allegory of an education' that Ariosto takes from the *Innamoramento di Orlando* and powerfully critiques himself in the *Furioso*. The following account of Macaronic as a transformation and allegory is accompanied by an examination of how this language transforms mimesis; I alo provide some space to treating the language of the poet as a form of linguistic 'interference' or *interferenza linguistica*, as Cesare Segre puts it, from vernacular dialects into Latin. Only by accounting for macaronic as an allegory of an education that moves continually between Latins and vernaculars and the cultures, texts, and traditions they share will the reader discover how Baldo may 'come into his own' as macaronic knight, joining his father Guido and other mythological, biblical, and literary heroes in a desperate struggle against powerful witches and the very notion of hell, proving, once and for all, that the 'child is the father to the man.' The language of the poet is also an education in macaronic, for Baldo is assigned a series of

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[47] See Luca Curti, "Per la biografia di Teofilo Folengo: la morte di 'Baldo' (Francesco Donesmondi)," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 169 (1992): 530–543.

[48] This is the title that Vigaso Cocaio claims, only half-seriously, might be given to the *Orlando furioso* (quoted from the Alessandro Luzio's text of the preface in the appendix to *Le maccharonee*, vol. 2 (Bari: Laterza, 1911), p. 199.)

'advisors' who instruct him in macaronic signs: from Sordello he learns to spurn tyrants and the vulgar crowd, from Manto he learns the 'dark arts', including how to use the Philosopher's Stone to generate infinite quantities of purest gold and granting himself immortal life; from Cingar, a macaronic astrology that satirizes Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Heptaplus* even as it parodies Pontano's *Urania*, and from his father a genealogy of mythological, historical, and biblical heroes who have combated the witches and the forces of darkness since time immemorial. This series of (un)productive encounters prepares the baron of Mantua for his final descent beneath the Moon Mountain, across the sea floor, and into the jaws of hell, where he will confront and defeat the witch-queen Culfora in a climactic battle. Just prior to this katabasis, the poet narrates the journey of an an ambassador in what is an elaborate parody of one of the central motifs of Renaissance selfhood, the sun, which also happens to contain an account of the origins of his own language, Macaronic. His trajectory just so happens to be that of the protagonist, whose story, as we known, began in Mantua. To ground my account of how Macaronic is a narrative of its own development in the character Baldo and in the history of the macaronic book, the reader must confront the models of learning that Macaronic *rejects* and *replaces* with its countervailing 'system' of signs.

In the most basic terms, the movement known as humanism is based on the study and the reproduction of ancient texts. Through a rigorous training in the reading of these texts, self-identified humanists sought to imitate these forms in their own speech and writing as well as to revive the ancient disciplines of learning, i.e. rhetoric, history, moral philosophy, poetry, astronomy, et cetera, each in their own varying and competing private, ecclesiastical, and academic roles.[49] Depending on the city, school, university, or courtly context, this nebulous movement accompanied and did not replace the 'scholastic' disciplines, such as grammar, dialectic, and natural philosophy. In Italy, talented intellectuals like Angelo Poliziano and Lorenza Valla composed treatises on Aristotelian philosophy and produced edited editions of Greek and Latin classics with equal facility; Flamino, Sperone Speroni, Girolamo Fracastoro, and Folengo were trained as humanists but also studied Aristotelian philosophy with Pietro Pomponazzi, who is mentioned by name at *Baldus* 22.123. To greatly generalize, the scholastics and the humanists differ over the relative importance of eloquence, the latter group holding that (*ratio*) ought to be reflected by one's speech and writing (*oratio*).[50] These historians, philosophers, and 'men of letters' trained in the curricula of the *studia humanitatis*, held that the serious and vigorous application of classical knowledge and eloquence

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[49] For the origins of the humanism in Padua, see Ronald Witt, *"In the Footsteps of the Ancients": The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni*, ed. Oberman A. Heiko, vol. 74, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[50]See Richard Waswo, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987). For a version of this debate, see the exchange of letters between Ermolao Barbaro and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in which *res* and *verba* may be said to take the place of *oratio* and *ratio*. Barbaro argues that *res* ought to reflect *verba* and vice versa, whereas Pico responds that *res* in scholastic philosophy is useful even when little or no *verba* is present.

played a vital role in the cultural and political life of the Renaissance city.[51] For Poliziano, Barbaro, Salutati, Bruni, Valla, Alberti, and other "Quattrocento" humanists, the pursuit of eloquence and knowledge was no mere antiquarianism. A ripening of ancient learning and eloquence would be a boon for the entire Renaissance city, as an elite whose speech, actions, and writing modeled the moral rectitude of ancient stoic thinkers and avoided servile flattery would naturally curb the excesses of an unjust prince. The schools of Guarino Veronese and Vittorino da Feltre produced several generations of competent humanists employed in various capacities throughout the peninsula, bolstering the reputation of Ferrara.[52] In the ideal humanist classroom, second language acquisition began as early as possible so as to prevent incorrect or unbecoming habits from taking root in the speech of the student. After an extensive training in the foundations of Greek and Latin grammar, the pupils of Guarino and Vittorino continued their education, or *formazione*, by reading the works of the ancients themselves: from Horace's *Ars Poetica* they learned that poetry, as a branch of rhetoric, should possess moral usefulness as well as entertainment value, that it should be pleasant *and* instructional for its readers and listeners, be "dulce et utile" (v. 333). This lesson in the didactic value of poetry continued a long tradition of warding off accusations that poetic language was primarily meant to distract or deceive listeners and readers.[53] As did countless students before him, Folengo memorized ancient poetry in the classroom and from handbooks until the verbal, grammatical, and metrical patterns and structures from these sign systems were 'imprinted' in his being. As his glosses indicate, he made extensive use of medieval Latin grammars, like those of Priscian and Alexander Villedieu, which never fell out of popularity in the Renaissance.[54] Some poems are more important in the Renaissance classroom than others: for the scholars and intellectuals trained by Guarino, the verses attributed to the Virgil poet were highly regarded as an introductory text and were used as a handbook for learning Latin. Virgil, whose works were interpreted by numerous ancient, medieval, and Renaissance commentators, who was memorized and

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[51] For the ways that Renaissance thinkers instilled virtue in leaders and patrons, see James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019).

[52] Folengo's family is related to Vittorino, and Folengo was sent to study at Ferrara before taking his vows as a monk in the Benedictine order.

[53] See the letters of Giovannino da Mantova and Mussato, noted by Witt, *"In the Footsteps of the Ancients"*, 157. For a later attack on the poetry of humanism, see Giovanni Domenici's *Lucula noctis*.

[54] Both grammarians are cited, often erroneously, as *auctores* in the glosses of the macaronic book. In the *De Ordine Docendi et Studendi*, Guarino stresses the importance of the memorization of the works of Virgil together with verse grammars: "On this grounds it is possible to commend the use of the *manual of grammar which passes under the name of Alexander; it is founded upon the great work of Priscian*, but it is much more readily committed to memory on account of its metrical form. When the rudiments of prosody have been carefully learnt we shall find that proficiency is best gained by the daily reading of the poets. *The works of Virgil must be learnt by heart*, and recited as a regular task. In this way the flow of the hexameter, not less than the quantity of individual syllables, is *impressed upon the ear*, and insensibly moulds our taste. Other metres may afterwards be attempted, so that no form of ancient poetry be left neglected. (trans. William Harrison Woodward (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1969), 165, italics are mine).

imitated by countless students over the centuries, and who Dante makes the guide of the pilgrim in the *Commedia*, never fell out of style. Because of the importance of the memorization of Virgil in the curriculum of the Latin humanists, his verses appeared in nearly every compositional activity. The *Macaronea* includes many direct calques and verbal echoes of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, and its writer even claims for himself a Virgilian nom de plume, Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argo.

Folengo not only quotes, misquotes, repurposes, mistranslates, and transforms the poetry of Virgil in Macaronic, but makes his book something of a systematic spoof of an edition of Virgil. The order of the poems within it are, for example, a point-by-point travesty of the sequence of a 'Virgilian career', from smaller compositions to longer ones, *Eclogues*, followed by a 4-book *Georgics* and then a 12-book epic.[55] At the same time, the two macaronic eclogues included in the *Liber Macaronices* and *Zanitonella* travesty myriad examples of neo-Latin and vernacular pastoral poetry, particularly Jacopo Sanazzaro's piscatory eclogues and *Arcadia*, in which romance and pastoral themes are combined. The language of the poet is thus an artifact of humanism even as it spurns Bembo's neo-classicism; even more so than its parody of the vernacular romance, the poem's continual transformation of Virgil's works at the level of language, genre, and textual presentation is what places the *Baldus* at the origin of the early-modern mock-epic.

Macaronic, however, is much more than ambiguous product of Latin humanism or the poetized rejection of an emergent sixteenth-century neo-classicism. The language of Merlin, as it is expressed in the *Baldus*, is also engaged with, or so I argue below, deeply engaged with meta-poetic and ontological questions, which its poet labors to weave into his narration, such as the relationship between authority and language as well as the vexed relationship between allegory and education. A topic of considerable interest in the Norther American criticism of European vernacular chivalric poetry is whether and to what degree allegory, as didactic aid and method of unfolding development in the characters of poems, informs how these poems were read, and how they ought to be read now. Some of the more elaborate studies of allegory and its subversion as a didactic aid focus on the courtly poetry of d'Este Ferrara as it filters into the English-language tradition in works like, for example, Sir Edmund Spencer's *The Faerie Queene*.[56] Many critics inquire how and to what

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[55] There are other characteristics of epic poetry shared by the poems: the defeat of Culfora at the hands of Baldo in P imitates Aeneas' defeat of Turnus at the end the *Aeneid*, as does Ruggiero's defeat of Rodomonte. In chapter 3, I explore how Baldo's voyage transforms and subverts not only the literal story of Aeneas's journey from Troy to Italy, but also the commentary tradition on Virgil's epic that includes the neo-Platonizing commentaries of Landino and Ficino who interpret Aeneas' voyage as a metaphor for the ascent of the soul from a state of blindness and material distraction to one of contemplation and spiritual communion.

[56] Michael Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in its Rise and Decline* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), David Quint, "Epic Tradition and Inferno IX," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 93 (1975): 201–207, Jo Ann Cavallo, "Allegory of Education in the *Orlando Innamorato*," *Modern Language Studies* 22, no. 3 (1992): 84–97.

extent the *Orlando innamorato* fashions an "allegory of education" or "education in allegory" for two of its principal characters, Orlando and Rugiero, before assessing how, in the *Furioso*, Ariostan irony or "*sorriso Ariostesco*" accompanies allegory only to ultimately subvert it. Studies of the poem also focus on whether the didactic intents of allegory are suspended or are undermined by a conspicuous and reoccurring theme: that of sheer madness. In the sections that follow, I argue that the themes of both allegorical education and its double, madness, are profoundly important for coming to terms with both Macaronic and Folengo's "phantasia plus quam fantastica".

Rather than suggesting that the *Baldus* contains one allegory, or a set of interrelated allegories in a single language, this chapter studies 'the language of the poet' as an elaborate transformation and inversion of the double-structure of allegory spread out along a series a learning episodes for Baldo. I argue that poem's allegory is often not properly allegorical at all, but a subversion of it: whereas the *Orlando furioso* depends on Ariosto's prodigious efforts (in proems, in the structure of the book) to emphasize the *difference* between the fantasies of literature and the reality of his readers, the macaronic book seeks to collapse this distinction, closing the gap between reality and fantasy until they coincide. The poem grants the privileged reader a 'real time' representation of the development of the protagonist: Macaronic is opposed to allegory as a non-disclosing interpretive act—it is, in 'other words', the opposite of allegory as *alienoloquium*, "the speaking other than what is said" in the definition of Isordore of Seville. In fact, the humor of the poem does not disguise morals so much as reveal the 'unpleasant' truth of the corruption of the clergy and the violent state of Italian politics between 1516 and 1521, making these terrifying facts more palatable through *varatio* and humorous language. That the visible layers of meaning are meant to soften the blow of the scorn of the poet is clear from his famous 'confessional' aside in the proem of book 9 of T, where the 'hidden author' compares his silence to that of the Psalmist, David, who remained *silui a bona* while crimes raged around him:

> Nil nisi crassiloquas dicor scrivesse camoenas,
> crassiloquis igitur dicamus magna comoenis.
> Siste labrum. Quare? Cupies tacuisse, tacendum est.
> Quod nocet? Immo nocet vatem nimis esse loquacem.
> Vera loquor: Num vera loqui tibi convenit uni?
> Num sequar errorem commune vera silendo?
> Et facis errorem tu solus vera loquendo.
> Vera loqui est error? Non error vera tacere;
> nam bona se interdum David siluisse fatetur.
> Interdum silui, interdumque loqui mihi fas est.
> Est (fateor) seu vera loqui, seu vera silere
> Adscriptum laudi, sed laus magis aequa tacendi est.
> Id nondum; sed ita quid sit tacuisse probavi,
> utile nil reperi; nunquid culpabile? Quantum!

> Fer causam. Dicam, si mites arrigis aures.
> Arrigo… iam satis est, dixisti, iure tacendum est.
> Tu facies melius Zambelli dicere vaccam.
> Ergo Zambelli vaccam, Mafelina canamus.[57]

I am said to write nothing if not the coarsely-speaking Camenae; therefore, we tell great things with the with coarsly-speaking Camenae. Stop lip. Why? You wish to be silent, silence will be had. What does it harm? Indeed, it hurts a poet to be overly talkative. I speak the truth. It is fitting for you alone to speak the truth? Then shall I follow the common error by being silent about the truth? And you are making an error yourself by speaking the truth alone. Is it an error to speak the truth? To speak the truth is an error? It is not an error to be silent about the truth. For David admits that he sometimes silent about the good. Sometimes I am silent, and sometimes it is right for me to speak. There is praise (I confess) to be ascribed to either speaking the truth or remaining silent, but the praise is more fair in being silent. That's not yet true; but so I have tried to be silent about what is, I found nothing useful; is it blameworthy? How very much so! Bring your case. I'll tell you if the meek pricks your ears. I'm at attention… enough already. You have spoken. You will do better to speak of Zambellus' cow. Therefore let us sing, Mafelina, of the cow of Zambellus.

What this astonishing passage makes immediately clear to the reader is that it is written mostly Latin, not Macaronic. While its formal structure is that of a dialogue between the concealed author and the poem's narrator, who "dialogizant," the vexed *tone* suggests that its author has learned from the authorial outbursts of the *Commedia* and *Orlando furioso*, particularly Dante's apostrophe blasting the simoniacs at *Inferno* 19.1-6, or Ariosto's condemnation of the avaricious at *Furioso*, 43.1-4. The proem is a rare instance in the Toscolana edition of the *Baldus* where the voice of the true author, Teofilo, can be distinguished from Merlin's, both at the level of the narration and at the level of language. Here the young monk strenuously objects to the immorality of the uncouth, lying language imposed by his tyrannical Macaronic-speaking pseudonym. The real author is profoundly suspicious of Merlin's muses ("crassiloquas camoenas") and casts doubt on the project of clothing objectionable truths with the humorous, rustic veneer that is Macaronic. As in the case of Ariosto's authorial proems, an inner tension has become externalized—but, unlike Ariosto (and more like Dante), the poet likens himself to a figure from the bible, the psalmist David. The disambiguation of the holy and penitential poet from his potentially heretical alter-ego could not be clearer: the young Benedictine Teofilo is forced to turn a blind eye to the monstrous evil disclosed

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[57] For a reading of the poem as an elaborate and extended allegory of sex crimes perpetuated by Church officials, see Mullaney, "Proposal for an Allegorical Reading" and her introduction to *Baldo*, volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), especially p. viii et passim.

by Merlin's language and thus remains "*silui a bona*" (39.3) as the poet's free-style versification continues. The proem informs the readers of the poem that Macaronic is not a deceptive exterior or "truth hidden under a beautiful lie" à la Dante, intended to entertain the vulgar crowd while concealing truths accessible to the knowledgeable few or "*ver ch'ha faccia di menzogna*" (*Inferno* 26.124). Instead, the structure of macaronic is an *inversion* of the forward-facing structure of allegory: its rough, bark-like surface—checkered with slang, solecisms, obscene jokes, and vividly realistic caricatures—hide not truths, but sheer devilry. Rather speak around the truth in a closed and deceptive *alieno loquens*, carefully separating fictions from the lived realities of their readers, macaronic lifts the veil, as it were, on the corrupt state of Italy, furnishing exactly the kind of document (and language) onto which a "radicalization of the discrepancy between poetic rhetoric and the 'realists' of history" may be formed by its readers, then and now.[58]

The divide between the perspective of the poet and the narrator, one who speaks in Latin, the other who speaks in Macaronic, may at first appear to be a schizophrenic fragmentation of linguistic boundaries, one that threatens to compromise the stability of the collection and the didactic or anti-didactic intents of its representation of an incomplete education and formation of an identity and self in the fictive medieval-Renaissance *commune* of Baldo and his peers. Yet, this too is anticipated and qualified by the very multilingualism—and, if we are to believe the commentators on the opening verses, the madness—that opens the *Baldus*: Teofilo's poem is, after all, a "*ph*antasia plus quam *fa*ntastica', an opening that openly echoes both Matthew 11:9 and the first verse of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.[59] Given Folengo's familiarity with Seneca's drama and Ariosto's epic, it is unsurprising that madness should be the dominant theme and enabling device of macaronic *verba* in the collection. As in those more famous works, madness is a thematic space in which the mobilization of Macaronic against poetic allegory is most readily apparent. The theme is as pervasive in the *Baldus* as it is elsewhere in the collection, and quite emphatically extends to language as well, compromising the educational function of poetry by continually collapsing the difference between literary fantasy and the lived reality of the reader. Merlin begins the poem in a state of macaronic *furor* wherein poetry is channeled from corpulent muses whose names derive from Mantuan folklore; in the introductory proem, the poet is a passenger who travels aboard a boat across a dangerous sea to a mountain where macaronic muses dictate verses to him as they engage in various gastronomic activities.[60] Unlike Erasmus' composition for his friend More that begins with a pun on his name ("Mor*iae Encomium*") and in which *stultitia* performs an oration in Latin about the topic that she herself personifies, or the poet of the *Furioso* who compares in Lombard

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[58] See Albert Russell Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 82.

[59] See Alessandra Paola Macinante, "Tra le auctoritates folenghiane: plus quam Lucano," *Filologia e critica* 1 (2013): 102 and Marco Faini, "Il palpabile parlare: linguaggio, profezia, alchemia tra Folengo, Leonardo, e Ariosto," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini, Memoria del Tempo 36 (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012), 78

[60] For my argument that the macaronic muses are central to Folengo's *grottesco* or 'grotto style,' a poetics of mixture and generic hybridity that effectively creates the Renaissance literary grotesque, see chapter 3, section 3.

and, later, in Bembian, Orlando's madness to his own difficulties in love, the poem-vision of the *Baldus* begins with a "phantasia fantastica", a Latin fantasy *and* a vernacular insanity: "a fantasy, more crazy than ever."[61] The comic-heroic opening sentence, which declares the subject of the poem in normal epic form and ends with a notorious image of hell shitting itself in fear at the arrival of the protagonist, is only one instance of the originality of Folengo's macaronization of epos. In *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Ernst Curtius writes that Folengo's muses are a scandalous novelty and compares them with the poet's macaronic language to the dream-prose of *Finnegan's Wake*. Curtius is right to focus on Folengo's muses, for they inspire his poetic vision in a madness or *furor poeticus* that militates against all the pretensions of contemporary neo-Latinists, especially the Florentine philosophical poets of the school of Lorenzo de Medici, whose writings display many instances of the same topos.[62]

The linguistic madness of this vision is not limited to the macaronic book: it spreads to its very interpreter, the herbalist editor and transcriber, Lodela, a symptom of which is his rejection of all forms of written authority other than Merlin's. Mentioning the scatological joke that ends the first sentence of the proem ("*incagare*"), Lodela tells the reader that he lost his mind while revising the poem: "meum ingenium quasi de birlo cascavit".[63] Just as the macaronic manuscript is a *pharmakon* or poison-cure to its philologist-editor, the macaronic book is an anomaly in the 'economy' of vernacular and Latin texts printed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Systems of grammar, imitation, and poetic language are intentionally ignored and parodied while, in the first sequence of books devoted to his childhood and upbringing, Baldo proves to be a 'nuisance' to his Latin teachers and a 'disruptive' presence in the language classroom. His formal education grinds to a halt when he discovers or "sticks his nose into" romances written in 'easy' vernacular languages, abandoning any chance of living a 'normal life' as a notary, lawyer, or other early

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[61] See the notes to the *Baldus* 1.1 in ed. Mario Chiesa. Carlo Cordié's translates "phantasia plus quam fantastica" as "fantasia matta più che mai". See "Dal *Baldus*," in *Opere di Teofilo Folengo*, vol. 1 (Milano, Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1976), 71–609. In the criticism, Merlin Cocaio is compared to Ion, the Greek rhapsode and interlocutor with Socrates in the eponymous dialogue composed by Plato. See G. Parenti, "*Phatasia plus quam phantastica* e l'inspirazione del 'Baldus','" in *Studi di letteratura italiana offerti a Domenico de Robertis*, ed. F. Gavazzeni and G. Gorni (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1993), 147–50.

[62] For discussion of the types of *furor poeticus* by Ficino and Poliziano, see Michael J. B. Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and The Phaedran Charioteer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) and James K. Coleman, "Furor and Philology in the Poetics of Angelo Poliziano," in *New Worlds and the Italian Renaissance: Contributions to the History of European Intellectual Culture*, ed. Andrea Moudarres and Christiana Purdy Moudarres (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 251–290.

[63] The passage in T lists 18 subjects and authors the authority of whom the editor has come to reject: "Infantasticabile vero nostri poëtae sentimentum iam menses pene septem adeo sforzatus sum distorthiare vel magis crevellare, quod meum ingenium quasi (velut aiunt) de birlo cascavit. Singula tamen brancatissime ad ultimum attacavi, tantam philosophiae, astronomiae, cosmographiae, musicae, nigromantiae, phisicae, alchimiae sparpagnationem et doctrinam maravigliatus ut nihil Pytagoram, nihil Platonem, Ptolomeum, Boëtium, Zoroastrum, Avicennam, Geber fuisse iudicatum est. Praeterea grandiloquacitationem, sermonisque pinguedinem masticantes, Ciceroni, Vergilioque incagare praesumimus" (Luzio, *Le maccaronee*, 282).

modern functionary. His education in macaronic signs begins when he learns about the adventures and trials of Orlando, whose strength and wild antics when mad with jealously the boy admires. Since Orlando is, even in Boiardo's poem, "pegged as allegorically illiterate", it is unsurprising that he should take some time to learn how to unveil duplicitous appearances for the corruption and vicious desires they conceal.[64] His education in Macaronic comprises a suite of learning episodes that prepare the Baron of Mantua for a mission far darker than the hectic battles that dot the final books of the *Aeneid*. Unlike Aeneas, whose dynastic struggle occurs in the gloom of the sublunar world, or Astolfo, who visits only one smokey circle of Dante's hell (in which he encounters ungrateful Lidia before ascending in the Chariot of Elijah to the earthly paradise and surface of the moon), Baldo battles through an underworld populated by demons, witches, and scheming minions before ending his poem in a pumpkin recalling Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and Lucian's *Mennipus*.[65] If Ariosto's poem casts doubt on the effectiveness of allegory as a tool for education in ethical action by way of poetry about Ruggiero, over the course of his poem about Baldo, Merlin turns his charge into a figure of what allegory is not, ultimately 'undoing the spell' of Culfora in P and bringing war to Lucifer in T, C, and VC. A macaronic education equips him with strategies and 'moves' for accomplishing his duty, one which is written into his stars by the Mantuan poet: to discern what is authentic from what is counterfeit and false, to learn that deceptive surfaces conceal horrid corruptions, to defend the chastity of Leonardo, and to defeat the witches, forever foiling their schemes to bring world war to humankind.

2.4   The Language of Baldo: A Macaronic Renaissance

Now that I have established that macaronic is a language placed under the sign of the madness of *fantasia*, a madness that is, moreover, both comprised of and seeks to endlessly compromise ancient, medieval, and humanist educational systems and the languages they are written in, I have cleared the way for a new account of the development of Baldo into *enfant terrible* of Mantua-Cipada. In the remainder of this part of the dissertation, I argue that by interpreting Baldo's character development, the reader arrives closer to a definition of the language of the poet as it develops between 1517 and the mid-1530s. The opening scene of the first macaronic book is set outside Paris, where the bravest knights of Europe have gathered to participate in a tournament announced by the King of France. For the announcement of the tournament and many of its details the poet has clearly drawn from the tournaments of book 5 of the *Aeneid*, the first book of *Morgante*, and the first book of the *Orlando innamorato*:

<div align="center">Exspectata dies aderat, nonamque serena</div>

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[64] Cavallo, "Allegory of Education in the *Orlando Innamorato*," 95.

[65] For Virgil's way of 'showing darkness' in the final book of the *Aeneid*, see W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Virgil's Aeneid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

> Auroram Phaethontis equi iam luce vehebant,
> famaque finitimos et clari nomen Acestae
> excierat; laeto complerant litora coetu,
> visuri Aeneadas, pars et certare parati. (*Aen.*, 5.104-8)

The looked-for day had come, and now the steeds of Phaëthon ushered in the ninth Dawn with cloudless light. The name and fame of noble Acestes had stirred the countryside; in merry groups the people thronged the shore, some to see the sons of Aeneas, and some ready to contend.[66]

> Erano in corte tuti i paladini
> Per honorar quella festa gradita
> E da ogni parte e da tutti i confini
> Era in Parigi una gente infinita.[67] (*Orl. Innam.* 1.i.9.1-4)

> Parigi risuonava de instromenti,
> Di trombe, di tamburi e di campane;
> Vedeansi i gran destrier con paramenti,
> Con foggie disusate, altiere e strane;
> E d'oro e zoie tanti adornamenti
> Che nol potrian contar le voci umane;
> Però che per gradir lo imperatore
> Ciascuno oltra al poter si fece onore. (1.i.11.1-8)

All the paladins came to court to celebrate that holiday. From every region, every nation, numberless people entered Paris... Through Paris drums and trumpets played, bells tolled and instruments resounded. Great paramented steeds appeared with stately trappings, rare and strange; their gold and jeweled ornaments defy the power of human speech. To show the emperor respect, each knight was most extravagant.[68]

> Interea pulchram giostram, largumque bagordum
> rex jubet ordiri campagnam desuper amplam.
> Fama per intornum volitat, gentemque remotam

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[66] I use the English from *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, ed. G. P. Goold, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 479.

[67] All quotations of the *Innamorato* are henceforth from text edited by Aldo Scaglione (Torino: UTET, 1963).

[68] The English is from Charles Stanley Ross's translation in *Orlando Innamorato: Orlando in Love* (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2004).

> avvisat, Scocios, Hirlandos, atque Britannos,
> Anglesos, Normandos, Picardosque, Baveros,
> quod statuebatur pulcherrima giostra Pariso.
> Inter francesas haec urbs est primior urbes,
> clara quidem studio, sed multum clarior armis. . .
> Iam super excelsas turres vexilla volazzunt,
> milleque banderas super alta cacumina produnt,
> inde pavaiones ficcato stipite drizzant.
> Undique sollicitant, crontradas undique spazzant,
> undique tala parant, faciunt ferrare cavallos,
> morbezant, saltant, cifolos ac timpana chiocant,
> pulsant campanas in campanilibus altis,
> nocte dieque fores urbis lassantur apertae,
> per quas continuo gensdarmae copia transit. (1.91-115) [69]

Meanwhile the kind orders the large lances to begin the beautiful joust on the spacious field. News travelled on wings to tell distant peoples, the Swiss, the Irish, the British, the Anglo-Saxons, the French, the Picards, the Baverians, that there was to be a beautiful joust in Paris. This is the leading city in all of France, famous for its learning but even more for its arms. . . already flags fly on lofty towers and a thousand banners jut forth on high, stuck to posts from where the pavilions stand. All sides get excited they agitate every quarters of the city, all sides prepare arms and make ready the horses; they dance, and leap, playing pipes and drums, the bells ring in the high bell towers and night and day the gates of the city are left open, through which pass scores of men-at-arms.

The grandeur of the tournament sets the stage for the doomed romance of princess Baldovina, daughter of the King of France, and Guido, the courageous knight from the lesser-known border town of Montalbano, that is to follow. As will be the case for Baldo's companions Fracasso and Cingar, Guido is the descendant of a figure from medieval romances, Rinaldo, the intrepid yet poor knights of Charlemagne. Unable to resist the gaze of the young princess who spots him from the spectator's gallery, Guido falls head over heals in love and, after a short interlude, the two elope to Italy.[70] The scene of this *innamoramento* is emblematic of Macaronic as the jumble of languages and poetic traditions that it is: Baldovina, described with the typical motifs of Petrarch's Laura, is

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[69] I cite from the text of the *Toscolana* edition in Attilio Portioli, *Le opere maccheroniche di Merlin Cocai*, vol. 1 (Mantua: Mondovi, 1882), 67.

[70] In VC, the poet ominously foreshadows their marriage as a "nozzae infelicis quam brutta ruina sequetur" (1.383-4).

more beautiful than a Venus or Minerva (P 1.62-5), while her glances at Guido are as deadly as the basilisk's stare or the arrows shot by Cupid at his victims:

> Baldovina videns, persulsa Cupidinis arcu,
> infelix oculos mentem quoque ficcat in illo,
> laudat honestatem vultus laudatque valorem
> moxque maritari sese desiderat illi.
> Guido levans oculos illam improvises adogiat
> atque reprecusis amborum corde medemo
> luminibus capitur, brusat, suspirat, abrasat. (P 1.126-32)

Baldovina, looking down, is struck by Cupid's bow and, fixing her mind and eyes on that unfortunate man and praising his honest face and valor, soon she longs to be married to him. Guido, raising his eyes, spots her unexpectedly and, having been struck in the heart with the eyes of both [sic], is captured; he burns, suspires, and blazes.

Consumed with a burning passion that resembles a sickness, Guido retreats to his tent, where he throws himself on his bed and misses the next round of jousts (P 1.165-169). He delivers a typical lament of unfulfilled desire in which he claims to be mad ("*demens*") and, even more disturbingly, blames Baldovina for not having covered her face with a veil:

> "caece puer, quem non crudeli conteris arcu?
> Ah *demens* Guidone puer te nudulus arcet?
> Ac te, venturam qui speras vincere giostram,
> fantinus vicit? Cohibe, Guidone, *furorem*,
> non tua progenies cosis regalibus aequat.
> Heu, quaenam facies claro me lumine cepit!
> Heu, quales in me miserum giravit ocellos!
> Non mea quippe fuit, sed pulchrae culpa puellae,
> debuerat quoniam frontem cohibere serenam". (P 1.126-146, my italics)

"Blind boy, what do you not destroy with your cruel bow? Ah, mad Guido, a naked boy hinders you so? And you, who having come hoping to win this tournament, are bested by a sprite? Restrain this madness, Guido, your family from royal stock does not equal it. Alas, what a face with bright eyes has captured me! Alas, what eyes have turned on miserable me! Of course, the blame was not mine, but that of the beautiful girl, seeing that she ought to have hidden her fair face."

Sinibaldo, the protagonist's close friend (his name, like Baldovina's, echoes and prepares us for the coming of Baldo) checks to see where his friend has gone. Sinibaldo then attempts to console the knight with words and examples intended to cure his lovesickness, restore his reason, his virtue, and the promise of winning a famous name:

> "Deh", Sinibaldus ait, "ne te, Guidone, trucidas!
> Est ubi tanta tui *sapientia*, *virtus*, *honestas*?
> Est ubi *temperies animi*, *prudentia*, *sensus*?
> Hactenus egregium Guidonis nomen ad astra
> tollitur, et solo vis omnia perdere motu?
> Tuque gubernares totum sagaciter orbem,
> et te sola virum clarii damisella guberant? (P 1.186-192, my italics)

> "Come", Sinibaldo said, 'Do not kill yourself, Guido! Where is your *judgement* so sound, your *courage*, your *valor*, your *honor*? Where is your *equal temperament*, your *prudence*, your *reason*? Until now the illustrious name of Guido has been lifted to the star, and you wish, alone, to lose everything in rebellion? You wisely steer the whole world and a single girl governs you, a famous man?

In VC, Sinibaldo forms words of guidance and produces examples of famous love affairs that ended badly for their participants, including Paris and Helen, and Aeneas and Dido:

> Verba prius formabat ei mostrantia drittam
> atque viam tortam centumque pericula vitae;
> transit ad exemplos dapossa mille notandos,
> bastantesque animam crudi tenerire Neronis. (1.287-290)

> *First, he forms words that demonstrate to him the right road from the crooked road and a hundred mortal dangers. Then he goes on to the thousand famous examples that would have softened the soul of cruel Nero.*

By way of macaronic signs, Sinibaldo demonstrates to Guido that amorous passion has put his manhood 'on the line.' His list of moralizing examples anticipates the figures of strength and fortitude unmanned listed by the narrator in the apostrophe at 1.324-325 ("Heu, quia troppus amor facit insanire, quid illi | contrastare potest?"), which includes Caesar, Samson, and Hercules, the last of whom is said to have abandoned his lion's pelt for a feminine gown:

> Caesar erat tam bravus homo, qui subdidit orbem,
> at mulier scanfarda illum subiecit amori.
> Alcides, validis qui spallis more pilastri

> cascatura susum tenuit solaria coeli,
> foemineam soccam, reiecta pelle leonis,
> induit, et mazzam posuit fusumque piavit.
> Fortem Sansonem, qui ungis spaccare solebat
> dentatos porcos, tygres magnosque leones,
> tandem imbriagum vilis putanella tosavit. (1.565-573)

Caesar was such a valiant man who subjugated the whole world, but one dishonest woman subjected him to love. Hercules, who held up the falling ceiling of the heavens with shoulders as strong as pillars, after throwing off the lion's pelt, donned a feminine skirt and threw down his club to pick up a spindle. Mighty Samson, who was accustomed to rend toothed boars, tigers, and large lions with his nails, in the end, drunk, was shorn by a vulgar girl.

A few comments can be made about the intertextual allusions in the apostrophe by the narrator, which is longer and includes more examples in the *Toscolana* edition. The mention of Hercules unmanned remembers Poliziano's ekphrasis of the Vulcan-wrought panels that Giulio sees on the Temple of Venus in the *Stanze*.[71] In fact, *foemineam soccam* is a macaronic 'transformation' of Poliziano's "*femminea gonna*" at *Stanze* 114.1, as here Folengo juxtaposes Hercules' former strength in holding the world on his shoulders with his servitude to Omphale, just as Poliziano-Vulcan does at 114.6 ("chi colli omer già fece al ciel colonna"). When Cingar refers to the hero's pathetic use of a spindle or *claviger* at 14.197, Folengo has in mind the *torce* that Hercules wields at *Stanze* 114.8. The exempla from humanist sources added to Sinibaldo's speech in T, C, and VC, as well as the poet's apostrophe on love, underscore that these organizations of 'macaronic signs' are meant to be didactic.[72] They deepen the dramatic irony of the scene when it is revealed that the jouster from Montalbano, unlike Giulio, has learned nothing from them.

It can also be pointed out that Sinibaldo's speech echoes the first episode of the education of Ruggiero in allegory in canto VI of the *Orlando furioso*—one that also ended in a failure. In that episode, the disembodied voice of the English knight Astolfo warns Ruggiero about the corrupting enchantments and charms of Alcina, who has transformed him into a myrtle tree—an adaptation of the striking image of Dante's Pier della Vigna, which is itself an imaginative transformation of Virgil's Polydorus in the *Aenied*.[73] As the first instance of spoken dialogue in the *Baldus*,

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[71] For specific treatment of the panels' allegory, see David Quint, trans., *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano* (The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA, 1993), p. xx-xxi: "The example of transvestite Hercules in the service of Omphale would confirm Julio's worst fears, and presents an ironic version of the conjunction of Mars and Venus."

[72] For the use and abuse of the *exemplum* in Renaissance France and Italy, see John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[73] The theme of the triumphant restoration of manly virtues over effeminate desires reappears in canto XVI of the *Gerusalemme liberata*, when Rinaldo's soldiers rescue the knight from Armida's island.

Sinibaldo's words are emblematic of macaronic as a mixture of signs capable of being read or misread depending on the competencies, experiences, and tolerances of different communities of readers; as sincere or ironic reflection on this or that aspect of the education of the poet; as a parody of humanism; as a distortion or transformation of the main themes of chivalric romance; as an inversion of *serio ludere* or "serious play", whereby the difficult, rustic embellishment of the text resists interpretation only to reveal little transcendent intellectual value within; or even a rejection and emptying-out of Socratic self-effacement found in Plato's dialogues and Castiglione's *Cortegiano*. Indeed, while Sinibaldo humorously juxtaposes words of stoic moral philosophy, such as *virtus* and *honestas*, with vernacular words derived from romance narratives and Italian lyric poetry (i.e. "*damisella*"), in the hopes of instructing his charge in behavior proper to a man, his advice inspires no change in his friend. In short, this first configuration of macaronic signs fails to correct Baldo's vicious appetites. If, at least as first, macaronic eloquence stirs the knight of Montalbano to spurn love and pursue a famous name in the tournament outside Paris (he does, in fact, return to the games), his heart remains suspended in a state of aching and unfulfilled desire. Soon enough, like the brother-in-law of his ancestor, Rinaldo, Guido abandons the path of virtue for one of *voluptas*, and he and Baldovina escape from France into Italy, ultimately settling in the city of the poet himself, Mantua.

If love is linked to madness both thematically and conceptually in the *Innamoramento* and the *Furioso*, accompanying or jeopardizing the didactic episodes of both poems, so it is in the macaronic book as well. Guido's transuming passion for Baldovina is described as a madness that lacks remedy. It also rebuffs the concerted interventions of his friends, for had Sinibaldo's words and examples, his macaronic *ratio* and *oratio*, functioned as they were intended to—correcting the corrupt desires of the knight and replacing them with reason and manly virtues— Guido would be 'cured', signaling the victory of the symbolic forms and examples of humanist exemplarity over vicious and unreasonable appetites, and Baldo would have no chance of being born or coming to age near Mantua. Fortunately, Guido spares no time in acting on his less-than-virtuous urges. Under the cloak of darkness, he and Baldovina escape from Paris and cross the Alps into Italy. They do so disguised as beggars, believing that this will help them elude the many spies the King has charged with finding and retrieving them: "sed male vestiti, ne quisquam nosceret illos" (P. 1.343-4). Having 'gone native,' they take refuge in the house of a peasant. The editor, commenting on their affair in a gloss, compares them to Dido and Aeneas: "Poëta noster amator honestatis fuit imitans Virgilium in sua Aeneidam unde dicit: 'Speluncam Dido, dux et Troianus eandem...'" (P. gl. 1.355, cf. *Aeneid* 4.165). Since the gloss is placed just after the verse describing Baldovina's death (the poet exclaims "infelix, heu heu, moritur vitamque reliquit"), the editor suggests that the death of Virgil's Dido is analogous to Baldovina's.[74] The homology between the star-crossed lovers and the fourth book of the *Aeneid* works equally well for both Baldovina and Guido, since Aeneas' decision to abandon Dido resembles Guido's sudden departure for Armenia, although the

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[74] See chapter 3 for consideration of the structural similarities between the *Aeneid* and the *Baldus*.

sequence is slightly different in P, as he departs immediately after Baldo is born and his wife has died in childbirth. He also seeks a "holy life in pentinence" ["vitam sanctam penitenter agendo" (P 1.367)] in a Christian twist on Aeneas's colonization of Italy.[75] Fatherhood is not for Guido and he, having named Baldo after his mother and placing him in the care of a local farmer, leaves for good. In an image recalling the infant Hercules strangling the snakes sent to kill him by Hera, Baldo is born with his fists tightly closed and with a frightening countenance: "as he was born the boy (horrible to say) held with fists tightly shut and whirled round "hic puer (horrendum fatu) nascendo tenebat | clavatos pugnos circumve rotabat ocellos | ac spaventabat scura cum fronte comadres (P 1.362-364) Baldo grows into adulthood with no knowledge of his French origin nor his noble lineage.[76] When he is old enough to stand and clothe himself it becomes clear to his guardian that Baldo is very unlike his brother, Zambello, or the other village children. He refuses to follow the "*costummos villae*" and, recalling the nobility of his parents, Berto (his name in later editions, when it is Baldovina who teaches Baldo) decides that he should learn how to read and write. Berto buys paper and teaches Baldo his ABCs:

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[75] In VC, Guido goes on a pilgrimage to the "sepulchre of Christ" where he tries to "discharge a vow" (VC 2.394), anticipating Tasso's Goffredo.

[76] At pp. 79-80 of edition of Attilio Portioli (Mantua: Mondovi, 1882) the poet remarks on the terrible destiny of the boy in a prophetic apostrophe (the paragraph title is "Propheticum Argumentum") in which Baldo's future deeds as Baron of Cipada are elencated:

> Nascere, parve puere, cui coelum, terra, fretumque
> Ac elementa dabunt tot casus, totque malannos.
> Ne dubita, quoniam gajarditer omnia vinces.
> In presone diu stabis sub rege Gajoffo,
> Sub qua non unquam sperabis cernere lucem.
> Non tibi mancabunt astutae Cingaris artes,
> Pro quibus exibis tenebroso carceris antrum.
> Se non istud erit fortunae munus iniquae;
> Namque valenti animo dum, tecum Cingare solo,
> Urbem assaltabus, stipantibus aethera lancis,
> Cuncta fracassabis, victorque scapabis ab urbe.
> Non terrae sat erit tantas superasse fadigas;
> Verum quam citius pelagum tentare parabis.
> Cinctus ab undosis montagnis nulla videbis
> Aethera, sed pluvias patiere, tonitrua, ventos,
> Fulmina, corsaros, ac tandem mille diablos.
> Ast ubi straccatus, salsis exibis ab undis,
> saeva tibi rapiet carum Muselina Lonardum.
> Invenies patrem confectum tempore, quem tu,
> Et vivum puncto, mortumque videbis eodem.
> Post coelum, terram, pelagumque, subibis avernum.
> Ac ita, parve puer venturus, nascere felix.

> Villanus cernens quod non seguitare volebat
> costummos villae, chartam campravit ad illum,
> atque quadernettum supra quem disceret 'a', 'b'.[77] (P 18-20)

The peasant, seeing that he did not wish to follow the habits of the village, bought paper for him, and on a notebook taught him 'a' and 'b'.

When Baldo continues his education at school, he progresses well enough ("*laetanter pergere coepit*") and in only three years can read "whatever book" ("*quoscumque libros*") he wishes:

> Ad scholam Baldus laetanter pergere coepit
> inque tribus magnum profectum fecerat annis,
> ut quoscumque libros velociter ille legebat; (P 21-23)

Baldo began to go to school joyfully and in three years had made such great progress that he could swiftly read any book.

In VC, the poet adds that Baldo recites the battle-scenes from "our" *Aeneid* to his instructors ("*nostrique Maronis | terribles guerras fertur recitasse magistro*" VC 3.92-3), but he neither understands the literal or allegorical meaning of the story of Aeneas' journey from Troy to Rome, nor wishes to emulate the moral choices or *pietas* of Aeneas outside the classroom. His education, which resembles that of a normal humanist education in the private schools of Renaissance Italy, is instead cut short when he "sticks his nose" into vernacular romances:

> sed post Orlandi nasare volumina coepit,
> non ultra curat deponentia discere verba,
> non species, numeros, non casus atque figuras,
> non doctrinales ad mentem tradere versus:
> haec eadem sprevit, tantum fera bella Rinaldi
> Orlandique placent... (P 1.24-29)

But after he begins to stick his nose into books about Orlando, he does not care to learn deponent verbs any longer, nor the genders, numbers, nor cases and figures, nor memorize verses from the Doctrinale; he spurns these things. Only the fierce battles of Orlando and Rinaldo please him...

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[77] The "chartam" may bear a distant recollection of Horace's *Socraticae chartae* at (*Ars Poetica* 310).

He is enchanted by the battles of Rinaldo and Orlando (*"ferra bella"*) and abandons his Latin studies. Although his 'fixation' on prohibited material quickly leads to 'unsafe' behavior in the language classroom, Baldo is spared the rod:[78]

> Saepe super testam scholarum ruperat asses
> librorum, fregitque caput quam saepe magistro,
> numquam terribilis quid sit scoriada probavit, (P 1.30-34)

> *Often he would break tablets on the heads of scholars and shatter the head of his teacher; he never had to experience how terrible a whipping could be.*

An education in one system of signs, meant to prepare Baldo for additional training and a possible career as notary, lawyer, or doctor in the early modern system of courts and universities, is cut short by a very different, primarily vernacular one—one which undermines and replaces the goals and values of the first. The 'examples' Baldo discovers in the vernacular fictions he reads are more immediately appealing, especially the ones that star his ancestor Rinaldo and fierce Orlando. He wishes to emulate their many feats of courage and to take up arms and armor himself one day, impeded only by his small frame: "Baldus in his factis nimium stigatur ad arma, / sed tantum quod sit picolettus corpore tristat" [Baldo is very much spurred to arms by these deeds, but is sad only because his body is so small"] (VC 3.115-16).[79] The ascendance of the vernacular romances over the medieval grammar and rhetorical handbook is the first sign that Baldo is not destined to be the functionary in the bureaucratic system of Mantua, the future that his guardian and instructors desire for him. Baldo's emulation of the characters of chivalric romances suggests rather that he is better suited to live out his days as a *condottiero* or man-at-arms.[80] Baldo's memorization of the

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[78] For the 'ritualistic' use of corporal punishment in the Renaissance Latin language classroom, see Walter J. Ong, "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," *Studies in Philology* 56, no. 2 (1959): 103–124. On the one hand, Ong emphasizes that the vernacular, often learned at home from a parent, guardian, or tutor (in Baldo's case, his adoptive father), was merely a step on the path of a male student to the 'closed world' of the Latin language (p. 109), which required a competitive classroom environment and the strict supervision of an instructor: "Schools often prescribed that a boy be able to read and write at least the alphabet as a requirement for admission, for it was the business of the school proper to teach, not reading and writing, but the Latin language" (p. 108). On the other hand, once a student like Baldo was fully indoctrinated into this exclusive system, the boundaries between the two systems of communication could be relaxed: "In the Middle Ages, for casual communication between scholars, young or old, Latin was unblushingly vernacularized" (p. 113), recalling Pomponazzi's famously lax lecturing style.

[79] A lengthy list of books in T, C, and VC confirms that Baldo's education in Latin has been replaced by a vernacular one. At VC 3.111 et passim, the poet notes that Baldo is enamored by the episode of Orlando's madness.

[80] Baldo's reading habits mirrors those of the courtly elite of Mantua and Ferrara. The Este library held a large number of romances titles: Jane E. Everson, *The Italian Romance Epic in the Age of Humanism: The Matter of Italy and the World of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 148 notes that "among the vernacular works we may note again the presence of some modern classics (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio) as well as traditional, popular vernacular texts, the *Aspromonte*, *Fioravante*, *Aimonte*, *Trioano*, *Alessandro*, *La Spagna*, *Buovo d'Antona*, *Guerino (il) Meschino*, and *Burifré* (i.e. Gotifré) *de Boion*". Baldo reads at least five of these.

Aeneid does not include learning to read it, to understand and interpret its meanings or the various allegories ascribed to it—the story of Aeneas' self-sacrifice and the suppression of individual desire in the heroic struggle to find a home for a people, which would become a city with a monarchy, then a republic, and, much later, a large empire.[81] Instead, Baldo recites the more violent scene of the poem to his teachers before tossing the book at them (VC 3.115). In the case of this episode as well as the proem to book 25 of VC, the language of the poet conflates a representation of the education of the protagonist with that of the poet himself: as in the case of Sinibaldo's failed attempt to restore his friend's liberty, Latin piety, ethical action—the model of the hero Aeneas—is substituted for the enticements of the vernacular *romanzo*.[82] In VC, the emulation of Orlando and Rinaldo in mock-battles is more pronounced. Baldo carries with him a sword at all times, which the poet gives an appropriately epic backstory:

> Quando suam spadam lateri furiosus habebat,
> se vantabat enim mundum curare nientum;
> semper erat multis haec sanguinenta feritis,
> quae fuit in scuris Vulcani facta fosinis,
> quam Brot et Steropes multa limavere fadiga;
> . . .
> quam Durindanae iurasses esse sorellam; (P 2.99-104)

> *When mad Baldo had his sword by his side, he would boast that he cared nothing for the world; it was always bloody with a great deal of gore and had been forged by Vulcan in a dark cave and polished by Brot and Sterop with great effort. . . you would have sworn it to have been the sister of Durindal.*

He makes outlandish claims that are nevertheless prophetic, such as that he wants to destroy the whole world and conquer hell itself:

> saepe minazzabat quod vult destruzzere mundum;
> immo sibi quotiens grandissima voia venivit
> ire diavolorum ad conquistare paësos. (P 2.105-7)

> *He often threatened that he wished to destroy the world; indeed, just as frequently an enormous desire came to him to go to conquer the land of the devils.*

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[81] See chapter 3, section 2.

[82] For how the *Orlando furioso* 'compromises' ancient models of education and virtuous action with the dalliances of romance, see Dennis Looney, *Compromising the Classics: Romance Epic Narrative in the Italian Renaissance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

His ongoing education in macaronic signs is on display in the two set speeches he delivers to his mother: in VC, he explains that he has been getting into fights with street urchins because he wishes to defend the noble lineage of their family ("*casadea*"):

> "Vultis", Baldus ait, "Quod ego mihi dicere lassem
> bastardum, mulum, sguatarumque, fiumque putanea?
> siccine communem tolerabo perdere famam?
> estne hoc oltraggio peius? vos, mater, adunque,
> tam curare pocum nostrae decus omne casadea? (VC 3.153-57)

> *"Do you wish", Baldus said, "That I let myself be called a bastard, mule, scullery boy, son of a whore? Shall I tolerate the loss of our reputation in such a way? Is there an outrage worse than this? Do you really, mother, care so little about the honor of our lineage?*

In this 'wild' stage of what is becoming an post-chivarlic *bildungsroman* turned picaresque adventure, a group of local ruffians invite the boy into their ranks to instruct him in the combat skills he needs to become a leader of *condottieri*, an apprenticeship that worries his mother:

> Non mancant homines qui me, dum praeparor, ispis
> rebus amaëstrant guerrae, seu quando parandi,
> seu quando locus est pugnos sine fine menandi; (VC 3.172-76)

> *I do not lack men who, when I train, instruct me in the ways of war: either when to parry or when it is right to throw fists without end.*

He must learn from these *bravi* should he wish to become a leader of his own crew of rapscallions, men the likes of Cingar, Fracasso, and Falchetto.[83] In the next book all the criminals of Cipada choose Baldo as their leader, making him swear a binding oath to them ("*compellunt*"). For without a leader among such men, everything goes "topsy-turvey" ("*sotosora*"):

> Ergo Cipadicolae primates gensque bravorum,
> quique sacramentant semper simul esse fradellos
> compellunt Baldum vinclo iuraminis ut rex
> sit compagnorum voiatque tenere governum;
> per quem quisque tamen vitam non stimet un aium,
> namque ubi rex mancat vadunt sotosora facendae. (VC 4.45-51)

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[83] Merlin names of each of the members of the Baldo gang, "all devils" ("*sunt omnes diablis*") at P 2.173-179: Marfustus, Bigolinus, Falchettus, Cingar, Schiavina, Fracassus, Castragallus, Moschinus, Zambutadeus, Brunellus, Francus, Sguerzus, Marmotta, Caponus, Rasa, Catacastrus, Cadenazzus, Roia, and Bocalus.

> *Therefore, the ring-leaders of Cipada and the gang of rogues, and those who swear*
> *to be brothers together forever, compel Baldo with the chain of an oath that he be the*
> *leader of the gang and wish to hold rule over them; for him each of them will not value*
> *life more than a garlic bulb, for where a leader is lacking, everything goes topsy-turvy.*

Baldo's readings are only partly the impulsive fixations of a failed student who has abandoned his studies for vernacular enticements. Indeed, this period as a reader of anachronistic romances (are they Baldo's readings, or are they Merlin-Folengo's?) prepare him for his ultimate destiny as king of outlaws. The depth of the imprint that they leave upon his imagination is indicated by his recollection of verses from their pages on the field of battle. For example, he recalls the story of Orlando amid a dangerous skirmish with the local ruffians: "*Baldus ad historiam Orlandini mente recurrit*" (VC 3.365). When Baldovina, horrified by the bodily harm that might come to Baldo, asks him to reign things in a bit, he reminds her that real men must meet the hour of their death with steadfast resolve:

> "Stat sua," Baldus ait, "moriendi volta, nec ullas est
> foggia resistendi fatis nullusque reparus;
> quid giovat hic nobis testam spezzare medemis,
> cum ciascadunis hominum semel hora fichetur? (VC 3.402-5)

> *"Each person," Baldo says, "Has a time to die. There is no way to resist fate and no*
> *way to dodge it; what good is it for us to break our own heads on this, since the hour*
> *is fixed once for each of us?"*

In VC, Baldo undergoes a separate and more 'holistic' phase of his education in Macaronic. This is overseen by a Mantuan aristocrat who encounters Baldo as the municipal authorities arrest him for hooliganism:

> Conspicit hic mamolum, manicis pedicisque ligatum,
> ante magistratum tanto rumore tirari,
> quanto menchiones Troiani tempore vecchio
> ad Priamum regem strassinavere Sinonem. (VC 3.445-449)

> *Sordello sees the child, bound hand and foot, being brought before the magistrate with*
> *as much noise as in days of yore the foolish Trojans dragged Sinon before Priam.*

Baldo's oration is a synthesis of a humanist education with the words and exemplary figures of the vernacular romanzo: for example, he uses the romance cliché of exaggerated bravery in the face of certain death, and even juxtaposes a claque of *Aeneid* 10.467 ("Stat sua quique dies") with a citation of the *Innamoramento di Galvano* 82.2-3 ("ben che 'l diabol se dipinge scuro, / non

crediate però che così sia"). Struck by the classical structure and lively tone of the speech, which begins with a *capitatio benevolentia* and ends by citing the "tovalae statuta rotundae" ["the statues of the Round Table"] (3.485), Sordello responds with a speech in Baldo's defense that succeeds in releasing the youth from his captors. Presuming that he would make a fine gentleman one day ("atque valenthomum subimaginat esse futurum", 6.585-590), Sordello takes Baldo home to be a page in his large household. There seems to be a family connection, as this is the same Sordello that Guido sees posing outlandishly in front of his manor at 2.75-78, and recognizes as a fellow veteran.[84] The new guardian and tutor to the hero of Cipada is a composite of at least three versions of a Mantuan named Sordello: the historical poet who abandoned Gioto and his native Lombard language for Provence and Provençal and was rewarded with landholdings in Italy by Charles of Anjou, the Sordello of medieval *vidas* and chronicles that make him a paragon of ethical action (influenced by his *sirventes* or political satires), and the literary Sordello who acts as a guide to *Virgilio* and Dante-pilgrim in *Purgatorio* 6-8. Like the Sordello who points out to the pilgrim and *Virgilio* the souls of the Italian princes undergoing purgative punishments for laziness and greed, this not-yet-deceased bard is an unflinching critic of tyrants and remains deeply loyal to Mantua, if not its ruler. Folengo makes no mention of the real Sordello's diplomatic career and tryst with Cunizza that resembles the escape of Guido and Baldovina, and here the man is an older bachelor.[85] Recalling the Sordello of the *Commedia*, the invective targets the corrupt system of justice that enriches the already powerful by preying on the poor and capitulating to the whims of princes:

> Heu tantum poveros, inopes soldisque carentes
> cernimus ad forcam canevi portare colanam!
> Non tamen hi nostri patres iurisque ministri
> attendunt (VC 3.533-6)

> *Alas, we see only the poor, the needy, and the poverty-stricken carry the noose of hemp
> to the gallows! But these our senators and ministers of justice pay no heed.*

How does this relate to the language of the poet as it is reflected in and represented by the education of the protagonist? To begin with, by parodying one of several encounters between poets, Dante-included, in *Purgatorio*, Folengo aligns Merlin and his macaronic poem with the poetic patrimony of Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil and Sordello. Dante's Sordello also recognizes *Virgilio* because the poet speaks in a Lombard accent: although Baldo is no poet, Folengo's Sordello is stuck by

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[84] In fact, Guido does not greet Sordello out of fear of being discovered by the spies of the King of France. The sighting prepares the reader for his sudden appearance in book 4, all but confirming that Folengo's source is Dante's Sordello, who Dante-pilgrim sees "all alone" ("sola soletta") at *Purg*. 6.58.

[85] See the notes to 6.58-75 in ed. and trans. Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2003).

Baldo's macaronic words ("ore disertus" 575) *and* possesses "verba rasonis" (568) himself. They both express scorn for the injustices of governments run by lazy, violent rulers. Sordello's employ-ment of Baldo in his house as a fleet-footed page, recalling Zeus's employment of Mercury as well as Ganymede, further develop Baldo's speaking skills, enabling him to learn useful courtier skills such as "sprezzatura".[86] Yet, as much as Baldo's apprenticeship with a Mantuan noble promises to tame his unruly passions and provide him with both "rein and halter", this desirable outcome is placed in doubt when he becomes the ringleader of a group of local ruffians whose backgrounds again derive from chivalric texts—like Baldo himself. Baldo is better suited to lead these individ-uals since he can quite literally "read" them too: they are related genealogically to the characters from his extracurricular readings. The fictions of the medieval and Renaissance romance once more threaten to compromise a very different kind of education, this time the instruction in eti-quette provided to squires employed in the household of an elite whose natural enemies are both the vulgar crowd and the tyranny of princes. If the fictions that Baldo reads play a crucial role in forming his character, are his *formazione*, the fictions of the poem again threaten to align with the reality of the poet's readership. For, as we have seen, Sordello is an eminently literary character *and* expresses views that are not far from those of Castiglione in his literary dialogue, *Il Corte-giano*. On this note, we may point out that Folengo's virtuous yet ultimately unsuccessful Sordello not only rewrites Dante's successful version of the Mantuan, but also points to the fictional status the poems themselves. This is clearer in the case of Manto, whose appearance in two locations in the *Commedia* have occasioned important articles by several critics (Hollander, Kay, Ascoli) about her pertinence to the question of the "veracity" of the visionary narrative, a Mantuan 'mistake' which mirrors the palinodic function of Sordello's conversations with *Virgilio* about poetry and language in *Purgatorio*.[87] By having his version of Sordello exchange macaronic speeches with the protagonist, become his mentor-guide, accuse the authorities of Mantua of various injustices, and ultimately fail to prevent Baldo from moving "onward and upward," Folengo inverts an impor-tant episode in Dante's formation as the vernacular poet-author of the *Commedia*, putting Baldo's education not *sub specie aeternitatis* but under the sign of confused *mediocritas homo*—the sign of Macaronic.

To summarize Baldo's progress thus far: just as in the case of his failed *formazione* in Latin, which might otherwise have prepared him for an alternative 'career path', the hero has decided that the life of a courtier-diplomat is not for him. Indeed, they were never destined to become a courtier in diplomatic circles or a humanist in Italy's university system, as the *propheticum argumentum*

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[86] For Mercury read as an allegory of intelligence and/or reason, see Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins Press, 1970), 138. For the myth of Ganymede, see Leonard Barkan, *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[87] Dante criticizes Sordello for abandoning the vernacular at *Convivio* 1.11.1 and *De Vulgari Eloquentia* 1.15.2., but adjusts this view in the *Commedia*.

following his birth loudly proclaims in T: "Nascere, parve puer, cui coelum, terra, fretumque, / ac elementa dabunt tot casus, totque malannos". His destiny is, rather, to turn the fictions of chivalric romance into the realities of a "phantasia plus quam fantastica" in the same way that the poet's macaronic language continuously collapses distinctions between correct and incorrect, right and wrong, truth and falsity, form and disorder, at the level of the word itself.

If Baldo has learned anything from his years of service in the household of Sordello, it is that he must—with every fiber of his being and at all costs—spurn the injustices of the prince of Mantua, the tyrant Giaoffo. Having taken this lesson to heart, Baldo battles against Giaoffo very spiritedly indeed—until he is imprisoned in the tower of the city. The narrative then make an abrupt shift into a sequence of book-length practical jokes performed by Cingar. In T, the poet ingeniously assigns paragraph headings to each and every rhetorical transitions (most are identified with one of his muses), and by VC the poem has been divided into 5-book sequences, each inspired by a different macaronic muse.[88] When Gaioffo escalates his efforts to eliminate the threat this boy poses to his power by convening a council of all the city's senators (4.395) and labeling Baldo the headmaster of a school of crime, his choice of words are telling: a disruption to the community of the likes of Baldo can only be solved if, like the "head of a serpent" ("caput serpae") he is literally decapitated by the "sword of reason" (4.500). It is once again Sordello who comes to Baldo's defense. In a final speech before the senators, he attests to his squire's indomitable spirit (4.523) and illustrious descent (4.541), and even insists that young people are like horses, bulls, and hawks—animals that are wild by nature but may be trained by humans:[89]

> Ingenium est homini, quum prima aetate tenellus
> morbezat, sese vitiorum inferre camino,
> si sine cozzono fuerit nullaque cavezza:
> huc illuc ruerit, fert ut sfrenata voluptas.
> At puer ingenuus, quamvis retinacula brenae
> nesciat illecebras seguitans, si forte virum quem
> maturum semel audierit, leviterque monentem
> principio, ne virga nimis tererina, potenti
> contrectata manu, media spezzetur in opra,
> deposita sensim patitur feritate doceri,
> seque hominem monstrat, quem humana modestia tantum
> retrahit a vitio iurisque in glutine firmat.
> Cernimus indomitos plaustro succumbere tauros,

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[88] See chapter 3, section 3.

[89] For treatment of the images of horses, reins, and bridles that appear in the poems of Boiardo and Ariosto, see A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen: An Essay on the Chivalric Epics of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto," in *Italian Literature: Roots and Branches: Essays in Honor of Thomas Goddard Bergin* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1976), 265–307.

> quorum duriciem removet destrezza biolchi,
> semper idem furiaret equus domitore carente,
> nec venit ad pugnum sparaverius absque polastro.
> Sic Baldus iuvenis claro de scemate natus. (4.525-541)

If he has no one to break him and no halter, he will rush here and there, wherever his unbridled desires take him. And yet if a well-born youth, even though he ignores the bridle and follows his fancy, if once he should listen to a mature man and be guided by him gently from the beginning—so long as a powerful hand does not snap this overly tender branch in the middle of the endeavor—and little by little surrender his unruliness, he will allow himself to be taught and show himself to be a man diverted from vice by human modesty and confirmed in the bonds of law. We see indomitable bulls submit to the plough and their fierceness tamed by the farmer's skill. Just so, a horse will always be riled if there is no trainer, and a hawk will not come to the gauntlet if there is no chicken-bait for it. Such is the young Baldo, born of illustrious descent.

As we have seen, Sordello's argument that Baldo's instruction as a gentleman should be permitted to continue, that the wayward youth will eventually learn to reign his "sfrenata voluptas" and adopt the virtuous lifestyle of a courtier, are not supported by Baldo's behavior up to this point. For one thing, he is soon to be the ringleader of a gang of *bravi*, and Giaoffo is right to assume that the law will be on his side when Baldo is ultimately captured. Sordello's speech also suggests that his tutelage of Baldo has been mostly ineffective. While not humanistic, this education is aimed at forming a human by means other than writing and reading (i.e. etiquette, elevated speech and dress, and the like), yet Baldo refuses to "allow himself to be taught and shown to be a *human* (*hominem*), to retreat from vice by *human* discipline (*humana modestia*) and [be] confirmed in the bonds of the law" (4.535-6). It comes as little surprise when Sordello's speech fails to move the senators, and they proceed to capture and bring this criminal to justice.

Their decision proves to be a death sentence for Sordello, who dies, perhaps by way of poison, a few days after his speech. Five books will pass before Cingar eventually succeeds in rescuing Baldo from his jail cell and the adventure may continue, this time at sea. Baldo's ongoing education in macaronic signs is far from complete: like Odysseus/Ulysses, Aeneas, or Ruggiero at the mid-points of the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, the *Orlando innamorato*, and *Orlando furioso*, respectively, Baldo does not yet possess complete knowledge of his destiny and illustrious lineage nor the skills he needs to destroy the realm of the witches and defeat their enchantress queen. After Baldo and his crew survive a storm at sea, they disembark on an empty and barren crag or "*scoglio*" that juts out of the water and that Merlin compares to Atlas "who supports the weight of the sky on his

back" (13.101).[90] The grotto conceals an enormous piazza encircled by porticoes whose vaults are adorned with mosaics and paintings commissioned by Manto, a *fada* or fairy identified as the daughter of Tiresias and the wife of the fairy Folletto:

> Pinxerat hic pictor pictorum, magnus Apelles,
> quidquid fada sibi comisit pingere Manto,
> Manto, Thyresiae proles uxorque Foletti.
> Cernitur hic illic semper memorabile bellum,
> quando Barigazzum Pompeius ab arce Cipadae
> compulit et, missis raptim squadronibus, ipsum
> stravit Alexandrum Magnum, Xersisque canaiam
> sub duce Grandonio mazzavit ad oppida Nini.
> Armiger Orlandus furit hic, dum fortis avanzat
> Hanibalem, nec non capelettum buttat Achillem
> cum caput avantum magni de arzone Bufalchi.
> Parte alia Caesar, secum veniente Rinaldo,
> alpibus in vastis Ferrarae, iuxta Folignum,
> diripit armatam de fustis deque galaeis,
> quam Darius princeps mundi mediique Milani
> miserat in punto propter ruinare Cipadam. (VC 13.155-170)

Here that painter of painters, Apelles, has painted everything that the Fate Manto commissioned (Manto, the offspring of Tiresias, and the wife of Folletto). Here and there one could see the always memorable war in which Pompey forced Barigazzo from the fortress of Cipada and, having speedily sent off his squadrons, defeated Alexander the Great and slew the rabble of Xerxes led by Grandonio near the city of Nineveh. On one side, Orlando in arms rages and staunchly advances against Hannibal and throws the mercenary Achilles headfirst off great Buffalco's saddle. On the other, in the great mountain of Ferrara near Foligno, Caesar (Rinaldo coming with him) destroys a fleet of vessels and galleys which Darius, ruler of all the world and half of Milan, had gathered together in order to defeat Cipada.

Unlike the frescoes on the walls of a pleasure palace examined by Orlando in the *Orlando innamorato*, or the panels wrought by Vulcan that Giulio sees adorning the temple in the *Stanze*, Apelles' painting are not allegories of vices and virtues, but rather depictions of battles between funnily-named commanders in and around Mantua. Baldo sees historical figures defeating made-up ones in no apparent chronological sequence: he sees Pompey expelling the army of "Barigazzo"

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[90] This island bears parallels with the island where Odysseus summons the *eidolon* of Tiresias in book 11 of the *Odyssey*. Baldo will shortly learn of his destiny on this island, and from the daughter of Tiresias, no less.

from the fortress of Cipada (159) and defeating Alexander the Great as well as the army of a certain "Grandonio" (161-2), followed by Orlando marching against Hannibal, Achilles dismounting "Buffalco" (164-5), and finally Caesar and Rinaldo destroying the fleet of Darius the Great (169-70). If these ekphrastic descriptions are meant to be humorous, displacing the real history of Mantua into the realm of the totally ridiculous and the macaronically absurd, they are also proleptic to the encomiastic prophecy uttered by Manto.[91] More learning scenes follow this one when Baldo ascends into an enormous mechanical structure or "arca" possessing ten highly ornate cylindrical arms whose rotations the whole thing resemble a spindle ("ad formam *naspi*, cum foemina fila volutat", 13.188).[92] The adventurers locate a ladder and climb through seven "spheres of various sorts of metals" ("sperae varia de sorte metalli" 13.214) that bubble in cauldrons, vials, and vats. The narrator then defines the properties of these metallic substances and the planets to which they are associated by various alchemists. When the adventurers pass through the sphere of the Sun, they see a multicolored substance identified by the narrator as a "true art" ("veram artem") made ageless, demiurge-like inventor or "author of things" ("Author rerum"). This stone, a "gift from Jupiter" and "spirit" incarnated in a "noble body" ("spiritus hic lapsus est"), is the Philosopher's Stone, whose powers can reanimate the dead, grant eternal life, and transmute lesser metals into gold (13.261-271).[93] Baldo introduces himself to this sorceress and guardian of a sepulchre har-

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[91] The mosaics may be synecdochally related to actual paintings adorning in the Gonzaga palace. Federico II is known to have commissioned the frescoes that adorn the "Sala di Manto", which includes a portrait of Manto dated to 1538. Federico II is known to have commissioned the frescoes that adorn the "Sala di Manto", which includes a portrait of Manto, painted in 1538.

[92] For possible sources of inspiration for the machine, including the Astrarium of Giovanni de' Dondi and the astronomical clock tower still standing in Mantua, see Rodolfo Signorini, "L'Arca Gonzaga e il cosmo alchemico di Manto," in *Teofilo Folengo nel quinto centenario della nascita. Atti del Convegno, Mantova-Brescia-Padova, 26-29 settembre 1991*, ed. G. Bernardi Perini and Claudio Marangoni (Firenze: Olschki, 1993), 59–83, Jean Du Verger, "Geographical, Cartographical and Cosmographical Echoes in Teofilo Folengo's *Baldus*," *Moreana* 51, no. 1 (2014): 35, and Faini, "Il palpabile parlare." According to Barbara Bowen, "Rabelais and Folengo Once Again," in *Rabelais in Context: Proceedings of the 1991 Vanderbilt Conference* (Binghamton, Alabama: Summa Publications, 1993), 139, this *arca* is a "model of the universe". Given the prophetic contents of Manto's speech, it is possible that the Spindle of Necessity, which is seen by Er in Plato's *Republic* (10.616c-617) and whose circles also happen to gyrate (in their case, in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction in accordance with the hand, left or right, of the particular that Fate, Lachesis, Clotho, or Atropos, that spins it)–is the archetype for Folengo's machine, if not a direct or indirect source. This appears to me to be confirmed by the cosmological and practical functions of the machine (as a model of the spheres of the heavens and as the center of an as of yet unoccupied tomb) and by its inhabitant, the seer Manto, who more than passingly resembles a Fate. Lastly, the machine may also be related to the eight-sided fountain at *Furioso* 42.73-96, dedicated to the chaste ladies of Italy.

[93] For his Manto, Folengo was aware of the Medieval tradition that associated Virgil and his poetry with witchcraft, even the Philosopher's Stone. For example, see John Webster Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer: Studies in Virgilian Legends* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 278: "In later manuscripts Virgil is said to have possessed the secret of the philosopher's stone".

boring metallurgical and life-giving secrets.[94] Manto gives Baldo three reasons why he has become famous throughout the world, under the sea, and in even hell: 1) his many accomplishments, 2) illustrious lineage, 3) birth in Mantua. She also emphasizes Baldo's exceptionality:

> Summne ego tam grandem videre guererum,
> quem coeli, terrae, ponti venerantur et Orci?
> Ubs mea te genuit talem cortesa baronem,
> *qualem non generat totum natura per orbem.* (13.312-14)

> *Am I so worthy as to behold such a great warrior, whom the heavens venerate and the earth, the seas and the nether-world? My noble city gave birth to you, such a baron that nature has not created your equal anywhere in the world.*

She introduces herself as the mother of Ocnus and refugee from fallen Thebes with the explanation that fates like her are immortal:[95]

> Illa ego sum Manto, de cuius nomine nomen
> Mantua suscepit, quam condidit Ocnus in undis,
> tempore quo Troiam ruinavit panza cavalli.
> Nec penitus vestros animos stupore occupet ullus,
> si nunc usque meam potui traducere vitam,
> nam datur aeterno me tempore vivere fadam,
> donec ab aetherno guastetur Iudice mundus. (13.316-3)

> *I am Manto, from whose name Mantua derives her name, which Ocno founded on the sea, in the era when Troy was ruined by the belly of a horse. Nor should you be at all surprised if I have been able to prolong my life up until now, for as a Fate, I have been given eternal life, until the heavenly judge shall demolish the world.*

As in the case of Sordello, Folengo's Manto is a composite of mythological and literary representations of the Theban prophetess and daughter of Tiresias whose wanderings after the destruction

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[94] For the argument that Manto is a figure of the author, see Angela Matilde Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse: Macaronic Fantasy and Skepticism in Teofilo Folengo's Baldus," in *Folengo in America*, ed. Massimo Scalabrini, Memoria del Tempo 36 (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2012). Signorini argues that the grotto functions as a synecdoche for Mantua and that its golden contents are inspired by a local superstition that witches are in the habit of burying treasures. Another likely influence is the treasure-filled cavern of the fairy Morgana, who is referred to repeatedly as "la Fata del Tesoro" in the *Orlando innamorato*. See David Quint, "Fortune and Romance: Boiardo in America," in *The Fortunes of Morgana: From Boiardo to Marino*, ed. Jo Ann Cavallo and Charles Ross (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), 20.

[95] Chiesa notes the allusions to *OI* 2.25.15.1-2 and *OF* 10.56.1-2.

of Thebes brought her to Italy, where she founded Mantua. Folengo's Manto rewrites Dante's version of the prophetess, which is in turn a rewriting of Vergil's Manto at *Aeneid* 10.198-203.[96] Her control of the Philosopher's Stone makes her an *aurifex* or goldsmith, and even suggests that her prophetic and encomiastic functions are conjoined with didactic ones. It is she who teaches Baldo the 'dark arts' of gold-production before predicting the arrival of a Gonzaga duke who will oust Gaioffo and for whom her grotto serves as a tomb:

> Hactenus ingemuit sub acerbo nostra tyranno
> Mantua, quo mores cortesos perdidit omnes.
> At praeclara modo, regalis et alma fameia
> Gonziadum venit atque aquilas spigat undique nigras.
> Haec, quam vidistis, miro fabricata lavoro
> stancia, Francesco Gonzagae tota dicatur.
> Post centum guerrae palmas, post mille trophaeos,
> post vitae laudes, post vecchi Nestoris annos,
> illius huic magno donabimus ossa sepulchro. (13.323-31)

Up to now, our Mantua has bewailed her bitter tyrant, on account of whom she has lost all her courteous customs. Yet, the illustrious, regal and glorious Gonzaga family now appears, flying their black flags everywhere. This palace you have seen, constructed with marvelous workmanship, is completely dedicated to Francesco Gonzaga. After a hundred wartime victories, a thousand trophies, after a laudable life, after he has reached the age of Nestor, we will consign his bones to this great sepulcher.

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[96] For the shape-shifting fairy who appears in the second of two stories told to Rinaldo, see Ronald L. Martinez, "De-Cephalizing Rinaldo: The Money of Tyranny in Niccolò da Correggio's *Fabula de Cefalo* and in *Orlando furioso* 42-43," *Annali d'Italianistica* 12 (1994): 87–114, "Two Odysseys: Rinaldo's Po Journey and the Poet's Homecoming in *Orlando furioso*," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 17–55, Quint, "Palaces of Enchantment," 29-30, and now Heather James, "An Aethiopian Sodomite, Aesop, and Ovid: The Undoing of Dynastic Epic in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*," *Modern Philology* 117 (2019): 163–193. For discussion of Dante's Manto, see Richard Kay, "Dante's Double Damnation of Manto," *Res Publica Litterarum* 1 (1978): 113–128, Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 215-17, esp. note 34, Robert Hollander, "The Tragedy of Divination in *Inferno* XX," in *Studies in Dante* (Ravenna: Longo editore, 1980), 131–218, "Dante's Misreadings of the *Aeneid* in *Inferno* 20," in *The Poetry of Allusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's Commedia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 78–93, Winthrop Wetherbee, *The Ancient Flame: Dante and the Poets* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 76-79, and Ascoli, *Dante*, 327-9. For Boccaccio's version, see Suzanne Hagedorn, "Boccaccio's Manto: Pagan Vision and Poetic Revisions," in *Writers Reading Writers: Intertextual Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Literature in Honor of Robert Hollander*, ed. Janet Levarie Smarr (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 58–72. An insightful study of Folengo's Manto as a figure of the author and witch *in bono* is Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse."

Manto's triple-role as prophetess of the Gonzaga family, aurifex, and instructor to the hero and his friends, is a transformation and expansion of her roles as depicted in the *Aeneid*, *Thebiad* *Commedia*, chapter XXX of *De Mulieribus Claris*, chapter 31 of *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, and *Manto*, the verse introduction to Poliziano's lecture on Virgil, all of which identify the seer with witchcraft, pyromancy, and black magic. In addition to her status as an aurifex, Folengo is careful to suggest that Manto is a *nutrix* for her city and for Baldo: it is she who possesses the hidden knowledge of the generative forces that govern the cosmos and their secret names, instructing the grotto's metalworkers how to make gold ("doceo aurum formare") and use her stone ("docebo") to the newcomers. Even more crucial for my argument is the suggestion that Manto is a *faber*— not just a founder but a maker of these things: it is she who is responsible for constructing this marvelous "fabricata lavoro" (13.327), a *work* that will stand in metonymic relation to the poet's laboriously fashioned language.[97]

Merlin's narrative ultimately leads the reader to the conclusion that Manto, who is both a classical seer and a *strix*, is a somewhat problematic figure along religious lines, for in the gloss at T (11.478) the editor indicates that the poet has fallen into grave heresy: "Carpitur hic poëta de heresi. Fada est mulier incantatrix et quae diversis in figuris dicitur converti." What causes Lodela to note that Merlin is being heretical in these verses? What significance might this have have for our understanding of the language of the poet, which is prophetic and is compared to Manto's foreknowledge and illicit alchemical arts? One the one hand, Lodela's gloss suggests that she is a figure for Merlin and a Piconian shapeshifter, able to alter her form as the circumstance requires: "quae diversis in figuris dicitur converti".[98] On the other, in the second tale told to Rinaldo at *Orlando furioso* 43, Ariosto's Manto transforms first into snake and then into a coin-producing dog; this power is clearly what the poet is recalling in his gloss. The kind of knowledge that she commands in the poem, however, leads one to believe that she is the exact opposite and opponent to a Pico: she does not push the possibilities of the sign to its limits so much as violate *all* systems of natural signification and value with potentially devastating knowledge of their origins and creation. Far from suggesting that man is God-like in his ability to be all things, there is much in Ariosto and Folengo's Manto to suggest that her powers are a twisted version of Christian transubstantiation that directly challenge the monetary sovereignty of the city-states within Italy, replacing the rarity of true gold bullion and the coin made from it with an infinite supply of 'fakes', metal produced by way of illicit alchemical arts. Confirmation of this conclusion is the three-letter name of her stone, a construction of vowels that likely alludes to Christian revelation: *"VIA"* (13.270) is a

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[97] Marcel Tetel is only partly correct when he claims that the poet's language has been made in a deeply arbitrary, self-justifying manner: "Folengo fabricates and writes in a whole new language, in which verbal inventions are self-justifying", in "Rabelais and Folengo," *Comparative Literature* 15, no. 4 (1963): 362. For like Manto's grotto, this grotesque language serves a specific end: to adulate its Gonzaga patron.

[98] The full gloss, which defines the word for fairy ("fada"), reads "Fada est mulier incantatrix, et quae diversis in figuris dicitur. For the suggestion that Manto is a *lamia*, see Angela Matilde Capodivacca, "Curiosity and the Trials of the Imagination in Early Modern Italy" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2007), 196.

unveiled allusion to John 14:6 ("Ego sum via, et veritas et vita") as well as Revelation 22:13 ("ego Alpha et Omega primus et novissimus principium et finis"). If Manto is a demonic version of Plato's demiurge, like Merlin or even Seraphus, the all-knowing and immortal deity whose intents for the protagonist are never properly disclosed, Merlin is a macaronic version of Lucretius who echoes the title of *De Rerum Natura* as he narrates her lesson. She teaches Baldo to "toccare manu genitalia rerum" ["touch the reproductive parts of things" (13.338)]—a glancing allusion to the incredulity of Saint Thomas—as well as to understand the "power of herbs", "feats of the stars", and "effects of stones". Her position inside a gold-making machine that doubles as a sepulchre resembles the position of Merlin's tomb at *OF* 3 as well as Saint John's praise of Ippolito d'Este at 35.6-9, just before the famous allegory of the poets in the *Furioso*:

> — Del re de' fiumi tra l'altiere corna
> or siede umil (diceagli) e piccol borgo:
> dinanzi il Po, di dietro gli soggiorna
> d'alta palude un nebuloso gorgo;
> che, volgendosi gli anni, la più adorna
> di tutte le città d'Italia scorgo,
> non pur di mura e d'ampli tetti regi,
> ma di bei studi e di costumi egregi.
>
> Tanta esaltazione e così presta,
> non fortuìta o d'aventura casca;
> ma l'ha ordinata il ciel, perché sia questa
> degna in che l'uom di ch'io ti parlo, nasca:
> che, dove il frutto ha da venir, s'inesta
> e con studio si fa crescer la frasca;
> *e l'artefice l'oro affinar suole*,
> *in che legar gemma di pregio vuole.*
>
> Né sì leggiadra né sì bella veste
> unque ebbe altr'alma in quel terrestre regno;
> e raro è sceso e scenderà da queste
> sfere superne un spirito sì degno,
> come per farne Ippolito da Este
> n'have l'eterna mente alto disegno.
> Ippolito da Este sarà detto
> l'uomo a chi Dio sì ricco dono ha eletto.
>
> Quegli ornamenti che divisi in molti,

> a molti basterian per tutti ornarli,
> *in suo ornamento avrà tutti raccolti*
> costui, di c'hai voluto ch'io ti parli.
> Le virtudi per lui, per lui soffolti
> saran gli studi; e s'io vorrò narrar li
> alti suoi merti, al fin son sì lontano,
> ch'Orlando il senno aspetterebbe invano.[99]

"Between the mighty branches of the king of rivers," he continued, "there now rests a humble little village; before it flows the Po; behind it spreads a misty vortex of deep marsh. I see it becoming, with the passage of time, the fairest of all the cities of Italy, not only for its walls and great regal piles, but also for the quality of its learning and manners. Such high and sudden eminence will not result from random chance: Heaven has ordained it, so that the city may be a fitting birthplace for the man of whom I speak. A branch is grafted, and its growth carefully fostered when it is expected to fruit; and the jeweler refines his gold if he intends it as a setting for precious gems. No soul in the realm of Earth was ever clothed in such beauty. Rare has been—and shall be—the spirit descending from these higher spheres who can match the excellence that the Eternal mind intends to bestow upon Hippolytus of Este. Hippolytus of Este is the name of the one whom God has chosen to inherit so rich a gift. Those accomplishments which, shared among many, would shed sufficient lustre on them all, will be all concentrated upon the adornment of the man of whom you have asked me to speak. He shall foster the pursuit of every virtue. Were I to give a full description of his eminent merits, I should be carried so far that Orlando would wait in vain for his lost wits.[100]

The prophecy of a birth that will restore a mythic Golden Age is taken from Virgil's fourth, 'messianic', eclogue. It is also one that, as we shall see, appears in book 22 of the *Baldus*. By alluding to the eclogue, Saint John predicts that the birth of Ariosto's patron, Ippolito d'Este, will inaugurate a period of flourishing arts and culture in Ferrara.[101] Comparing the buildings and spectacles that will adorn the city to the purest gold and the most fecund fruit trees, Saint John asserts in his prophecy that the particularly golden aspect of this cultural rebirth is both due to and commiserate with the rarity of Ippolito's soul.[102] Ippolito's shining achievements "which, shared

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[99] All quotations are from Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti, 2 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1995). Italics are mine.

[100] All translations of the *Orlando furioso* are from Guido Waldman (Oxford University Press, 1974).

[101] For additional instances of the poetic myth of the Golden Age as it appears in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, see *Furioso* 3.18, 51, 56.

[102] It is signficant that the grafted branch recalls the Golden Bough of *Aeneid* 6.

among many, would shed sufficient lustre on them all," serve to celebrate him alone, for he is the most excellent of the souls who have "descended from the higher spheres". Yet, Ariosto's praise of his patron through the words of the "imitator of Christ" do more than simply adorn it—they literally save it from oblivion, just as the white swans, who stand for true poets (read, Ariosto), do allegorically, for they snatch from oblivion the gold-threaded name-tags of true patrons that Father Time discards into the waters of the Lethe by the lap-load. As an overseer of goldsmiths who amasses piles of treasure in the heart of a miniature version of Mantua ("his ego divitiis praesum facioque magistros"), Manto and her grotto is inspired by Ariosto's Saint John, his prophecy, and the instruction he provides to Astolfo. But there are important differences. Instead of being suspended in the airy vacuum between the earth and the heavens, Manto's crag and grotto traverse the junction between earth and sea; the smoke and soot that pour from the grotto's entrance recalls Astolfo's descent into a parody of Dante's hell immediately before his journey to the moon, where he encounters Lidia and listens to her story. And just as St. John serves as the most poignant and desacralizing authorial figuration of Ariosto-poet in the *Furioso*, we find that this Mantuan prophetess, whose son founded Mantua, is related to the author of the *Baldus* by blood.[103]

Manto's prophecy and the education she bestows on Baldo directly recalls the help that Astolfo receives on the moon. On the one hand, this is important for our study of Folengo's macaronic language, as the moon trip has been interpreted as an allegory of signification and/or of reference between sign and signifier, of writing in general, and of the poem itself. I argue that this claim can also be extended to what Baldo discovers during his descent into the grotto of the Mantuan seer.[104] On the other hand, is it not apparent that Manto is interested in explicating the relationship between truth and poetic fictions at all, let alone clarify how this relationship might be developed or manipulated by poets to praise their patrons. Rather, she is in the business of knowing what is forbidden for no other reason than to hoard it in her cave as tribute and tomb for Folengo's patron, Federico. More than reveal the uncomfortable truth of the association between poetry and power, the willingness of poets to blanket history and truth in a tissue of lies that does nothing more than praise their unscrupulous lords, Manto's grotto and gold-making addresses a more fundamental question about money and the production of knowledge within a world circumscribed by death, entombment, and oblivion. As Lodela reminds the reader in the prefaces to P and T, Baldo, his friends, and the poet himself—are destined to be entombed by *their* masonic author: *Hos sculpsit tumulos Merlini dextra Cocai / Texit magnanimos in quibus ipse viros*.

Like Ariosto, Folengo has included allegorical images (including satires of allegorical images) that help us to understand what this overtly educational episode means within the macaronic fiction. The battles of fictional historical figures in wars near Cipada, the relationship between the

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[103] See the introduction to P, included in appendix B, where, quoting Merlin, Aquario writes: "'I am called by the name Cocaius of Manto's blood,' wherefore it is understood not so much that he was Mantuan, but rather that his female lineage was from Manto, a mage, it is said, who built the city called by her name, Mantua."

[104] See David Quint, "Astolfo's Voyage to the Moon," *Yale Italian Studies* 1 (1977): 398–409.

planets and metallic substances, the secret reproductive forces of the world, the effects of herbs, the accomplishments of the stars, how to name the stone that produces life and gold; each of these configurations of macaronic signs contain an ironic commentary of the origin and content of pseudo-scientific disciplines. Manto's control of dark secrets is not a knowledge but rather a flaunted, dogmatic superstition that flattens true wisdom with the most empty of powers; it is not an allegory of poetic writing pace St. John so much as an allegory for what Macaronic is with respect to forms of Renaissance knowledge and the languages used to share that knowledge.[105] If Manto fails to include an allegory of writing or poetry in her instruction and refuses to launch into a diatribe against poetasters or "ruffiani, adulatori, buffon, cinedi, accusatori" (*Of*, 35.20.5-6), she is a teacher of signs and names: her final lesson, as narrated by the poet, is even *more* devastating than Saint John's 'revelation' to Astolfo about the truth of his sacred text which make his eyes blaze "like two flames". We may compare the two passages, the first which arrives at the end of the lunar episode at *OF* 35.24-30 and the second from the end of Manto's lesson:

> Credi che Dio questi ignoranti ha privi
> de lo 'ntelletto, e loro offusca i lumi;
> che de la poesia gli ha fatto schivi,
> acciò che morte il tutto ne consumi.
> Oltre che del sepolcro uscirian vivi,
> ancor ch'avesser tutti i rei costumi,
> pur che sapesson farsi amica Cirra,
> più grato odore avrian che nardo o mirra.
>
> Non sì pietoso Enea, né forte Achille
> fu, come è fama, né sì fiero Ettorre;
> e ne son stati e mille e mille e mille
> che lor si puon con verità anteporre:
> ma i donati palazzi e le gran ville
> dai descendenti lor, gli ha fatto porre
> in questi senza fin sublimi onori
> da l'onorate man degli scrittori.
>
> Non fu sì santo né benigno Augusto
> come la tuba di Virgilio suona.
> L'aver avuto in poesia buon gusto

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[105] It is notable that a medical motif runs through the episode of the lunar voyage as well as Manto's grotto. Ultimately, the purpose of Astolfo's trip to the lunar surface is to restore the missing wits of Orlando, bottled up in a medicine jar and found amid heaping piles of junk that stand for human desires and aspirations.

la proscrizion iniqua gli perdona.
Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
né sua fama saria forse men buona,
avesse avuto e terra e ciel nimici,
se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.

Omero Agamennón vittorioso,
e fe' i Troian parer vili et inerti;
e che Penelopea fida al suo sposo
dai Prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti.
E se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
tutta al contrario l'istoria converti:
che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
e che Penelopea fu meretrice.

Da l'altra parte odi che fama lascia
Elissa, ch'ebbe il cor tanto pudico;
che riputata viene una bagascia,
solo perché Maron non le fu amico.
Non ti maravigliar ch'io n'abbia ambascia,
e se di ciò diffusamente io dico.
Gli scrittori amo, e fo il debito mio;
ch'al vostro mondo fui scrittore anch'io.

E sopra tutti gli altri io feci acquisto
che non mi può levar tempo né morte:
e ben convenne al mio lodato Cristo
rendermi guidardon di sì gran sorte.
Duolmi di quei che sono al tempo tristo,
quando la cortesia chiuso ha le porte;
che con pallido viso e macro e asciutto
la notte e 'l dì vi picchian senza frutto.

Sì che continuando il primo detto,
sono i poeti e gli studiosi pochi;
che dove non han pasco né ricetto,
insin le fere abbandonano i lochi.

*"Believe me, God has robbed these simpletons of their wits and clouded their judge-
ment, making them shun Poetry so that death should consume them whole and entire.
They would otherwise emerge living from the grave even if their lives had been a dis-
grace: had they only known how to cultivate her friendship, they would give off a
fragrance better than spikenard or myrrh. | Aeneas was not so devoted, nor Achilles
strong, nor Hector as ferocious as their reputations suggest. There have existed men in
their thousands who could claim preference over them. What has brought them their
sublime renown have been the writers honoured with gifts Augustus was not as august
and beneficent as Virgil makes him out in clarion tones—but his good taste in poetry
compensates for the evil of his proscriptions. And no one would know whether Nero
had been wicked—he might even, for all his enemies on earth and in heaven, for all his
enemies on earth and in heaven, have left a better name—had he known how to keep
friendly with writers. Homer made Agamemnon appear the victor and the Trojans
mere poltroons; he made Penelope faithful to her husband, and victim of a thousand
slights from her suitors. But if you want to know what really happened, invert the
story: Greece was vanquished, Troy triumphant, and Penelope a whore. Listen on the
other hand to what reputation Dido left behind, whose heart was so chaste: she was
reputed a strumpet purely because Virgil was no friend of hers. Don't be surprised if
this embitters me and if I talk about it at some length—I like writers and am doing my
duty by them, for in your world I was a writer too. And I, above all others, acquired
something which neither Time nor Death can take away from me: I praised Christ and
merited from Him the reward of so great a good fortune. I am sorry for those who live
in an evil day when Courtesy has shut her door: pallid, lean, and wizened, they beat
at it day and night in vain. So, as I was saying, poets and scholars are few and far
between. Where they are offered neither board nor lodging even the wild beast desert
the place."*

> . . . et habendi denique plenam
> semper ducatis borsam donavit avisum;
> quod magis importat, magis altum recat honorem,
> quam studiando libros et stellis perdere sennum. (13.339-43)

*And finally she advised them to always have their purses full of ducats; which is more
important and brings higher honor than studying books and losing one's wits reading
the stars.*

While Manto's final lesson is less overtly grandiose than Saint John's famous remarks on the
relationship between truth and poetic writing, in some ways it is more powerful. For while Saint
John puts in doubt the authenticity of scripture by confiding with Astolfo its human origin, Manto

teaches Baldo to use her ungodly stone, a mockery of Christian revelation and transubstantiation that grants to the user God-like powers and a unconditional immortality. As Merlin understands it, her lesson reveals that worldly gain, whether by legitimate or by insidiously magical means, is of greater importance and brings more *honor* to those who pursue them than "losing one's head studying books and the stars". In a few words, Manto's lesson gives the poet a chance to reflect metapoetically on the constructedness of his own language and the ends for which he has made it, which are primarily to praise his Gonzaga lord as well as expose the writings of contemporary humanists as hopelessly belated products of writerly alchemy, books written in languages just as Macaronic as his own, and that in each case fail to simulate or to restore the excellence of the writings of the ancients. Merlin's wry comments on Manto's final lesson is a mere pretext for the disclosure of a profound irony and skepticism enclosed by the reality of death, sentiments that have come to subtend the creation of the poem from opposites and contraries in the imagination of the poet. Baldo's instruction in the generative forces of the cosmos and his use of her stone to produce gold is a 'revelation' of the same caliber as Saint John's, but it also one that threatens to empty out all knowledge other than itself, replacing the pursuit of true knowledge and learning with a bag of magic tricks that barely solves a prosaic problem—lack of money, one that all destitute poets understand and that is as true for Baldo and Merlin as it is for Folengo himself. Merlin makes a very similar claim about the superiority of common sense and pecuniary interests to astrology and other superstitious arts at the end of the poem, where even poets and writers who "complevere libros follis vanisque novellis" ["fill books with vain and silly stories"] are attacked:[106]

> ac ea, quae possunt indovinare fachini
> cum coniecturis rerum cosisque vedutis,
> dicere cascari coniunctionibus ac in
> ascendente Iovis cum Virgine cumque Leone. (25.617-20)

And those things, that porters predict by reasoning and seeing things for what they really are, you say occur due to conjunctions and of Jupiter in ascendance with Virgo and Leo.

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[106] The problematic but necessary relationship between tyrants and poets is made more explicit in these verses in T:

> Sunt quoque (nescio qui, sana sine mente poetae)
> qui paritiales patriae, propriisque Tiranni,
> complevere libros follis verisque bosiis. (T. 248v)

They are those (I don't know who, poets with no brains) who, for the interest of country and really of Tyrants, fill books with air and true lies.

Like Ariosto, Folengo is familiar with the ingratitude and miserliness of his patrons: compare Saint John's claim about the trumpet of Virgil to Merlin's apostrophe in book 11:[107]

> Tunc herbolatti Scardaffus, Aquarius et qui
> Rigus aquae freschae cristeria fare solebat,
> accumulaverunt de paucis quippe guaritis,
> deque sibi occisis non pochis, mille cichinos.
> Unde patet ratio resolutave questio claret,
> quare tres illi de Baldi laudibus orbem
> implevere librosque simul scripsere galantos;
> namque guardagnandi data causa, daturque canendi,
> nec ferat Augustum sub sydera bocca Maronis,
> sentiat Augusti raines nisi borsa Maronis. (11.511-20)[108]

> *Now the herbalists Scardaffus, Aquarius and Rigo, who were in the habit of making enemas of fresh water, accumulated thousands of zecchini from both the few patients they healed as well as from those not so few that they killed. Thus the reason is apparent, and the question clearly resolved, why those three fill the world with Baldo's praise and together write such grand books; for material gain gives them a motive and gets them singing. Virgil's mouth would not have praised Augustus to the stars if Virgil's purse had not felt the weight of Augustus's florins.*

Interrupting the climactic battle against the forces of tyranny in book 11, Merlin's metapoetic aside anticipates his narration of Manto's grotto and lesson by echoing St. John's parting words to Astolfo concerning the relationship between patronage and poetry. With impossible omniscience, Merlin comments here on the discovery of his own editors, Aquarius, Scardaffus, and Rigus, who changed professions after realizing they would make more money selling books of macaronic poetry than injuring their patients with bogus cures. The macaronic narrator's claim about Virgil anticipates a much more extensive condemnation of poetry, and the poetry of praise in particular,

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[107] The comment is inspired by the poet's note on Baldo's nobility and his scorn for tyrants: he is unwilling to spare Gaioffo for all the banks in Genova and ducats in Florence: "Si dare tunc Zenovae voluisset munere bancos | et quantos trafegat gens Florentina ducattos, | non accepisset probitas generosa guereri. | Quisque auro incagat proprio si gaurdat honori" ["If he promised then to give him the banks in Genoa and all the ducats that are traded in Florence, the noble integrity of our warrior would not permit him to accept. When he considers his honor a man doesn't give a crap about gold"] (11.481-84).

[108] Mullaney's translation of the lines makes the meaning of the passage clear, even elegant. To be clear: Lodela, the editor describing the macaronic book, interrupts Merlin here mid-narration, to comment on how he, working with Scardaffus (the corrupter of the first edition), and a fellow named Rigus, made money in the world of publishing. For the third figure, see the helpful note to vv. 511-12 in op. cit., p. 453: "The name Rigus is used elsewhere for a donkey and a friar."

as a lying or dissimulating discourse in book 25. While Manto makes no such claim about the relationship between truth and writing, there is more than enough evidence to suggest that Astolfo's extraterrestrial voyage and St. Johns prophecy, as well as Ariosto's Manto, are literary counterparts to Baldo's descent into the grotto, instruction by the Theban prophetess, and audience to a prophecy regarding Federico Gonzaga. Indeed, her stone, her instruction of the adventurers in alchemy and chrysopoeia, and her status as a figure of the author who is related to the narrator of the poem by blood, all suggest by contrast that this Ariosto's lunar episode is an important foil to this episode, and, by implication, to the macaronic project as an epideictic project as a whole. In short, by making the poet related to the mythic founder of Mantua, whose duty it is to adorn her patron's tomb with gold for all of time, Folengo approaches the question of the relationship between truth and poetry, as well as poets and patrons, in a manner much removed from, but still connected to, Ariosto's, substituting *his* parody of neo-Platonism and allegory of poetic writing with a far more heretical, even Lucretian reality.

Because it is clear from the prefaces and the episode that Merlin and Manto are related to the author of the *Baldus*, no great leap of the imagination is needed to link her deep knowledge of alchemy to Macaronic, to the artful concoction of mixtures and opposites which animates this poetics. More so than Sordello, and later Cingar, Guido, and Merlin, Manto is a figure of the poet and her technical proficiency at making gold through alchemy have been placed in synecdochal relation to the macaronic book and its multiple, shifting forms. Both serve as elaborate fictions for the purpose of ambiguous praise, and their relationship to patrons as well as the mythic and literary origins of their home cities is not the only theme they tease out: just as Manto's praise for Folengo's patron is subverted by the heresy and pseudo-learning of her knowledge of alchemy, her stone and gold-making in the macaronic book subvert the knowledge that real alchemists, some operating in Mantua in this period, celebrate in Latin didactic poetry.[109] As the tomb doubles as a Gonzaga sepulchre, Manto's grotto-lab also reflects the intellectual and political interest in alchemy as found in these poetic texts at the same time that it echoes and responds to Ariosto's literary reflections on the relationship between writing, truth, praise, and patronage in cantos 34 and 35 of the *Orlando furioso*. Finally, there is the fact that Folengo utilizes the etymology of Manto's name (from the Greek word for prophet, *mantos*) in the episode to further emphasize her connection with Macaronic as well as the allegorical or concealing purposes for which Folengo has carefully constructed and 'perfected' it. In addition to her often-commented upon status as a figure of the author, and the location of the episode at the poem's structural mid-point, Manto's name is a distant relative to the divinely inspired *man*-ia or madness—the same *fantasia* or insanity that engulfs Merlin, and, according to the Platonic tradition developed by Ficino and the Florentine neo-Platonists, uses *him* as a vessel to recount the story of Baldo. Last, but not least, her name shares a distant etymological root with the English word for both an article of protective outerwear and

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[109] For the *Chrysopoeia* of Giovanni Aurelio Augurello, see Matteo Soranzo, *Giovanni Aurelio Augurello (1441-1524) and Renaissance Alchemy* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020).

layer of the earth (mantle), suggestive meanings for a poetic language and subterranean sepulcher that specializes in the revealing and concealing of the value they contain.

Baldo's education in alchemy under the supervision of Manto anticipates the longest didactic episode in the poem, which is also something of a summa of macaronic learning about astrology.[110] This is the incomplete two-part lecture delivered by Cingar in books 14 and 15. The eclectic assortment of allusions, quotations, and imaginative transformations of astrological and astronomical sources assembled in Cingar's expansive lecture suggest it is an parody of astrology in general and an elaborate response to the curious blend of occultism, religion, and humanism in the thought of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in particular. The author has drawn from Pontano's *Urania*, as well as the exposition of the celestial world in the second chapter of the *Heptaplus*, Pico's "commentary on God's commentary", for Cingar's description of the seven spheres (his system falls short of the typical nine), beginning with the sphere of the moon, and ending with Saturn. His lesson on the system of the heavens, and their effects on the terrestrial world, not only inverts Pico's deepest insights about scriptural, kabbalistic, and pagan knowledge, but refuses to Christianize the representation of the Gods inhabiting the heavenly sphere. Our rogue-turned-astrologer, who presently becomes something of a macaronic version of Horace's "Empedoclean poet", reporting on the behavior of deities with a misplaced sense of authority and an incomplete and folklore-laden knowledge of pagan rituals, elects instead to define the Gods strictly in the terms of the fallen, endlessly flawed, human beings that are said to be made in their image.[111] These insights provoke similar conclusions to those of Pico (that astrology is largely invented by man, and is therefore almost always erroneous in its predictions), while at the same time challenging the directionality of Pico's claim that the "image of man is made in the likeness of God." In short, by putting in terms far too human the attributes, activities, emotions, and rivalries of the Gods, Cingar disturbs and even inverts the harmonious reflection elaborated by Pico in his commentary on the creation of the heavens and in his philosophy of man—and in doing risks making man the center of all things—even the perfection of deity.[112] By showing how the states of the Gods do not simply pass

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[110] This episode, in which "Cingar astrologo" delivers for Baldo a fraudulently comic astrological lesson, at one point butchering Plato's name ("Piatoni"), was not a late addition to the poem, but appears fully formed as early as 1521. For analysis of the references to Montegna and Michaelangelo in this book, as well as the full text of book 13 with commentary, see Massimo Zaggia, "Cingar astrologo, la maledetta progenie dei villani e Andrea Mantegna "pictor celeberrimus", ovvero il tredicesimo libro del *Baldus* nella redazione Toscolanenese," *Strumenti Critici* X, no. 77 (1995): 65–104.

[111] Cingar can be seen to meet Pico in the middle in his representation of the Gods, because his half-serious distortion of the relationship between mankind and these entities is not exclusively negative (i.e. pulling the divine not just down to earth, but restricting it to its more nefarious and vulgar parts), for there are references to more prominent members of the Italian Society: the club of Mars is compared to the one wielded by Luigi Gonzaga (15.185-6), Jupiter is described as the "papa deorum" ["pope of the gods"] (15.292), and his palace is adorned with artwork as regal as those made by Michaelangelo and Montegna.

[112] Cingar's lecture is prompted by Baldo's interest in the motion of the sun, a central motif of origins in Renaissance texts. See the proemial journey of book 22 of the *Baldus*.

downward to man but are degraded reflections of him, Cingar's lecture should be read as a parody of poets and astrologers who claim to predict the future. Rather than the heavens controlling man, in Cingar's view the Gods suffer from all the vanities and imperfections of the average people. Jupiter is seduced by Ganymede, Vulcan and Time are cuckolded by Venus and Nature, Saturn suffers a long list of ailments and bodily infirmities, the Olympians squabble like siblings, the list goes on. Worse than Melito's folly—which Pico reminds us in the *Heptaplus* was the error of giving a human form to God—Cingar's blasphemous explanations for human activity and behavior remind one of Plato's critique of Homer in the *Republic*. It is this that makes Cingar's lesson of fundamental importance to Baldo's education in Macaronic. As in the case of the representation of Manto, the editor lets us know at 15.318-19 that the poet fall into an "heresia" when remarking on the superiority of "forma regazzi" over "sapientiloqui sententia docta Catonis" to pacify angry lords and masters. Cingar's astrology even appears to invert Pico's claim that "hence in God all things are of better stamp than in themselves, whereas in man inferior thing are of nobler make and the superior are degenerate," revealing instead that the Gods are nothing other than projections of human behaviors, desires, and follies. For Cingar, the heavens are a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours, harboring nothing perfectly human, nor fully divine. Perhaps the most valuable insight for Baldo in this lecture is the description of the madness inflicted by the golden-tipped arrows of Cupid, for he will need to spur the enticements of love should he wish to finish his journey:

> Altra sagittarum species aurata refulget,
> quae scoccando oculos intrat, filzatque magonem
> trincerasque animi spezzat, murosque rasonis.
> Hac feriente, cadunt ab honesto corda volero.
> Hac feriente, cito mentis spezzantur habenae.
> Hac feriente, iacent conseia salubria spallis.
> Hac feriente, bonos compagnos quisque refudat.
> Hac feriente, Paris patriae fuit, oyme, ruina.
> Hac feriente, patri taiavit Scylla capillum.
> Hac feriente, colo filavit claviger Hercul.
> Hac feriente, Iovem cornutum Europa cavalcat,
> Ioque de vacca ficta fit vacca daverum.
> Hinc veniunt irae, sdegni, mala quaeque diabli. (VC 14.187-200)

A second type of arrow shines with gold, once shot, it enters the eye, pierces the chest and breaks apart the fortifications of the soul and the walls of reason. When it strikes, hearts abandon honest desire; when it strikes, the reins of reason are quickly broken; when it strikes, sound advice is thrown over one's shoulders; when it strikes, one turns away good friends. When it struck, Paris became the ruin of his homeland; when it struck, Scylla cut off her father's hair; when it struck, Hercules, the club-bearer,

started weaving with a spindle; when it struck, Europa rode horned Jupiter, and Io from a metaphorical cow became a real cow. From this arrow come rage and disdain and all the devil's evils.

Now that Baldo has successfully completed Manto's lesson in alchemy, and Cingar's in astrology, he is on his way to becoming the hero he is destined to become. After a chilling encounter with the first of the dread witches, Pandraga, Baldo meets his father, Guido, from whom he learns his origins, which began when a "madness, which the commoners call love" ["furor rabiae, quem chiamat vulgus amorem"] (18.238) united Guido and Baldovina in love. After relating how they escaped from France to Mantua and his departure into reclusion as a hermit after Baldo's birth, Guido reveals that a powerful wizard named Seraphus taught him the skill of prophecy. Seraphus, who will intermittently descend into the poem to help the adventurers, has bestowed on Baldo an awful mission: he must defeat three of the most powerful witches to have ever existed, whoses names are Pandraga, Smiralda, and Gelfora. Following their defeat, he must also prevent the furies from bringing total war and destruction to Italy. Guido frames his mission with the history of the war that Seraphus has waged against the witches since time immemorial, a conflict including an impressive number of literary and mythological women who are traditionally associated with sorcery and witchcraft, including Circe, Medea, Fallerina, and Alcina:

> Theseus, Orlandus, Iason, Tristanus et ille
> Hector nigrae aquilae gestator, et ille bianchae
> Ruggerus, qui sunt tavolae fortezza rotondae,
> talibus in studiis contentavere Seraphum. (18.320-323)

Theseus, Orlando, Jason, Tristan and Hector, bearer of the Black Eagles, and Ruggiero, bearer of the white, who are the strength of the Round Table, all in feats have competed to prove themselves to Seraphus.

This education in what Baldo has been predestined to do (per the prophecy ending book 1 in T) quickly expands to all kinds of writing when Baldo is sealed within a cavernous chamber. In this grotto-like space he discovers the simulacra of 30 literary, mythological, and historical figures who sit around the famous Round Table of King Arthur's court. Seraphus puts the knights to a vote: they decide to elect Baldo to be their leader before Merlin describes their various identities and feats. Equating himself with an ancient historian, Merlin even reminds us that it is job of poets like him to record the accomplishments of great medieval heroes, who otherwise risk becoming quickly-forgotten rumors: "O if only Rinaldo and fierce Orlando in the time of Charlemagne could have had Plutarchs, Livys, and Sallusts!" ["O si Plutarcos, Livios, Crisposque Rinaldus, Orlandusque ferox habuissent tempore Carli!"] (14.476-7). It also appears that Merlin is following the instructions of Seraphus, for when he reminds Baldo that he alone is invulnerable to the superstitions and blandishments of witchcraft ("nulla supersititio poterit te vincere solum") he adds that

it was Seraphus who prearranged ("*desposuit*") this terrible fate for them.[113] The male heroes of the round table have repeatedly proved their mettle to Seraphus: it is left to Baldo to eliminate each of the "ribaldas magas" and leave Manto alone untouched and alone, for she, even more than Seraphus, is a "genuine Sibyl" ("syncera Sibilla") whose prophetic voice and alchemical powers are central for the onward progression of the story.

When Merlin descends into the poem to administer a confession from Baldo and his friends before they descend into Hell, his appearance is preceded by an extended proem in which the poet's backstory is revealed to align with that of the historical Folengo. The proem is, in fact, a thinly-veiled autobiographic excursus that accounts for the origin of Macaronic in the history of little boy raised at public expense to do something huge: "quem publica spesa Cipadae nutriat, et tassis nemo scusetur ab illis" (207-9).[114] The theme of alchemy returns when Apollo, after listening to the entreaties of an ambassador who is sent to request a macaronic poet to rival Virgil, observes that ancient poets like Homer and Virgil have spent all the world's true poetry, figured as pure gold set aside in a warehouse filled with boxes containing other precious metals. What moderns have written is the product of an alchemy wherein new things are clothed in the habit of ancient words:

> His de materiis magazenus noster abundat,
> praeter quod solos per Homerum, perque Maronem
> scattola vodata est auri, nec dragma remansit.
> Illi poltrones sicophantae cuncta vorarunt,
> nec migolam fini liquere nepotibus auri.
> Si mihi Pontanum proponis, Sanque Nazarum,
> si Fracastorium, si Vidam, sive Marullum,
> crede mihi, alchimia est quidquid dixere moderni. (22.77-79)

Our warehouse overflows with these metals, with the exception of the box of gold, which has been so completely emptied by just Homer and Virgil that not even a single drachma remains. Those lazy sycophants devoured everything, leaving not a trace of fine gold to their grandchildren. If you suggest Pontano to me, or Sannazaro or Fracastoro or Vida or Marullo, believe me, what these moderns say is alchemy.

After this devastating attack on modern poetry, Apollo provides the ambassador with directions for how Mantua can go about finding a poet who does not apishly imitate the writings of Virgil.[115]

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[113] See 25.365ff.

[114] For the importance of the autobiographical proem in the "Cipadense" edition, which includes a section explicitly mentioning Francesco Donismondi as well as a "gran disordine" so historically crucial to the subject matter and the generation of the poet's epic (in a coda which is then cut from the poem), see chapter 4, section 2.

[115] For the notion that Sannazaro is attempting to become "another Virgil" in his *De partu virginis*, see Bryan Brazeau, "'Emotional Resque': Heroic Chastity and Devotional Practice in Iacopo Sannazaro's *De partu Virginis*," *California Italian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 225–246.

Unlike the poet-craftsmen who taps into the metals of Apollo's warehouse, Macaronic is a "new" art whose creative materials have not yet been exhausted by its practitioners: "until now no one has excelled in this new art" (22.90). In fact, the ambassador's journey mirrors the movement of the sun (a typical motif of the return of self to origin and identity in the Renaissance); should a line be drawn between the points on his route (Mantova, Delphi, the New World-like island of the macaronic muses, and Cipada), the parabolic shape would resembles the rotation of the sun around the earth. Having travelled east to Delphi, the ambassador requests an instruction manual from the muses of the macaronic mountain, located beyond the gates of Gibraltar. As it turns out, the hero the Mantuan elders select to be raised to rival Virgil is very much like Baldo, as he also writes macaronic poetry instead of studying his grammar textbooks and listening to the lectures of his philosophy professors. In these verses of the proem, Merlin conflates his own authorial identity with that of his protagonist, riding on Baldo's coattails, while at the same time aligning his own authorial intentions with those of Phoebus Apollo, the pagan God of brightness and light. It is at this auspicious moment of convergence between the text and the voice of the narrator-poet, after Baldo has defeated the dread witches one after another, that Merlin descends into the macaronic text to administer confessions from the heroes.[116] Like Ariosto in the episode of the lunar journey, Merlin's words are endowed with spiritual authority, for when "Father Merlin" (12.161) convinces his characters to confess their sins to him, he reminds them that "the power of the devil cannot harm you, if the creator of things helps" (22.149-50). Besides, an ancient discovery of the Holy Church (a "retrovatio vetus") has shown him that he has been elected and legitimately chosen by the Church to deliver these confessions and to absolve the characters of their sins: "mihi confessare bisognat, namquam pretus sacratus ego sum lectus ad istam legitime impresam, per quam peccata lavantur." (22.153-4). Merlin is thus doubly elected: once as a child in Mantua, and here by the Church to oversee the successful completion of Baldo's mission.[117] The proximity of a confession with a figure of the poet as a sage is not uncommon in romance poetry and recalls *Guerrin Meschino* 4.5 and *Orlando furioso* 41.

All that remains is for the poem to end, and when it does, Baldo and his friends, along with Merlin, are shut within an enormous pumpkin wherein all poets, ancient and modern, are destined to punished for their written creations, in an elaborate transformation of the *Apocolocyntosis*, the humorously-named satire thought to be written by Seneca, a document whose existence says more

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[116] After all, Folengo is the holy man whose writings continually engage with religious themes, ideas, and controversies, such as justification by faith, the subject of the *Beneficio di Cristo*. This infamous and heretical treatise was partly composed by Folengo's peer, Benedetto da Mantova, and was, as mentioned above, edited by Marcantonio Flaminio.

[117] While he notes that the word *retrovatio* is a neologism, Chiesa does not give this "discovery" the due diligence it deserves. Does the "retrovatio vetus" refer to the instructions of the Apollo and then macaronic muses, or to something else, something that happened 'outside' the fiction of the poem? Chiesa does observe that the mention of the "Holy Church" is an addition to later editions: "il verso compare solo nella C, quando ormai non poteva essere un'affermazione che potesse sfuggire per distrazione" (885).

about the backstabbing of writers during regime change than it does about ineffectual leadership of tyrants.[118] Before the poet's boat arrives to port battered by the arduous trials of writing macaronic poetry, Merlin chastises the poets for the lies they tell, beginning with those that Homer and Virgil told about Achilles and Aeneas, who were certainly not stronger than true heroes like Hector and Turnus. The same piercing criticism, recalling Ariosto's St. John as well as Socrates in Plato's *Ion*, is then extended to *all* the parasitic arts, " astrologers... astronomers, minstrels, and palm readers" who use obscure signs to forecast what even "porters could predict by reasoning and personal experience." If Folengo's macaronic language is a 'social construction', a Frankenstein's monster of Latins and vernaculars whose scars and sinews reflect the rifts in the literary, political, and social fabric of early modern Italy, the way in which the poet releases his language to the world has lasting, and potentially devastating, implications for a culture which conceives of itself in the terms of rebirth, of renaissances. For the poet suggests that the hermeneutical pumpkin is the ultimate destination of all poetry, particularly epic poetry, which, as we know, is to become an increasingly private kind of writing, at least in cinquecento Italy. The pumpkin is therefore a most suitable figure indeed for the kind of world in which "nuovi Argonauti e nuovi Tifi" are halted from beginning their voyages of discovery before they can even begin. In the Renaissance of the Pumpkin, i.e. Folengo's "Macaronic Renaissance", it is not the rich or the powerful who have a tooth removed from their head for every lie they ever told, but the scribblers who repeat their lies, and invent many of their own besides. Recycling Folengo's Ovidian calque to conclude this interpretation of Macaronic as a system of lying signs, the *zucca* is our homeland.

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[118] For Ariosto's use of the episode in St. John's prophecy about Ippolito d'Este, see Quint, "Astolfo's Voyage to the Moon," 404. The satire was popular in the Renaissance and furnished a model for Erasmus' *Julius Exclusus* (1518), which Folengo may have read before he included the episode in T (1521).

Chapter 3

Genre Macaronics

> Anche Tebe era un cumulo di rovine. Ma nessuno ormai avrebbe potuto cancellare quelle piccole lettere, quelle zampe di mosca che Cadmo il fenicio aveva sparpagliato sulla terra greca, dove i venti lo avevano spinto alla ricerca di Europa rapita da un toro emerso dal mare.
>
> Roberto Calasso, *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia*

At the beginning of the second volume of his magisterial *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, Bernard Weinberg provides a detailed description of one of the earliest and most important documents in the sixteenth century debate concerning the genre of the *Orlando furioso*, the pamphlet containing the Pigna-Giraldi Cinthio Letters.[1] Weinberg's analysis of passages from the second open letter, sent by Professor Giraldi Cinthio to fellow Ferrarese academic Giovanni Battista Pigna, underscores the importance that Giraldi assigns to Ariosto's choice of the vernacular in the debate, a vernacular that he defines as a modern language shared by a large community of Italian readers.[2] When Giraldi explains the causes for the perception that Latin epic and the vernacular romanzo are fundamentally different and incompatible genres, Weinberg's use of possessive pronouns suggests that Giraldi's position on the matter not only forms an important precedent in the defense of the romanzo against the objections of the exclusive supporters of classical epic, but aligns his own position as an historian of this and other literary discourses in Italy ("the practices of the epic—'their genre'—and the romance—"our genre").[3] Weinberg raises the

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[1] Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 1554.

[2] Giraldi is here responding to criticisms of the *Furioso* elencated in the first letter by Pigna.

[3] Ibid., 961.

ideological stakes of his reading of the causes listed by Giraldi when he strictly disambiguates ancient epic from early modern romances, claiming that Ariosto "proclaims the right of an Italian to write differently from a Greek or Roman, of a romance to be put together in ways not known to the writers of epics". Across a distance of nearly five centuries, both Giraldi and Weinberg agree that the *Orlando furioso* is a modern poem whose modernizing language and genre have effectively made their readers modern as well.

It is important to note that Giraldi is not only defending Ariosto's choice of language but also his choice of a distinct genre which then revolutionized and modernized the vernacular chivalric romance. What makes this letter interesting from the standpoint of later developments in this famed *querelle* is that the letter doubles down on the significance of the linguistic as well as formal-generic differences between the ancient epic and modern romance. Giraldi explains that a "fundamental difference" separates such ancient works as the *Aeneid* from the romances of Italy, France, and elsewhere in Europe.[4] He then gives three causes for this fundamental difference. In describing the third cause, he applies to Ariosto the "doctrine of common consent", arguing that several generations of an "entire nation" ("intiera nazione") of vernacular language speakers, with the exception of "some who are too fastidious" ("alcuni superstitiosi"), approved of the *Furioso*, even hailed it as a modern classic for their *nazione*. To put this another way, Giraldi takes sides with a "nazione" of open-minded vernacular moderns who deem the *Furioso* to be worthy of praise rather than blame. For Giraldi, and apparently for Weinberg too, the consent of a national public spanning generations embraced the *Furioso* as the pinnacle of the romance genre in Italy, supporting its non-classical genre, digressive elements, non-linear structure, and use of narrative interlace, and non-Latin language and meter.

In addition to delineating how the exchange of letters established the language that came to define this debate, Weinberg underscores that it was the language, perhaps more than any other key term, that determined the difference between these two traditions of poetry (Latin and Greek on the one hand, and the vernacular on the other). He writes that "just as language belongs to all men of a *common nation* and epoch, so does the right to critical judgement", Giraldi's letter "constitutes a kind of manifesto for the new poetry" that proclaims the right of "a living audience to brings its own criteria to bear upon the works of its time". He does not elaborate on Giraldi's repeated suggestions that the *Furioso* was already being hailed as a unifying, even proto-nationalizing project, which stood parallel to the masterpieces of Florence's "Three Crowns" (Dante's *Commedia*, Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*) and that, in order to do so, Ariosto put Bembo's archaizing notions of literary language into practice over the course of two revisions. This is odd, as Giraldi's letter repeatedly links the genre and the language of the *Furioso* to the just-mentioned *nazione*. Both evade the double question of how and why the poet's language and generic choices in the *Furioso* change over time. For example, Giraldi asserts that Ariosto left out many aspects of "foreign romances" ("romanzi stranieri") that he deemed to be "unworthy of the

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[4] Ibid., 962-3.

majesty of our language and of our country" in his discussion of the second cause, while claiming in the first that the romanzo was a well-established genre in the countries where Spanish, Provençal, and French are spoken. In his view, Ariosto was not only following the literary-linguistic and poetic "customs of those nations" when he elected to write his greatest work in the vernacular, but he was creating a dignified work meant to unify his own *nazione* in the first instance. Despite the tremendous political and linguistic disunity of early modern Italy, Giraldi is confident, at least in this preliminary stage of what will be a more extensive defense of the romanzo, that the *Orlando furioso* appeals to an already-existing proto-national community of readers in Italy, whose shared tongue allowed it to overcome cultural and political differences. Only after the letter and the debate that followed, however, would the *Furioso* truly be enshrined as the modern vernacular 'classic' that Giraldi claims Ariosto intended it to be *ab ovo*—a romance, more than an epic, but one that was nevertheless more refined than Boiardo's poem, and that would therefore appeal to speakers of the language shared by the poet and his peers. Well before Pigna and Cinthio engaged in this historic exchange, the editor of the Vigaso Cocciao edition of the *Baldus* would extend a similar claim to Folengo's epic, claiming that it too was worthy of being proclaimed a classic, one on a par with the greatest authors of antiquity as well as Trecento Florence, and that its author had even given thought to completing a *rifacimento* of the *Orlando innamorato* in the wake of Ariosto's linguistic revision to his own poem:[5]

> "...dico che era pur cosa sconvevole il perdere una opera di Merlino da lui fatta così bella, così vaga, così piacevole; e forse maggior dano forà suto che se anticamente si fosse perduto Vergilio, o pur ne' tempi nostri Dante e Petrarca. Peroché non altro d'aver perduto Vergilio ne seguiva che la perdita di un buon poeta in una lingua, la quale rimaneva in molti altri che ben la parlavano e meglio vi scrivevano. Cosí dico di questi scrittori della lingua tosca, la quale non è però altro che una lingua sola e da altri belli ingegni, come ogni dí si vede, con loro scritture adornata e tersa. Ma perdersi questo (o Dio, che danno incredibile!), si perdeva un bellissimo ed ingegnossimo autore di molte lingue insieme."

> I say that it would also be an unfortunate thing to lose a work by Merlin, made by him so beautiful, graceful, and pleasing; and maybe it would have been a greater damage if in ancient times had been lost a Virgil, or even in our day a Dante and a Petrarch. Because what would attend the loss of Virgil would be but the disappearance of one good poet in one language, which lives on in many others, who spoke it well, and wrote it better. I would say similarly about these writers of the Tuscan tongue, which

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[5] Vigaso Cocaio's preface was written as early as 1545, placing it well before this debate over the language and genre of the *Furioso*. See Marco Faini, "Building the Chivalric Canon: Teofilo Folengo, Lodovico Domenichi, and Aretino's Silence," *Italian Studies* 74, no. 2 (2019): 152. The latter part of the preface draws heavily from the preface to the Cipadense edition written by Folengo's heteronym Nicolo Costanti, "lo Scorucciato".

> is not other, however, than one single language, and is adorned and made clear by
> other beautiful minds in their writings, as one observes every day. But to lose this
> [work] (Oh Lord, what an unbelievable loss!), one would lose a most beautiful and
> most ingenious author of many languages together.

Whether or not Giraldi was aware of Ariosto's linguistic revisions to the *Furioso* (which he of course must have been), his repeated use of the word *nazione* in the letter certainly reflects the opinion that Ariosto had decided in the early years of the 1500s to compose his poem in a non-regional vernacular, and had thus also decided to write a romance, as these were not usually written in Latin. Giraldi patently ignores the problem that Boiardo's poem poses to Ariosto's, a topic that the author of the the Vigaso preface, published in these years, seeks to address, and also ignores the development of the *Furioso* as a living artifact that responds to literary and linguistic trends. Giraldi also uses strong in-group/out-group positions that cast Ariosto as an Authority who writes for an audience much larger than the Ferrarese court: the *Furioso* continues to be rejected by a tiny group of backwards-looking "superstitiosi" in Ferrara whose archaic, epicurean tastes are informed by strict ancient Greek standards: these extremists reject the *Furioso* because it does not obey the requirement of formal unity demanded by Aristotle's *Poetics*.

The identification of certain literary experiments, such as Trissino's *L'Italia liberata dai Goti*, with this exceedingly small group of *superstitiosi*, overlooks the fact that the *Furioso* was actually *influenced* by these writers (especially during its revision) and had never been *all* romance to begin with. Nor had it been written in the shared language that Giraldi here assumes unites the Italian peninsula into a linguistic *nazione*, in spite of the extreme social and political fragmentation of Italy, along with its enormous linguistic diversity, constantly shifting alliances, violent hostility between city-states, and invading foreign armies. Giraldi (and Weinberg) also fail to note that it could only have been the evolution of the language of the *Furioso*, the removal of many of its northern regionalisms, and the insertion of a large quantity of Petrarchisms and Tuscan words, which led to it being celebrated as a classic of Italian literature and not just one among many regionally-specific romances produced Italy during these years. In the case of its genre, Ariosto systematically contaminates incompatible material from the first edition onward, so that the poem's genre has never ceased to be the subject of debate.[6] This generic hybridity anticipates Trissino and Bernardo Tasso's more stringent efforts to graft epic language and themes to romance materials, imitating only "action that is serious, complete, and possessing magnitude" (*Poetics*, 1449b). Giraldi, in other words, offers a view of the distinctiveness of the *Orlando furioso* that is rhetorical, and, by most accounts, untenable when held to the facts of its composition and development between 1516 and 1532.

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[6] Ariosto indicates in the very first verse that the *Furioso*'s subjects would be both *donne* and *amori* as well as *i cavalier* and *l'arme*, an earlier indicator of its hybrid generic status.

Giraldi and Weinberg are not wrong in their assertion that Ariosto's poem was more a romance than an epic, however: its ottava rima and extensive application of *entrelacement* or interwoven plot threads place it firmly within the genre of the romance. But their claims that the poem represents the culmination of the romanzo in Italy, to the exclusion of epic or other genres, is, however, most inaccurate. The attempt to distinguish the romanzo from the classical epic in the letter as well as in *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi* is a false distinction which seeks to distance and differentiate all romanzi from epics written strictly in classical languages, with which are grouped the then-failed experiments of neo-Aristotelians, such as Trissino's. By contrast, most defenders of Ariosto, such as Pigna himself, would set about demonstrating in exhaustive detail the extent of Ariosto's use of ancient epic sources, particularly the *Aeneid*.[7] An immense number of allusions and borrowings from epic poetry were there to be found, from the famous reuse of the last verse of the *Aeneid* during Ruggiero's final battle with Rodomonte, to the dynastic plotline linking Ruggiero, the hero, to Ariosto's patron, Ippolito d'Este. The humanist revival of classical epos, and of the dynastic epic of *Aenied* in particular, thus constitutes a crucial model for the composition of chivalric poetry in Ferrara, and for Ariosto's poem in particular.

Around the same time that Ariosto sent his manuscript to be printed, a Mantuan poet was putting the finishing touches on an experiment in language and genre that sought to compress in classical meters the language, themes, and even characters of vernacular romances. Folengo's knowledge of the works attributed to the Vergil poet, and especially the *Aeneid* in particular, allowed him to construct, elaborate, and refine not just an epic, but an entire collection of poetry written in this utterly 'new' kind of poetry. Ariosto and his Mantuan contemporary were, in point of fact, approaching the end of a tradition of humanists in Italy whose imitations of Virgil were often continuations or 'corrected' versions of his works. Following in the footsteps of ancient and medieval 'spin-offs' of the *Aeneid* which extended its ending beyond the death of Turnus (e.g. book 14 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the *Roman d'Eneas* (c. 1155-60), the *Eneasroman* (c. 1170-90), or Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum* (found in numerous fifteenth-century manuscripts of Virgil *Opera Omnia*).[8] There were also the dynastic-historical epics composed for the ruling families of Italy to take into account—poems such as Antonio Cornazzano's *Sforziade*, Latin works that certainly influenced both poets as they determined how to praise their patrons. Beyond Vergil there was Homer, too, for when Ariosto carefully revised the first *Furioso*, Folengo immediately set his sights on competing with the Greek poet (in name, if not in reality), long before Gian Giorgio Trissino began his 20-year project to compose an epic modelled on the *Iliad* concerning the reconquest of Italy by Falvius Belisarius. In the famous dedication to Charles V that prefaces the first

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[7] "Instead of asserting and justifying its differences from ancient epics, most midcentury promoters of the *Furioso* sought to affiliate it in every way possible to those prestigious classical poems." See Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: the Canonization of Orlando Furioso*, 26.

[8] See *Short Epics*, ed. Michael C. J. Putnam and James Hankins (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), ix-xi.

printed edition (1547) of the *L'Italia*, Trissino asserts that he has divine Homer to thank for his poem's single action, and that using the *Iliad* as a model for the poem has insured that it also falls in line with the stipulations set out for epic poetry in the *Poetics*:

> Là ωnde di tante sue gloriωse azziωni, n'ɛlessi una, e nωn più, per nωn partirmi dalle lɛggi della Poesia, e questa fù la liberaziωne, ch'egli fece della Italia dalla servitù de' Gotthi; la quale hò in ventisɛtti libri divisa, e descritta, cωminciandω dal principiω della detta azziωne; cioè dall'ωrigine della guerra, che per tal causa fece cωi Gotthi. Et in questω hò imitatω il divinω Hωmrω, il quale vωlɛndω descrivere l'ira di Achille, ɛt i danni, che per essa hɛbbenω i Grɛci intωrnω a Trωja, cωminciò dal principio, ɛt origine della detta ira, e terminò nella fine di quella, cioè nel rendere il corpω di Hɛttore a Priamω.[9]

> *I have therefore chosen one of so many of his glorious deeds, and no more, so as not to depart from the laws of Poetry, and this was the liberation he made of Italy from the servitude of the Goths; which I have divided into twenty-seven books and described, starting at the beginning of the said action, that is, from the origin of the war, which for such a cause he waged with the Goths. And in this I have imitated the divine Homer, who, wanting to describe the anger of Achilles, and the losses Greeks suffered on account of it around Troy, started at the beginning and origin of the said anger, and ended at the denouement, that is, in the return of Hector's body to Priam.*

At the end of the last book, Trissino invokes divine Homer alongside the classical muses to help him conclude this exceedingly "tiring" ("*faticoso*") and "lengthy" ("*lungo*") poem:

> Vergini sacre, al cui gωvɛrn postω
> Parnasω, ɛt Hɛlicona, ɛt Aganippe
> E cω i lωr fiωri, ɛ le lωr limpide acque
> Ωrante il mωndo di memorie ɛtɛrne,
> Hor, ch'iω sωn giuntω a l'ultima fatica
> Del faticωsω, ɛ lungω miω Pωɛma,
> Cω'l vostr ajutω, e cω'l divinω Hωmerω,
> Ch'è statω il miω maestrω, e la mia stella;
> Piacciavi darmi ancωr tantω sωccωrsω,

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[9] I cite from *L'Italia liberata dai Gotthi* (Rome: Valerio e Luigi Dorici, 1547), ii-iii. Recognizing Charles V's commitment to The Order of the Golden Freece, Trissino claims that he has used the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes as an additional model his poem's single, continuous action: "E questω fece medesimamente Apolloniω ne la aziωn di Iasωne, quandω andò al cωnquistω dell Vellω de l'orω, che cωminciò da la causa de l'adunare gli Argωnauti, e terminò nel pωrtare il Vellω d'ωrω a casa." For Dante and Ariosto's use of the motif of the "vello", see *Orlando furioso* 35.3.3-8 and *Paradiso* 2.16-18.

Che giunger possa al disiatω fine,
Ch'ὲ prεssω homai. . . [10] (27.1-11)

*Sacred muses, in whose care are placed Parnassus, Helicon, the Hippocrene, with
their flowers and limpid waters, adorn the world with memory eternal. Now that I
have reached the final toil of my long, laborsome poem, with your help and with divine
Homer, who is my teacher and my star, may it please you to provide your aid again, so
that it may reach its desired end, which is now close at hand.*

One wonders what Ariosto, who knew little Greek and could not, as Petrarch and Boccaccio be-
fore him, read the *Iliad* in the original, thought of Trissino's quixotic attempt to import not only
the structure of the *Iliad*, but also a few letters from the Greek alphabet, into his vernacular exper-
iment.[11] More importantly, while Trissino's revival of Homer and corresponding 'epiciziation' of
the vernacular ultimately fell flat on its face, Folengo's contest with Homer in macaronic hexam-
eters made his Merlin famous throughout the whole world. Almost everyone in the educated elite
could read and understand the *Baldus*, due in no small part to the widespread use of Latin as well
as the monastic and university cultures that encouraged its contamination with local vernaculars.

What few critics of Ariosto or Trissino are willing to address is how the 'low' languages and
mixed genre of Merlin's poem, as well as its author's use of the high or epic style to represent
in vivid details vulgar subjects and base characters (both strictly antithetical to the rules for com-
posing epic poetry, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*) appears to have *catalyzed* efforts in Italy to
determine and refine a language capable of doing epic the right way in both classical languages
and in the vernacular. For Trissino and Torquato Tasso, this meant applying an increasingly refined
knowledge of classical standards to vernacular. It is also possible that the *Baldus*, as well as other
macaronic poems, would have been received differently had the second book of the *Poetics*, in
which Aristotle discusses comedy and possibly mock epic parody (like those attributed to Homer)
survived from antiquity. The university tradition of macaronic poetry was a distant relative of this
tradition, which, as we have seen, already combines within it goliardic Latin satire, the burlesque
verses of Berni, and the poesia giocosa of Florence. Merlin's poem alone, however, has man-
aged to escape the obscurity of the macaronic poets that preceded him: the survival of the second
book of the *Poetics could* have provided an important classical antecedents capable of justifying
his comic language, juxtaposition of genres, and use of dialect words and phrases, but this wasn't

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[10] Ibid., pp. 165

[11] For the place of Homer in Renaissance epic poetry, see Guido Baldassari, *Il sonno di Zeus: sperimentazione
narrativa del poema rinascimentale e tradizione omerica* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982). For the seventeenth-century revival
of Homeric poetry in Italy, see Annalisa Andreoni, *Omero italico: favole antiche e identità nazionale tra Vico e Cuoco*
(Rome: Jouvence, 2003).

ultimately needed.[12] But if Jorge of Eco's *Il nome della rosa* succeeded in his efforts to destroy the sole surviving copy of Aristotle's second book, Folengo has suceeded as well: the *Baldus* is widely read and enjoyed by readers around the world. In 1521, i.e. well before Trissino began to apply the 'puristic' poetic language he developed in the *Castellano* for the *L'Italia*, a poet whose book began as a parody of Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Aeneid*, and who systematically imports into his hexameters thousands of Latin, vernacular, and dialect words and texts for the avowed purpose of undermining—even overthrowing—Virgil's authority in his evangelical, entelechial anti-epic, seems to have set his sights on besting Homer himself. Indeed, his story of Baldo and his friends will swell from 17 to an astonishing 25 books—from five whole books longer than the *Aeneid* to an entire book more than the *Iliad*. The collection containing it would now also include a pseudo-Homeric *Batracomiomachia*, also written in Macaronic. This rival of the greatest poets of Greece and Rome was producing macaronic versions of some of the most celebrated examples of ancient genres! Well before Trissino or any other Italian poet had experimented with the possibility of Latinizing or vernacularizing Homeric epic, Merlin Cocaio could boast of being able to "topple not only Virgil but also Homer by the vigor of his song".[13]

If "genre theory" has been identified as a distinctly Renaissance invention, the early moments of this invention occurs within the sixteenth-century debate over the exact nature of the difference between vernacular romanzo and Latin epic. Before the sixteenth-century revival of Aristotle's *Poetics*, theories and taxonomies of poetry were widely divergent: the first volume of Weinberg's study provides a detailed summary of the diversity of systematizations of knowledge that include poetry, with groups of theorists classifying it variously as an art of rhetoric, branch of moral philosophy, or instrumental science. Universal agreement about poetic genres was in short supply, however, in spite of the growing ubiquity of these systems of classification in comparison to ancient treatments on the subject.[14] This is significant for the argument of the current chapter, for the emergence of genre theory under the influence of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the latter half of the 1500s would have doubtlessly appeared bizarre not only to the ancients, but to the humanists as well. Below, I show how our poet indiscriminately draws from the content, motifs, and narrative techniques of many literary genres in order to forge an utterly unique product of humanist culture.

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[12] From what we can gather from the surviving evidence, including the manuscript described in *Aristotle's Poetics I, with the Tractatus Coislinianus, a Hypothetical Reconstruction of Poetics II, The Fragments of the On Poets*, trans. Richard Janko (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), Aristotle discusses the cause and purpose of laughter, different kinds of comedy (like parody and lampoon), comedic diction, and even what local dialects the comic poet ought to assign to the narrator and characters.

[13] "nervo carminis ipsum, non tam Virgilium sed Homerum buttet abassum" (*Baldus*, 22.64-5).

[14] In the view of D. A. Russell, "historically, 'genre theory' is very much more a Renaissance inheritance than an ancient one. When we come to look for it in the critics of antiquity, as of course we must, it appears a much more patchy and incomplete thing than is commonly supposed." I quote this passage, originally in Russell's *Criticism in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 148-9 from the beginning of a helpful article on the subject of ancient genre by Professor Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Ancient Literary Genres: A Mirage?," in *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. Andrew Laird (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 421.

By incorporating the features of romance poetry along with many other kinds of vernacular literature and thus exploiting the already flexible generic horizons of writing in both genres, the *Baldus* circumvents the norms of romance and epic poetry, subordinating both to Macaronic. The interpolation of different kinds of writing into hexameters is primarily a *rhetorical* procedure or strategy by which Merlin casts a pervasive *ambiguity* about what the poem *is* generically or linguistically, thereby preventing his readers—then and now—from *assigning* it to a genre in the first place. This procedure of disguising the genre (and exact language) of the poem undermines its arbitrary designation to any one genre or genres, thereby engaging in a contest and critique with the *Aeneid* and especially its most stringent and exclusive medieval and Renaissance imitators, who threaten to reduce all Latin poetry to its example alone. The hybridity of the *Baldus* is therefore best understood as a concealment that doubles as a revealing—the book, the poem, and its para-texts function as *pretexts* for a different, but no less admirable, goal as Ariosto's in the *Furioso*, and one that is organized by different pressures (for Ariosto, chiefly Ippolito d'Este, followed by Pietro Bembo; for Folengo, mainly Federico II Gonzaga, followed by the Orsini). Whereas the *Furioso* becomes *the* text onto which early modern theories of genre and form are to be debated in the sixteenth century, the *Baldus* joins with more and more early modern voices who reject the exclusive imitation of Vergil, chief poet of empire and colonization, and claim for poetry new voices, languages, and horizons.

It is my argument that the *Baldus* casts an impressively long shadow on considerations of poetic genre in sixteenth century Italy, and that this aspect of the poem's creation and reception calls for much closer critical scrutiny if a more accurate understanding of its genre in the early modern period is to come into view. Only when Merlin's poem is placed on the Index in the latter half of the 1500s will it, and the generic innovations it engendered throughout Italy, drift into the annals of history, to be perennially 'rediscovered' by critic after critic, as would De Sanctis during his stint of imprisonment in Naples for participating in the failed uprisings of 1848. Setting aside romantic viewpoints, it is the view of this critic that the *Baldus* represents one of the most powerful and, indeed, coherent expressions of the encounter between art and history in this period, capturing in its pages the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the linguistic, political, and religious thought of early modern Italy and beyond. It is an indelible and emblematic artifact of one of the most turbulent and creative moments in human history. In the sections that follow, I will explore the intertextual and intratextual methods used by, after Ariosto, the "greatest poet Italy produced in the first half of the sixteenth century" to engage with Renaissance theories of genre both within and outside his poem, and in so doing, generate an epic that would change the trajectory of poetic making in Italy for good.[15]

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[15] For the claim that "Il mantovano spirito bizzarro è, dopo l'Ariosto, il maggior poeta che l'Italia abbia prodotto nella prima metà del secolo XVI", see Vittorio Rossi, ed., *Storia della letteratura italiana per uso dei licei* (Milan: F. Vallardi, 1930), 199.

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In the first chapter of this dissertation, I provided a new analysis of Macaronic and an updated reading of the episodes involved in Baldo's education in and through a series of signs, or educational allegories, that I argue are structured by this protean language. Both my analysis and reading revealed the degree to which Macaronic draws from and responds to some of the most famous texts and authors of the Italian Renaissance. I also suggested that this reading of Baldo's education in an often confusing mixture of languages and textual traditions is merely provisional, in the sense that the standard critical tools which exist for many early modern Italian and Latin texts, such as a diachronic correspondence—and that would allow critics to trace the poem's developing form, or to compare to it to the texts it incorporates and comments upon—do not exist. Baldo's education ends when he is able to give a final bon voyage to Merlin, who enters an enormous pumpkin that, along with the *Domus Phantasiae* which precedes it, is an Infernal prison for those who have divorced writing from truth, subverted authorship, and questioned the validity of what one might call *scientific* knowledge in this period.[16] This chapter also briefly explored some of the ways that Macaronic is contextualized by a sophisticated array of para- and peri-textual information, a consideration to which I will return in chapter 4.[17] Finally, I argued that the *function* of Folengo's equivocal use of Latins and vernaculars is to critique the rigorous imitation of classical authors and texts by his contemporaries. By historicizing the question of the styles of the *Baldus* in the same way, the current chapter explores how they are essential elements of, or, figuratively speaking, ingredients in, Merlin's linguistic-stylistic *impastura*, producing a textual meal that doubles as a *pharmakon* or poison-cure for the excessive emulation of ancient poetry by his contemporaries.[18]

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[16] For Ariosto's (St. Johns's) revelation that poetry, even scripture—poetry at its most truthful—is a tissue of lies, see Albert Russell Ascoli, "Worthy of Faith?: Authors and Readers in Early Modernity," in *The Renaissance World*, ed. John Jeffries Martin (London: Fordham University Press, 2007), 442. The modern reader is likely to take Lodela's rejection of pre-scientific discourses in the preface to the second edition of the *Baldus* to be just as disturbing as St. John's reduction of scriptural Truth to the lying fabrications of human beings. For the claim that Merlin's ironic renunciation of the truth-telling of poets in the *Domus Phantasiae* echoes Ariosto's St. John, see Francesca Castellano et al., eds., "Vagabondi, furfanti e buffoni: mésalliances inedite e palinodia dell'eroe nel *Baldus* di Teofilo Folengo," in *Le forme del comico: atti delle sessioni plenarie: Firenze, 6-9 settembre 2017* (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2019), 898.

[17] For examples that are symptomatic of this kind of philological-linguistic parsing of Lodela's glosses (and hence, Folengo-glossator or *interpres*), see Zago, "Alcune glosse grammaticali nel *Baldus* dell'Edizione Paganini" and Federico Baricci, "Geosinonimi folenghiani nelle glosse della Toscolanense," *Studi di Lessiografia Italiana* 34 (2017): 167–205.

[18] See p. x in Mullaney, op. cit., where it is claimed that: "The frame story proposes the text as a substitute remedy—a remedy, it would seem, for the feverish exaltation of the ancient Greek and Romans, for their literary creations, for their language" (p. x). Lodela's book-cure is partly derived from Lucretius's famous double metaphor at the beginning of *De Rerum Natura* (1.925ff), where he likens his poem and the Epicurean philosophy it contains to enticing honey drizzled on the brim of a cup of bitter medicine.

To briefly summarize the final part of chapter 1 of this dissertation, Merlin's ironic and Lucianesque assertion of the accuracy or veracity of his poetry at 1.30, as well as his more meaningful and extended meditation on the macaronic project in Manto's grotto and the Zucca of the poets, needs to be interpreted through the lens of the speech by Ariosto's St. John addressed to Astolfo in canto 35 of the *Orlando furioso*. Read with the help of these intertexts, the episode functions as a commentary not only on Baldo's education, which is swiftly drawing to a close in these books, but also on the language of the poet, Macaronic. Merlin, like Ariosto-narrator, knows that history and poetry share a fundamental trait: the use of figurative, rhetorical language to fashion narratives that disguise moral or instructive truths. Between T and VC, this implicit critique of poetry, which becomes much more explicit and categorical in the final verses of the poem, is therefore one which evolves from a dispassionate admonition of the excessive emulation of ancient poetry (which, in Merlin's words, "often hurts us moderns"), to a much broader and condemnatory view of poetry as a discourse allied with other forms of dubious knowledge and superstition, such as astrology and alchemy: "astrologis… cantoribus atque poetis" (25.623). Following in the footsteps of Scalabrini, Faini, Capodivacca, and others, I would like to suggest that Macaronic, both in the *Baldus* and in the macaronic book as a whole, is a poetics of skepticism that promises to cure the excessive imitation of ancient poetry by administering this Platonic critique, beginning with the poetry of Virgil and Homer themselves. A bold, even brazen, contest with the greatest poets of the ancient world via a playful expansion of the Platonic critique of poetry to all forms of knowledge, is no easy stance; it one that is ambivalent about Platonism as a potentially anti-rhetorical and even anti-intellectual philosophical position that is paradoxically embedded in many of the *poetic* texts of this period, and therefore recognizes its power as well as eventual subordination to the increasingly dominant, Aristotelian models of poetry in Italy.[19] Macaronic deploys Plato to deny the difference (and *différance*) between it and not just other kinds of poetry, classical or humanist, but *all* discourse formed using *any* sign system, whether verbal, symbolic, or otherwise.[20]

The characters, motifs, *topoi*, allegories, and plots of the chivalric romance constitute an essential, perhaps fundamental aspect of the genre of the *Baldus*. While providing a core model for the poem, the vernacular romance is, however, not the principal focus of the current chapter. In a sequence of separate, interlocking descriptions of basic generic features and intertextual borrowing and allusions present in the *Baldus*, I instead demonstrate how the poet structures this work as a comprehensive *satura* of different genres as well as anti-epic that seeks to compromise the authority of the *Aeneid* and Augustan classicism in the period of the writing of the poem. Seen from a distance, the subject of the genre of the *Baldus* is an intimidating one. The poem's critics are ready to admit that the more they attempt to parse the poem's generic form, the more it seems like its

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[19] For Macaronic as a poetics of scepticism, see Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse" and "Curiosity and the Trials of the Imagination in Early Modern Italy," 213-14.

[20] For Folengo's appreciation of Plato, see Cesare Federico Goffis, *Teofilo Folengo: studi di storia e di poesia* (Turin: Tipographia Vincenzo Bona, 1935), 107, "Il filosofo preferito era sempre stato per lui il 'divino' Platone".

language, discrete poems, and the genre of its longest poem, are impossible to fully distinguish. The one seems to be a specular reflection of the other, and vice versa, so that not only their symmetries, but also their distortions and mixtures of prior texts, are mirrored in each other. In the first chapter, I suggested that the story of Baldo's education is best read through the lens of Macaronic itself. Merlin's 'mistakes' and 'errors', which Lodela does his best to explain in the margins of the book, create a mise en abyme of dubious signs and interpretation that make both its language and genre resemble an almost impossibly variegated patchwork, or jigsaw puzzle, of erudite citations, oral allusions, and nonce coinages which the glosses do not necessarily elucidate. Even more remarkable is the bare fact that this Verbius-like tapestry of words, which may be scorned as absurd, but not ignored, is complete in each of its four, chimerical versions.

Like the spiral of a Möbius strip, the poem's language and genre do not stand parallel so much as are bound together and made indistinguishable—the heterodoxies of the one leading naturally to the anomalies and the hybridities of the other. This linguistic and generic opacity to interpretation, which resembles, on the one hand, the enigma or the cipher, and, on the other, the descent into the mad versification of an Empedoclian poet (*AP* 463ff), both solicits and anticipates the attempts of its critics to illuminate its mechanisms. In one study, Alessandro Capata tests the *Baldus* against five generic categories (the chivalric romance, the "allegorical epic", mock-epic, and satire), but remains unable to decide which is the more significant. He instead elects to identify it as an "incunable of the picaresque", and thus falls into the anachronism of understanding Baldo's story in the terms of a genre which did not yet exist per se.[21] Treatments of the genre of the poem that seek definitions via certain pervasive thematic elements, such as violence and misogyny, have been just as unsuccessful. The scenes of graphic violence that arrive just before important narrative transitions have led some of the Folengo's readers to argue that his genre must be closely linked and even derived from this theme.[22] Epics such as Lucan's *Pharsalia* and the *Orlando furioso*, however, contain no shortage of scenes of gratuitous violence, often exacted against various undeserving groups. One wonders how a single theme, which is not as widespread or essential to transitions in the narrative as Rizzo claims, can possibly stand in for an entire genre. It also does little to explain the many lighthearted and humorous moments in Baldo's adventure, and does not provide a generically distinctive aesthetic or narrative technique that the poet uses to juxtapose and alternate his source material, some of which may be macabre, but not outright violent. Indeed, often times the violence represented in the *Baldus* can be said to be just as parodic and lighthearted as the scenes of violence depicted in the *Furioso*, such as when the narrator recites the final verse of the *Aeneid* in order to parody both Aeneas's defeat of Turnus as well as Ruggiero's defeat of Rodomonte.

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[21] Capata, *"Semper truffare paratus"*, 54. Capata's study also falters in its tendency to ascribe ideological reasons to the poem's anomalous stylistic and generic features.

[22] For this quixotic interpretation of the poem's *genere*, see Gianluca Rizzo's dissertation, *Modernità del maccaronico folenghiano* (University of California, Los Angeles, 2010), 168-171.

The most successful way to situate the *Baldus* along the lines of generic form, construed in its broadest possible terms, is to trace how Folengo works both intratextually and intertextually, drawing from, and, in the process, transforming classical and medieval theories of genres found in medieval grammars, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, medieval romances, and post-classical theories of the three styles. In the five sections of what follows, I do just this. In the first section, I examine the relationship between the *Macaronea* and the *Baldus*, noting how both provide an antecedent for the picaresque and the *roman à clef* narrative. In the next section, I perform two close readings of proems that mark important transitions in the narrative and showcase Merlin's staging of the *Baldus* as a performative display of poetic *aemulatio* with the Vergil poet. This encourages readers to understand the status of the *Baldus* as an extended satire or pastiche of the *Aeneid* that has gradually adopted Homeric proportions. Allusions to the *questione della lingua* in these introductory proems, as well as to Dante's defense of the vernacular in his *Ecloghe*, suggest that Macaronic reveals just as much as it conceals, attempting to reconcile and play off the entrenched views of language, imitation, and generic form in this period, by way of a playful denigration of Virgil and his more puristic Renaissance imitators. In doing so, Teofilo aspires to reconcile mortally opposed literary and philosophical worldviews and understandings of the merits of the vernacular in Italy during this exceedingly turbulent period of Renaissance history. In the third section, I explore how Folengo uses the ancient Greek and Roman novel as well as different kinds of ancient satire to compose key episodes of his poem. The fourth section is devoted to assessing the value of the grotesque as a literary category for understanding not only the poem's anomalous genre, but also its 'global' engagement with notions of hybridity at both figurative as well as narratological levels. In the later half of this section, I argue that the grotesque serves as a *narrative technique* which serves to hold together the different parts of the poem via one of the most innovative, and therefore distinctive, aspects of the epic: its macaronic muses. In last part of this chapter, I retrace the poem's origins and language to Virgil's low style, demonstrating how Folengo brings together, and therefore collapses, ancient, medieval, and Renaissance understandings of literary style, and the pastoral in particular. Witness to how humanists like Sannazaro, but also Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio strove to expand the limits of the Latin and vernacular eclogue into what has been described as a genre-traversing movement, Folengo retraces the origins of Merlin's *ars macaronica* to his education all things rustic.

3.1 The Macaronic origins of the *roman à clef* and picaresque narrative

Before we treat the genre of the poem in closer detail, we need to briefly consider its connection with a poem that predates the *Baldus* and extends to the picaresque the keyed or à clef auto-biographical narrative. When the *Liber macaronices* was first published, the longest example of

macaronic poetry printed up to that point in Italy was the seven hundred-line *Macaronea*.[23] So great was the influence of this poem on the macaronic book, that Merlin includes Tifi's name with the macaronic muses dancing in the kingdom of lasagna (22.87) and even references it on the title page of the first edition.[24] Along with the imitation of Macaronic as a language, there is an additional layer of similarity that I will define as my argument proceeds.[25] As we begin to compare the *Macaronea* to the *Baldus*, we must briefly consider the fact that both texts are what would later be referred to as a *roman a clef* or keyed novel, a type of narrative that permits the privileged reader to understand hidden allegorical meanings, such as the historical figures on whom the characters of the narrative are based, by way of an external preface or extensive network of allusions. The procedure of providing such narratives with keys is routine: while the first full-blown *roman a clef* is John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621), at least one macaronic poem includes a preface with precisely this kind of allegorical *clavis*.[26] Although it can be said that many kinds of writing have keys of one kind or another, the structural feature that the *Macaronea* and the *Baldus* share is even more specific than the standard *roman a clef* type. Put simply, Michele and Folengo transform their personal and 'historical' exploits into humorous fictions, fictions that share a parodic devotion to Virgil's

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[23] Thought to have been written by Michele degli Odasi, a member of the *Studio patavino* who seems to have went by the Tifi in other role as *vicecollaterale* of Padua, this short poem recounts a series of pranks performed on an apothecary-sorcerer by Tifi and a group of his friends, the so-called *macaronica secta*. The tract was edited and published posthumously with a title that emphasizes its regional and comical-magical subject matter, the *Carmen macaronicum de Patavinis quibusdam arte magica delusi*. See Paccagnella, *Le macaronee padovane*, 34-39, 114-33 and Paolo Zaja, "Odasi, Michele," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 79 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2013). Texts that are not necessarily written in Tifi's style but have been described as "anti-classical" are the *Catania* of Sico Poleton, the *Repetitio Zanini* of Ugolino Pisani, the *Tosontea* of Corrado of Padua, and the *Macharonea medicinalis* of Gian Giacomo Bartolotti, all of which may have been known to Folengo.

[24] While Tifi's presence grows stronger as the poem develops, these verses give one the sense that Merlin is paying Tifi the due respect he deserves. It is significant that Folengo mentions neither the *Macaronea* or its author—and never refers him by name outside the *Baldus*. Of course, Michele, who died in 1492, could never have met Teofilo or corresponded with him. If he could have, one wonders if he would have even gone by the name Michele. In addition to their inventive use of pseudonyms inspired by the names of literary characters, the *Macaronea* features oddly modified verbal calques from classic works, as well as unusual muses (prostitutes instead of cooks). The *Macaronea* is also something of an epyllion, or short epic, comparable to those in the *Appendix Virgiliana*.

[25] For both poems as a "carnival of the *questione della lingua* in which critics feast on the slippage between the 'vulgarity' of what is represented and the 'vulgate' adopted in its representation", see Barbara Spackman, "*Inter musam et ursam moritur*: Folengo and the Gaping "Other" Mouth," in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 24.

[26] See Schupbach, "Doctor Parma's Medicinal Macaronic." The allegory Tasso wrote for the *Gerusalemme liberata* is one example of this phenomenon.

poetry and that remember themselves as characters within these fictions.[27] For the sake of clarity, it may be pointed out that the true protagonist of the *Macaronea* is based on an actual apothecary named Giampietro degli Odasi. Not coincidentally, this was Michele's cousin. Tifi, the ringleader of the *macaronea secta* that pranks the doctor, is not simply a pseudonym, but indeed Michele's professional name, attested to by his working signature, preserved in the official documents and letters he signed in his role as a Paduan functionary. The poem thus bears parallels to certain Boccaccian *novelle* that play with the superficial distinction between the Italian words for story and history (*storia*/*istoria*), with the main difference being that Michele may claim that *his* story elides this distinction, and was clearly inspired by *true* events, to which he claims to be an eyewitness.[28] Likewise, the protagonist of the *Baldus* is based on Folengo's close friend, the Mantuan Francesco Donesmondi, who died a few years before the publication of the poem.[29] Following Tifi, Folengo successfully transforms a personal experience into an elaborate fiction/history with a much larger allegorical scope and casts of characters. Indeed, the poem occupies a position of performative ambiguity within and external to the traditions, sources, and histories it binds together in rustic Vergilian hexameters, including the picaresque, the *roman a clef*, and the Bernesque—all categories that only come into view *subsequent* to its publication and dissemination. The multifaceted nature of this grotesqueness, which extends from the poem's genre and language to its deliberate distortions of mimetic and figural representation, is in many ways a result of the continual intrusion of 'realism' into the poem, the refusal of the poet to limit the scope of his *materia* to pure flights of fantasy and playful absurdity. The grotesqueness of the narrative is the product of its

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[27] While Dante's *Commedia* is an obvious antecedent for the entanglement of biography and fiction, there is an important difference between it and the *Baldus*. Whereas Dante is the protagonist of his epic vision, Michele and Folengo are not the focus of the events that shape their stories, and they add themselves to their fictions under different names. While Michele appears to have gone by the name Tifi in his personal and professional life, Merlin and his other thinly veiled authorial pseudonyms are not intended to disguise his identity. See n. 11 (p. xxi) in the introduction of Mullaney, *Baldo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007): "Folengo never actually hid behind any of his pseudonyms. The first edition of the *Baldus* featured a *juvenum Folengum* and an exemplary character named Philotheus. A few copies of the second edition included a Latin dialogue in which an interlocutor specifies that the author had been named Girolamo before becoming a monk."

[28] One of the more famous fictionalizations of an instance of Renaissance 'social engineering' also happens to draw, like the *Baldus*, from the Calandrino stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. In Manetti's *La Novella del Grasso Legnaiuolo*, the famous Florentine architect and designer of the dome of the Florentine cathedral Brunelleschi performs an elaborate prank on a woodworker that utterly transforms his role in society. It goes without saying that Merlin very intentionally refers to the *Baldus* in its first verse as an "*istoriam*" or history/story.

[29] In the view of Ivano Paccagnella, "Il protagonista della burla è stata identificato con il cugino di Tifi, Giampietro di Comino degli Odasi da Martinengo" (*Le macaronee padovane*, 38). For the "real" Baldo, see Curti, "Per la biografia di Teofilo Folengo," 532-33 and Nora Calzolaio, "Il Dialogus Philomusi: edizione, attribuzione, commento," *Quaderni folenghiani* 3 (2000): 57–106. The murder of Folengo's friend by Ercole Marescotti is the subject of a letter dated September 2, 1515 sent from Professor Pietro Pomponazzi to Francesco Gonzaga. For the relevance of this letter to the question of whether Baldo is based on a historical individual or was invented out of thin air by the author, see Curti, "Per la biografia di Teofilo Folengo," 533.

extensive sampling of many different kinds of epics and romances, an operation which makes the poem 'uneven' or 'contradictary' only when seen from the perspective of classical literary modes. In this epic *satura*, fantasy combines with the drab and often cruel realities of life in early modern Italy in ways that poke fun both at satire's interactions with realism as well as epic's reliance on tragedy and the sublime.

Indeed, the post-medieval characters and caricatures that populate Merlin's macaronic universe—Baldo's friends, relatives, rivals, and guides—are imprinted, as it were, from the eyes and ears of the poet unto the mimetic surface of the poem's verses. These figures are not just caricatures: while they might claims genealogies from the characters of Pulci's *Morgante*, Cingar and Fracasso are also clearly formed from the personalized memory of the author and the macaronic muses that inspire him. To put this another way, by yoking the features of popular sub-genres together under the proverbial shadow of Dante's *Commedia* (in which the narrator is also the protagonist), Folengo succeeds in constructing and maintaining a fully-formed world which meets and often exceeds the expectations of early modern readers for such fabricated world, a world of words—of mimetic words, of allegorical words, of macaronic words. By transforming personal history into the *literary* narrative, macaronic poetry morphs into macaronic *literature* for the first time.

It is no great discovery that the picaresque and the *roman a clef* necessarily pass through the *Baldus* as they develop in different national and linguistic contexts.[30] What is surprising is the extent to which the poem anticipates this development, placing Baldo in a line of antiheroes that have their distant ancestor in Homer's Odysseus. In the same way that the *Orlando furioso* would be inconceivable had Boiardo never written the *Innamorato*, yet makes this predecessor text seem small in comparison to its labyrinthine, palatial structure, the *Baldus* goes far beyond its macaronic forerunner in establishing itself as a model for future imitation. The undeniable linguistic and auto-biographical elements of Tifi's poem are merely two factors that one must consider when assessing how the *Baldus* and the macaronic book containing it develop over time. More than Tifi or the previous macaronic poets, or even the romanzi of Pulci and the Ferrarese poets, Folengo can be seen to be using a particular ancient *auctor*, model, and attendant commentary tradition to construct his *sui generis* epic: Virgil's *Aeneid*. Indeed, as we shall see, Merlin not only uses the *Aeneid* throughout the macaronic poem, but thinks of himself as a modern Mantuan competitor to the ancient Roman poet. First, however, we need to consider the extent to which several ancient prose narratives appear allusively in the poem over the course of its different versions.

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[30] For the Castilian translation of the *Baldus*, and its influence on the Spanish picaresque, see J. A. Garrido Ardila, "Origins and Definition of the Picaresque Genre," in *The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature: From The Sixteenth Century to The Neopicaresque*, ed. J. A. Garrido Ardila (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6-7 and Alberto Blecua, "Libros de caballerías, latín macarrónico y novela picaresca: la adaptación castellana del Baldus (Sevilla, 1542)," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 34 (1971): 147–239. It is noteworthy that most picaresque novels are written in a vernacular.

"'n su la groppa una cornacchia aveva": Ass Narratives and the *Baldus*

The Latin prose novel of Apulius provides an additional frame of reference for certain episodes of the *Baldus*, if not the exact nature of its narration, which, unlike that of Lucius, remains primarily 'heterodiegetic', except for when Merlin descends into the poem to interact with its protagonists, and reveal to them that he must enter a pumpkin for all of the lies he has told as *poeta*.[31] It may even be claimed that Merlin constructs the *Baldus* and its language *against* the ancient Milesian tales and the "monstrous" works inspired by the *Metamorphoses*, including the *Hypnerotomachia Polipholi*. The macaronic poem engages in the digressions of the Milesian type only to overthrow its distracting and potentially decadent attributes in a teleological thrust towards narrative finality, and epic termination. Indeed, Gelfora, the closest to an Isis figure in the poem, is eventually defeated, and Boccalo, whom she has ordered to be turned into an ass by the application of an ointment (23.601ff), regains his human form. Indeed, the positioning of Gelfora near the end of the poem and after a katabasis that mirrors Lucius' before his entrance into the Isis cult, as well as the presences of witches throughout the *Golden Ass* that culminate in her appearance, suggest that the influence of the roman novel on the poem is much more extensive than has been noticed by the *Baldus*' critics.[32] Even more suspiciously, in the letter attached to T, Folengo uses the generically-charged adjective "Milesian" to identify the *Baldus* in particular with the salacious subjects and low-life characters of what Apuleius identifies as a "Fabulam Graecanicam" (*Met.* 1.1), or patchwork style narrative in which stories are inserted within and interpolated by a frame story. In addition to the Latin original, Folengo could have read both Boiardo's vernacular translation and known of Apuleius' debt to the Milesian fables of Aristides.[33] Indeed, I think it is very likely that Folengo, even at this early moment in his career, is not only alluding to "sermo Milesio" at *Metamorphoses* 1.1, but rather to a lengthy tradition of ancient composite narratives about erotic 'picaresque' subjects that begins with those of Aristides in Greece and that made their way to Italy

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[31] See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay On Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 248.

[32] The correspondences between Isis and the Myth of Er, including the fact that Isis' robe bears an ekphrasis that "features a planetary scheme that recalls and indeed seems to be based upon the planetary whorls of the Spindle of Necessity", also calls for a close comparison to Folengo's Manto, whose enormous whorl bears a close resemblance to the Platonic myth, as I have shown in chapter 1, section 4. See Brian MacDougall, "The Book of Isis and the Myth of Er," *American Journal of Philology* 137, no. 2 (2016): 257-9.

[33] For Boiardo's translation, which uses phrases from Boccaccio's imitations of Apuleius in the *Decameron* (in day seven, story two as well as day five, story ten) in his translations of the 'tale of the tub' and 'miller's tale', see Edoardo Fumagalli, *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell'Asino d'oro: contributo allo studio della fortuna di Apuleio nell'umanisimo* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1988) and Julia Haig Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass: A Study in Transmission and Reception* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 175-180.

through Latin translations such as the one attributed to Lucius Cornelius Sisenna.[34] Folengo was aware, moreover, that the inset stories in book 43 of the *Orlando furioso*, which not only concern a subject found in this particular ancient genre (infidelity), but also feature the star of the *Aesop Romance*, an anonymous Greek fable recounting the fictionalized biography of Aesop which Ariosto could have read in the Latin translation (1448) of Rinuccio da Castiglione.[35] Ariosto's subtle allusive and intertextual workmanship in canto 43 of the *Furioso* would make it quite popular—and controversial—among its readers for years to come, influencing even the narrative structure of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.[36] In the same proem to the beginning of his novel, Apuleius coyly apologies for the linguistic blunders he may have committed in the novel, explaining that he learned Latin only upon arrival in Italy. Beyond its obvious parallels the apologetic Merlin who, especially in the *Apologetica* of T, asks his readers to forgive the many grammatical errors he is about to commit, Apuleius' novel was being used even more extensively both other Italian authors in this period. One highly relevant example (because it was possibly known to the poet) is Machiavelli's unfinished *Asino* (1517), a *terza rima* composition recounting the heavily allegorized journey of

[34] For interactions between the roman novel and Milesian tale, see Stephen Harrison, "The Milesian Tales and the Roman Novel," vol. 9 (Groningen, 1998), 61–73 and id., "The Roman Novel," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 233-5. In addition to identifying his novel as a Milesian tale, the narrator cleverly explains that his rapid changes of language are the result of his "trick-riding" style (*desultoriae scientiae stilus*): "this very changing of language corresponds to the type of writing we have undertaken, which is like the skill of a rider jumping from one horse to another." ["Iam haec equidem ipsa vocis immutatio desultoriae scientiae stilo quem accessimus respondet."] I quote from the translation of J. Arthur Hanson in *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass), Volume I: Books 1-6* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3-5.

[35] For Ariosto's other sources for the two stories, such as Ovid's Cephalus and Procri in *Met.* 7, see chapter 1, 95. For connections between the *Vita Aesopi* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, see Hugh J. Mason, "*Fabula Graecanica*: Apuleius and his Greek Sources," in *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass*, ed. B. L. Hijmans Jr. and R. Th. van der Paardt (Groningen, The Netherlands: Dijkstra Neimeyer, 1978), 1–16 and Ellen Finkelpearl, "Lucius and Aesop Gain a Voice: Apuleius *Met.* 11.1-2 and *Vita Aesopi* 7," in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis, Maaike Zimmerman, and Wytse Keulen (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston: Brill, 2003), 37–51, who draw attention to the presence of the goddess Isis at the end of both stories. According to Mason, "From the Aesopic tradition, the ass-story could derive such themes as the animal's stupidity, stubbornness, sexual characteristics and even curiosity. The Aesopic fable is surely one of the elements Apuleius alluded to in the phrase fabula graecanica, and one with a Latin tradition already existing (Phaedrus)" (10). For the influence of Astrides' *Milesiaka* and other Greek erotic novels on both the *Vita* and the *Met.*, see Karla A. Grammatiki, "The Literary Life of a Fictional Life: Aesop in Antiquity and Byzantium," in *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*, ed. Carolina Cupane and Bettina Krönung (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 322-3. For an investigation of the narratological levels of *Golden Ass*, see John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius's Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[36] See Quint's treatment of the "Curioso impertinente" in *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of Don Quijote* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003). Curiously, Quint, whose main argument is that Ariosto imports the Ariostan narrative technique of *entrelacement* into the modern prose novel, fails to mention a single ancient novel as a possible source for these interpolated tales.

an unnamed narrator-protagonist (probably Machiavelli himself, pace Dante) to Circe's island.[37] Both the date (the same year as the first edition of the macaronic book) as well as the content of this fascinating poem merit comparison to the *Baldus*, for Folengo's poem slightly predates it and, moreover, it is possible that Machiavelli includes a veiled reference to Folengo in the catalogue of animals collected in Circe's stables. This occurs when the narrator spots a strange animal bearing a "variegated skin and hide" and the mark of a "raven on its back".[38] Given the implicit references to other poets in the passage, including one to Ariosto (in a famous letter, Machiavelli laments the fact that Ariosto did not mention him at the end of his *Orlando furioso*, and calls him a "dick") it is possible that this is a thinly veiled reference to Folengo:[39]

> Uno animal che non si conosceva,
> sì variato avea la pelle e 'l dosso,
> e 'n su la groppa una cornacchia aveva.

There was an animal I did not recognize—so variegated was its skin and its hide—and on its croup was a raven.[40]

In addition to the implicit and explicit ties between between Gelfora, the final witch queen and last major obstacle between Baldo and the Inferno, and Isis of the *Metamorphoses*, Merlin and Lucius share a tone that is perceptibly anti-religious and often deeply condemnatory towards the attitudes and behaviors of religious figures in their respective cultural worlds. For Merlin, this comes to the

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[37] For readings of the poem, see Albert Russell Ascoli and Angela Matilde Capodivacca, "Machiavelli and Poetry," in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. John M. Najemy (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 190–205 and Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 121-131.

[38] Folengo's heraldic emblem displays a raven-like bird, the Merl. Compare the Tarand purchased by Pantagruel in chapter two of Rabelais' fourth book (1552), whose coat is thought to change its color based on its surroundings, like the skin of a chameleon. In November 1509, Machiavelli was sent on a diplomatic mission to Mantua in which he delivered a payment of several thousand ducats to the agents of Emperor Maximilian and gathered intelligence on the French, during which he might have met Folengo. See *The Historical, Political, and Diplomatic Writings of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. Christian E. Detmold (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin / Co., 1891), 195-2.

[39] No commentator has identified an individual for this animal, but at least one (De Maria) has suggested that the beast immediately preceding it, described as "da natura fatto con più arte" veils a reference to at least one poet working outside the Medici circle: Ludovico Ariosto. See Ugo De Maria, *Intorno ad un poema satirico di Niccolò Machiavelli: saggio critico* (Bologna: Zamorani e Albertazzi, 1899), 14-15 and *Operette satiriche*, ed. Luigi Foscolo Benedetto (Turin: UTET, 1926), 103. The allusion to the coronation of Giacomo Baraballo in book 6 (vv. 109-26) also contains an "allusive fling" at Ariosto's self-coronation in the final canto of the *Orlando furioso*. See Ascoli and Capodivacca, "Machiavelli and Poetry," 200. For other readings of the *Asino*, Brian Richardson, "Two Notes on Machiavelli's *Asino*," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 40, no. 1 (1978): 137–141 and Ed King, "Machiavelli's *L'Asino*: Troubled Centaur into Conscious Ass," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 2 (2008): 279–301.

[40] I quote the English from Allan Gilbert's translation in *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others* (Durham: Duke University press, 1989), 768.

fore in the episodes dedicated to Cingar, and especially in the episode involving Chiarina the cow, who is stolen, murdered, and consumed by gluttonous friars in book 8. This fraudulent transaction at least partly resembles the trials and tribulations of Lucius as ass, who is bought, sold, and threatened with the prospect of being killed by his various owners in various episodes of the novel. Lucius' interest in magic and the occult is also picked up if not paralleled by the themes of white and black magic in the poem.

Like Lucius in Apuleius's ass novel, or even the pilgrim in Dante's *Commedia*, the narrator of the *Asino* is also its protagonist, who reports what has happened to him *post facto*: "If I should, too, by my effort be held longer than is my wont, so I am commanded by that ass under whose form I have lived" (1.19-21). Machiavelli's ass narrative is thus very unlike *Baldus* in this respect, for Merlin does not transform into an ass, let alone enter the on-going narration (with one or two exceptions). Other than these extremely limited instances, Folengo can be said to be very studiously and scrupulously Virgilian with regard to the narratological positioning of his Merlin. What the poems *do* share is their interest in using Apuleius's narrative to comment on the political landscape of early modern Italy, as well as their interest in ass-transformations: we find at least one episode in which a character has been transformed into an mule by an enchantress in the *Baldus*: the jester Boccalo by Gelfora (23.601ff).[41] Still, despite the lack of interpolated stories, the numerous smaller stories and poems recited by major characters scattered throughout, such as the diplomatic letter at the beginning of the fifth book, or the nineteen cooking recipes in book 14 of T, arguably make the poem just as stylistically heterogeneous as *The Golden Ass* or any of the novels from Greek and Roman antiquity. What makes the *Baldus* even more impressive from a narratological standpoint is that Merlin has integrated his intertextual allusions and references to primarily prose texts, like Apuleius' and Boccaccio's (in the case of the latter, the stories staring Bruno and Buffalmacco and Calandrino in days 7, 8, and 9 of the *Decameron*) into a verse epic narrated by a 'Virgilian' poet who rarely, if ever, descends into the ongoing action.[42] With the exception of the tale told to the heroes by Pasquino in book 23 (254ff) this does not resemble at all the kind of story-telling that one finds in ancient Greek and Roman novels, the *Decameron*, or book 43 of the *Orlando furioso*.[43] Merlin is instead in control of his narrative in a way that unmistakably imitates the post-Aristotelian, Vergilian narrator of ancient epic poetry, with colorful, but ultimately narratologically limited, touches taken from the ironic narrators of the chivalric romances, such as the authorial proems at the beginning of many of the books, or, in C and VC, the author's descent

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[41] For this episode, see the chapter dedicated to Folengo in Nuncio Ordine's extensive study of the figure of the ass in the writings of Giordano Bruno, *La cabala dell'asino: asinità e conoscenza in Giordano Bruno* (Naples: Liguori, 1987), 446-452.

[42] The Boccaccian characters Brancazio, Buffalmacco, Nello, and Maestro Simone are mentioned by name at *Baldus* 9.1-3 and again at 22.394, where the latter three are compared to Cingar and Boccalo.

[43] For Folengo's Pasquino, see Marco Faini, "'Credite Pasquino schietto savioque prophetae': L'impossible verità di Pasquino nel *Baldus* di Teofilo Folengo," in *Ex marmore: pasquini, pasquinisti, pasquinate nell'Europa Moderna*, ed. Chrysa Damianaki, Paolo Procaccioli, and Angelo Romano (Rome: Vecchiarelli Editore, 2006), 51–66.

into the poem at the beginning book 22. Returning to Bembo's stylistic prescriptions for poetry written in either Latin or the vernacular, any serious consideration of the *Baldus* as a product of a culture of humanist Latinity rather than vernacular humanism must confront its emulative debt and even 'anxiety of influence' not to the romance poets or to the *Tre corone*, but to the author of Romen's greatest epic: Vergil.

3.2 "Una duos numerat Mantua Maonidas": Merlin Cocaio, Vergil *Redivivus*

Of the many ancient and medieval texts that partake in the *de vita et moribus* tradition, the *Vita Virgiliana*, the fourth-century biography of Vergil written by Aelius Donatus, is perhaps the most important. It is also one of the main sources that Folengo uses to fashion his Merlin persona into a post-medieval alter-Vergil. The use of the *Life* in the prefatory material and the glosses serve to convince the reader of the macaronic book that Merlin is precisely an alter-Virgil, who composes the *Baldus* in hexameters during the very late Middle Ages in Mantua, well after the historical or fictional Turpin of the Romances. The clearest examples of this use of the *Life* is Lodela's explanation that Merlin's last name, "Cocaio", is derived from a bottle stop, a direct allusion to the account of the birth of Vergil in the *Life*.[44] There is also the wildly exaggerated pseudo-knowledge attributed to Merlin by Lodela in the prefaces and glosses, which satirize the wisdom traditionally ascribed to Vergil's poetry.[45] The proliferation of Folengo's authorial figures or heteronyms, many of whom are directly yet ambiguously tied to Vergil, including Merlin, Sordello, and Manto, pokes fun at the perceived instability of notions of authorship in this period, spreading a pervasive doubt about the structure of all forms of literary authority in the immediate context of the publication of the first two versions. The macaronic style is not simply the product of the singular imagination of a single ex-monk making fun of humanist literary and intellectual culture, in which faith and obedience is due to certain authors more than others, but his poem is an artifact which owes its existence to a more widespread literary disagreement with the pro-Ciceronian and pro-Bembian camps in Italy, which arguably begins with the letters of Poliziano and Pico and is rehearsed by the former's nephew, Bembo, Castiglione, and Ariosto. The systematic travesty of the received Vergil and Vergilian learning all but determines the iconoclastic satire of a 'Vergilian career' and the tripartite hierarchy of styles associated with it by Lodela: by corrupting not just Vergil's verses but his career as a poet, while mixing foreign generic elements into what is at core both a romance and, within the macaronic book, a macaronic substitute for the *Aeneid*, the *Baldus* fashions a kind

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[44] Like Vergil's mother, who throws herself into a ditch and gives birth while travelling outside Mantua, Merlin's mother gave birth to him while searching for a cork in a field (*Vit. Virg*. 2.3).

[45] Needless to say, Merlin, like the Aristotle-like pagan philosopher Virgilio, plays the part of a guide to the protagonist, as does Seraphus, who is less Vergilian and who is allied with Manto.

of universe for the macaronic style unto itself, one that deliberately rivals the legacy of Vergil in Italy, as far as it is understood to our monkish poet. The success of this strategy is confirmed by Folengo's epigraph: "Una duos numerat Mantua Maonidas"—Greece should not boast too loudly of her Homer, for Mantua has given birth to two such poets (see fig. 2.1). The entire macaronic book can be said to be an overt attack on Vergil's status as a poetic model 'for all ages and cultures' that openly challenges, and paradoxically valorizes, the memorization of his verses by rote in the Renaissance classroom. Baldo's education in the *Aeneid* is only one example of this systematic travesty.

The *historiam* of Baldo is, then, a mixture of many different genres and exegetical modes that have been overlaid onto the core features of a classical epic. Merlin reverses the trajectory of Aeneas in each of the poem's versions, dropping its dynastic plot: whereas Aeneas journeys from Troy to Italy in order to find a home for his people, and eventually to Augustus' empire (and Augustus himself) and is consciously remembered by Ariosto's Ruggiero in the *Furioso*, Baldo abandons the shores of Italy for good, battles against unspeakable evils, and eventually descends into an underworld often darker than *Aeneid* 6 and Dante's *Inferno*, never to return. Despite the many obvious differences between his poem and the *Aeneid*, Merlin regularly reminds the reader that he is engaged in a specific kind of agonistic contest with the Vergil poet, and that the *Baldus* is to be read as a kind of alter- or even anti-*Aeneid*. The performance of his contest with Virgil qua epic poet throughout the various episodes of the poem is in multiple senses a *performative* one, in the sense that Merlin (as well as Lodela and the other heteronymic editors) is actively performing the *Baldus* for the specific audience of peers addressed at the end of T. One might even suggest that the entire poem, in all its versions, is an elaborate and sustained *performative utterance* meant to alter the social reality it describes and fictionalizes, and that the prefaces and eclogues are strictly corollated and depend on the success of this project.[46] Within the *Baldus*, the narration is performative in the capacity that it is meant to caution the reader's excessive, neo-pagan emulation of classical authors and texts, particularly the chief poet and poem of empire and colonialism, Vergil, whose imitation, like that of Cicero, was becoming stale. Both the macaronic book and the Baldus is meant to perform the cure of laughter, eliciting both praise or scorn depending on the reader, who might be shocked by the author's debasement of Latin and epic poetry or pleasantly entertained by it. The proem of book 11 offers a particularly instructive example of how a single figure of speech, *aemulatio*, may be used to track Merlin's contest with and parodic attack on the textual traditions tied to Vergil. In the opening verses to the third five-book sequence, Folengo deploys a layered allusion to a transition at the narrative center of the *Aeneid* which suggests that Merlin is competing not only with Vergil, but also his imitators in Latin, the vernacular, and macaronic styles:

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[46] For these terms, see J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962) and John R. Searle, "How Performatives Work," Publisher: Springer, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 12, no. 5 (1989): 535–558.

Figure 3.1: Folengo, frontispiece portrait of Merlin, *Theophili Folengi, vulgo Merlini Cocaii, Opus macaronicum: notis illustratum, cui accessit vocabularium vernaculum, Etruscum, et Latinum* (Amstelodami, Joseph Braglia, 1768-1771), fol. 1r. © Newberry Library.

> Altius, o Musae, nos tollere vela bisognat
> mysterumque facit gravius distendere schenam.
> Usque modo calcavit aquas mea barca Cipadae,
> ranarum quae voce cridant redolentque lavacchium;
> nunc mare Pietoli, quo non prigolosius altrum,
> trappassare volo, nulla retinente paura.
> Huc, Zoppine pater, tua si tibi chiachiara curae,
> si tua calcatim Veneti ad pillastra Samarchi
> trat lyra menchiones bezzosque rubeba guadagnat,
> huc mihi cagninas iuncta cum voce budellas
> flecte, soporantes galeottam carmine gentem,
> tirantesque sibi totas dolzore brigatas.
> Tuque boni semper seguitatrix, Lippa, boconis,
> Lippa foiadarum, columen Mafelina Cocaii,
> adsis et tecum invita coenare poëtam.
> Usque modo ruptos gessit Bertuzza stivallos,
> atque ad calcagnos cascavit braga Cominae;
> nunc stringare licet gaiardis carmina stringhis,
> unde valenthommi celebranda est forza baronis,
> quo non Hectorior, quo non Orlandior et quo
> non tulit in spalla portas Sansonior alter. (11.1-21)

It behooves us to raise sails higher, O Muses, and it is necessary to stretch the back with greater force. Until now my boat has trodden the waters of Cipada, which reverberate with the voice of frogs and are redolent of mud; now I want to traverse the sea of Pietola, more dangerous than any other, without being restrained by any fear. Here, Father Zoppino, if are careful with your gossip, if your lyre draws the credulous in crowds to the pillars of St. Mark's in Venice and your rebec earns you bezzi, come here and pluck the dog gut to accompany my voice, putting the sailors to sleep with a song and attracting to it all the groups with sweetness. And you, Lippa, always the pursuer of tasty bites, Lippa of the leaved, Mafelina, head of Cocaio, appear and invite the poet to dine with you. Until now, Bertuzza has worn broken boots and Comina's pants have fallen down to her heels; now it is permitted to lace together with strong laces a poem which must celebrate the strength of a valiant baron, no one more like Hector, no one more like Orlando or in carrying city gates on his shoulders more like Samson.

The proem marks the beginning of a new sequence of books (11-15) inspired by Mafelina as well as an elevation of the poem's subject matter and setting. The first metaphor bears a strong resemblance

to *Aeneid* 7.36-45 (the invocation to Erato, goddess of love), the ur-source in the Renaissance for the metaphor of an ascent in subject matter and stylistic register as a boat entering wider, more dangerous seas.[47] Merlin's unconcealed contest with not just the romance poets but with Vergil is confirmed by his juxtaposition of the "waters of Cipada" to the "sea of Pietola", an oblique reference to Vergil's place of birth. Then Merlin turns to a figure outside the poem in a second allusion, calling on the famous Venetian street performer, Zoppino to join him in performing the tale of Baldo for all to hear (vv. 7-12).

The reference to this figure of humble origins emulates another early modern imitation of the *Aeneid*: the narrative transition in Bartolotti's *Macharonea medicinalis*.[48] Here it appears that Merlin is not really alluding to Vergil, but to a later imitation of the same passage. And this is not just any imitation of *Aen*. 7.36ff.[49] In point of fact, he is alluding to what is likely the strongest prior interpolation of a Vergilian transition into macaronic verse.[50] Folengo recognizes the significance of a pre-existing macaronized transition, but has Merlin steal Bartolotti's street performer, Zoppino, who presently enters the performative staging of the poem. This is an imitation that doubles as an "allusion troped as recognition", for here Folengo has Merlin appropriate and competitively transform Bartolotti's text by recognizing and 'recruiting' his local performer to collaborate with the best macaronic poet in town. Figuratively and, if the *Baldus* was ever performed, as it probably was, also literally speaking, Merlin summons forth Zoppinus from Bartolloti's text to join him in singing of Baldo's adventures beyond Cipada, across the seas, and beneath the earth.[51]

In the proem to book 19, Folengo once again chides Vergil and, by proxy, his humanist imitators, by deploying a subtle but unmistakable allusion. This is to a key document for the defense of the vernacular as well as the development of pastoral poetry in Italy: the attack on the proto-humanist classicism of Giovanni del Virgilio in Dante Alighieri's two Latin eclogues:

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[47] A commonplace in the criticism is that the transition demarcated by the invocation begins the second half of the *Aeneid*, dedicated to the deeds of Aeneas in Italy. The invocation to Mafelina seems to be doing the same thing in the *Baldus*. Chiesa notes that the image bears significant parallels to *Orlando Innamorato* 2.17.2.1-3, where a prominent transition in the narrative is also troped with the metaphoric image of a boat entering wider waters: "Così ancora io fin qui nel mio cantare / non ho la ripa troppo abandonata; / or mi convien al gran pelago entrare", and to this one might also add the nautical metaphor at *Paradiso* 2.1-18, where Dante compares his journey to the Argonauts'.

[48] See notes the notes to verse 7 in op. cit., p. 482.

[49] For this, see Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1985): 215–239.

[50] For the role of performers in the sale of books like the *Liber macaronices*, see Rosa Salzberg, "In The Mouths of Charlatans: Street Performers and The Dissemination of Pamphlets in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Studies* 24, no. 5 (2010): 638–653, especially p. 646. For treatment of "the techniques of typical montebanks and street singers" advertised by the notorious charlatan Iacopo Coppa, see Eugenio Refini, "Reappraising the Charlatan in Early Modern Italy: The Case of Iacopo Coppa," *Italian Studies* 71, no. 2 (2016): 199.

[51] It should be mentioned that the *Baldus* is shot through with similar references to bards, mimes, and clowns who existed in the historical reality of the play, in addition to an ensemble of characters who resembled Zoppino, like Gilberto, who recites verses in humanistically correct Latin.

> Menter ego, in Berghem lauratus et urbe Cipada,
> praepor ad sonitum gringhae cantare diablos,
> Fracassique provas horrendaque facta balenae,
> altorium vestro, Musae, donate Cocaio.
> Non ego frigidibus Parnassi expiscor aquabus,
> ceu Maro castronus, quo non castronior alter
> dum gelidas Heliconis aquas in corpora cazzat,
> agghiazzatque sibi stomachum vinumque refudat,
> unde dolet testam rumpitque in pectore venam.
> Per quid? per quatros soldos; dum cantat in umbra
> "Dic mihi, Dameta...", tondenti braga cadebat.
> Malvasia mihi veniat: non altra miora est
> manna, nec ambrosiae nec nectaris altra bevanda. (19.1-13)

While I, the poet laureate in Bergamo and the city of Cipada, prepare, at the sound of the guitar, to sing of the devils and the deeds of Fracasso and the extraordinary episode of the whale, lend you aid, Muses, to Cocaio. I do not fish in the frigid waters of Parnassus, as Maro the castrated, who is more castrated than any other, from the moment that he drinks the gelid waters of the Helicon into his body and freezes his stomach and refuses wine, so that his head aches and he bursts a vein in his chest. And for what? For four bucks; while he sings in the shade "Tell me, Dameta..." the shearer's trousers fell down. Let the Malvasian wine come to me: no other manna is better, nor any drink of ambrosia or nectar.

What is most essential for my argument about this second proem is that Merlin is not just echoing Dante's criticism of Paduan humanism in the Latin eclogue, but reversing Dante's deferral of poetic coronation. In doing so, he claims for himself a crown as poet laureate of Bergamo and Cipada—no small feat. I argue that the hidden narrator, vis-à-vis Merlin, is in these verses staging a performative attack on Vergil, as he will elsewhere in the poem, that doubles as an oblique critique of the humanist movement and *its* denigration of the vernacular, redirecting Dante's critique of Giovanni del Virgilio against Folengo's neo-classicizing contemporaries.[52] I will show that the reference to Dante's Mopsus in the proem is a pretext for a more serious critique, one that not only suggests, but is also actively recuperating, the macaronic style as a broker between mortally opposed views of the merits and demerits of the vernacular as a poetic language (or indeed any form of communication between class or caste). By debasing with macaronic words and images

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[52] For the early history of humanism in Italy, see Witt, *"In the Footsteps of the Ancients"*. For the strongly anti-vernacular stances of humanist intellectuals, see Vittorio Cian, "Contro il volgare," in *Studi letterati e linguistici dedicati a Pio Rajna* (Milan, 1911), 251–297.

a very sideways characterization of Mopsus/del Virgilio by Dante/Tityus, Merlin appropriates for himself Persius's self-description as a "half-caste" ("*semipaganus*") poet in the prologue to the *Satires* (*Sat*. *Prol*. 1.1-7).

The allusion quoted below hinges on the distinction that Dante, via Persius, is ironically drawing between different kinds of poets and their respective languages, with Vergil/del Virgilio serving in the position of the *vates* on one side of the distinction.[53] It confirms Merlin's laureation as a rustic macaronic poet at the same that it suggests that the *Baldus* is solidly, like Dante's *Commedia*, a vernacular poem, intentionally *not* written in the neo-Senecan hexameters of the humanists like del Virgilio, Albertino Mussato, and their many heirs. As we have seen, no form of Latin holds pride of place in the *Baldus*: by turning Dante's critique of Mopsus/del Virgilio against Vergil himself, Folengo defends Merlin's satirical antics at the same time that he claims for himself the poetic authority that Dante/Tityrus wields in the *Ecloghae* to defend his crowning achievement in vernacular verse.[54] My argument requires a further point of clarification about the importance of the *Ecloghae* for Dante and the revival of the eclogue form by his humanist successors, Boccaccio and Petrarch.[55] One of the first thorough-going imitations of Latin pastoral poetry since late antiquity, these two epistolary eclogues addressed to the Bolognese *magister* Giovanni del Virgilio were probably written between 1319 and 1321.[56] The reference to the laurel crown in verse 1 and the joking citation of Vergil's second eclogue in verse 11 are the first of many indications that, within the economy of the poem and for its readership, Macaronic has critical-discursive *raison d'être* only insofar as Merlin is able to maintain a playful but forceful stand against Vergil and his imitators in support of the vernacular—a defense that is here traced back to its origins with, paradoxically, Dante's defense *of* the vernacular in his Latin eclogues. The weight placed on the value of the pastoral may explain the transposition the final verses of P, in which Merlin recalls the end of the *Aeneid* (cf. the final verse of the 1516 *Orlando furioso*) as Baldo defeats Culfora, to the end book 22 of T. The following verses, whose image of the imbibing of poetic waters is

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[53] For the possibility that Dante's *prolutus* (v. 30) echoes a "*prolui*" at *Prol*. 1, see notes to the verse in *Egloge*, ed. Enzo Cecchini in *Opere minori* (Milan and Naples: Riccardi, 1995), p. 665. The notes to this verse in *Egloge*, ed. Giorgio Brugnoli (Milan and Naples: Riccardi, 1980) indicate that the connection is at least plausible. This suggestion is also made in my honors thesis, *Dante's Eclogues: A New Translation and Commentary* (The University of Vermont, 2013).

[54] Dante follows Vergil by associating himself with Tityrus in the eclogue. For the importance of naming conventions in pastoral poetry, see Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 77-82.

[55] For Petrarch's concealed debt to Dante's *Ecloghae* in *Parthenias* and *Familiares* X, 4, see Albert Russell Ascoli, "Blinding the Cyclops: Petrarch after Dante," in *Petrarch & Dante: Anti-Dantism, Metaphysics, Tradition*, ed. Zygmunt G. Barański and T. J. Cachey (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009) with biobliography and Santangelo, "'Reliqua cogitando percipies'": Dante in Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen* I (Parthenias).

[56] The exchange consists of four verse letters, the first being a standard *epistola metrica* addressed to Dante from del Virgilio and the following three assuming the form of epistolary eclogues (a sudden stylistic transition initiated by Dante in the second, responsive letter).

clearly echoed by Folengo in his proem, distinguish Merlin from Vergil on the basis of Tityrus's description of Mopsus:

> Montibus Aoniis Mopsus, Melibee, quot annis,
> dum satagunt alii causarum iura doceri,
> se dedit et sacri nemoris perpalluit umbra.
> Vatificis prolutus aquis, et lacte canoro
> viscera plena ferens et plenus ad usque palatum,
> me vocat ad frondes versa Peneide cretas. (28-33)

> *While others endeavor to learn law for pleading, Meliboeus, Mopsus dedicates him-*
> *self year in and year out to the Aonian mountains, and has grown pale under the*
> *shade of the sacred grove. Drenched in prophetic waters, his insides filled deeply with*
> *melodious milk, even to his palate, he invites me to [laurel] leaves sprouted of the*
> *transformed Peneid.*

Within the fiction of the macaronic book, Merlin's unmistakable allusion to Tityrus's characterization of Mopsus contributes to Merlin's status as poet who writes in the same period as Mussato and Dante, yet who, unlike Tityrus/Dante, accepts the laurel crown of a poet for his macaronic accomplishments. On the one hand, the comical and deeply anti-pastoral defamation of Vergil in the proem, aided by its explicit reference to Dante's first eclogue, discredits and debases the language of the humanist project of the revival of ancient poetry by targeting the followers of Vergil, and even the Mantuan himself.[57] That this is the case is made especially clear by the two hemistichs

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[57] For critical discussion of this verse in Mantuanus's eclogues, known to Folengo, see Stephen Hinds, "Pastoral and Its Futures: Reading Like (a) Mantuan," *Dictynna* 14 (2017), `http://journals.openedition.org/dictynna/`.

of verse 11, taken from *Eclogues* 3.1 and 1.28.[58] On the other hand, the allusion functions as a meta-poetic reflection on the origin of the macaronic style in Folengo's readings and earliest parodies of the neo-Latin pastoral, from those of the *Tre corone*, starting with Dante, to those of Sannazaro and the Latinists listed in the outro of T.[59] There is, however, an even more important sociolinguistic-ideological reason why the poet has chosen to critique Vergil by adapting these pastoral verses.

I would like to suggest that Folengo's (mis)reading of Dante's paradoxical revival of the Latin eclogue in defense of the vernacular language of the *Commedia* and his concomitant rejection of the Latin classicism of the Paduan proto-humanists are crucial for coming to terms with Merlin's vulgarizing parody of the *Aeneid* and comprehensive travesty of Vergil's collected works in the *Macaronee* as a whole. By placing in the mouth of "Cocaio" Tityrus's already ambiguous praise of Mopsus, Folengo inscribes the beginning of book 19, one of the last books to have been composed, as well as the genre of the *Baldus*, into vying discourses over the relative merits and demerits of the vernacular for the writing of different kinds of poetry, the formal and stylistic requirements of epic as opposed to tragedy and lyric poetry, and how it is that Vergil's imagined career necessarily informed the poetic praxis of neo-Latin or even vernacular poets. Merlin take sides with Tityrus/Dante, defends his coronation as Poet Laureate of the Macaronic Style, and, in so doing, critiques the tradition of Mopsus/del Virgilio, for del Virgilio's brand of humanism has systematically excluded the vernacular as the speech of women and commoners, as a semiotics of

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[58] In a relatively recent dissertation, "*Quoium Pecus*: Representations of Italian Identity in Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*" (Berkeley, 2019) Kevin Moch claims that the parody of this verse by Numitorius, preserved in Donatus's *Vita* (44), suggests that Vergil is using unrefined language to disparage non-Roman Italians in the eclogue. Moch writes "Vergil in Eclogue 3 intentionally employs sociolinguistic features of less respected dialects of Latin in order to draw attention to the same kinds of social and cultural arrogance demonstrated towards local Italians... one that points to a sociocultural judgment that would have affected local Italian integration into Rome." (p. 63) Folengo, who is here parodying the same verse from the opening of *Ecl.* 3, transforms Vergil's mockery of the speech of non-Romans into a humorous verbal joke, replacing the half-line in which the rustic "*cuium*" occurs with the puerile image of the speaker's trousers falling down: *braga cadebat*. For discussion of the scatological parody of the same verse by Mantuanus, see Hinds, "Pastoral and Its Futures": "Mantuan has picked up a 'rustic' moment in Vergil's Eclogues and taken its rusticity to a new and unpoetic level" (15ff). Many have argued that Folengo's poetry is *anti-villanesca*, more a friend to the erudite pastoral poets like Mantuanus, addressed at the end of T, than to the farmers parodied in the *Baldus* and the *Zanitonella*; but here the point seems to be to try to turn the joke back on Vergil, the original *anti-vallano*, and thus return to the spirit of Numitorius's original parody of *Eclogues* 3. Folengo is thus returning to the aristocratic tradition of parodying Vergil which begins with his earliest readers, referred to by Asconius Pedianus as *Obtrectatores Vergili* or "detractors of Vergil". Indeed, the vulgarism of Macaronic explicitly parodies another early critique of the *Aeneid* as fashioned "*ex communibus verbis*", confirming Marcus Vipsanius's suspicion that Vergil's language, assembled at the behest of Maecenas, is nothing than obscure "*cacozelia*", a schizophrenic poetics. See *Vit. Verg.* ad loc.

[59] For the importance of Boccaccio's pastoral poetry in the emergence of this genre, see Jonathan Combs-Schilling, "Under the Cover of a Green-Hued Book: Boccaccio's Pastoral Project," in *Boccaccio Renaissance:* ed. Martin Eisner and David Lummus (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019), 94–111.

vulgus. If Merlin is making fun of Vergil, Folengo is criticizing the humanists who follow in the footsteps of del Virgilio for imitating the classics at the expense of the vernacular, especially at a time when the vernacular was finally coming into its own in Italy. What comes to the fore is that Merlin's contest with Vergil becomes a vehicle or stage for Folengo to perform a critique of the ways that Latin and the vernacular were coming together in his own immediate context, as well as the ways the poem's genre, as a hybrid mixture of ancient epic, medieval travel literature, the romanzi of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto, and many other kinds of vernacular writing, compromises the flawless purity of a Vergilian style. By reminding his pan-European readership of this major defense of the vernacular in Dante's 'minor' eclogue-letter, Folengo crowns Merlin as the Virgil of Cipada even before the proem of book 22, and if Merlin, now made poet laureate of not one but *two* cities, drinks Malvasian wine to inspire his song of Baldo's battle against the army of Lucifer.

Both proems treated above suggest that the *Baldus* is not based on the *Aeneid* so much as constructed to oppose or undermine it, functioning not as a parody or pastiche but rather as a replacement, however absurd, for Vergil's vision of providential empire. This runs parallel to the overall project of the macaronic book, which seeks to substitute its proems and glosses for the works of Vergil and the various disciplines of ancient and medieval learning associated with the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*. As Lodela reminds us in the lengthy prefaces included in P and T that the *Baldus* is both a macaronic *Aeneid* and a systematic satire of the authorial legacy and epistemological value of texts associated with the Virgil poet, just as Merlin himself is very much an amalgam of late-ancient and medieval legends that describe Virgil as a bibliomancer (i.e. the *Sortes Virgiliana*), magician, and alchemist.[60] Merlin is a macaronic poet-theologian whose bombastic contest with Vergil aims to criticize the principal poet of empire and to outdo his "deliberately violent and disordered poetics", his "turbulent unintelligibility", in a grotesque mashup of many different kinds of texts.[61] Lodela is Merlin's spokesperson, who packages the scattered writings of this strange poet and offers it up as cure with a steep purchase price for its consumers. They must confess that his Merlin is truly a Vergil *redivivus* who clothes this quixotic orally-patterned trans-generic epic in the rustic language of a pastoral poet.

The reader must also be ready to accept that the poet's radical skepticism towards ecclesiastic institutions, insistence on the literal word of the bible, and belief in the doctrine of *sola fide*, are anticipated in Italy by the writings of Lorenzo Valla, Alberti, Bruni, and before them, Dante's *Com-*

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[60] For the observation that Vergil the poet is being used to legitimize the macaronic project, see Ettore Bonora, "L'esordio del Folengo," *Belfagor* 5, no. 2 (1950): 178: "E mentre già nella prefazione di Aquario resta adombrato lo scherzoso mito polemico e sentimentale di Cipada contro Pietole, di Cipada che ha il suo Merlino come Pietole ebbe il suo Virgili il grande poeta concittadino è un modello che dovrebbe aiutare Merlino ad inserirsi in una tradizione di poesia bucolica ed epica che l'umanesimo rinnovava riconoscendo in Virgilio il suo grande capostipite."

[61] Johnson, *Darkness Visible*, 59.

media and political writings.[62] These critiques of religious authority are absorbed and sublimated into Merlin's continual mockery of Vergil and his cultural legacy in Christian Europe, alongside his criticism of religious institutions and practices. Most treatments of the *Baldus* overlook, however, (with a few exceptions) the significance of the connections between Folengo's skepticism, his knowledge of the ways that modern and ancient poetry are the products of very different worlds, and Merlin's emulative contest with Vergil and Homer, since the poem is not a direct parody of any particular ancient poem, including the *Aeneid*.[63] Like the romance poems of the same period, the *Aeneid* is nearly always somewhere in the background, if not being actively being used in the construction of scenes or by way of allusion and citation. Even if Baldo is not an alter-Aeneas, Merlin certainly thinks of himself as a new Vergil. Their rivalry extends well beyond the *Baldus* and can be said to constitute an integral part of Lodela's design choices for the macaronic book *in toto*. As we are reminded by the medicinal metaphor, pace Lucretius, in the prefaces of P and T, the poem and the book containing it can function as a cure only insofar as it resolves a specific kind of ailment caused by the excessive imitation of ancient poetry and the puristic imitation of Vergil's major works in particular. That this effect is intended by Merlin is confirmed by the famous "*Virgilii Laudes*" found at the end of T, in which the poet addresses not fictional characters, but, in a unmistakable nod to Ariosto, his humanist contemporaries. The poem is a fit vehicle for

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[62] The genre of the *Baldus* can also be semanticized in the terms of religious faith. Folengo's artistic labor, his attempt to make a poem whose genre is as difficult to ascertain as possible (the meaning of the word *genere* in Italian can have two meanings, genre or gender), and that is also, roughly speaking, the central claim that I am making in this chapter, is an expression of his sovereign faith: the prolonged effort of one of the strongest poets of his day—and one whose understanding of the implications of the value and importance of faith throughout his life is considerable—to forge a poetic object, a Good Work, but also the product of his own intellectual and spiritual beliefs and commitments, that defers the problem of genre assignment to an indeterminate future. Especially in the *Orlandino*, the poet's open support of the doctrine of *sola fide* ("Credo che del vangelo il saldo fede, altro non sia, salva la mera fede", 8.75.7-8), and his later religious poetry, supports the notion that it is Folengo, perhaps more so than any other Renaissance Italian poet in this period, who anticipates John Milton. For the intersection of the notion of religious faith and poetic craft in the Renaissance, see Victoria Kahn, *The Trouble with Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). For Folengo as ardent supporter of Luther and Protestantism, see Cesare Federico Goffis, *Roma, Lutero e la poliglossia folenghiana* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1995).

[63] A lucid assessment of the evidence that Merlin is emulating the poetic careers of Vergil and Homer is that of Giuseppe Billanovich, *Tra Don Teofilo Folengo e Merlin Cocaio* (Naples: R. Pironti, 1948), 120-1: "prima egli aveva composto la *Zanitonella* e la *Moscheide*, come Virgilio giovane i carmi dell'*Appendix* e le *Bucholiche* e come Omero giovane la *Batracomiomachia*; e poi, come i due grandi maestri classici erano passati ai loro poemi, egli era salito alla composizione del poema suo, del *Baldus*. Già nella stampa di Toscolano sotto la *Moscheide* segnò la glossa: *puerili tempore composita* e dichiarò nella *Zanitonella*: *Lusimus ista puer ficto sub amore Tonelli*. For Folengo's use of *Vita Virgiliana* in P and T, see G. Bernardi Perini, "Vita di Merlino e vite virgiliane," *Quaderni folenghiani* 1 (1995): 43–54. In *Scritti folenghiani* (Padua: Imprimitur, 2000), 26-7, Perini views the macaronic project as one that aims to create an "alternate and parallel universe to that of Virgil": "la scelta macaronica del Folengo avrà torto a non considerare seriamente, accanto alle altre motivazioni storiche e critiche, il lato "virgiliano" della fantastica biografia di Merlino, che può invece sostanziare a legittimare la sua creazione poetica appunto come universo alternativo e parellelo a quello di Virgilio."

the communication of an uncompromising view of the value of ancient poetry to moderns that is not restricted to the epic, but can only be understood within and contextualized by, the macaronic project as a whole.

3.3 "Grottas intrare dearum": The Clothing of Grotesque Muses

Now that I have investigated how the *Baldus* 1) anticipates and strongly influences the development of two literary sub-genres (the picaresque and *roman a clef* narrative) and 2) engages in a serious competition with Vergil, the most important poet of empire and colonialism in the West, in order to construct and maintain an englobing macaronic *fantasia*, in this section I will show how Merlin not only engages with but creates the concept of the literary grotesque, and that the monstrous, hybrid, and paradoxical—all categories that have come to be associated with the grotesque—have a distinct origin in the poet's attempt to stitch together a genre-less, unapologetically hybrid, poem. While it might be observed that Folengo or Merlin never uses the adjective *grotesca* or *di grota* to refer to their poetry or to Macaronic, a number of studies have demonstrated the surprising capaciousness of the adjective in this period, capable of describing a vast range of visual aesthetics associated with mixtures, contraries, hybrids, monsters and bodily functions, as well as visual effects such as marvel, shock, awe, horror. Perhaps the most famous study of the grotesque in literature is Mikhail Bakhtin's chapter on the bodies of the *Pantagruel* in *Rabelais and His World*, although Rabelais is not the first to use the word to describe a written work. Montaigne is the first to do so, when he not only compares his *essais* to *crotesques* in "Of Friendship", but even uses the adjective to refer to the composite nature of the essays as a synthetic, monstrous whole: ("Que sont-ce icy aussi à la verité que crotesques et corps monstrueux, rappiecez de divers membres, sans certaine figure, n'ayants ordre, suite, ny proportion que fortuite?").[64] There is much to suggest Merlin's grotto style anticipates and informs the flexibility of the grotesque in the later Renaissance, and that without the publication and dissemination of this product of macaronic muses, what Bahktin finds to be so immensely interesting about Rabelais' "material bodily lower stratum" might never have come into existence. In this section, I show just how misguided it for Bakhtin to have chosen to ignore Folengo's contribution to—and creation of, a formalized grotesque poetics, whose ten-

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[64] For the Renaissance grotesque, see Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), Frances S. Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture: The Image at Play* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), and Maria Fabricius Hansen, *The Art of Transformation: Grotesques in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Edizioni Quasar (Rome: 2018). For Montaigne's descriptive use of the term, see Simon Godart, "Grotesque Poetics: Michel de Montaigne's Use of Grotesques in *De l'Amitié* (I:28)," in *Paradigms of the Renaissance Grotesque*, ed. Damiano Acciarino (Toronto: Centre for Reformation / Renaissance Studies, 2019), 219–240.

drils pass through many aspects of his style of writing. Merlin's adaptation of ancient Horatian and Neronian-period theories of the grotesque for the purposes of representing the spaces, characters, and various antagonists of the epic (normally monsters, demons, and witches), and his transformative use of grotesque muses to inspire, rearrange, or 'sew' together different parts of the epic as it developed between versions is crucial for understanding its contribution to the grotesques of later artists and writers, such as Rabelais or Doni. Merlin repeatedly figures the poem, and even Macaronic itself, in highly grotesque terms; and even when he doesn't, he deploys a thoroughly grotesque mechanism to hold its various parts together: fantastic muses whose names, origins, and behaviors transpose and transform the classical daughters of Zeus into folkloric allegory. In what follows, I argue that the *Baldus* must be understood as one of the most important representatives of proto-grotesque poetry in the early modern period, as it constitutes one of the most influential examples of the rediscovery of the grotesque style as well as the application of this aesthetic to literature. Like a Möbius strip, in this case as well Folengo's poem and its process of revision anticipates what makes the grotesque distinctive in later art and literature.

From the monstrously exaggerated, hybrid creatures like Falchetto (half dog, half man), to the Chimera and enigmatic *Utrum* of book 25, Merlin develops exactly the kinds of bodily hybridizations and distortions that are commonly associated with the grotesque by its major advocates. Arguably more important are the ways that the grottoes that dot the poem are linked by a network of images and verbal patterns suggestive of the water, earth, shadow, and mystery that define these spaces, generating a poetic ambiance of the grotto. As in the case of the *Domus Phantasia*, the poet is particularly interested in populating his epic with the twisted figures and motions of the ornamental grotesques of the ruins of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, which had been replicated by Raphael and was still a popular subject for painters in these years. Like the base of the mountain of moon, the poem is punctuated with watery spaces in which seers and witches ply their shadowy craft, spaces that contain most of the mysterious and secluded *topoi* of the high grotesque: Manto's cave, Mafelina's lair, Gelfora's enormous underwater city, where the earth and the sea conjoin and their inhabitants come into contact. At an even more basic level, there are the linguistic monstrosities of Macaronic itself: the frenzied *parlar disgiunto* in which nonce neologisms and obscure names and languages are frantically coined by a poet who seems to alternate between a state of considerable bodily and mental duress and complete freedom of expression, casting scurrilous and base images in epic language and making language itself seem like a grotesque tangle of impossible fusions, catachreses, malapropisms, and blatant errors at every turn. One might even go as far as to say that Macaronic is itself emblematic of the grotesque, is a *lingua grotesca* or highly ornamental, artificial, even manneristic hybridization of Latins and vernaculars whose absurd lexical combinations

and fusions serve to shock as well as to awe readers into awestruck silence.[65] Indeed, the article of evidence this section will use to suggest that, in addition to the *roman a clef* and picaresque story, the poem anticipates and lays the groundwork for much that will define the *literary* grotesque, are the six muses of the poet, who act as humorous distortions of the nine classical sisters, that control the flow of the poem's narrative, directing it towards a dramatic conclusion.

The principal source for the poem's recuperation of the ancient literary grotesque is Horace's suggestion by way of the *topos* of *ut pictura poesis* that this category of painting may be applied to the criticism of poetry. In the opening verses of the letter, he asks his readers if they could possibly suppress their laughter upon reading a book of poetic fancies "shaped like a sick man's dreams", with a body so disjointed and nebulous that it resembles the monstrous chimeras dreamed up by painters of these grotesques:[66]

> Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
> iungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
> undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
> desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne,
> spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?
> credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum
> persimilem, cuius, velut aegri somnia, vanae
> fingentur species, ut nec pes nec caput uni
> reddatur formae. "pictoribus atque poetis
> quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas."

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[65] One wonders what Lazzaro Bonamico, both as a historical figure and as a character in Speroni's famous *Dialogo delle lingue*, would have thought about Macaronic respective to the *questione della lingua*. See Teodoro Katinis, "Latin and Vernacular Interplay: Lazzaro Bonamico as Author and Character of Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo delle lingua*," in *Neo-Latin and the Vernaculars: Bilingual Interactions in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Alexander Winkler and Florian Schaffenrath (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 36–52. "According to Bonamico's argument, the Italian vernacular is a hybrid product in which different foreign linguistic terms blend to create a monster instead of a legitimate language. With a reference to the biblical Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis, he prays God will bring discord to the words of this monstrous language, so that Latin will be restored in Italy as the only language of the peninsula" (42). He and most others elected, quite wisely, to remain silent.

[66] For the interesting hypothesis that Horace is in fact defending the grotesque at the beginning of the *AP*, see James Raynham Townsend's dissertation *Horace and the Ancient Grotesque* (Harvard, 2018). For an equally provocative reading of the satires written under the reign of Nero, such as the *Apocolocyntosis*, through the lens of Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque, see Lee Burnett's dissertation, *Satur(n alic i)a Regna: The Neronian Grotesque and the Satires of Seneca, Persius, and Petronius* (Bryn Mawr College, 2017). Particularly suggestive is the connection that Burnett locates between the symbolism of the grotesque and Nero's famous octagonal dining room, which Suetonius describes as a enormous rotating depiction of the cosmos, which seems like it could easily be another possible source of inspiration for the enormous gold and gem-studded ark in Manto's grotto-tomb: "A depiction of the cosmos within this space, and one in dynamic motion and change, furthermore, is a powerful message within the context of grotesque imagery—particularly in a room for feasting—versus the Augustan principles of static eternity" (p. 60 n. 40).

> scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim;
> sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut
> serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

> *If a painter chose to join a human head to the neck of a horse, and to spread feathers*
> *of many a hue over limbs picked up now here now there, so that what at the top is a*
> *lovely woman ends below in a black and ugly fish, could you, my friends, if favoured*
> *with a private view, refrain from laughing? Believe me, dear Pisos, quite like such*
> *pictures would be a book, whose idle fancies shall be shaped like a sick man's dreams,*
> *so that neither head nor foot can be assigned to a single shape. "Painters and poets,"*
> *you say, "have always had an equal right in hazarding anything." We know it: this*
> *licence we poets claim and in our tum we grant the like; but not so far that savage*
> *should mate with tame, or serpents couple with birds, lambs with tigers.*[67]

A few verses later, recalling Aristotle's prescription concerning epic poetry in the *Poetics*, Horace warns that the poets who vary their subjects in a wondrous ("prodigaliter") manner are like painters who add animals to environments in which they do not belong: "delphinum silvis appingit, fluctibus aprum" ["dolphin to the woods, a boar to the waves"].[68] These mostly negative judgements reflect an uncharitable attitude towards the grotesque that is not shared by our poet. In fact, Folengo embraces the grotesque to the point of making it the key to understanding how his outlandish macaronic epic is held together.

The obscene and the misshapen, the out of place, and the monstrously hybrid are each central attributes of the grotesque, and in each of these the *Baldus* excels. A few suggestive allusions to *Ars Poetica* scattered throughout the *Baldus* indicate that Merlin is not only ironically disobeying Horatian standards, but is also reversing and recuperating the negative spin that Horace himself, in his letter to the Pisos, placed on hybrid, non-'classical' poetic forms.[69] It should be emphasized here that the style of the grotto or the *grottesco* as it is pursued by Merlin goes well beyond even what a theoretical inversion of Horace's precepts and recuperation of the humorous grotesque for poetry might suggest. From the cartoonish devils and witches that populate the final books, to the bubbling vats and whirling gizmos of Manto's *scoglio*, our poet is deeply invested in exploring what is strange, hybrid, malformed, twisted, and subterranean, for both its 'shock value', as well

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[67] I quote H. Rushton Faircloth's translation in *Horace. Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry.* Loeb Classical Library 194. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 451

[68] Annotating his copy of *AP*, Tasso writes that "questo è il difetto del Ronsardo" (Rudolph Altrocchi, "Tasso's Holograph Annotations to Horace's *Ars Poetica*," Publisher: Modern Language Association, *PMLA* 43, no. 4 (1928): 936).

[69] These include the allusion to AP 147ff ("Nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo") in the proem of book six, where Folengo brags of beginning his story *before* Baldo's birth and thus *ab ovo*, against the Horatian prescription that epic poetry should not begin before the start of the principal action.

as for its intristic relationship with the macaronic project. Before I make a broader claim about the grotesque as a narrative device in the *Baldus*, I will first examine a few instructive examples of this style of grotto poetry, taken from the scenes of battle on the high seas mid-way through the poem and literally within the *grottae* (21.196) of the witches of the final five books: the lairs of dread Smiralda and Pandraga.

The description of bodily functions in minute detail in as well as the violent destruction of the body in scenes of epic warfare appear throughout the "battle" books of the *Baldus*. These images, what Bakhtin has famously (but not unproblematically) referred to as the "material lower bodily stratum", take on even more grotesque proportions during the seafaring adventures in the poem's second half. In one particularly hyperbolic description of mass carnage produced during a skirmish with pirates—"worthy of being sung by a thousand Virgils"—the blood, limbs, and screeching noises of wounded sailors infects nature itself with madness, causing birds to plummet to earth, deer and hares to abandon the woods, and fish to squirm uncontrollably under the sea (see fig. 2.2):

> Per nubes ingens hastarum factio bombat,
> perque sinum ponti vocum fragor altus eechat.
> Fiunt squarzones carnis fiuntque cruoris
> flumina, de mortis hinc inde fiuntur acervi.
> More bechariae pulmones, viscera, trippae,
> atque coradellae, panzae, ventralia, milzae,
> arboreis ramis pendent herbasque cruentant.
> O crudas bottas, o vulnera digna Rinaldo,
> millibus o doctis cantanda Maronibus acta!
> Hic ferit, hic reparat, taiat iste, sed ille taiatur.
> Squarzantas maias tridasque omnino piastras
> cernebas, avibus similis volitare per auras.
> Ad bassum volucres tanto pro murmure crodant,
> seque trabucantes fasso meschiantur in uno.
> Et cervi et lepores extra boscalia saltant,
> piscesque attoniti bacchantur in aequoris imo. (20.535-50)

Through the clouds the breaking of spears resounds, and a loud clash of voices echoes through the bay of the sea. There are shreds of flesh and there are rivers of gore and there are heaps of bodies everywhere. As in a butcher shop, lungs, viscera, tripe, offals, stomachs, and spleens dangle from the branches of trees and bloody the grass. O ferocious blows! O wounds deserving of Rinaldo! O exploits worthy of being sung by a thousand Virgils! This one hits, that one blocks, this one cuts, while that one is cut. You could see torn chain mail and fragmented plate mail flying through the air

like birds. Flying creatures fall down to earth due to so great a noise, and crashing
into one another, they blend into one jumble. Deers and hares jump out of the woods,
and the thunder-struck fish go wild at the bottom of the sea.

The description of the gory destruction of the human body in warfare and its corrosive effects on
the surrounding environment invokes passages from the *Pharsalia* in which Lucan highlights the
utter abjection and dissociation of war, its grotesque removal of the human from any symbolic
sphere, and the total annihilation of identity and individuality. Here the desperate fighting, the
blood, and the severed body parts pollute nature rather than be harmoniously reclaimed by it: the
blood flows in rivers, chainmail soars through the air, and, most disturbingly for its culinary and
cannibalistic associations, organs decorate the trees like animal carcasses in a butcher shop. The
carnage is so extreme as to make all levels of nature (sky, earth, and sea) who are witness to it
go crazy. This is only one of many passages that foreground what will be associated with the
grotesque in modern textual criticism. It is followed by another striking passage in which a whale,
recently defeated by Fracasso, plummets to the bottom of the sea, taking with it an entire island
with all its creeping things:

> Iam maris in fundo sese balena stravaccat,
> boscorumque trahit secum sex mille biolcas,
> per quos discurrunt pisces, novitate gioiscunt,
> saepe cachinnates rident; pars incubat ulmis,
> parsque capellutas mangiant de robore giandas.
> Miranturque capros, lepores cervosque negatos,
> nec minus humanas facies bustosque taiatos,
> et carnes, modo quas Baldi fecere sodales.
> At super innumerae testae sofiare videntur,
> arma, trabes, tavolae, capannae, millia rerum. (20.581-90)

The whale by now stretches out on the bottom of the sea, and drags with it six thousand
hectares of woods, through which fish wander, they enjoy the novelty and they often
laugh uncontrollably; some rest in the elms and some eat hooded acorns from the oaks.
They marvel at the drowned goats, rabbits, and deer, and no less at the human faces
and severed torsos, and the shreds of flesh made recently by Baldo's comrades. And
above the sea are seen innumerable breathing heads and armor, beams, tables, cabins,
a thousand things.

The masterful convergence of the fantastic, the macabre, and the absurd in these watery descrip-
tions constructs a macaronic grotesque by alluding to Virgil's description of the drowned sailors in

Figure 3.2: Folengo, woodcut of the sea battle in *Macaronicen* XIX, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 188r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Aeneid 1, as does as the marvelous depiction of the sheep drowned by Cingar at 12.183-7:[70]

> Tempore deluvi, super alta cacumina pisces
> lustrabant sylvas, perque ulmos perque pioppos
> errabant laeti, mirantes prata, fiores.
> Grex modo lanosus sub gurgite pascolat algas,
> contra suamque voiam mangiat, bibit atque negatur.
> Neptunus magnum quistavit alhora botinum,
> qui maraveiabat pegoras descendere tantas,
> de quibus et nymphis cortisque baronibus unam
> donavit coenam: mangiarunt omnia plenis
> ventribus affattum, gattisque dolentibus ossa,
> ossa polita nimis sub mensis esse gitata. (12.183-93)

In the time of the flood, the fish moved through the forests on the high mountain tops and happily wandered among elms and midst poplars, admiring the meadows, the flowers. Now the woolly flock graze on algae under gurges and against its will it eats, drinks, and drowns. Neptune then acquired a great booty, and marveled that so many sheep descended, and he presents a dinner of them to the nymphs and barons of the court: they eat everything with completely filled stomachs, and cats are upset that the bones chucked under the table are too clean.

The curious and ethereal image of sheep who drown yet feed and are in turn fed upon by the nymphs, barons, and cats of Neptune's court, adds a grotesque finale to what is perhaps the most stirring and famous episode of the first half of the *Baldus*, imitated by Rabelais in the *Pantagruel*. The grotesque is not an afterthought or merely ornamental: it is one of the principle causes and results of the poet's synthetic language, the composite result of an uncompromisingly syncretic and heterogeneous artistic attitude. As in the case of the terrible fate of poor Chiarina the cow, who is duplicitously purchased and then consumed by the voracious friars of Motella (see section 2 of chapter 4, below), the fate of the poor sheep of the Tesini shepherds can and will be read as both a brief and powerful statement about the violent relationship between the classes as well as a potent poetic allegory of the fate of the Christian everyman under the rule of malicious neo-Pagan

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[70] No critic has previously noted how this passage reworks an octave in the *Orlando furioso* (8.54) in which Proteus exacts his revenge on the inhabitants of Ebuda for the murder of an unborn child, itself an imitation of Virgil's Georgics 4.394-5, ["Neptuno... immania cuius / armenta et turpes pascit sub gurgite Phocas"] with touches taken from Ovid's *Met*. 1.293-310 and Horace's *Odes* 1.2.7-12. In Ariosto's episode, Proteus musters an army of sea creatures to harass the shepherds of Ebuda and kill their sheep and goats, whereas in Folengo's version, the drowned sheep of the Tesini shepherds are consumed by a consort of undersea deities. For the figure of Proteus in the Renaissance, see A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Proteus Unbound," in *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (Yale University Press, 1984), 115–150.

princes, who buy, sell and wantonly destroy the lives of the faithful, in this case leading them off metaphorical boat of Christendom.

The grotesque is at perhaps its most concentrated and frightening in Merlin's narration of the pack of hybrid monsters and feral beasts who accompany Lucifer in *Macaronicen* XIX. With the aim to emphasize the connection between the grotesque and the fueling theme of Macaronic composition (i.e. food and its consumption, the digestion of food, and its excretion), Merlin compares this confused tangle of beasts with a cauldron of beans or pot of legumes:

> Quale Cremonesis plenum caldare fasolis,
> quando parecchiatur villanis coena famatis,
> seu quale in giorno mortorum grande lavezum
> impletumque fabis subiecto brontolat igne,
> magna fasolorum confusio, magna fabarum
> est ibi, dum saltant, tomant sotosoraque danzant;
> tale diabolicum rupto certamen Averno
> mescolat insemmam bruttissima monstra baratri:
> scilicet absque coda vulpes, cum cornibus ursos,
> mastinos tripedes, porcosque suesque bicornes,
> atque quadricornes tauros, atque ora luporum
> inficata super spallas et colla gigantum,
> montones caprasque magras, simiotta, schirattos,
> maimonesque gatos, baboinos et mamotrettos,
> semileonazzos griphes, aquilasque dragonum,
> semique gregnapolas, civetones, barbaque zannos,
> et qui rostra ferunt guffi sed brachia ranae,
> quique asinorum sub orecchis corna becorum.
> Haec ea garbulio vilupantur monstra medemo,
> diversumquesonum, neque talem forsan uditum
> seu per passatum, seu praesens, sive futurum,
> fant simul, atque simul sex millia mille fit unum. (19.514-535)

Just as a cauldron full of Cremonese beans, when dinner is being made for hungry peasants, or an enormous pot full of beans grumbles when placed on All Souls' Day over a fire, and there is a great confusion of beans and legumes that jump, fall, and dance this way and that; so the diabolic battle, blowing open Avernus, mixes together the ugliest monsters of the underworld. I mean to say, foxes without tails, bears with horns, tripodal mastiffs, two-horned pigs and swine and four-horned bulls, snouts of wolves stuck onto the shoulders and necks of giants, monkeys, rams and thin goats,

monkeys, squirrels, chimpanzees, baboons, marmosets, half-leonine griffins and eagles from dragons, barn owls, half-bat bearded owls, and those that bear the beak of an owl but the arms of a frog, and any with the horns of a goat under the ears of an ass. These monsters are caught in the same tangle and together make an extraordinary sound, the likes of which was perhaps never heard in the past, the present, or the future, and six thousand thousand are one.

Slightly before this passage, Merlin had given a twisted, anti-Petrarchan anatomy of the grotesque and hybrid form of an enormous demon, as ugly as any every painted by the "vulgus" (119):

> Quattuor ingentes stant alto in vertice comae
> binae coperiunt montonis instar orecchias,
> binae incastrati surgunt bovis instar aguzzae.
> Mostazzus canis est Morlacchi, cuius ab ore
> hinc atque hinc sannae vista panduntur acerba.
> Non griphonus habet nasum harpyaque becchum
> tam durum, sodumque, aptumque forare corazzas.
> Barba velut becchi marzo de sanguine pectus
> concacat, et magno foetet puzzore bavarum.
> Plus asini longas huc illuc voltat orecchias
> deque cavernosis oculis duo brasida vibrat
> lumina, quae diris obscurant sydera sguardis.
> Serpentis caput est pars vergognosa davantum,
> codazzamque menat pars vergognosa dedretum.
> Gambae subtiles pedibus portantur ochinis,
> sulphureumque magro culamine spudat odorem. (19.96-111)

Four enormous horns stand upon his head, two cover his ears like those of a ram, two spring up like the sharp one on a bull. Its muzzle is that of a Molossian dog, from whose mouth on one side and the other dangle tusks, horrible to see. No griffon has a nose nor any harpy a beak as hard and as solid and able to pierce armor. Its beard, like that of a billy goat, soils his chest with fetid blood, and stinks with a great stench of drool. He turns his ears, longer than those of an ass, here and there, and within his cavernous sockets two coal-like eyes glow forth, which obscure the states with their fierce gazes. The shameful part in front it the head of a serpent, and the shameful part behind sways an ugly tail. His slender legs stand on goose feet, and he spews forth an odor of sulfur from his thin butt.

Then there are descriptions of the noises, like the cacophony produced by a *schiatta* of animals—louder than a "hundred thousand devils"—which assaults the heroes in the claustrophobic blackness of Smiralda's grotto:

> Est id cunctarum rabidissima schiatta ferarum;
> quaeque suas reddit voces, ut usanza ministrat:
> dat leo rugitum horrendum, lupus elevat urlos,
> Bos: "bu bu", resonat, "bau bau" mastina canaia,
> nitrit equus, nasoque bufat, raspatque terenum;
> sgnavolat et gattus, et adirans eiulat ursus;
> mula rudit, mulusque simul, tum ragghiat asellus,
> denique quodque animal propria cum voice favellat.
> Hi pariter celerant incautos contra guereros
> duraque cum rabadis afferrant morsibus arma.
> Si manegiare volunt spadas, est grande periclum
> ne sibi medesimis mortalia vulnera figant.
> Quisque suum corpus sentit morderier atque
> per tenebras ullam nescit comprendre cosam.
> Longa cavernarum via, nigris plena latebris,
> tomboat istarum vario cridore ferarum. (21.352-67)

It is an extremely rabid gallimaufry of wild beasts! Each one emits its own voice, as custom supplies: the lion gives a horrendous roar, the wolf raises howls; the ox thunders "moo moo" and the mastiff yaps "bark bark"; the horse neighs and snorts from its nose and paws the ground; the cat meows and the infuriated bear wails, the female mule brays and so does the male; the donkey whuffles. In short, each animal speaks with its own voice. These in like manner speed towards the unsuspecting warriors and clench their weapons with rabid bites. If they want to use their swords, there is a great danger that they might strike each other with mortal wounds. Each feels his body bitten and in the darkness is unable to understand any thing. The long road of the cavern, full of dark liars, resounds with the cries of these beasts.

The poem's most famous grotesques are the Chimera (545-55) and *Utrum* (556-565) which are encountered by the heroes within the House of Fantasy in the final books of the last three editions. The wildly distorted forms of these noxious beasts remember the fantastical features of Dante's Geryon and Ariosto's hippogriff, but they also function figuratively and symbolically as grotesque parodies of medieval and Renaissance education models. More precisely, coming as they do amid a more extended parody of Medieval rhetorical and philosophical education in the Domus Phanatasiae, the Chimera and *Utrum* function as spoof of the arcane rules of medieval

Latin metrical composition and scholastic philosophy via close allusions to the *Ars Poetica* and the vocabulary of scholastic philosophy. Merlin finishes describing the Chimera with a parodic citation of *Ars Poetica* 139 ("parturiunt montes"), whereas his description of the *Utrum* grotesquely personifies the Whether of syllogistic logic.[71] In the case of the Chimera's form, Merlin's description recuperates Horace's negative assessment of poetic fancy via the grotesque by making it even more patently absurd, hyperbolically exaggerating the Chimera's garishness, which now bears the head of an ass, the body of a camel, and *thousands* of hands, feet, and wings. Merlin also attributes two different kinds of poetic/comedic foods to the beast: the lasagna and Horatian bean, both eminently literary-satiric foods, the former of which hearkens back to the lasagna made by the macaronic muses (1.55), while the latter puts a culinary spin on Horace's bathetic version of the Aesop's fable, "parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus" (*AP* 139).

Finally, the chimera recuperates Horace's negative critique of the grotesque in order to focus attention on the poem's unfinished state, which is "cauda mancante" (carefully likened to the *Aeneid* by Lodela in P and T), and to its metonymic relationship with the macaronic project and the *Baldus* and particular, in its 'unfinished' (though by no means incomplete) composite wholeness. The Chimera is, then, a twisted figure for the misplaced desire of philosophers and theologians to acquire and synthesize all that is knowable, for the sole desire of the beast is to "eat Minerva" (the goddess of wisdom) and is judged in its apparent taillessness to be nothing more than a "lasagna" which leads one to nihilism ("ducitur in nihilum"), produces mountains out of molehills, and gives birth to a single bean.[72] This is also something of figure of the poet himself, for an important apologetic passage from the *Orlandino*, he will assert that the influence of Saturn transformed him "d'uomo chimera" ["from a man into a Chimera"], the state in which he wrote his poetry: "La stella di Saturno o sia pianeta / è quella che mi fa d'uomo chimera, lo qual non ebbi mai né avrò mai queta / la mente, in fantasie matin e sera." The Chimera is thus a response to Horace that extends to the Saturnian fictions and fanciful grotesques of Macaronic the quibbles of non-poetic fields of knowledge: Folengo's macaronic Chimera consumes and digests them within the encyclopedic pages of its all-devouring display of flawed erudition, the hundred-armed form of its comprehensive *fantasia*. On the other hand, it is no mere coincidence that the body of the Whether resembles an almanac chart bearing the image of Castor and Pollux, for this beast openly figures a culture of medieval scholasticism in which the felicitous and friendly pagan twins, who were

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[71] For the different mythological beasts mediating Ariosto's Hippogriff, which in one view is "converting the Chimera back to Pegasus" in order to valorize the "resolutely composite" and grotesque aspects of the poem itself, thus departing from Horace's critique of fantasy while retaining the specter of Dante's Geryon, see Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 246-257. These include *Eclogues* 8.26-28 ("nam iungentur gryphes equis"), Horace's Chimera, Virgil's and Dante's Geryon, and the winged white and black horses of the Chariot Allegory in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

[72] See the notes to vv. 552-3 in Chiesa (pp. 1036-1037). Without commenting on the clear metonymic relationship between the passage and the macaronic poem, Chiesa glosses the meaning of "lasagna" as "stupida" and translates *lasagna est* as "è una sciocchezza". While no particular philosopher seems to be targeted by the *Utrum*, the implicit critique of the wish to avariciously acquire and sythesize knowledge reminds one of the elder Pico's 900 theses.

honored by all ancient sailors seeking favorable winds, have been supplanted by a violent vision of the binary rivalry and competitive logical inquiry, whose endless fisticuffs resemble the fratricidal enmity of Cain and Abel or Romulus and Remus (see fig. 2.3).

Lastly, Folengo may be deploying marine metaphors similar to those used by Dante for Geryon and Ariosto for the Hippogriff (the "remigium alarum") in order to underline the sheer literariness of the *Utrum* as well grotesque fluidity and hybridity of Macaronic. If Merlin's descriptions of grottoes and their frightening inhabitants is a natural outgrowth of his language of opposites and contraries, the twisted bodies of these senecdochic monsters are emblematic of his poem's jagged sutures, elephantine dimensions, and polemical implications for Italy and Italian literary culture of the Renaissance: it is an unmistakable masterpiece of the literary grotesque avant la lettre, fully aware of the complete originality its contribution to literature and the ability of its creator to create and sustain a consistent and complete literary world.

Each of the examples I have covered above, while certainly illustrative of the poet's deliberate control of grotesque themes and images, are merely episodic; they do not serve as *the* method or formal narrative structure which directs the overall content of the books themselves, generating their generic features as they progress. I will now argue that the grotesque almost unswervingly appears when any critic (myself included) attempts to pin down the central, unifying technique that marks this poet's writing: the macaronic muses. For Teofilo, the grotto is more than an ornamental or aesthetic attitude towards the creation of figures and characters "inside" his *Baldus*. A grotto is, indeed, the space in which his macaronic book was originally found, and it is my claim that Folengo turns this *topos* into a robust narrative technique which literally stitches together generi-cally variegated material into a composite whole. By analogy, if the chivalric romance possesses a handful of features that distinguish it from other kinds of literature (certain characters, narra-tive techniques, and types of allegory), some of which make it far too multiple for the tastes of neo-Aristotelians, the same may be said of the *Baldus* vis-à-vis its continuous investment in the grotesque. To put this another way, the style of the grotto functions as both a general stylistic attitude and as a way of maintaining minor modulations in the narration, analogous with, but also constructed against, the dominant method of controlling narrative sequences in the vernacular ro-manzo: narrative interlace. As all critics of Ariosto are aware, *entrelacement* is a powerful tool of narrative construction that enables authors like Boiardo and Ariosto to weave together many plot threads in a sophisticated and sometimes confusing manner, leaving one character only to return to them in a much later canto. By contrast, the macaronic grotesque works at both linear and recur-sive levels, driving the narrative of the poem forward by adding to and subtracting from the general outline of Baldo's journey from Mantua to Manto's cave, voyage at sea, and infernal *katabasis* with which the poem concludes. When the characters are found entombed in their hellish grotto-cave, they are only completing a journey through many such dark and hair-raising zones, but have been led there by a narration which is inspired by powerful muses. The muses contribute a great deal to this additive process, for they function as a 'connective tissue' which binds together the different
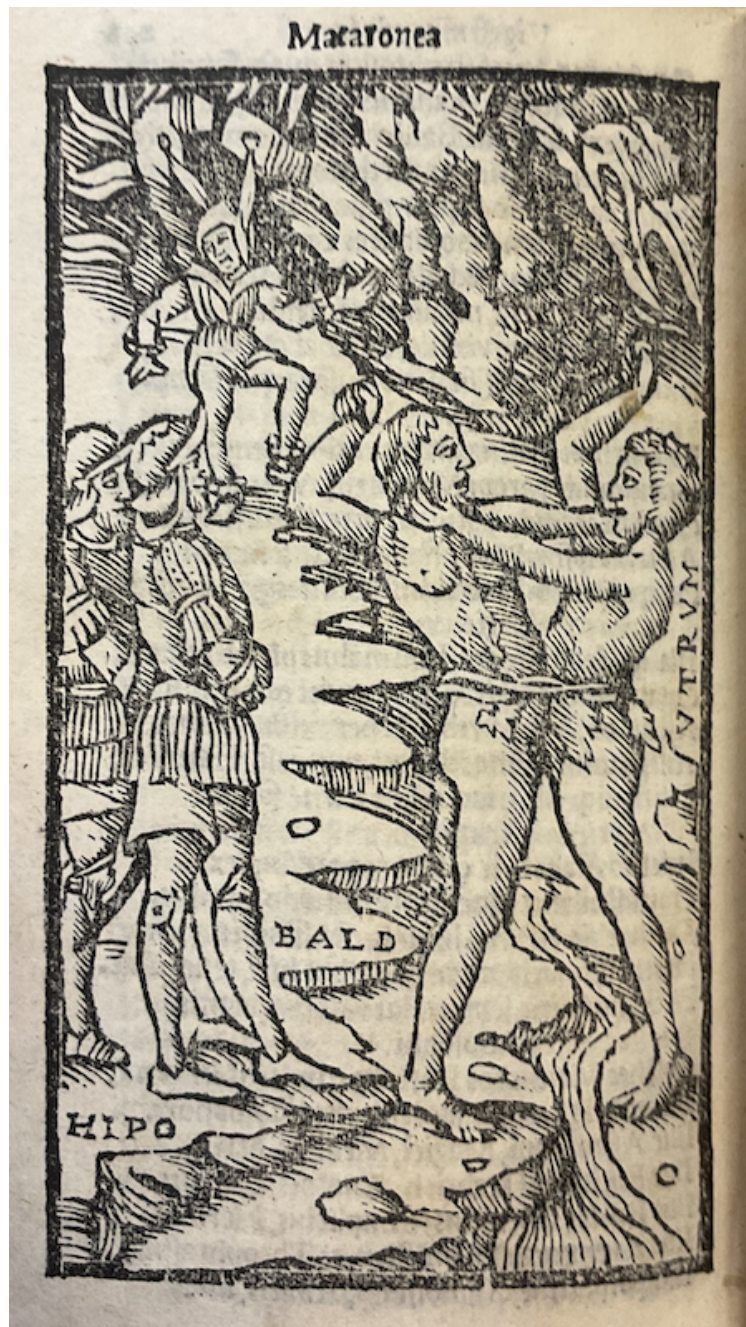
Figure 3.3: Folengo, woodcut depicting the *Utrum* seen by the heroes in *Macaronicen* XV, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 298r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

generic modalities and colors of the poem, supplying its generic and stylistic hybridities and rooting them in the proto-nationalistic folklore of premodern Italy. The poem's genre is plural because Merlin's muses are also plural: six to be exact. These muses provide both the source of the poet's macaronic *furor* as well as an instance of pure, innovative *technē* that power the poem's thrust towards climatic, terminal conclusion in each of the four author-edited versions. They control its composition in the first two editions and frame its reorganization in the final two editions.

Folengo's muses determine not only the subjects of whole books, but, in T, minor shifts in subject and stylistic register. They are for the most part an unprecedented and almost completely unstudied aspect of Folengo's macaronic poesis. It should be said from the outset that the ambiguity and multiplicity of the genre of the poem is shared by a number of the most important works of this period, from Ariosto's eventually monoglossic masterpiece, to the multilingual prose experiments of Rabelais.[73] Folengo's muses, however, make his poem stand apart from these different editorial projects, for they are intimately connected to the invention and the placement of different parts of Macaronic, operating as choral voices whose entrances and exits generate, give logic to, and (arguably) "hold together" its different parts. As we have seen, the *Baldus* is a hybrid textual beast, a Chimera of languages, allusions, and motifs whose protean qualities resembles literary beasts like Dante's Geryon, Ovid's Virbius, and Ariosto's Orillo. The mutations of the macaronic book across its four versions—and particularly the mutation of the *Phantasiae Macaronicon* from the Paganini to the Vigaso Cocaio versions under the unscrupulous eyes of proto-Counter Reformation inquisitors, premodern 'hackers,' 'state actors,' and other 'cultural brokers', is nothing short of remarkable. The critic will also have to account for the relationship between the muses and the folkloric traditions from which their names and backgrounds are derived and how the primary figure of the author, Merlin, is placed in relation to them.

The 25 books of the final version of the *Baldus* are divided into 5-book sequences, each of whose subjects are determined by a different macaronic muse.[74] As we learn in the introductory proem, these six muses inhabit a mountainous island that bears a distinct resemblance to Dante's

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[73] What Elizabeth A. Chesney, *The Countervoyage of Rabelais and Ariosto: A Comparative Reading of Two Renaissance Mock Epics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982) claims about the distinctiveness of Rabelais' and Ariosto's works is possible only because the *Baldus* was there to connect them: "As pivotal figures between northern and southern, early and late Renaissance, Rabelais and Ariosto unite almost all the diverse tendencies or differences— of the period within their works. Satire and lyricism, piety and heresy, poetry and prose, the grotesque and the sublime all find their way into these conglomerate masterpieces, which by virtue of their very heterogeneity, are perhaps the most representative monuments of a contradictory age which resists definition. Thus while the various components that make up the two mock epics are often commonplace or similar to themes and forms in other works, the ensemble is unique and different. And it is because, paradoxically, each work is "sans parragon" that the two are ultimately comparable: each is the kind of authentic, truly representative art form that a single culture seldom produces twice" (213).

[74] It is worth noting here that the arrangement of the books into 5-book parts emphasizes the position of the first important episode involving a grotto, that of Manto and her spindle, at more or less the narrative center of the poem (book XIII).

Purgatory or the Fortunate Isles, and that is located somewhere beyond the New World, for "no Spanish Caravel has reached" it (1.17-20). The distortion and transmogrification of Parnassus and its denizens—the stately daughters of Zeus—into a distant island where paunchy muses whose names derive from local folklore, net gnocchi, and stir pots that overflow with pastas, is a 'move' whereby the poet simultaneously associates the poem with the legends and locales of Northern Italy, and removes its inspiration to a space far beyond Europe.[75] It is to be emphasized that Merlin's muses are amalgamations that only grow in distinction and color between editions: on the one hand, they are closer to the classical muses than the whores of the macaronic tradition; on the other, they are linked to the witches of Val Trompia (5.468), the valley in northern Italy popularly associated with witchcraft as well as to the various *fate* of the chivalric tradition, such as Morgana, and even Folletto, the husband of Manto and Silvana (6.12-13, 18.306). Merlin's claim at 5.16 that Comina smears herself with an unguent on the witches' sabbath: "cum zobiae giornos sub nubibus uncta galoppas" is the clearest indication that these muses are more grotesquely hybrid (and multifaceted) than the classical ones, as they operate as witches, serve as cooks and fisherwomen (quite literally feeding Merlin the 'materia' of the poem as he sings it), and cavort with angelic and demonic fairies. The book hawked by Lodela is poetry served up by witches in possession of ingenious recipes for succulent macaronic verses.

The composite nature of Merlin's muses are, then, both the cause and a reflection of the poem's distortions and grotesque transformations of classical myth and legend, transformations that require the contamination of this material with local folklore, even the occult. Finally, the most important connection between the muses and Macaronic *qua* genre is their cooking abilities: starting with the proem to T, they are continually linked to the culinary origin of the poet's *satura*, inspiring nearly every paragraph of T, and every sequence of books in VC. The way in which these muses swell the poem *per saturam* with material taken from a vast range of sources and genres is by determining Merlin's *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, as well as the additions, subtractions, and transpositions he makes to verses, episodes, and even whole books.[76] This is made abundantly clear by innumerable paragraph headings that dot each page of the second edition and in which Merlin's muses appear to be taking turns in modifying the poem's topic or stylistic register by

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[75] The ambiguous coordinates of the Muses' realm, suspended as it is between fictional, folkloric, and historical allusions and between epic and comic language, deliberately scrambles the readers' textual and geographic orientation, effectively removing the poem into the macaronic imagination of the poet. This effect may also be described in grotesque terms, for as Kayser reminds us, "The grotesque is not concerned with individual actions or the destruction of the moral order (although both factors may be partly involved). It is primarily the expression of our failure to orient ourselves in the physical universe." (185).

[76] For the ancient meaning of the adverbial phrase *per saturam* as poetry written "irregularly", "indiscriminately", "*en mass*", or "miscellaneously", see Robert Henning Webb, "On the Origin of Roman Satire," ' *Classical Philology* 7, no. 2 (1912): 181-2.

inspiring the poet with a different modality of *furor poeticus*.[77] The progressive marginalization of the muses to the invocations at the beginning of the book sequences in the third and fourth editions are indicative of the increasing imbrication or formalization of the generic or stylistic modes found in each of the major episodic sequence. The simple fact that the muses appear to have driven the expansion of the poem between the first and second edition is grounds enough for considering them, and the passionate macaronic *furor* they inspire in Merlin, to be *the* principle narrative driver and 'technique' holding this poem together in monstrous union. If the genres of the *Baldus* are multiple, this is because the poet's muses are multiple.

Inhabitants of what is likely the first true alter-Parnassus in Western Poetry, Merlin's muses are shown feeding the poet the macaronic dumplings that stand for the poem's material (see fig. 2.5), taking to a humorous and satirical extreme the typical association (made by the ancients for both satire and epic poetry), of poetic inspiration with the bodily mechanisms of eating, including ingestion, digestion, and excretion.[78] These muses are direct analogues of roughly five of the nine chaste sisters of Greek and Roman mythology, whose subjects are each of the liberal arts,

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[77] One of the most fascinating "extra-textual" feature of the 1521 *Phantasiae Macaronicon*, these headings provide vital insights into the composition of the poem and may actually be defined as "micro-invocations" of the muses. They would therefore provide a necessary starting point for any serious study of Folengo's Ion-like *furor* in the composition of his poem.

[78] For studies of the muses of the macaronic tradition, and Folengo's in particular, see Silvia Longhi, "Le muse del *Baldus*," in *Le memorie antiche: modelli classici da Petrarca a Tassoni* (Verona: Fiornini, 2001), 143-157 and Ivano Paccagnella, "La muse macaronique," in *La Muse s'amuse: figures insolites de la Muse à la Renaissance: Atti del Convegno di Parigi (22 novembre 2012) e Lille (15 marzo 2013)*, ed. Perrine Galande and Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou, Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 130 (Genève: Droz, 2016), 119–43. Tifi's Phrosina, invoked at *Macaronea* 23-27, is also a likely antecedent for Folengo's muses. One of the downsides of Longhi's study is her treatment of the muses in V before comparing them to their less "developed" role in the previous three editions, a pattern that seems to be repeated by most critics of the *Baldus* and that inevitably downplays the complexity of the evolution of their roles in structuring the narrative between the three editions.

a relationship that is made most clear in the final edition.[79] The first five books, dedicated to reporting the history of Baldo's birth and adolescence, "sat Baldi schiattam, sat nascimenta" (6.4), is inspired by Gosa, who resembles Clio, muse of history; "mirthful" Comina oversees the books dedicated to the tricks of Cingar, and thus recalls Thalia, muse of comedy; Mafelina, who presides over books dedicated to astronomy and whose prominence is emphasized by Merlin when she is said to have made him a pauncy poet at 1.63 ("hic me pancificum fecit Mafelina poetam") is based on Urania, muse of astronomy; Togna, who inspires the books of battle (16-21) is a clear analogue for Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, and Striax, who sings of Baldo's descent into Hell at the end of the poem, is arguably linked to Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. The relationship between Pedala and the remaining classical muses (Erato, Euterpe, Polyhymnia, and Terpsichore) is anyone's guess, because her books are reserved for the writer who will sing of Baldo's ascent and salvation (Pedrala may actually be Striax in the final version).[80]

Along with helping the poet to sing the tale of Baldo, Merlin describes these muses doing many very un-muse-like things, such as ceasing to plays pipes and an accordion in order to drink hearty wines (2.498-500), sleeping with their mouth open (Gosa at 3.593; at 4.553-4 she is invited to rest with the poet), cooking (Foccaccio instead of bread at 5.417-19), eating (Gosa prepares a fresh snack or "merendam modernam" for Comina and the poet at 561), retreating to Val Trompia after feeding the poet ravioli and minestrone (6.468-70), feeding others (Comina her husband at 7.5-6), asked to cork the bottle of musty wine that is book 10 (553), lacing up the poem with strong boot strings (11.18), refusing to sing because of the poet's misogynistic remarks (11.584), drinking like a German and angrily smashing bottles (Togna at 16.5-7), helping the poet row against the

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[79] Lodela eventually gives their full, three-part names in glosses: "Gosae Gregnapolae Valtropiensis" (books 1-5), "Lippa Mafelinae Lodelae" (6-10) "Simin Comina Bertuzza" (11-15), "Gnae Tognae Caritonga" (16-20), "Grugnae Striacis Carossae" (21-25), and Pedrala, who does not sing, and is referenced at the ending as a continuer of the unfinished poem. It should be noted that each have three names (and that Lippa shares the same surname as Aquario Lodela), the significance of which is still up for debate. Incidentally, it is possible that Merlin's grotesque transformation of the muses parodies Poliziano's lecture on Vergil *Manto*, where the muses present to the babe Vergil the three styles of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* in the introduction to his lecture on Vergil. For this intriguing association, see Clare E. L. Guest, "The Growth of the Pygmy Muses: The Muses in Italian Sixteenth-century Poetics," in *The Muses and their Afterlife In Post-Classical Europe*, ed. Kathleen W. Christian, Clare E. L. Guest, and Claudia Wedepohl (London; Turin: The Warburg Institute; Nino Aragno Editore, 2014), 197: "The Muses are most present in 'Manto', the first of the *Sylvae* on Vergil, where they present the infant Vergil with generic attributes related to pastoral, bucolic and epic. (n. 29) Poliziano is also responsible for, in chapter 89 of the first *Centuria*, editing Virgil's fourth eclogue so that its *puer* bears a *risus*, a reading that caused a stir ("fece clamore") according to Giorgio Bernardi Perini, "La nascita di Baldo," in *Omaggio a Gianfranco Folena* (Padua: Editoriale Programma, 1993), 118. Folengo is alluding to the smiling boy when Baldo is born without tears: *plangere quem nusquam viderunt more putini* (For the episode, see the best edition of T, Portioli, *Le opere maccheroniche di Merlin Cocai*, vol. 1, 79). See also Stefano Gulizia, "All'ombra del faggio: il peso della tradizione virgiliana nella formazione del mondo macaronico," *Quaderni folenghiani* 2 (1997): 220-1.

[80] For the hypothesis that that Striax is a macaronic Calliope (at least at the beginning of book 21), see Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse," 149.

dangerous waters of the port of Malamocco (21.23-4), and riding on horseback alongside the poet (22.4). The sources that accumulate in the description of the mountain of the macaronic muses in the introductory proem, where they ply their various gastronomic arts atop a mountain made of characteristically Italian cuisines, makes it clear that these muses and their abode are very much amalgams of different textual and oral sources. Like the hybrid folkloric-classical muses, their enormous mountain, referred to as the realm of lasagna or "*regna lasagna*," is an alter-Parnassus that reveals itself to be a patchwork of purely literary and regional references. The poet travels to this mountain in order to "fish up" the macaronic arts ("Hic macaronescam pescavi primior artem", 1.62) from the sisters, each of whom are responsible for preparing her own different soup, which is to be understood as a humorous allusion to the different kinds of macaronic poetry they are responsible for figuratively 'feeding' to the poet.[81] Their realm, which consists of a lake of milk, shores of butter, and a mountain which stretches as high as moon in height (1.22-23) and rests beyond the new world (1.18-19), is a comical alter-Parnassus constructed from literary references and oral folklore (in the latter case, the land of Cocknaigne or *paese di Cuccagna* seems to be an important source, and for the former, Boccaccio's 'Land of Plenty' or *Bengodi* from *Decameron* VIII 3.9, where rivers run with fine wine, trees grow sausages links, and residents roll freshly-cut and boiled pastas down a mountain made of grated Parmesan cheese).[82] What makes this dwelling grotesque is the manner in which the poet systematically incorporates and entangles many different kinds of sources into his descriptions of the muses and their edible realm, while at the same time signalling the distance between his writing and previous texts and their genres.

This methodical procedure simultaneously draws from and radically estranges the macaronic muses and the many kinds of macaronic poetry they generate in both the *Baldus* as well as all its sources, immediately displacing this anti-epic into a comically ridiculous but at the same time radically new space, and in the process overthrowing and replacing all macaronic compositions that precede it. Merlin, now the *first* macaronic poet within the folly/*Phantasia* that is his epic alone, is free to recite heroic verses inspired by and organized around the magical influence of paunchy muses who direct him to the themes and subjects of each discrete part of his epic. In T, the learned sisters are Berta, Gosa, Togna, Mafelina, Pedrala, and Comina (names adapted from obscure Brescian words), and make frequent appearances in subheadings or *didascalia* dispersed inter-linearly, sometimes multiple times per book. The old, refuted classical muses are not entirely forgotten, but

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[81] Interestingly, Chiesa notes that the adverb "primior" may have both qualitative and temporal meanings, by which the poet learns from the muses how write macaronic poetry "more excellently" than his peers, but who is also *before* them (at least within Merlin's post-medieval fantasy) and thus prior to his rival, Tifi ("per prima, secondo la "phantasia" che fa Merlin più antico di Tifi"). Whether or not this is evidence of some kind of Bloomian anxiety of influence that is resolved by the proem of book 22 in C and VC (80-132), in which the poet becomes Tifi's *discipulo*, is a question that deserves more scholarly attention.

[82] For other possible sources, including the mountain described by Ulysses (Purgatory) in *Inferno* 26, the Terrestrial Paradise of *Purgatorio*, and the mountain in Nubia explored by Astolfo in canto 33 of the *Orlando furioso*, see Longhi, "Le muse del *Baldus*," 157-163.

Figure 3.4: Folengo, Frontispiece depicting Merlin being fed macaronic dumplings by Zana and Togna, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 1r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

even appear in the paragraph headings (such as Talia in book 4 and Clio in book 11).[83] T represents the phase of maximum experimentalism in the deployment of the macaronic muses and is woefully understudied in this respect. While I have yet to discern a pattern between these headings and the verses to which they are assigned, the use of both the traditional and macaronic muses points to the astonishing syncretism of the poet's project in this version. While Folengo's 'purification' of the poem in C included the removal of the inter-lineal paragraph titles, many parts of the poem are the product of the multiple influence, or confluence, of these muses. And while C does not preserve the paragraph headings, the three names of each muse loudly replace Aquario's titles at the beginning of each five-book section (see figure 2.4).

It also bears mentioning that Merlin's use of regional folklore in the construction of his muses reflects at first an embeddedness within, followed swiftly by an elite detachment from, the 'low culture' from which they are drawn: in this sense, their changing status resembles the relationship between 'popular culture' and Rabelais' works between 1532 and the later half of the sixteenth century. What calls for further elucidation along these lines is that, aside from astonishing and scandalizing his contemporaries, Merlin's muses constitute an effective parody of not only their revival by humanist poets, but also theorizations of poetic inspiration, past and present. In this sense as well, the poet performs a grotesque parody of erudite philosophical consideration of the origin of poetry, pursued most notably by Ficino. The relationship between the muses and the heavenly spheres described by Cingar suggests that Folengo is drawing from the neo-platonic interpretation of the muses described at one point by Equicola. Equicola's account of the history of the Christian transformation of the classical muses is particularly useful for understanding what Folengo is doing in that it provides a genealogy for the poet to understand the role of the muses in the creation of different kinds of literature, and their place within the pagan universe that sits alongside the Christian one. As the rejection of the classical order in the proem to the *Moscheide* should remind us, the poet, alternating between the persona of Merlin and the voice that dialogues with him in the proem to book 9 of T, cannot channel, fabricate, or perform their poem without an entirely separate order of muses. By drawing his muses from the folklore of his immediate cultural situation and by debasing their status in Macaronic, Merlin erects from the beginning of the epic a grotesque satire of the harmonious structures of divine, prophetic inspiration, thought to be achieved through *afflatus* and enthusiasm, and which would be the object of study by Patrizi, Arnigio, and others in the late Renaissance.

Folengo creates for Merlin a tradition of inspiration that rests humorously adjacent to that of *furor poeticus* and in a way that casts fundamental doubt on not only this notion of poetic creation, but also the origins of the tradition in the collected writings of Plato. Yet again, it is via the Merlin figure and his temporal dislocation to the distorted past of a peculiar macaronic

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[83] In the former case, Lodela explains the anomaly in an extremely helpful gloss: "aliquando Parnassi Camoenis utitur poeta", indicating that he is quite aware of his potentially transgressive use of the traditional muses in the macaronic narration.

Figure 3.5: Folengo, photo reproductions of each five-book sequence from the first reprint of the Cipadense edition, *Macaronicorum Poema* (Venice, Pietro Boselli, 1555), folios 4v, 45v, 92v, 131v, and 181v. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

universe that Folengo strikes a devastating blow against the pretensions of the Platonic revival in Italy, spearheaded by Ficino and propagated in literary works by Bembo and many others. Merlin invokes the macaronic muses so that he may sing the tale of Baldo, and in so doing grant the role of a prophet to Folengo, who may now foretell the future of the hero of Cipada and his battle against the Army of Darkness. And as the present and the future come to align in the real world of the poet, and his contemporaries once again begin to appreciate the prophetic quality that his folly seems to hold—-the truthful *serio* in his toilsome *ludere*—-they also learn just how powerful the innovation of the macaronic book has been, and the inadequacies of the Platonic academy for coming to terms with the extent of the popular mistrust of writing, intelligence, Ancient Greek and Latin, and academic/humanist institutions in Italy that encourage its dissemination. The muses are the result of an act of synthetic creation which reflects the poet's deep knowledge and appreciation of the humanist tradition in Italy, as well as his deeper concern for the ends of this tradition, concerns that stems from his experience of how the classical and the Platonic traditions might be rendered culturally and morally bankrupt when turned into the gilded propaganda of violent and repressive princes and their regimes, from Augustus' to Charles V's. More than their outwardly humorous status as cooks and tipsy witches, it is *this* fundamental duality, this antinomy of the classical and anti-classical, elite and popular, high and low, which render Folengo's muses so powerful, and yet so very grotesque.

While the roles, names, backgrounds, and activities of the Muses in VC are provided in much richer detail, their influence on the creation of the project can be said to be more limited, controlled, and systematized.[84] Whereas in P and T their voices are almost everywhere intervening in the progression of the narrative, in C and VC they have been neatly segregated to separate sections of the poet's world. As one of the most experimental poems of all time, the *Baldus* of edition T is an ungainly beast whose total lack of any clear generic definition whatsoever is but one of the results of the chorus-like appearances of the macaronic muses in each section. Even if the poem can be said to be more symmetrical in C and VC, with some of the onomastic uncertainties regarding the muses 'resolved' (the muses receiving three-part names), the basic episodes of the poem have been 'constructed' via a complex and chorus-like interplay of all the muses in T.

3.4   The Pastoral Ends of the *Baldus*

Returning to the two anti-Virgilian proems examined in section 2 of this chapter, it was revealed that Merlin's principal rival in the *Baldus* is the ancient pagan Mantuan in many of the versions known to the Benedictine and his mythical alter-ego, Merlin: the 'historical' Vergil born in cisalpine Gaul; the ancient and medieval *auctor* of a centrally important classroom text; Dante's

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[84] For a study of Rabelais' use of popular culture in the *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, see Richard M. Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin: Popular Culture in Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

fictional *Virgilio*; the list goes on. In the course of unpacking the intertextual allusions present in these proems, I have attempted indicate how the low or pastoral style is used to defend the vernacular from claims made against it by countless humanist imitators of Cicero and Virgil. By playfully recalling the origins of the pastoral in Dante's defense of the vernacular against Giovanni del Virgilio and the Paduan proto-humanists, Merlin inserts his poetic project into a tradition of imitating not only Virgil's Latin, but also the phases of his career and the progression of the publication of his poetry. From the macaronic eclogues and sonnets dedicated to Zannina from Tonello, to the Ovidian and Petrarchan *locus amoenus* of book 17 wherein Leonardo heroically defends his virginity from dread Pandraga, Folengo blends the epic and pastoral together as a pretext for reflecting on the corrupting pleasures of erotic desire.[85] It is not by accident that the poet recalls *Ecl.* 3.93 ("latet anguis in herba") when Leonardo awakens from slumber to find himself in the clutches of a succubus:

> Non aliter sese de floribus ille rebalzat,
> quam quam tollit humo cifilantia pectora serpens,
> qui, dum flammato godit sub sole iacetque
> herboso in strato, fit pressus calce romeri. (17.55-58)

> *He jumps out of the flowers not unlike a hissing snake that, while enjoying the sun and resting on a grassy field, raises its breast from the ground when pressed on by the heel of wayfarer.*

Indeed, the locus amoenus presided over by Pandraga bears several parallels to the garden of Alcina, and the witch Pandraga is most certainly a *femina balba* of the Dantean kind. When Leonardo dies of injuries he has sustained fending off the ferocious attacks of two bears, the poet invokes the Christian god in a passionate eulogy that compares his death to Christ's. The passage is modelled after two Vergilian passages, the first epic and historical, the second pastoral and 'messianic'. The first could not be clearer: Merlin and the "hidden author" mourn Leonardo's death as does Anchises in his eulogy to the Roman general Marcellus, who claimed the *spolia opima* by defeating the Gallic general Virodomarus in single combat:

> "O nate, ingentem luctum ne quaere tuorum;
> ostendent terris hunc tantum fata nec ultra
> esse sinent. nimium vobis Romana propago
> visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent.
> quantos ille virum magnam Mavortis ad urbem

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[85] See Gulizia, "All'ombra del faggio," 226-31. Both Chiesa and Mullaney note that Alcina's Island at *Orlando furioso* 6.21 is a likely source for some of the passage's imagery, the former noting the resemblance to a passage in Jerome's *Life of St. Paul* as well as *RVF* 333.

campus aget gemitus! vel quae, Tiberine, videbis
funera, cum tumulum praeterlabere recentem!
nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos
in tantum spe tollet avos, nec Romula quondam
ullo se tantum tellus iactabit alumno.
heu pietas, heu prisca fides invictaque bello
dextera! non illi se quisquam impune tulisset
obvius armato, seu cum pedes iret in hostem
seu spumantis equi foderet calcaribus armos.
heu, miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas!
tu Marcellus eris. manibus date lilia plenis
purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
his saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani
munere." (6.868-86)

"My son, seek not to taste the bitter grief of your people; only a glimpse of him will fate give earth nor suffer him to stay long. Too powerful, O gods above, you deemed the Roman people, had these gifts of yours been lasting. What sobbing of the brave will the famed Field waft to Mars' mighty city! What a cortege will you behold, Father Tiber, as you glide past the new-built tomb! No youth of Trojan stock will ever raise his Latin ancestry so high in hope nor the land of Romulus ever boast of any son like this. Alas for his goodness, alas for his chivalrous honour and his sword arm unconquerable in the fight! In arms none would have faced him unscathed, marched he on foot against his foe or dug with spurs the flanks of his foaming steed. Child of a nation's sorrow, could you but shatter the cruel barrier of fate! You are to be Marcellus. Grant me to scatter in handfuls lilies of purple blossom, to heap at least these gifts on my descendant's shade and perform an unavailing duty."

Aspicis, alme Deus, pro te quamque impia quamque
fert indigna puer tuus iste, simillimus agno?
iste tuus innocuus, puer iste fidelis,
aspicis ut pro te tam dira morte necetur?
Nonne hic expulsor Veneris columenque pudoris
quo datur ad vitae, via, lux aditusque coronam?
Siccine mortales tanto nos munere fraudas?
Felices o vitae hominum, felicia secla,
lapsa quibus coelo est animi praestantia tanti. (17.280-88)

> *Do you see, propitious God, what impious things, what indignities your boy suffers for*
> *you, most like a lamb? Do you see how your innocent and faithful boy dies such a*
> *cruel death for you? Is he not the expeller of Venus, the pillar of modesty, who shows*
> *us the way, the light, the entry to the crown of life? Do you thus defraud us mortals*
> *of such a gift? O happy the lives of men, happy the age, in which the excellence of so*
> *great a soul has descended from heaven.*

In addition to its relatively refined language, this passage is an excellent example of Folengo's
ability to transverse multiple generic boundaries in a few verses, duplicating the historical com-
plexities of Vergil's allusion to an epic eulogy in the *Aeneid* while at the same time combining it
with a particular reading of the most famous Vergilian eclogue. For if the poet of the *Aeneid* con-
ceals a tribute to Augustus' nephew (a different Marcellus, who died sometime before the writing
of the poem), Folengo turns the compulsion of his narrator to compete with Vergil into an oppor-
tunity to eulogize not the knight related to the Colonna family, but the person who inspired his
poem, Francesco Donismondi.[86] To return to the terms of Conte, Merlin is then the 'mythomanic'
narrator who aggrandizes the events of the narrative with erudite epic allusions and imitations, in
this case to one of the most famous Virgilian elegies, while the 'hidden' poet relies on the audi-
ences' knowledge of the significance of the onomastic doublings present in the Vergilian allusion to
clarify the deeper historical, pastoral, and even Christological meanings of the death of Leonardo.
Conte's thesis concerning the hidden author of the *Satyricon* is helpful indeed for thinking about
the ways that Merlin differs from the "hidden poet", whose appearance as a "young Folengo" in P
appears to suggest that he is ironically staging Merlin's pedantic pretensions for the satisfaction of
the readers, who remain 'in the know' and potentially 'on his side' about the folly of his perfor-
mance and meta-literary contest with two of the greatest authors of ancient epic. Finally, the ways
in which Leonardo's purity is made the measure and the end of the happiness of an entire age of
man is enabled by a common Christological interpretation of the beginning of *Eclogue* 4:

> Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
> magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
> iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;
> iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
> tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
> desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
> casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo. (4.4-10)

> *Now is come the last age of Cumaean song; the great line of the centuries begins anew.*
> *Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns; now a new generation descends*

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[86] Both Chiesa and Mullaney have noticed the biographical resonances of the eulogy without commenting on its
clear debt to *Aeneid* 6.868-86.

> *from heaven on high. Only do you, pure Lucina, smile on the birth of the child, under*
> *whom the iron brood shall at last cease and a golden race spring up throughout the*
> *world! Your own Apollo now is king!*

The presence of the word *puer* in both the eulogy to Marcellus as well as the fourth eclogue suggests that they might have had some connection in Vergil's mind as he was writing book VI. Folengo could also count on his readers' knowledge of the famous case of Vergil's fourth eclogue being read as 'messianic' or containing a prophecy of the coming of the Christ-god: in *Purgatorio* 22, the poet Statius tells Virgilio that it was this eclogue, which reports the birth of a Christ-like child, that made him convert to Christianity. If the fourth eclogue celebrates the renewal of the ages of man at the birth of a child, in this eulogy for Leonardo/Francesco, Merlin laments the postlapsarian closure of an epoch, invoking the pity of a God who exacts a terrible price for the promise of a future with no *novus ordo saecularum* in sight. The sophisticated contamination of different genres and modes of reading Vergil poetry in the eulogy make it an emblematic example of how the macaronic poet pastoralizes epic through careful intertextual allusions. If the grotesque muses inspire and bind together the parts of the *Baldus*, it is by way of the pastoral as "meta-genre" that Merlin links not only his epic but the entire ensemble of macaronic poems that are collected in the book to the pastoral-suffused literary *milieux* of quattro- and early cinquecento Italy. As the appearance of the invocation to God in C indicates, the number and placement of pastoral themes, allusions, and explicit citations only increases as the collection evolves, so that the pastoral proves to be an important access point into to the macaronic project as a whole, even the principal stylistic or generic key in which Merlin wraps things up for his readers. For when the poet disembarks from the boat that is his poem, gently admonishing his contemporaries as he enters a pumpkin and abandons the adventures of Baldo and his loyal friends for another to poet to continue, Merlin finishes not only with a quotation of the final verse of the *Aeneid*, but also alludes to the *Eclogues*.[87] In T, the poem ends with Merlin's death, shortly following a triumphant address to his contemporaries and appeal to his own spotless integrity:

> Immo probos vitae mores, breve tempus et annos.
> Scripsimus, ad veniam propero, si scripsimus ulla
> Fortisan aditu male consona, parcite, quaeso.
> Et jam confectus senio, terraeque recurvus
> Corpore destituor, vitae quoque cedo.[88]

> *Indeed, my habits of life were honest and the time I wrote a few short years; I hasten*
> *to [request] forgiveness if anything I wrote sounds perhaps unpleasant to hear; spare*

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[87] The quotation of the final verse of the *Aeneid* is transposed to vv. 24.260 in VC.
[88] Portioli, *Le opere maccheroniche di Merlin Cocai*, 210.

> *me, I ask of you. And now I have become old, and turning away from the earth, my*
> *body abandons me, and I die.*

In C, the poet transforms this more dramatic appeal to his reader's forgiveness, in which he dies, into a famous exclamation of pastoral desire in Vergil's second eclogue: Corydon's outburst of embarrassed unrequited love for the boy Alexis. The definitive version of the text makes Merlin's lament constitute an artful synecdoche for what Macaronic in each of its generic and linguistic manifestations does to ancient poetry in the service of reporting the *istoriam* of Baldo for all to hear:

> He heu, quid volui, misero mihi? perditus, Austrum
> floribus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros! (25.657-8)

> *Alack, alack, what did I wish, miserable me? Ruined, I have let loose the south wind*
> *among flowers, and wild boars amid clear fountains.*

The reuse of Corydon's frustrated exclamation at *Ecl.* 2.58-9 is a fitting salute to Baldo, now the greatest hero to have ever been celebrated in macaronic verse. The meta-poetic and even biographical organization of pastoral poetic is slightly less epic, but no less stirring, when the same verses arrive at the end of book 23 in T, following shortly after the verses of effulgent praise dedicated to Baldo's second wife, Crispis:[89]

> Sed venit ecce Charon, iam trappassabimus amnem
> cum mihi tempus erit, vobis de Crispide dicam.
> Sic ergo Macaronicum penitus volo linquere carmen

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[89] For the appearance and praise of Crispis, whose name echoes Christ's, and who Merlin assures us will be celebrated for all time, see Goffis, *Teofilo Folengo: studi di storia e di poesia*, 47-48, who believes she represents "la religione pura" of the uncorrupted and uncompromised Benedictine order: "Essa ci rappresenta la prima testimonianza di quella concezione che del Christianesimo mostrerà di avere Teofilo. Crispide è la religione pura, evangelica, cui egli non credeva di poter giungere da solo..." See also chapter 2 in Ann Mullaney's PhD dissertation, "Teofilo Folengo: Ecce Homo" (Yale, 1984), pp. 110-14, which, follows Goffis and is right to note that the repetition of the verse "cum tempus mihi erit" by Merlin identifies him with Baldo. Neither make any attempt to connect Crispidis to pastoral poetry or to explain why the litany to her would elicit the near-quotation of *Eclogues* 1.58-9 at the end of book 23 in T, or why this same lament is transported to the end of book 25 in C and VC. In addition to connecting her to the theme of this chapter, I suggest that Crispis, whether or not she is "puramente spirituale", is essential for establishing the role of the pastoral in the epic, and that Folengo has chosen the litany to end the book in T, and, later, the poem in C and VC, very deliberately: while her disappearance from later editions along with many other historical and 'personal' details has been attributed to the decreasing historical relevance and increasing *literariness* of the macaronic project, Folengo clearly recognizes that the Vergilian, pastoral lament that "Crispis virgineos ros" provoked in him would serve as the best ending to his greatest macaronic work. Thus, even in the later versions, it will nevertheless be true that "Crispis erit semper celeberrima seclis."

> cum mihi tempus erit, quod erit, si celsa voluntas
> flectitur et nostris lachrimis, et supplice voto.
> He heu, quid volui, misero mihi? perditus, Austrum
> floribus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros! (23.657-8)

> *But here Charon comes, now we will cross the river, when my time is up, I will tell you*
> *of Crispis. Thus, I wish to hand in a macaronic poem, when it is my time has come,*
> *and come it will, if the high will is softened by both our tears and our suppliant vow.*
> *Alack, alack, what did I wish, miserable me? Ruined, I have let loose the south wind*
> *among flowers, and wild boars amid clear fountains.*

After delivering many verses in praise of Crispis, Merlin relinquishes his poem to the world in the key of a poetic movement that may have inspired him to adopt the macaronic style in the first place.[90] Merlin now embraces his fate with penitential tears and a final "voto" that, with respect to "linquere carmen" in the previous two verses, both echoes *Orlando furioso* 46.1.3 ("nel lito i voti scioglier spero") and anticipates the vow Goffredo will dissolve at *Gerusalemme liberata* 20.144.[91] What is even more suggestive along the lines of poetry and value is the less shamelessly plagiaristic reuse of the verse in the *Chaos del Triperuno*, in which Merlin laments his purposeful debasement of the *aurum* that is ancient poetry:

> He heu, quid volui, misero mihi? Sordidus aurum,
> perditus, et gemmas immisi fecibus indas?

> *Alack, alack, what did I wish, miserable me? Ruined, I cast gold to the unclean, and*
> *Indian gems to the dregs.*

In this pastoral coda to the poem, the 'Virgil of Cipada' winks a final time at his readers as he gives an irony-laden apology for his many transgressions of language, style, and genre—-and too-liberal use of authorial license—-in his performance of the tale of Baldo and his friends. When the poem finally draws to an end, and Merlin disembarks from his oar-less boat to discover an Italy that has changed dramatically from the one he left in search of the island of the macaronic muses, the reader may begin to consider the significance of the stark juxtaposition between the diminishing importance of his project for the Renaissance, and Folengo's increasing awareness of the origins of his unique style in Dante's pastoral response to the Latin purism of the proto-humanists. The citation of *Ecl.* 2 captures in an emblematic fashion the pastoral origins of the macaronic project,

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[90] If the two eclogues in P were composed prior to *Baldus*.

[91] While it would be difficult to prove that Tasso had read this edition of the *Baldus*, it is noteworthy that their poems share something like the language of keeping promises under the specter of death, and, at least in Tasso's case, *sous rature*.

for by ending his counter-*Aeneid* with verses from Virgil's most 'humble' style, Folengo once more refuses to assign generic specificity to his poem. Given his skillful use of all things pastoral (and anti-pastoral), it is only fitting that he should have Merlin adapt verses from the bawdiest love-song of the *Eclogues* to supply this final, valedictory, salute to Baldo and the undefinable, genre-less poem he has meticulously constructed for, and dedicated to, them.

Merlin's performative lament coincides with that of the poet himself, who is indeed very troubled by what he was elected to write by public decree.[92] Even in T, the tone of the final two verses is one suspended between the mirthful irony of the medieval bard, who presently enters the pumpkin of the poets for all eternity, and the bitter realism of the historical monk, whose prolonged *Vergilii Laudes* addressed to neo-classicizing poets from a previous generation in the final paragraphs of T criticizes their sacralization of the language and the poetry of ancient non-Christians at the same time that it, like Petrarch's "discovery" of the Middle Ages, marks the difference between what is 'modern' and what is permanently irrecoverable. Even as the poem generates this moment of rupture by addressing the poet's contemporaries and defending the *moderni*, and valiantly making Virgil and Homer the butt of a final joke, Folengo reveals himself to be increasingly aware of his own irrelevance to the neo-classicizing "culture" that would continue well beyond the sixteenth century in Europe, and, indeed, throughout the entire world, endlessly exporting Vergil's poetics of empire and pristine, spotlessly 'white' classicism wherever it made landfall.

But at least Vergil now had an uncompromising rival, whose poem by all rights constitutes the first true anti-epic of the sixteenth century. Merlin and his poem also, as we shall see, resolutely refuses to disappear from the scene, even after his moment in the sun (1517-1520) draws to a conclusion. As in the case of the proemial narrative of book 22, where Merlin writes himself into a mythography of the origin and development of his style in the hometown of the protagonist, in these verses Folengo and Merlin are one and the same: the pastoral plaint and bittersweet farewell to Baldo that immediately precedes it belong to them. Merlin departs, but Folengo lives on to haunt his own poem and the imitators of Virgil who are both its subjects and its addressees, patiently filing away its verses *ad or ad or*, in an Horatian *limae labor* that will continue until his death, and beyond. Indeed, the poem's final verses achieve a correspondence between expression and

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[92] N.B.: Lest we forget, Merlin is said to have been chosen or bound (*e-ligitur*), to the task of completing the macaronic project (q.v. 22.106ff). By tracing the poetic self back to its origins, this singular, individual monk assumes the lone-ly task (according to the etymology provided by Carolinne White in *Early Christian Lives* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p. xv, "the term 'monk' derives, via the word '*monachos*', from the Greek word '*monos*' meaning 'alone'") of contributing this vision of selfhood to those available in the Renaissance, from Pico's to Ariosto's. Indeed, Bakhtin himself has described this task as only possible in the space of *vnenakhodimost'*, the desert of exile: "It is the outsideness (vnenakhodimost') of my unique place in being that defines life as a task – the *dannost'* that impels our *zadannost'*, as it were. The site we occupy in being is not merely a site we occupy in space and time, but a task, the obligation to forge relations within ourselves and with the world we live in that will keep all the separate elements from devolving into chaos". See Michael Holquist, "The Fugue of the Chronotrope," in *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotrope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, ed. Nele Bemong et al. (Gent: Ginko, Academia Press, 2010), 25.

meaning on a par with some of the greatest examples of world literature, one which has risen to through grit and necessary defiance to exceed the possibilities of what a *heroicum carmen* can be in this period—inaugurating as well as haunting the permutations of the novel form, from Rabelais' to Cervantes', as well as its struggle for legitimacy in the centuries to come.[93] Merlin's *coda* is his *exigi monumentum aere perennius*, a "monument more lasting than bronze" which ends, in the key of pastoral, by aggrandizing the macaronic project as a whole at the same time that it apologizes for—and closes the lid on—an entire fictional universe, a *classic*, that will presently entomb its subjects along with its poet: *Hos sculpsit tumulos Merlini dextra Cocai / Texit magnanimos in quibus ipse viros.*[94] The masonic hand that typed their fate is the one that sculpts their sepulcher.

In each version of the poem (in P the poet quotes the final verse of the *Aeneid* rather than an eclogue) the presence of the Virgilian coda is at once emblematic of an ideal alignment of *res* and *verba* he has meticulously woven over the course of decades of tireless editorial work, and the final expression of the textual and inter-textual ideal of his appropriative and appropriating *ars*, a confirmation that this filigree of thousands of texts and voices—Macaronic—has achieved a Cratylitic correspondence between what is spoken and what is meant for all those who dare to read it. If the genre of the *Baldus* ends up proving to be to be as difficult to define and assign as its language, Folengo accomplishes this feat of artistic ambiguity, of flamboyant disguise, by throwing into doubt the basic features of literary authority and humanist imitation, starting with the styles, genres, and authorial career of the greatest poet of empire, speaking laughing truth to Vergil's legacy of death and destruction. The near-quotation also functions as a final warning to his contemporaries, who are praised but also admonished for the excessive praise and imitation of ancient poetry and exclusive emulation of Vergil; not acts but *choices* that discredit and even

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[93] David Damrosch writes in *What is World Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) that the act of reading a text by an author of world literature is by necessity both a *public* and a *private* experience. The task of this dissertation has been to show how the *Baldus* fulfills just such a criterion: "World literature's attachments are multiplied by the fact that it is at once a collective and an individual phenomenon. A large and multilayered group of foreign works that circulate in a given culture, it is also experienced as a private pleasure by individual readers, in ways that may diverge dramatically from the social goals that usually underlie the defining and formal transmission of a literary heritage. The texts themselves exist both together and alone: when we read Dante, we are aware that we are encountering a major work of world literature, one that draws on a wealth of previous writing and that casts its shadow ahead onto much that will follow it. Yet even as we register such connections, we are also immersed within Dante's singular world, an imagined universe very unlike any envisioned by Virgil or by Saint Paul."

[94] For Italo Calvino's 14 definitions of a classic, all of which the *Baldus* has fulfilled with flying colors, see *Why Read The Classics?*, in *The Uses of Literature*, trans. by Patrick Creagh (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 125-134. Definitions 9, 10, and 12-14 seem to me to be particularly appropriate for the poem: "(10) We use the word "classic" of a book that takes the equivalent to the universe, on the level with the ancient talismans... (12) A classic is a book that comes before other classics; but anyone who has read the others first, and then reads this one, instantly recognizes its place in the family tree... (13) A classic is something that tends to regulate the concerns of the moment to the status of background noise, but at the same time this background noise is something we cannot do without. (14) A classic is something that persists as background noise even when the most incompatible momentary concerns are in control of the situation" (pp. 129-32).

debase the value of their poetry. At best they parrot the past, and at worst they practice a futile alchemy that churns out texts as intrinsically valueless as this strange Mantuan's travesty of his Roman forbearer, painstakingly performed by Merlin and edited by Lodela.[95] Their performative attack on anti-vernacular humanism complete, and Folengo's vow dissolved, the most systematic travesty of the principal *auctor* of Latin verse, and possibly the most powerful parody of classicism in this period, is both freed to wander the world of early modern Italy and Europe and sealed within a tomb that prefigures Manto's cave and the Zucca of poets, where it will be discovered by some future Lodela, and 'finished' by a far distant acolyte of Pedrala. *Valete*.

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[95] See the conclusion to this dissertation, below.

Chapter 4

Text Macaronics

> Bare Virtue can't make Nations live
> In Splendor; they, that would revive
> A Golden Age, must be as free,
> For Acorns, as for Honesty.
>
> _____
>
> Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*

4.1   Merlin Cocaio, Pauper King of the Harvard School

Most of the features that form the impressive textual encasement of the Toscolana *Baldus* are either fully developed or present *in nucleo* in the Paganini edition. Central among these are the glosses of the humanist-philologist-herbolist-historian Aquario Lodela that surround the epic, the two macaronic eclogues, and the lengthy epistle addressed to Lord Passarino, Count Scaduarum from Lodela, which serves as a preface to the book, an *accessus* to Merlin, and a general prologue to the *Baldus*. The epistle draws the reader immediately into the 'fictional' poetic universe of a bold new multilingual rival to Virgil. Before passing to a new reading of two important Latin speeches in this version, I will briefly rehearse the ways that Aquario's letter prepares the reader for the story of Baldo by establishing its literary credentials, chronological setting, and geographical location, and by introducing the author and his characters to the "global north," while accumulating in this object—the first time in history—an impressive combinations of opposites and contraries that will come to define Macaronic for Folengo and his imitators in the centuries to come. The playful and non-serious names shared by the editor and the book's dedicatee (Lord Passarino, Count of Rudd) in the title of the first prose section, marks the epistle as distinctly macaronic in flavor, yet allusively tied to the history of ruling families of Mantua. Aquario's extended praise of this prophetic *vates et artificis* includes an account on the recovery of the dead poet's manuscripts during a fantastical

voyage beneath a mountainous island off the coast of Armenia, which I will presently interpret for the sake of contextualizing its novelty.[1]

The frame-tale developed in the Paganini epistle to Passarino is enough to secure for Merlin a permanent place in the history of trans-generic fiction. Like Rabelais' *Pantagruel*, our editor creates a book with a no-less developed narrative and totalizing design as that of the Toscolana edition: a complex yet complete work of art which demands its readers read and interpret it separately from subsequent editions of the macaronic collection. Indeed, it is my claim that the preface to P is crucial for the world-building that characterizes the macaronic book as well as the *Baldus*. It is no less innovative in several respects: the preface constitutes the first known example of a dedicatory prose epistle written in the macaronic style.[2] The preface's neat division between the narrative of fantastic discovery and an ample *accessus* yet again underscores the degree to which Macaronic functions by breaking and conflating elements found in different traditions of written communication, this time the textual traditions that accompany literary artifacts in the ancient, medieval,

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[1] Outside the macaronic fiction, the poet's posthumous status helps his chances of being accepted as an author within the *doxa* of Aquarius' post-medieval world, when the attribution of *auctor* continues to be restricted to long-dead candidates.

[2] It is also the first substantive example of macaronic prose known to exist. The only other extended prose preface to a macaronic poem is the prologue to Bartolotti's *Macaronea*, which is written in his own refined, "Tuscanized" Italian. As I have already suggested in chapter 3, there is good reason to believe that Folengo read the preface as well as the poem in the volume containing Bartolotti's *On The Antiquity of Medicine*, which is now housed in the Vatican Library. William Schupbach has shown quite definitively that the MS containing the sole surviving copy of this macaronic poem (Wellcome Library 461) is in Bartolotti's hand, and that it takes up the same number of leaves (thirty-one) now missing from Codex Vaticanus 5376. See "Doctor Parma's Medicinal Macaronic," 155-8. A close inspection of the digital reproduction of this manuscript (publicly available at https://iiif.wellcomecollection.org/pdf/b19248039) reveals that the procedure of cutting the signature down to size, presumably in order to fit it into the binding in which it is now found), has resulted in the partial removal of at least one word ("fama", folio 2v). This word has been restored by a different hand at the left-hand side of the following line in a light brownish-red ink (the poem is written in a blackish ink with a thinner stylus). The similarity between the hand that entered this *scolia* (especially in the near-exact calligraphy of the humanistic *f*s) and the sole example of a word beginning with this letter definitely known to have been written by Folengo (the "fides" of the final line of his profession of faith on ordination into the Benedictine order on June 24, 1509) is striking. If his intervention could ever be authenticated, it would a) confirm that Folengo read Bartolotti's poem and b) suggest that our Mantuan monk played a central role in removing the manuscript from Bartolotti's personal notebook and correcting the mutilated copy. For descriptions and photo reproductions of the two surviving autograph documents attributed to Folengo, see Marco Faini, "Teofilo Folengo (Mantova 1491 - Campese 1544)," in *Autografi dei letterati italiani*, ed. Motolese Matteo, Paolo Procaccioli, and Emilio Russo (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2009), 215–16.

and early modern worlds.[3] Even the lengthy title of the first section, *Magistri Aquarii, herbolatti in arte cristeriensci peritissimi ad illustrem dominum Passarinum comitem Scarduarum libellus de laudibus Merlini Cocai*, is firmly rooted in the scabrous humor of the macaronic burlesque, from Aquario's knowledge of the art of administering enemas ("in arte cristeriensci peritissimi") to the absurd title of addressee (Illustrious Lord Passarino, Count of Rudd). At the same time, Lodela lays out for his readers a dizzying number of claims about this newly discovered author and his autograph, a procedure that, as I have been suggesting, quickly erodes the distinction between his "fictional" macaronic narrative and the "real" world of sixteenth-century Italy. Lodela immediately seeks to defend the author's Mantuan birth, even claiming to have met this prophet in person (something that he would presumably *not* have insisted upon had he simply found and edited the manuscript of a long-dead authority. Our Merlin is thus suspended in the half-truths of the macaronic burlesque: both living and dead, incarnated by Lodela's claims and numerous quotations as well as the textual sum total of a dubious restoration based on an archaeology of forgotten manuscripts, apocryphal books, and stories with no written histories. In other words, the *libellus* both assimilates a number of textual traditions into Macaronic for the first time, while simultaneously making the exact origins or 'authenticity' of Merlin's poems almost impossible to ascertain—an elaborate fiction constructed by an vertiginous architecture of many fictional selves meant to buttress the rule of an illegitimate and violent dynastic bloodline. To support my argument that P's 'paratexts' are not really paratextual in the formal, literary-critical sense, but are in fact components of a much more complete and totalizing work of art than Folengo's critics are willing to admit, we must now consider the features that make this book and its longest poem the singular marvel of syncretic engineering that it is.

Skipping over the more well-trodden issue of the origin and meaning of Aquario's two names, it is my claim that the name of the addressee of the epistle and book—Lord Passarino—is centrally important for understanding the rhetorical function of the letter, as well as the temporal horizons of the fiction of the two macaronic eclogues and heroic poem. For if Merlin Cocaio is a Mantuan and is related to this city's mythic founder by blood, then Passerino bears a name that is far from arbitrary for those with even a passing knowledge of the history of this famous city. One of the most famous rulers of Mantova prior to the Gonzaga dynasty, Rinaldo Bonacolsi (1278-1328), was not coincidentally nicknamed "Passarino"; this fact alone would not have been lost on Aquario's

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[3] It is a fact that the direct literary antecedents for both Aquario and his herbalist friends are the doctor-quack-charlatans that populate the tradition of Italian macaronic poetry (other examples include the protagonist of the *Tosontea* and the apothecary of Tifi's *Macaronea*). But it is also just as frequently asserted in the criticism that Lodela's function as an editor and glossator may only be understood as a parody of a Renaissance humanist (Georgius Merula, "il Marlani", and Jodocus Badius, have been named possibilities as distinct targets of this parody). See Georgio Bernardo Perini, "Identikit di Acquario Lodola, a proposito di onomastica folenghiana," in *Studi in onore di Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo per i suoi settant'anni: vol. I-II* (Firenze: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007), 467–478 and Luca Curti, "Il *Baldus* e il suo autore," in *'O macaroneam musae quae funditis artem': Studi su Teofilo Folengo a cinquecento anni dalle macaronee*, ed. Federico Baricci (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2021), 138.

readers. Passarino's role in Mantua's history is not trivial: this Rinaldo was the last member of the Bonacolsi dynasty to rule the city, and was removed from power and exiled from Mantova following the violent coup of 1328 supported by Ludovico I Gonzaga. I argue that Aquario's unmistakable reference to this key figure in Mantua's dynastic history does two things for the macaronic book respective to its immediate print circumstances. First, if Passarino inevitably remembers Rinaldo Bonacolsi, then the fact that he rules a humorously-named city "Scarduarum" suggests he is living outside of Mantua and thus after the Gonzaga drove the Bonacolsi from power. Therefore, while Merlin might be from Mantua, his poem and Lodela's book has been sponsored by a direct historical competitor to the Gonzaga family, raising interesting questions about a) the extent to which the *Baldus* was originally composed with the praise of the Gonzaga in mind, and b) the ways that the patronage of Federico II Gonzaga sponsored the revision of the macaronic project in the Toscolana edition. At the same time, it places both the editing of the macaronic book somewhere in the Po Valley and at some point in the mid-thirteenth century, perhaps a few years after the death of Dante.[4] Finally, the only-apparently fictitious patron of the Paganini edition generates a clear issue in terms of the link between the poet to *his* 'patron', Federico II Gonzaga: why would our Aquario have been commissioned to produce an edited version of the macaronic book by the then-ousted rival of the Gonzaga? Like many other facets of the *libellus*—and the entire Paganini edition for that matter—the name of Aquario's patron has been carefully situated at the fertile and ambivalent intersection of myth and history, fact and fiction, truth and falsehood. But this is not the only way in which the *libellus* generates mixtures and juxtapositions that generate a macaronic universe well before the *Baldus*'s opening verse.

Partially due to Lodela's active emulation of Merlin's language and style, the preface to the macaronic book evinces the same linguistic, generic, and textual hybridities as the *Baldus* itself. On the one hand, it is clearly a standard introduction which adopts the conventions of the *de vita et moribus* tradition found in many *opera omnia* of classical authors (something which the title of the preface in T makes even clearer). This first function of prefatory letter serves to situate Merlin's writings within the traditional discursive parameters of authorship for the work of a legitimate classical text. On the other hand, the style of the *libellus* is just as clamorously mixed (an introduction disguised as a letter, or vice versa?), divided between the harrowing description of a fantastic journey in the first half, and the aggressive praise of Merlin's works in the second. It is thus equal parts introduction, dedicatory epistle, announcement of the arrival of this true poet-prophet, Merlin, and a boisterous advertisement and endorsement campaign for his Vergil-like poetic powers. We also learn from Aquario that the delirium of editing the collection at the behest of his demanding patron inspired him to compose this eccentric 'little book': Merlin's style has rubbed off on him from across the centuries. Lodela's "free indirect discourse" extends well beyond the preface to the hundreds of glosses adorning the pages of the poem he claims to have fashioned from the pages of

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[4] The count's name is the first indication that the intended fictional setting of the macaronic book is in Italy's illustrious humanist and vernacular past.

Merlin's manuscript. The entire Paganini edition is thus an elaborate literary ruse that parades its extensive knowledge of different textual traditions before the readers' eyes only to insist that each of these discrete textual traditions must be collapsed into the *gesamtkunstwerk* that is the Paganini edition in its full, un-divided glory.[5] Indeed, 'true' paratexts begin to appear only in the Toscolana edition, with its dialogue about the origin of the *Baldus* and two vernacular letters exchanged between the author and publisher (to which may be added the letter addressed to "Paganinus" by Federico II Gonzaga, discovered in the archives of Mantua some years ago.[6]

The 'alternative facts' are these: Aquario chooses to believe what the editor has not only heard, but touched with his own hands ("accipe rem, non quam audivi sed his manibus pertocavi"), the book he has fashioned using Merlin's autograph manuscript. He then explains that herbalists, pullers of teeth, and masters of dungarees such as himself ("herbolattos, cavatores dentium, magistros bragirorum") are naturally interested in exploring the world and its foreign attitudes, being traveling medicine men in search of ingredients for treacle themselves. Aquario then launches into a several-page story of his discovery of the volume he is presently introducing ("de retrovatione huius voluminis"): any doubt about the macaronic status of the epistle is quickly evaporated by the list of ridiculously-named herbalists who accompany him on his journey: Magisters Quintus Scaramella, Salvanellus Boccatorta, Dimeldeus Zucconus, Johannes Baricocola, and Buttadeus de Grattarognis.[7] Aquario tells us that their caravel ran aground ("inzzapellavit") during a storm which left them *semivivi* ("half-alive") on the island. Finding it thus uninhabited, they rest for a while ("aliquantillum repossati") on a deserted beach before they enter a wood of pine trees, which turns out to be no less sun-scorched and inhospitable. Consuming a few victuals and lighting a torch, the team works up the courage to penetrate the gloomy blackness of a cave they find in the woods, thus beginning a two-day journey under an enormous mountain ("montagnae smisuratissimae"). Aquario details the many wondrous things he and his team of herbalists discover in this subterranean complex: they find the limbs, heads, and bones of different animals, followed by a larger antrum and two enormous bronze doors. Walking slowly through the gate in sheep-like single file, they marvel at the rusty tools of a blacksmith's workshop and the necropolis of eleven enormous marble sepulchers (wondrous to tell) each tricked out with hanging porphyry *tabula* (likely the architrave or some other other part of the tombs' entablature) engraved with golden-lettered distiches. Desperate to convince Count Passarino of the veracity of this remarkable sequence of findings, Aquario immediately reinforces the messages of the first epigram: our Merlin was a poet not only capable of writing perfectly acceptable Latin epigrams, but indeed the very sculptor and

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[5] The different textual layers discussed in this chapter may be said to be crucial parts of the poet's 'mannerism', if such an over-schematic term is appropriate for defining the ornate and onion-like textual workmanship of the second macaronic book.

[6] For my analysis of these texts, see section 2, below.

[7] A careful examination of these fanciful names underscores that the macaronic style governs their construction: each possess a properly Romanized first name ending in -us followed by an at least partly vernacular surname related to a food or ridiculous place-name.

engraver of the tombs inside the cavern ("compositum et sculpitum a nostro Cacaio"):

> Hos sculpsit tumulos Merlini dextra Cocai,
> Texit magnanimos in quibus ipse viros.
> Hi phlegethonteas coelo donante per umbras
> Lustrarunt, ac res quas retulere mihi.
> Scripsimus haeroico libros in quinque coturno.
> De baratro sensi quidquid ab ore suo.

> *These tombs were sculpted by the right hand of Merlin Cocaio, in which he covered the bodies of brave men. These men moved through Phelgethontean shadows by the grace of heaven, and that which they reported to me, whatever I have learned about hell from their mouths, I have written in five books in the heroic style.*[8]

Aquario's reportage of Merlin's boasting epigram should alert readers immediately to the fact that Merlin, and very likely his editor too, are the same 'same' Girolamo-Teofilo, the "author of the author" who constructs this impressive Work. The epigrams reproduced by Aquario disclose to attentive readers that Merlin is not just a writer of macaronic texts: in fact, in an excellent recent article on the Paganini *Baldus*, Roberto Galbiati has noted that the first edition contains many more passages of non-macaronic Latin than do subsequent editions, which include these epigrams, as well as the speech by Guido in book 13.[9] Galbiati also points out that the preface is not merely supplemental to the interpretation generated by his reading of the 1517 poem, which emphasizes Merlin's moral and ethical warning against love (see chapter 2), but that the epigrams reveal crucial details about what happens to the heroes after the death of Culfora (and the poem's dramatic conclusion).[10] Baldo's companions loyally follow their leader into the cavern under the mountain, where they live out the rest of their days in the spiritual tranquillity of the equivalent of a monastic community—perhaps a macaronic version of Polirone or one of the other monasteries through which the poet moved as a novitiate in the Benedictine order.[11] Against the white surface of an

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[8] For use of the noun cothurnus, which in antiquity refers to the high shoe or buskin worn by actors of tragedy as "an elevated style of poetry", see Virgil's Ecologues 8.10 and Horace's Odes 2.1.12.

[9] "Saranno solo le redazioni successive a non far più distinzioni tra brani e a usare ovunque il macaronico", "Lettura del *Baldus* dell'edizione Paganini (1517)," in *'O macaroneam musae quae funditis artem': Studi su Teofilo Folengo a cinquecento anni dalle macaronee*, ed. Federico Baricci (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2021), 228. Galbiati lists 12.288-328, 13.186-205, 13.243-334, and 14.6-24 as the passages written without macaronic words, all of which are relatively important episodes, especially for the first version.

[10] I agree with Galbiati that the poem is a finished product in its first version, and would go one step further, arguing that it can be only interpreted and truly understood *before* and *apart from* subsequent versions (and within the context of the second half of the 1510s—potentially before the poet read the *Orlando furioso*, or met Ariosto), a prospect that is just beginning to come into view with Galbiati's essay, but that deserves its own book-length treatment.

[11] The tranquillity of their entombment contains the seeds of Thélème, the remarkable secular monastic community described in the final chapters of the Pantagruel and Gargantua.

alabaster tomb at the center of this acropolis, Baldo's epigram reveals to Aquario and the herbalists that "having fallen into hell, it pleased me to disdain the world, and to ask God for strength in this cavernous mountain" ("Lapsus ab inferno, placui contemnere mundum, / hoc ve cavernoso monte rogare deum"). Each of the subsequent epigrams include new details about Baldo's friends and their hellish fate: they are summarily condemned to Hell after they confess their sins to Merlin in book 16, and are accepted into the "divine justice" inscribed by Dante Alighieri on doorway to his Dis.[12] All this has been accomplished by Aquario's ekphrasis of the eleven tombs and their inscriptions and contents, which together serve as *evidentia* to prove to Count Passarino as well as the buyers of the macaronic book that this spelunking expedition actually occurred, and that Merlin's sole surviving manuscript indeed became the *voluminis* that they now happily scroll through on their screens. The one soul who is not condemned to the fires of hell is the clown Boccalo, whose mysterious epigram inspires the herbalists to remove the cover of the tomb in which he sits. Within, they witness a hugely-bearded Boccalo ("usque ad summitates pedum") who sits play with various nick-nacks ("gallis, bechirris, nonnullisque bagatellis"). The *libellus* suddenly makes a sharp dialogic shift, when Aquario breaks into direct discourse so that he may report the conversation between the herbalists and Boccalo to Passarino (and us). Speaking in riddles, Boccalo confirms that both hell and heaven have closed their doors to him: one word from the herbalists will save his soul from this eternal limbo, however, sending it packing to one of the two binary Christian options. After the Father Gilminus recites a psalm and the *Requiem aeterna*, an angel arrives to carry Boccalo' soul forthwith to heaven. This strange episode of life-in-death (in which we learn a number of things about Baldo's companions) concludes with a humorous moral: clowns need prayers to escape from Limbo. The herbalists then read the longer epigram on the last tomb (Fracasso's, who God has damned to hell for two thousand years in recompense for his failed attempt to save an equivalent number of souls from Hell by scooping them up into the horns of Lucifer. The epigram hints ("as his verses were attesting" ["ut sua testabantur carmina"] at an episode from the five books *de diavolorum patria* "of the country of the devil". The wisdom-loving philosophers are made happier than they might have been discovering the treasure of Croesus when they excavate ("desotteravimus") an enormous chest filled with "our laureate" Merlin's writings "in arte macaronica": "libros, librettos, libricolos, librazzos et mille alios schartafacios." Of the many seemingly fictitious titles in this chest (which only grow in number in T), Aquario lists the title-description of the present work ("ipsum librum de gestis magnanimi Baldi") and the five books of hell, which the herbalists carefully place into a smaller, more portable chest. It is of utmost importance that this Merlin is a veritable fountain of wisdom and the writer of many works on a vast quantity of subjects and in a variety of ancient languages: in addition to his draft of the *Baldus*, five books about the country of the devils, and two eclogues, Aquario reports having seen

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[12] It is also worth pointing out that the physical inscriptions recording these epigrams, hanging (the Latin word used is from *pendeo*) as they do from tombs in a subterranean chamber resembling Hell, each share Dante's famous inscription as their direct textual antecedent.

an enormous volume on the subject of natural history and astronomy, a book concerning military history (specifically, one about the battles conducted by a "King Charles"), a book on witches and warlocks that "assaulted the Dominicans a bunch" ("frates dominiginos impugnabat assaium"), and a list of books with vaguely Hebrew and Chaldean language titles (in P these are *Barrichut*, *Transbaruch*, *Robaiott*, *Sgnirifot*, *Scharcacol*, *Cracricon*, *Stritricez*, and *Argnafel*), tomes that have all been authored by Merlin alone (as well as many others titles on subjects "so subtle that men should not speak of them." Disturbing this mini-library contained in a pirate's trunk has had grave consequences for the survival of Merlin's *oeuvre*, however, for the malevolent magic guarding it conjures forth an earthquake which violently shakes the chamber and forces the herbolists' hasty retreat to their ship, where they watch the island swim some 200 miles into the distance. Aquario dares open the smaller chest only after his return to Italy, where he finds (the word *inventione* is used repeatedly and deliberately in the preface, emphasizing the novelty of the discovery but also the originality the fictive originality of Merlin's poem) that everything except the unpolished, first-draft of Baldo's deeds has utterly vanished: Aquario suspects that someone has stolen the missing books concerning the country of the devil and speculates that they will eventually come to light—perhaps they were in the process of being written by the young monk?

After the second address to Lord Passarino, the last part of the treatise piles on the standard details of the life of the author (his place of birth, genealogy, and upbringing) as well as comparisons between ancient poetry (Virgil's poetry is the only ancient explicitly quoted) and various passages that Aquario has carefully selected passages from the two eclogues and anti-epic to advertise the merits of the collection to readers. Important for any discussion of the so-called "second battle over imitation" in Italy is that Aquario, following a reading of Merlin's manuscript, feels utter contempt towards the two most important ancient models for the Latin poetry and prose—Virgil and Cicero—and not a single vernacular author is mentioned.[13] Aquario is especially keen on silencing Merlin's critics, who claim that he is neither Mantuan nor a capable poet. This may point to the likely circulation of a manuscript of the *Baldus* prior to the publication of P (it was, after all, only *non ante impressi*).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the *libellus* is that the reader must take Lodela's editorial claims at face value: there is no way to judge whether the manuscript he has found, transcribed, edited, and finally printed with this preface is a faithful copy. And without an autograph manuscript of Teofilo's poem, the question of the authenticity of Merlin's manuscript is, like the identity of Passarino, just other way of discussing the fictionality of Macaronic itself. In short, like Petrarch of the *Familiares*, Folengo is from the first instance deeply committed to blending legitimate textual-historical questions with questions and tropes of a purely literary nature, generating fictions not necessarily 'in disguise', nor 'in the background'—behind the masks of his authorial selves, as it

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[13] The phrase "la seconda battaglia" in reference to the debate over imitation initiated by Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and Pietro Bembo is that of Remigio Sabbadini (*Storia del Ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'èta della Rinascenza*, 46-50). See Curti, "Il *Baldus* e il suo autore," 133.

were—but, through these vaguely historical figurations, in the open, directly in front of the readers' eyes. In so many words, his heteronyms are what allow the heterogeneity of the textual presentation of the macaronic book to assume the form that it does. It therefore leaps well beyond the temporal and textual limits of classical, medieval, or humanist (or post-post-postmodernist) efforts to open or close textual horizons.[14] This is substantially different from the auto-commentary tradition in Italy, since Dante-glossator or Lorenzo-glossator cannot be said to possess distinct fictional selves, but are rather versions of the same aspiring authors, who have written *post-facto* commentaries on their poems. Nor was the macaronic book designed as a carefully crafted forgery, like the *Pilodoxeos*, meant to be passed off to erudite readers as the work of an ancient author before triumphantly revealed to be the work and plan of all-knowing Alberti (Merlin is no ancient, though Teofilo is at times), and, of course, Aquario's dubious profession and preening, aggressive attitude closely aligns him with the tone and characters of some of the macaronic poems that survive to us, just as Merlin himself has a distant relative in Tifi, the intrepid Paduan clerk. But neither of the manuscripts that preserve these earlier authorial selves, nor their early print versions, display the complexity of the features that suddenly explode into view with the Paganini *Baldus*, with its dizzying array of codicological roles (poet, editor, glossator, "coder") which remain consistent and simultaneously preserve and attack scholarly conventions. And, of course, there is also the chivalric tradition, with its found-manuscript *topos* and its Turpin, or the Merlin-demon and assistant to Spargo's medieval Virgil, who conjures black magic and pops out of Merlin's marble tomb in book 16. In other words, as early as the 1510s, the complexity and power of Merlin's playful positioning in the text of the first book may be compared to those structured by Dante in his divine poem, Pico in his commentary on creation, or Erasmus in Folly's speech. A case may also be made that Ariosto's parody of Pico in the *Erbolato* is also indebted to Folengo's early pastiche of the philosopher in the Cingar-astrologer episode, and in Aquario-herbalist's *Libellus de Laudibus*.[15] At the same time, the macaronic project shares a profound appreciation for the unification of man's potential with the powers of his creator, i.e. Pico's explicit goal in the *Oratione*; the division of the self into multiple authorial roles paradoxically permits this monkish poet to unite several distinct textual traditions (secular and religious, humanist and scholastic, manuscript and print cultures, etc.) that were otherwise increasingly held separate in the period, and that would, moreover, have been extremely difficult to unite if not within the specific *stilus* allowed for by Macaronic. In so many words, the textual heterogeneity that is raised by the presence of competing textual selves

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[14] Though the comparison of Aquario to Nabokov's Charles Kinebote is not unreasonable, a better comparison is between the structure of *Pale Fire* and the macaronic book: the patent non-linearity of Nabokov's novel and the resulting multiple ways in which it calls to be read is not a modernist or postmodernist innovation so much as a participant in a history or lineage of such texts, which are traced more or less directly to a single common ancestor: the macaronic book (as do most examples of post-modernist "poioumenon", to evoke the helpful term of Alastair Fowler).

[15] For the argument that the target of the critique of astrology in both Cingar's speech and the preface is Pico (as well as Pontano), see chapter 2, section 4, above.

in the first two editions of the *Baldus* both emulates and profoundly critiques the coherence of Pico's syncretic and universalizing project for 'humanity'. At the very least, it can be seen to absorb into the textual entablature of Macaronic many of the basic problems raised by Pico, showing that man is only provisionally (and unstably) capable of being many things, of containing multiplicities, to wit Whitman's "I contain multitudes"—and only within the parameters of this joking, highly-referential fiction.

What Lodela's praise of the long-dead *auctor* makes abundantly clear is that Teofilo's poem, from its publication in 1517 forward, figures itself as something very different than a simple parody of a romance poem: this text is a transformation and elaborate synthesis of many distinct literary and textual traditions whose multiple innovations, by cultural necessity, require that its primary author be dead at the time of its editing. In fact, the tension between innovation and tradition in respect to its multiple pseudonyms, one of which is long since dead, is most visible in the Paganini edition, for there Merlin's muses are not *grassis* but rather *novellis*, 'new'. Merlin/Teofilo is fully aware that what they are doing is unprecedented, and that their macaronic epic has no equal in any ancient, medieval, or modern style; they is, moreover, unafraid to have Lodela say as much in the *Libellus* in 1517.

Now that I have demonstrated how the different parts of the macaronic introduction prepare the reader for Merlin's 17-*macaronices* heroic anti-*Aeneid*—both his and Teofilo's greatest claim to literary immortality—it is necessary to emphasize the clearly satirical nature of two episodes. Perhaps the most astonishing feature of the first edition is the entrance of the poet-figure Merlin into the tapestry of his ongoing narration. Nothing quite like this is found in earlier literature. Dante-poet never descends into his own poem to greet Dante-pilgrim and Virgilio, nor does Ariosto wholly collapse the distinction between the ironic poet who writes the proems of the *Furioso* and his automata "characters"—his Bradamante, Ruggiero, Orlando, Astolfo, and so forth, whose struggles he voyeuristically gazes down upon like omnipotent *scriba dei*—nor are his Merlin, Atlante, or Cassandra anything more than fictive characters—certainly *not* actively composing his poem so much as carefully controlled constructions who inhabit it. The descent of Folengo's Merlin into the *Baldus* is totally new, and arguably paves the way for similar occurrences in other, later fictions.

Only a few critics have noticed this fundamental contribution to the history of human narrative. Moreover, the speech is in good Latin, which makes it distinct from other parts of the poem. The other notable passage also written in Latin is the speech of Baldo's father, Guido, which preceeds it. As Galbiati points out in his excellent recent article on the episodes in the 1517 edition, Guido's speech lends epic gravitas to Baldo's adventure on the whale-island and, more importantly, bestows on the heroes a sacred model of contemplative life after their active duties have been relinquished. I disagree with Galbiati's claim, however, that Guido's words are delivered in a fully serious way by this narrator, or that the Guido is an effective "esempio di vita" for Baldo and his friends, altering the outcome of their future lives and fortunes after the slaying of the witch that inhabits this island.

I also disagree with Galbiati that Guido "non investe il figlio di nessuna missione", because at the end of the encounter he clearly tells them that Mafelina "nunc poenas pro crimine solvet" ("now she will pay the penalty for her crime"), a claim which at least implies that the *baroni*, whose conquests Guido has been observing from afar via his divinely-gifted power of "remote viewing," will be dealt with at long last. Galbiati is claiming that Baldo and his friends learn from Guido, and then from Merlin, how to be good Christians (223) and therefore abandon "le vanità dei valori"; that they will enjoy the same solitude as Guido, and, like him, go to Heaven after their deaths.[16] Baldo and his friends do not cease being thugs after Guido's speech, nor does the murder of Culfora seem like anything other than another page in the long history of misogynist literature, turning the woman into the Other, the object of male fascination and hatred. He even claims that Guido's example is connected to the preface's intimation that Baldo and his friends become themselves hermits at the end of the poem. The 'holiness' of the heroes is contradicted, however, by the fact that the tomb's inscriptions imply that the soul's of Baldo, and all his friends, have in fact gone to Hell (besides that of Boccalo, who is, after all, a jester, and is therefore restricted to Limbo, not Hell). This contradicts Galbiati's claim that the heroes are saved by either a retreat into contemplative isolation or the confession administered to them by Merlin, even if they followed in Guido's footsteps and found a grotto to inhabit for the remainder of their days. It is better to assume that Guido and Merlin are, in addition to imitations of other wise old men/wizards in chivalric literature, deeply satirical representations of both the age-old ascetic movement in Europe as well as the liberality of the indulgence-granting Church. Like the hero-thug Baldo and his friends, Guido and Merlin are as functionally double-sided as Macaronic itself—both self-effacingly satirical and solemnly straight-faced in their "pure" Latin eloquence, both bombastic liars and pillars of Christian piety and sanctitude.

After telling the heroes about his retreat into the solitude of a mountain cave after death of Baldovina, Guido reveals that the island they have been exploring sits on the back of an enormous whale, a miraculous thing which can only be the product of magic. In fact, Guido makes it clear in at least two places in his speech that magic for Merlin/Folengo has a mostly negative valence. The first is the mention of Baldovina's love as being "like that of the magical women" [read witch]; the second is the magic of Mafelina. The elaborate narration of his love affair with Baldovina emphasizes that she was "velut feminei generi magis" (an overt suggestion that carnal desire made the daughter of France act more like a witch than a human) and that their choice to have pre-marital sex led to serious mental anxiety for both parties—followed by a difficult, very likely unwanted

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[16] Galbiati cites Baldo's remembrance of Guido's advice at 16.44-46 as evidence for this ("Nostras fides Christi magicas non extimat artes. / Guido pater quondam monuit non esse robustos / incantatorum contra miracula falsa". Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. While it is clear that Baldo and his friends have, to a certain extent, become the faithful warriors of Christ they certainly become in the later editions, especially after their blessing by Merlin in book 16, Guido has shown them how to disenchant the magic spells of witches, and has even turned them into abominable witch-hunters who must discover, dispel, and kill potentially innocent women in a very unchristian manner. See Galbiati, "Lettura del *Baldus* dell'edizione Paganini (1517)," 223.

pregnancy and, saddest of all, Baldovina's early death in childbirth. This is basically a *riassunto* of the first book of the poem, which provides a satirical and "misogynist" depiction of Guido and Baldovina's doomed romance. Guido's speech is considerably less "light" than the narration of jokes and battles in the rest of the Paganini *Baldus*, but it too has echoes of pagan satire woven into it. For example, it begins with an open quotation of Persius's *Satires* 2.61-3 ("O curvae in terris animae et caelestium inanis, / quid iuvat hoc, templis nostros inmittere mores / et bona dis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa?"), noteworthy for its easily Christianized vanity theme, but written by a non-Christian Roman satirist:

> "O curvae in terris animae et caelestium inanes,
> quantum nunc homini foedatur imago tonantis.
> O caeci, qui summa ignorant sublimia spernunt
> implicitas volvunt terrae per inania mentes.
> Felices, mundi spretis qui luxibus, altam
> ad patriam qua regnat amor divinus, anelhant.
> . . .
> Guido fui quondam, sine quo rex ipse nec horam
> vixisset, tantum erga me monstrabat amorem.
> . . .
> Iamque prophetandi mihi parta est gratia: totum
> ante meos oculos Deus orbem semper apertum
> concessit, mentesque hominum, venturaque rerum
> hoc insignitus dono dulcissime fili.
> Balde tuam semper felici numine vitam
> inspeculor, quoniam tu solus nostra propago es.
> . . .
> Hactenus arbitrio praesens stetit insula nostro,
> insula quae summo plantatur tergore cethae
> haud naturali, magico sed carmine ficto.
> Sic etenim perversa Deo Muselina ferente
> composuit, sed nunc poenas pro crimine solvet,
> nam paradisiacos ad honores scando. Valete." (241-332)

O, souls bent to earth and void of heavenly thoughts, how much is the image of the thundering god dishonored? O, blind ones, those who are ignorant of the highest things despise the lofty things, and roll the entangled minds of the earth in vain. The happy ones, despising the world's luxury, yearn for the lofty homeland in which divine love reigns. . . I was formerly Guido, first in the renowned court of the French king, without whom the king himself would not have lived for an hour, such was the love

he showed toward me... And now the grace of prophecy is given to me: God has granted the whole world ever opened before my eyes, as well as the minds of men and things to come, marked by this sweetest gift of his son. Baldo, I have watched your life always with favorable divine will, since you alone are our offspring.... The island has hitherto stood present at our disposal, an island which is planted on the back of a whale, not by natural forces, but by an imaginary magical song. Thus indeed the perverted goddess Muselina was borne, but now she will pay the penalty for her crime; I, on the other hand, now climb to paradisiacal honors. Farewell.

Guido then suddenly and mechanically passes away in a manner that can only be read as humorous: "Sic dicens iunctis palmis ac poplite flexo, / tradidit extremas coram plorantibus auras" ("Thus saying, with his hands and knees joined together, he delivered up his final breath before the weeping men" (333-4)). There is no indication that the author is in ill health prior to this moment; like Merlin at the finale of the 1521 edition, Guido simply—and with no explanation—dies. Why? If this speech is meant to encourage Baldo and his friends to become Christians, why does this have to involve the death of his father and the murder of an otherwise innocent witch? Certainly, we can say that having Guido bend over like a rag doll and leave the text does not increase the drama of the speech, nor underscore the message it is supposed to supply to Baldo and his friends. But the bathetic and humorously mechanical nature of the scene once again suggests that Merlin is toying with us, making his characters pop in and out of existence in a way that is supposed to elicit our laughter. Of course, this naturally undermines the notion that, by the end of the poem, Merlin has created a totally serious Christian epic, even a call to action in the "real" world. Rather, Guido's speech reflects the *Baldus*' status as an embodiment of Renaissance *serio ludere*: his poem is a highly complex *anti*-epic, which shows itself time and again to be capable of both hilarity and high seriousness at the same time, generating overtly moral *exempla* that are simultaneously ironic and, at the very least, double-sidedly ridiculous.

As I mentioned above, perhaps the most interesting aspect of Merlin's entrance into the poem in book 16, which happens just after Nocentina's famous mention of the "young Folengo's" nearly calamitous brush with temptation at 16.244 ("decepique mea iuvenens cum fraude Folengum", long thought to be an allusion to a real, "autobiographical" encounter between Teofilo and a dread temptress) is that it is unprecedented in all prior human literature. This is because the narrator-poet who, up to this point in the narration, has been introduced in Aquario's epistle to Passarino—but has otherwise narrated the poem alongside the 'concealed' author—quite literally descends into his own ongoing narration, banishes a dangerous witch, and greets his characters *in carne ed ossa* within the fabric of the ongoing narration, imparting them with dangerous mission—all while narrating their reactions to us. Aquario's quotation of Merlin's biographical speech in the preface emphasizes the total and complete originality of what is going on here—again, nothing like this passage occurs in any of the Italian chivalric epics, high or low, prior to 1517. While the prolonged

Figure 4.1: Folengo, woodcut of Guido reporting his story to Baldo and his crew, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 174r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University

confession of the heroes to Merlin is also very original (in terms of both vernacular romance and Latin literature produced in the period), what is even more astonishing is what is happening at the narralogical and metatextually level of Merlin's speech: something that might be thought of as the collapse of the traditional, epic, 'Virgilian' narrator into a more satirical, 'colloquial' narratological form. Moreover, the fact it is quoted at length in Aquario's preface (and, later, adapted into the pièce de résistance which is the preface book 22 in VC) speaks to the fact that the entire macaronic book is what ultimately permits this unprecedented configuration of author-within-text.[17] What happens in the macaronic text 'stays' in the macaronic text.[18] It is something that Aquario is well aware of when he writes in the gloss to v. 263 about "Cociao Merlin": "Iste senior est noster praeclarus poeta Cocaius Merlinus quis non auditu sed palpatu Baldum decantavit" ("This old man is our famous poet Cocaio Merlin who, having not only heard but touched Baldus, sang [about him].") His speech is brief, but he does emphasize Baldo's providential fate, which is soon to christen him as Warrior of God and, eventually, scourge of witches:

> Alloquitur senior: "Bene iam veniatis amici!
> sunt anni centum quod vos expecto per istas
> speluncas, hoc summa mihi providentia tempus
> concessit donec te possem Balde videre.
> Qui perges (si vera docent mihi sidera) totas
> per baratri partes terraeque secreta videbis.
> Unde tuam vitam nec non cantare prodezzas
> disposui, si tanta mihi conceditur aetas;
> donec cum sociis presentibus inde revertas.
> Nomine Cocaius dicor de sanguine Mantos
> est mihi cognomen Merlinus Macaronensis.
> Vos Deus in unum iunxit tutosque reduxit;
> restat adimplatis summi praecepta Tonantis
> qui vos elegit propter lustrare paesos
> tartareos nobisque illas contare facendas.

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[17] One obvious objection is Dante, whose two auto-commentaries and divine epic are endlessly 'metatextual'. My point is not to suggest that Teofilo is outdoing Italy's greatest author in any way, but rather to suggest that this particular narratological configuration—where the author suddenly appears within the diegesis and then blinks out of the text, reassuming the narration 'from above'—is totally new, and should probably have been discussed by Bahktin in one of his essays on the dialogic imagination, or even by Gerard Genette, who is clearly too afraid to mention Folengo in his various analyses of different kinds of narrative discourse.

[18] I am alluding to the first rule of the fighting club featured in 1996 novel by Chuck Palahniuk, which are famously reiterated two times to its participants (by the actor Brad Pitt) in the now famous 1999 movie of the same name: "What happens in Fight Club stays in Fight Club" (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p. 96. It is worth pointing out that the character Tyler, the founder of Fight Club in the novel, and the creator of its rules, turns out to be the schizophrenic projection of the narrator-protagonist's fractured ego.

> Vobis conveniet magnus passare fatigas
> quod desperati vitae quondoque saritis.
> Gratia caelestis vobiscum semper inessens
> undique deffendet: non vos mortalia possunt
> laedere si coeli dominus praebebit aiuttum.
> Attamen o socii vos confessare bisognat
> quae commisistis in vestrae tempore vitae.
> Nec confessandi quaeso vergogna sit ulla
> nam vobis meritum talis vergogna parabit." (16.255-79)

The old man addresses them: "Now, friends, let you be welcome! A hundred years I have waited for you in these caverns; highest providence granted this time until I could see Baldo. You who travel (if my stars teach me the truth) will see through the parts of infernal regions and the secrets of the earth. Whence I have set your life and exploits to song, if so much age is allowed to me; until you return thence with your friends present. I am named Cociao of the blood of Manto, and my surname is Macaronic Merlin. God has brought you together and led you back unharmed; it remains for you to obey the commands of the highest thunderer who has elected you for the sake of purifying the Tartarean country, and for me to innumerate [your] deeds. It is necessary for you to overcome great hardships, such that at times you will be in despair for your lives. Heavenly grace, always present with you, will defend you on every side: mortals can't harm you if the Lord of heaven gives you help. But nevertheless, O comrades, you must confess to what you have committed in the time of your lives. Nor I ask there to be any shame in confessing, for such shame will prepare this honor for you.

The author here breaks up the sequence of Nocentina's attack on the heroes, reveals his Guido-like prophetic powers to the heroes, and hears confessions from these soldiers of God. He then bestows on them the mission that Guido left only implied in his speech: they will have to complete this final battle in order for the poem to end—and the world to change for good once again. Baldo is the most willing to confess; Cingar hesitates because he has committed so many crimes; Falchetto, crying, finally acquiesces; as does Hircanus, Fracasso (who committed relatively few sins); then follows the Centaur, Moschinus, Philotheus, Rubinus, Bocalo, Lirone (who takes an entire day)— all these characters are forgiven and can finally move on with their lives. Merlin then feeds the barons a humble but filling meal described at length (underscoring how he, like Guido, is a lowly but loyal hermit), before revealing to them, at the beginning of the next book, the entrance of a subterranean passage under Mafelina's smithy. The passage leads to a storeroom containing mythical arms of chivalric, biblical, and historical origins (17.1-100). Merlin may thus be said to play a fundamentally important role in preparing the heroes mentally, physically, and spiritually for the final battle against Culfora and her minions, which is soon to confront them. After all,

when they do receive their arms, Baldo reminds them that "Cocaie pater benedictie nobis" ("we have Father Cocaio's blessing").

On the one hand, Merlin is in this passage being as solemn and serious as any character in the whole of the first version of the *Baldus*. In the context of the later 1510s, however, his use of the word *elegere*, which makes clear that God himself has elected Baldo and his friends to be the ones to eliminate the final witch, is ambiguous, even ironic. The insinuation that Baldo's life and deeds have Divine sponsorship, echoed elsewhere in the poem and repeated in later versions, confirms the author's familiarity with not only the potentially heretical, Pauline interpretation of the bible supported by the protestants, but possibly a knowledge of the heretical doctrines of Luther and, later, Calvin, whose dubious assurances that God has hand-picked an elect for salvation on an unconditional basis—and therefore damned the rest of mankind—means that the lives and fates of peoples everywhere have been predetermined from the very beginning of time (including Teofilo-Merlin's, who, crucially, is suggesting here that *he* must be counted among the elected: "nobis contare facendas"). As a careful follower of the true, evangelical Catholic doctrine, Teofilo doubtlessly considered predestination to be anathema, and, while intriguing from a philosophical perspective, impossible; later in his life, he would become be a voice of empathy and protest against the unholy crusade again witches in this troubled century. The confusion among critics of the *Baldus* arises when election, like *sola fide* and other deeply heretical views, are attributed to Teofilo the innocent Benedictine monk, and not to Merlin the poet-heteronym. Merlin, indeed, is also a pile of contradictions: he claims that God has chosen Baldo and his friends for this adventure and then immediately proceeds to demand confessions from them—a demand which is more in line with True Catholic Doctrine and that may or may not save the souls of these violent and profligate sinners.[19] In other words, in the first edition of the *Baldus*, the concept of election is treated in an ambiguous and half-serious way, meant to satirize the new "protestant" heresies from the North by applying them in a half-serious way to this author as well as to the fates of his characters, and assimilating them with Catholic sacraments, like confession. As Cosimo Burgassi has pointed out, the mention of God's desire to *unify* the sinners recalls the Pauline doctrine of the unity of Christendom (*Ephesians* 4.20-25, *Romans* 12.4-5, and *Corinthians* 12.12), pointing to a potentially ideological undertone for the *Baldus* and the macaronic book as a whole: as a rival to Virgil, Merlin will not so much restore the Empire by slaying these enemies of Truth, but unite and liberate the peoples who suffer under the yoke of the *potenti* to the original and pure harmony of early Christianity (hence the humble meal Merlin provides to the heroes after their confessions have been heard and

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[19] There is also no indication in these confessions to suggest that Baldo and his friends are unrepentant or that they seek to somehow fake their confessions, like so many Boccaccian Cepparelli (though perhaps not in the case of Cingar). They reveal everything to Merlin, and disclose to him that they are truly sorry for having killed so many people in the venal pursuit of a rollicking good time.

their sins absolved).[20] But Merlin is no northern reformer/heretic: he desires to do his best to save the souls of these sinners. Indeed, as I mentioned above, Aquario's epistle suggests that the confessions do not save the souls of Baldo and his friends from eternal Hellfire, and that their souls ultimately descend into the Inferno upon defeating Culfora (perhaps this was a sin that they also needed to confess for, but were unable to?):

> Et Cocaius in benedixit quinquies illos
> mox se reclusit iam discedentibus illis. (140-1)

And Cocaius blessed them five times, but soon confined himself when they were departing.

4.2 Merlin Cocaio, Master of the (Macaronic) Multiverse

A rainbow of new preliminary texts stretches across the stage of the new-and-improved Toscolana edition, giving voice to the previously silent herbalist companions of Aquarius as well as a totally new and dasterdly corrupter figure, who is mentioned in several of the prefatory materials and is upbraided in the fictive letter by Lodela. On the title page the reader is greeted by a sestina penned by one of the herbalists identified at the beginning of the first letter to Passarino, Gian Baricocola or "John Apricot," whose last name forms a pun on the slang for ballsack. The *Hexasticon Ioannis Baricocolae*, whose connection to the editor is comparable to Raphael Hythloday's addressee in the hexasticon included after the title page of the 1516 Latin edition of More's *Utopia*—and is thus flagged as operating within the fictive space of the macaronic universe which emerged, now years ago, with the publication of the first macaronic book—almost exactly as Hythloday's poem brings the reader into the fictional satire of More's "no-place" by addressing a figure within that fictive, utopian universe. This six-verse poem also serves as a coda to the *frontespizio* of T, where Aquario includes a list of titles containing descriptions of each of his works:

> Merdiloqui putrido Scardaffi stercore nuper
>   omnibus in bandis imboazata fui;
> me tamen Acquarii Lodolae sguratio lavit,
>   sum quoque savono facta galanta suo.

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[20] See "Per *Baldus* XXII, 168*," *Quaderni folenghiani* 8 (2010): 88. Burgassi also points out that the emphasis placed on the herectical doctrine of election is made even more explicit in the passage of the poem from P to VC (90), especially in Baldo's response to Merlin at VC 22.162-166: "Dudum coelestis nota est clementia Patris, qui non misurat quantum peccamus in illum, sed nos optat, amat, tirat salvatque ribaldos; *nos immo elegit, nos immo vocavit ad esse iustitiae invictos soldatos atque barones*. The *telos* of Rabelais' *Pantagruel* is often claimed to carry out an analogous fictive transaction, defeating the armies of Picrochole.

Ergo me, populi, comprantes solvite borsas:
si quis avaritia non emit, ille miser.[21]

I was recently soiled in every part by the putrid excrement of shit-eating Scardaffus. Nevertheless, the cleaning of Aquario Lodela has cleansed me; thanks to his soap I have become graceful. Therefore, people, open your purses to buy me: who out of avarice does not buy me, is a wretched one.

In these verses, Baricocola ventriloquizes the macaronic book's barbed attack against one Scardaffus Zaratanus—a counterfeiter-corrupter about to be lambasted at much greater length in Aquario's furious *Epistolium colericum*—and informs the *populi* or the potential buyers of the macaronic book that Aquario Lodela has valiantly restored this implied stolen manuscript to a publishable state after Scardaffus' slanderous and stercorous debasement. Baricocola has been plucked from the *Libellus de laudibus Merlini Cocaii* and is here transformed into Folengo's fully-developed heteronym, whose control over Macaronic is made readily apparent by the flamboyantly hybrid, scatologically obscene, and plainly non-Latin lexis of the text (e.g. "merdiloqui," "imboazata," "sguratio," "comprantes", "galanta."). The personification of the macaronic book in the sestina (which speaks in the metaphorical language of purity and profanity linked to the *topos* of a stolen and corrupted autograph manuscript) aggressively hawks this new edition to its eager early modernist consumers. Evidently, we are to now shun the Paganini edition in which we first met Aquario and his intrepid herbalist friends spelunking the monastery-cave necropolis wherein the character's of Merlin were shut. By the bottom of the first page of T, Folengo has therefore introduced a mostly new companion to Aquario, who presently bullies the reader into buying the book by calling them names and adopting an extremely threatening satirical pose: if we do not fork over the money due they are to have attributed to them one of the multiple negative definition of *Latin* word *miser*! The release of the new macaronic volume calls for the employment of completely new herbalist-editor-heteronyms, one capable of performing a few of the new and pressing subordinate tasks in the management of the macaronic book-vending business. Johannis Baricocola is therefore a subordinate to Loleda, who provides an additional voice to the macaronic book in a way that would be immediately recognizable to any classically trained consumer of printed material.

The reader is thus greeted by what seems to be a collaborative project: the names of not one, but *two* fictitious and fully macaronic pseudonyms parade before our eyes on the first page of the Toscolana edition, at least one of which is writing to us for the first (and last) time. The reader is also encouraged to disregard the first version of the macaronic book (but which?), regarding these two variants as maliciously corrupted and pirated copies of a stolen autograph that is now decked out with many apocryphal glosses. How can one mistake the beautiful volume in which

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[21] I quote from the transcription of the *Hexasticon* provided (as a quote) by Zaggia in the introduction to his edition of the Toscolana *Zanitonella* (op. cit., p. 49).

Baricocola's name first appeared (as Aquario's compatriot in the *Libellus*) for something dirtied by such an evil corrupter and counterfeiter?[22] What is most evident, however, is that the introductory poem aims to prepare the readers for the veritable explosion of textual innovation in subsequent pages, as well as the ventriloquization of heteronyms pulled from the original island expedition (Baricocola, Salvanello Boccatorta, and Dimeldeo Zuccone).[23] In short, if the first edition of the macaronic book is constructed so as to make any reading of the *Baldus* and its textual features dependent on the story reported to us by Aquario in the *Epistolium colericum magistri Aquarii ad Scardaffum Zartanum Merlini poëmatis corruptorem*, the Toscolana edition both vastly expands this macaronic textual universe in each of its existing parts while simultaneously bringing new perspectives, voices, and book practices into dialogue with the macaronic universe, via the addition of new, extra-macaronic features (a Latin dialogue, the vernacular letters and sonnet, an *errata corrige*, and a *tabula vel repertorium facetarium*). These non-macaronic additions enter the Toscolana edition only at the end of the book; in other words, if one is unfamiliar with the macaronic style and has simply chanced upon the book at the bookstore or borrowed it from a friend, one only learns that its sustained multilingual satire is an extended "joke" when one has finished the entire book and seen the non-macaronic material added to its end. But the more serious and engaged follower of Merlin will know that this book is not the construction of a group of strangely-speaking herbolists, led by the bombastic and intrepid Lodela, or any team of scholars hoping to make a few bucks by churning out a book of collaboratively written goliardic poems. They will instead recognize that this volume is the product of a single individual—a cowled monk from Mantua, no less—who has ingeniously and perhaps for the first time in the history of this emergent technology, personally seen to the typesetting and printing of a highly complex and layered textual artwork that deploys multiple literary heteronyms, whose roles and personalities are clearly defined and are

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[22] Folengo's critics will naturally understand that there were at least two reprints of the Paganini edition in circulation by 1521, one which includes substantial additions and changes to Aquario's glosses (the other only light emendations). This reprint, issued by Cesare Arrivabene in 1520, is very likely the target of both the *Hexasticon* and the *Epistolium*, unless the trope of the stolen manuscript is simply a literary fiction—an elaborate ruse invented by our monk to entertain us, perhaps before the circulation of the 1521 *Furioso*. The hypothesis that Gian Baricocola and Lodela is *not* referring to the Paganini is carefully examined by Carlo Cordié ["A che alludeva con precisione la sfuriata a Scardaffo? Alla Paganini '17 no di certo..."] in his "L'edizione principe delle "Maccheronee" folenghiane e le sue due ristampe," *La Bibliofilía* 51, no. 1 (1949): 55-56. Cordié also notes that the "manipolazione" of the glosses in this edition are at times indistinguishable those that Folengo-Lodela would have made ["mutamenti, soppressioni e aggiunte che a prima vista possono anche sembrare dell'autore"] and that the edition on the whole "mostra la possibilità di un interessamento dell'autore" (p. 48).

[23] Aquario quotes Salvanello in at least ten times in the glosses to the *Baldus* alone. Zucccono, now a scholar of Hebrew, is also quoted in at least one of the gloss, and he appears in the preface to T with four Jewish natural scientists ("quatuor praticatissimi artis physicae Giudei") Samuel, Nabaioth, Helcana, and Ruch. Unfortunately, I have not found any reference to Buttadeo Gattarogna outside of Aquario's *libellus de laudibus Merlini Cocaii* or the *Laudes Merlini*. References to a different erudite macaronic authority, Quintino Scaramella, are also present in the glosses—this is in all likelihood the same Scaramella that stars in the first eclogue of P. There is also a mysterious *poetae godii* (perhaps Sordello, a famous poet from Goito?) quoted in the glosses.

very different from that of the author-poet. Also entirely new are the dozens of full-page wood-cuts included in this edition, which begin with the image of the macaronic muses feeding the poet dumplings and have been inserted into the narrative, key to Folenghian *entrelacement* (and not rigorously fixed to the beginning of each canto, as one finds in the first illustrated editions of the *Furioso* by Nicolò Zoppino).[24]

The emphasis that all these "extra"-textual features places on the total originality of Merlin's textual construct is born out by the poet's use of the ending of the title of the epistle to Passarino, *Laudes Merlini eiusdem magistri Acquarii Lodolae ad illustrem dominum Pasarinum Scarduarum comitem de vita et morbus Merlini Cocaii et de inventione huius voluminis*. Here the reader must of course remember that the word *inventione* is being used in a deliberately macaronic manner, activating its distinct literal and rhetorical meanings in both Latin and the vernacular (the finding of a novel on an island that is currently being "invented" as its author writes it; the finding/locating of the commonplaces necessary to construct the book and its textual spaces and episodes in the author's memory, et cetera). While the countless differences between the first and the second epistle are impossible to fully list in this dissertation, one notices immediately that there is a higher percentage of macaronic words present in the prose of the second letter, and that hilarious new details have been added to almost every passage, such as a comparison of the entering herbalists to cats from a fable involving "Apollo and a prosciutto," or the addition of the title of Merlin's poem (Aquario now reports that its title is *De gestis et facendis Baldis*, adding that the original chest also contained the *Moschaea* and the *Zanitonella*, which had been removed by Scardaffus and thus left out of the first, "corrupted," edition). Most importantly, in addition to describing Scardaffus' castration of the first edition, Aquario details the editorial process in much greater detail: "comentariolum meum, et argumenta cuiscumque libri composui, univique libros inferni cum prioribus Baldi gestis." Merlin's prophetic nature is again underscored in the *accessus* part of the letter, and for the first time the Gonzaga family is directly mentioned, along with the pontificate of Leo X and Julius II:

> Verum super omnes quae in ipso fuerant virtutes, propheticum habuit spiritum nam de pontificatu Iulii et Leones praedixit, deque Gonzagarum felicitate, diversorumque nobilium suae civitatis.

> *But above all the virtues that were in him, he had the spirit of a prophet, for he predicted the pontificates of Julius and Leo, and of the success of the Gonzaga, and various other nobles of his city.*

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[24] For the best study and contextualization of the woodcuts in all the variants and reprints of the macaronic book, see Alessandra Paola Macinante, "Parodia per immagini: Appunti sulla tradizione silografica del Baldus," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 18, no. 2 (2015): 371–396.

This is the first indication that the world of Macaronic and the historical reality of sixteenth-century Italy are not unconnected, but often overlap in ways that compromise the otherwise carefully sealed "fictionality" of the macaronic project. In fact, in these early years of the 1520s, Folengo's Gonzaga patron, Federico II, will be absolutely essential for securing his livelihood, not to mentioning publishing the second macaronic book for all to read.

On the heels of the *Epistolium* and the *Laudes Merlini* follow two ingenious treatises, both explicitly authored by Merlin, the first the famed *Merlini Cocaii apologetica in sui excusationem*, and the second a *Normula macaronica de sillabis* explaining the rules of proper composition in Macaronic. These additions may be presumed to have been restored and included in the edition after their removal by the castrator-corruptor Scardaffus; but outside the increasingly confusing editorial fiction of the macaronic book, Merlin's prefaces clearly function as a response to any number of criticisms of *Folengo*'s macaronic project, heard by the poet after the dissemination of the first edition.[25] Again, the prefaces both legitimize Folengo's work as well as distance him from its satirical and supercilious author, Macaronic Merlin. The four parts that follow the prefaces (in order, the *Zanitonella*, *Moschaea*, *Phantasiae macaronicon*, and *Libellus epistolarum et epigrammatum*) are organized and given titles, reaffirming that Aquario is the one organizing the textual features of the macaronic book and the one doing the demanding editing work. At the same time, however, Merlin seems to have become even more meta-textual, including material like a *Prohemiunculum* that prefaces the eclogue collection: in its full, extravagant title, it is named *Merlini Cocaii poëtae mantuani Zanitonella, constans diversis ex sonolegiis et ecclogis pastoris Tonelli, qui pastorellam Zaninam ardebat*. The eight-verse *Merlini Cocaii Prohoemiunculum in sua Zanitonellam* is a tour de force display of audacious showmanship, breathlessly daring readers across trotting elegaic couplets to scrutinize every word of his compositions, no matter how apparently confusing or profane. The anaphora and alliteration of the sestina confirm that the teasing, satirical voice of Merlin is speaking, again 'getting away' with saying what he wants to and warding off all those who have "Rhinoceros noses": it's up to the reader to savor the flavor of a text cooked "a puntino", just right. Like the macaronic book in Baricola's epigram, the *Zanitonellam* speaks for itself in this short metrical composition:

> Libriculum quicumque capit, quem perlegat, istum,
>   cesset, si nasum rhinocerotis habet.
> Non me nasutis, non meque dicacibus edo,
>   non quibus est humilis nausa videre libros.
> Me legat amussim quisquis legit omnia, quisquis
>   scit quia fert aliquid lectio quaeque boni
> Lusimus ista puer ficto sub amore Tonelli;

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[25] See chapter 2, section 2 for my treatment of Merlin's *Apology*.

libriculi titulum 'Zanitonella' voco.[26]

Whoever takes in hand this little book and reads through it should stop if he has the nose of a rhinoceros. I do not put forth myself for the censorious, for the sarcastic, for those to whom it is nausea to see a humble book. Let anybody who is willing to read anything read me exactly, since anyone knows that any reading brings some benefit. I composed these verses in youth, under the fiction of Tonello's love; the little book is entitled Zanitonella.

After the seven eclogues (in sapphics and hexameters) and the thirteen *sonolegìe* (a hybrid form modelled after the Petrarchan sonnet, consisting of fourteen elegiac couplets) that make up the bulk of the *Zanitonella*, we discover a quite lovely "*Strambotolegia Merlini in excusationem huius Zanitonellae*" in which the poet boasts of his achievements rather than seek forgiveness for his outrageous representation of the love of peasants (as the words "in excusationem" of the title suggests that he might). The *strambotolegia* assures us that this new work, like a Horatian *Carmina* or an Ovidian *Metamorphoses*, will be read for all of time, securing for its author everlasting fame, "super alta astra":[27]

Livida semineci mors quae tulit inguen Achillis,
　　reddita quo falsum Troia domaret equum,
Bistonios audet - fateor dispellere nautas,
　　sed non Zaniphili carpere fata mei.
Dixit Apollinei quantum ferat ulna Phitonis,
　　dixit et obscurae quanta sit esca lyrae.
Non reprobent Latiae, pastor quae dixerit, aures:
　　castus in hoc gracili cortice gaudet amor.[28] (925-32)

Envious death, which brought the privy parts of Achilles to the half-dead city, fell back on him so that Troy could defeat the deceiving horse. It dared—I admit—to dispel the Bistonian sailors. But it did not dare to detract from the fate of my Zanfilo. It said how much endured the arm of Apollonian Python, and it said how great is the lure of a mysterious lyre. The ears of Latins do not condemn what the pastor has said: under this simple bark rejoices a chaste love.

Just as the machinations of death (which sunk the boats of Thracian sailors and smote Achilles) are unable to detract from the fate of his Zanifilo (a name whose form explicitly echoes Colonna's

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[26] Folengo, *Macaronee minori*, 141-42.

[27] *Met.* 15.875-6.

[28] op. cit., pp. 141-42.

Polifilo), the envious ears of Latinist readers will be unable to detract from what Merlin-pastor has written: for no love could be as *castus* as the one described in his pastorals.[29] In other words, Merlin uses the *strambotolegia* as another opportunity to superciliously silence potential critics and plug for the future relevance of his elegant collection of bucolic verses. Since the two eclogues that come after the *strambotolegia* are simply revised versions of those included in the Paganini edition, the latter may be read as a postface for the *Zanitonella* as a whole. It is once again clear that the rules of textual macaronics call for apparently 'paratextual' material to be *included* within the on-going game that the powers-that-be structure around the lonely editorial work of this wayward monk.[30]

In total, there are more than 10 named components of the Toscolana editions in addition to the four main works. Two that merit mention before we more closely examine passages from the Toscolana *Baldus* praising the Gonzaga and condemning the corruption of the Church are the *Prohemium Merlini Cocaii super phantasiam suam* and the *Merlini Cocaii poetae mantuani prologus in Moschem, puerili tempore compositum*. Both of these remarkable texts underscore the importance that the creator of the macaronic book affords to prefacing his macaronic works and designating the period of their composition as one of youthful exuberance. In the case of the 40-verse *Proemium* addressed to *phantasiam suam* (in this edition, the title of the *Baldus* itself), Merlin provides what is in essence a *dramatis personae*, both naming and elaborating upon almost every important character in his epic fantasy (some of whom have been renamed or added, such as Malfattus or Serraffus).[31] Lodela also provides some encouraging details in the glosses, like a "Merlinus in adolescentia sua macaronicus", indications that the *Baldus* is not to be interpreted as a measure of the full potential of this Merlin, but only the products of his earliest, embarrassing juvenilia. While not surviving into the following two editions, these "extras" are crucial for a) underscoring the difference between the roles and occupied by Merlin and Aquario in the cast of the poet's heteronyms and b) emphasizing the importance of the integrity of the macaronic book as an collection or amalgamation of many different texts, which in their totality comprise an *opus* that occupies its own space, its own universe, somewhere between the rich vernacular and Latin textual cultures of sixteenth century Italy.

In addition to new authorial figures, such as the magician Seraphus, the Toscolana *Baldus*

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[29] The poetic figure that Merlin is deploying here is that of the *cortex* of allegorical verse, pastoral poetry being among its most historied forms.

[30] Zaggia notes that "Con la precedente sonolegìa si può considerare conclusa la *Zanitonella*... si riferiscono evidentemente ad una fase successiva, e quindi a tutto rigore costituiscono un'appendice alla Zan. T" (p. 141).

[31] After a refrain of many verses that almost do make the reader into a Nestor, the proem ends by telling the book to go and seek forgiveness from anyone that it should or if by chance "a poet was revealed": "Vade liber, veniamque pete si offendimus ullum, / Vel si detectus forte Poeta fuit." The phrase "detectus poeta" may also point to the clear difference between Merlin and Teofilo. In her dissertation, Mullaney writes that "the emphasis is on the semi-dedication to fantasy: these writings are the product of the youthful half of Merlin's life, not the mature, religious half" (93).

contains many added textual perplexities for readers to ponder over, beginning with paragraph headings identifying the different parts of the ongoing narration with either a description of the contents or an ascription of the dominant macaronic muses invoked to help compose it.[32] The newly-lengthened elegiac book summaries penned by Aquario Lodela as well as the many additional glosses, some in a smaller and larger fonts, spotlight the fact that this poem has been updated and therefore vastly improved, with significant expansions to the textual features pioneered in the first edition. The poem itself swells by seven whole books, now comprising 25 *macaronices* which include the infamous *libri diavolorum* Lodela presumed were lost in the epistle prefacing P. Meanwhile, the poem has been almost entirely reworked from the bottom up, with a marked decrease in the passages in Latin, and a general increase in the ubiquity of 'macaronic' and dialectical words and phrase. The lexical shift in the 1521 *Baldus* points to the increasing importance of the debate about language and imitation at the beginning of the decade and to the significance that Folengo places on the linguistic and textual originality (both in the vernacular and in Latin) of the work, rather than on a servile imitation of one single authority, whether it be Virgil, Petrarch, or any other humanist imitator of our Merlin.

What makes the Toscolana edition of the *Baldus* a very different beast from the Paganini version, however, is the inclusion of many references to the world of Folengo's "historical present,"—to the Gonzagas, for example, as well as to the various and sundry personal conflicts, monastic vendettas, and biographical episodes that the author goes out of his way to share with privileged readers. Indeed, the separation between Merlin and the well-concealed narrator often breaks down in the edition, or the two "voices" become suddenly and jarringly juxtaposed. From the extended praise of the Gonzaga, to the addition of the episode of Manto's grotto and the praise of Baldo's second wife, Crispidis, the Toscolana edition is in many respects a very different artifact than the textual "skeleton" it had been assembled upon, an artifact that is much more attuned to itself as literary and historical product of some cultural and historical significance for the period in which it was written, and, what is more, capacious enough as a poetic object to absorb and distend many different kinds of discourse, without its author loosing the thread of his narrative about Baldo and his mission to Hell, and beyond.[33] The addition of new moralizing proems (5.1-43, 7.1-18, 20.1-11, 21.1-21)—a feature completely absent from the Paganini—as well as the new invectives, moralizing episodes, and ecomiastic passages, underscore the author's increased moral and ethical seriousness, as well as his increasing confidence as an author willing to distinguish himself from Merlin—a liberation no doubt enabled by his extensive travels and studies between 1517 and 1521.

The resounding critique of the conduct of the Church found in book 7 of the Toscolana edition is one of the main reasons why this poet-monk has so often been associated with the early stirrings

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[32] See chapter 3, section 3.

[33] Both the popularity of the first edition of the *Baldus* as well as Folengo's reading of the first *Furioso* (perhaps during his supposed visit to Ferrara, where he might have met Ariosto in person) are factors that one must take into consideration when accounting for the transformation of the poem between these years.

of the reformation movement in Italy. Not only does this book begin with an astonishing proem in which the poet "converses with himself" ("dialogizat secum poeta"), exposing the beliefs of an otherwise concealed author who debates with Merlin about whether he ought to tell the (macaronic) truth to the whole world, or just stay silent, this book is filled with uproarious and salacious details about the decadent and corrupt lifestyles of the monks of Motella, who do not follow any of the laws of any of the main Catholic religious orders—not those of the Benedictines, Augustinians, or Franciscans—but only the "praecepta coquinae" of an ignorant pastor named Fra Stopino:

> Sub quali norma vivebant, nescio certe,
> nunquid sub magni Benedicti legibus? absit,
> nunquid sub fidei Augustino robore? nec sic.
> Francisci nunquid sub paupertate? nequaquam.
> Sed, velut exterius meditor, sub fratre Stopino
> . . .
> Ille suos docuit fratres praecepta coquinae,
> atque lecatoria doctores fecit in arte.
> (7.26-34)

> *Under what norm are they living? I do no know for sure. Was it under the laws of great St. Benedict? Heaven forbid. Was it under the strength of Augustine's faith? Nor thus. Was it under the poverty of St. Francis? Not at all. But, as I wonder aloud, under Father Stopino. . . He taught his brothers the rule of the kitchen and made them doctors in the art of gluttony.*

The only learning that goes on in this fetid and stinking monastery is the "education" of the parishioner Fra Iacopino, who learns his letters by associating their shapes with various profligate behaviors ("Alphabettum prae Iacopini", 181-218). Iacopino ignores or denigrates almost every religious rite he knows:

> Iste fuit pretus, qui, dum sacrosanta levabat
> corpora, supra figum vidit montasse vilanum,
> unde reclamabat, "Sursum diabolus ivit,"
> parens quod Christum sic diceret esse diablum.
> Dum confessabat, per quatros nempe sisinos
> scortas et ladros vitio solvisset ab omni.
> Massaram nunquam vecchiam Iacopinus habebat,
> dicens quod foedant bava stillante manestram,
> Aut opus est unam ter semper dicere cosam,
> Numque sonant vecchiae sordinam saepe vocatae.
> At iuvenis massara placet. Cur? dicere nolo. (238-48)

> *This was the priest who, when he was washing the sacrosanct body, saw a peasant climbing a fig tree, whence he exclaimed: "the Devil went on high," from which it is clear that he said that Christ was the devil. While delivering confessions, he would without hesitation absolve crooks and thieves of all sins for four pennies. Iacopino never held the old mass, saying that they pollute the minestrone soup with dripping drool, or do we always need to say one thing three times, because the old names often sound dirty. But the young people enjoyed his masses. Why? I don't want to say.*

Iacopino is said here to completely ignore the rituals involved in confession, mass, and other important Church traditions; he instead makes a total mockery of them, even cracking a particularly bad joke about Christ being the devil. Stopino's other protégés (Aquario notes "Alumni Fratis Stopino") are morally bankrupt individuals, two of whom trick Zambello outside the monastery and steal the cow Chiarina. First they lead Baldo's poor half-brother into believing his cow is a goat, buying it from him at a much lower price (and with "daneros" no less, which Aquario glosses as a term which peasants use for money: "daneros rustici dicunt"). This provokes a lengthy invective against priests by Cingar (101-168), a sentiment with which at this point the reader cannot help but sympathize, at least in the case of the inhabitants of the monastery of Motella. Finally, in an astonishing "parenthesis" that takes up the bulk of the book (292-421), one finds accusations, rebuttals, a strong critique of the early forms of capitalism changing the monastery system of Europe, an "Aenigma," a threatening reference to Archilochus' iambs and what happened to Lycambis, an excellent and memorable verse remembering these dark years of censorship and persecution ("est formido nefas cum fari veri timemus"! ["it is a dreadful crime when we are afraid to speak the truth"]), a favorable description of the lands of the controlled by the Benedictine order in Italy, and a series of obscure allusions to the enemies of the young poet-monk. It also contains the closest we get to a reference to the horrid Florentine abbot Ignazio Squarcialupi (the use of the word "lupo" makes the reference more than explicit). These pages of the Toscolana were fiercely censored because of the salaciousness of the details they brought to light, with at least one copy in the Harvard's Houghton library containing full pages of careful expurgation by presumably livid censors (see fig. 3.2). Merlin details the raucous sounds of the endless feasting taking place under the reign of Stopino's "Precepts of the Kitchen," together with the ravenous habits of Iacopino and his gluttonous friends, whose names strongly resemble their behaviors, in a passage of bone-chilling macaronic color:[34]

> Prae Iacopinus olet grasso lardoque colanti,
> non vult ossa, vorat teneras tantummodo polpas

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[34] For the vernacular reception of Stopino, Iacopino and the friars of Motella in book 7 of the Toscolana *Baldus*, see Cesare Federico Goffis, "Una collaborazione di Merlin Cocai con M. Alcofribas Nasier," *Rinascimento* 10, no. 1 (1959).

> . . .
> dente parum tangit, sed aperto gutture carnis
> frusta vorat, grossosque facit sine fine bocones.
> Frater Polazzus sedet illic, frater et Antoch,
> frater Gelminus, frater Marmotta, Schirattus,
> frater Pagnocher, frater Scapocchia, Tafellus,
> frater Bernichus, frater Scapinus, Arolfus,
> denique frater Enoch, Bisbaccus, fra Bagarotta.
> Hi sunt auctores qui dant praecepta coquinae.
> Hique lecardiae multos fecere magistros,
> est deus his venter, broda lex, ius inde vocatur. (455-465)

Fra Iacopino smells the fat and clarified lard; he does not want the bones, he only devours the tender flesh. . . but with an open throat he devours strips of meat, and makes huge bites without end. Brother Polazzus sits there, as does brother Antoch, brother Gelminus, brother Marmotta, Schirattus, brother Pagnocher, brother Scapocchia, Tafellus, brother Bernichus, brother Scapinus, Arolfus, and finally brother Enoch, Bisbaccus, and brother Bagarotta. These are the authorities who provide the precepts of the kitchen. And they made many masters of gluttony, for these the Stomach is god, and the law, Broth, and thence it is called just.

Lamenting the death and disturbing mutilation of Chiarina by these unholy priests, Cingar buries her remains in the books' final verses, whereupon Merlin composes an epigram for the "Tumulus Chiarina"—another stirring example of textual heterogeneity within a poem dedicated not only to an innocent animal slaughtered unjustly by cruel priests (revealing Teofilo's great sympathy for animals, which resembles many poets and wise men, from Pythagoras to Ovid), but a profound reflection on the lives of countless humans who suffer every day under the yoke of ignorant, sadistic rulers:

> Vendita quod fuerim bis, falso Cingaris astu,
> quodve mea fratres Mottellae carne cibarim,
> non multum toedet, fleo sed mea fata sub orco,
> namque sub insano vixi male ducta magistro.
> Sic nos mortales stulto sub praeside stantes,
> flere licet potius, quam dulcem perdere vitam. (509-14)

Although I was sold twice by the false cunning of Cingar, and although my meat was food for the monks of Motella, I am not very upset, but I weep in Hell at my fate, for I lived under the evil rule of an insane master. Thus it is more fitting for us mortals
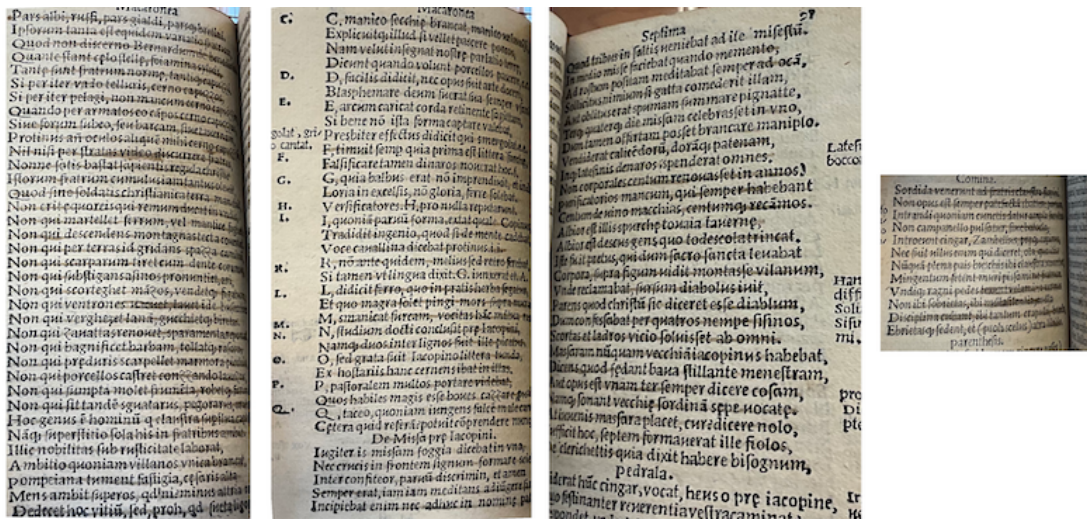
Figure 4.2: Folengo, expurgated passages in *Macaronicen* VI (vv. 119-154 and 189-250), *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), folios 89r, 90r, 91v. 91r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University

> *to weep for our lives spent under a stupid governer, than to weep for the loss of sweet life.*

Book 21 of T is also greatly changed from the nearly three books it absorbed and recapitulates in this version. The whole of the *macaronicen* spotlights the development of Teofilo's bold new moral and ethical voice over the course of these few short years. Like book 7, a reformist tone towards both religious and political issues marks many passages of book 21, from the lengthy introductory proem, which reflects on Cingar's encounter with the character Merlin and the ethical implications of his confession, as well as the Pauline theme that identifies Culfora as a *radix malorum* and reminds the heroes that "Vos Deus elegit... de gentibus uno, ut prius emundi viciis armisque refecti, / Culfoream penitus valeatis struggere sectam" (20.549-51). The apparently misogynist proem detailing Cingar's escape from love, as well as the fabulous prolepsis that compares all of us to him (22-45) underscores the importance of restoring to Christendom an uncompromisingly pure Catholic confession for both Merlin and Teofilo, and the moralistic and anti-feminine thread (Merlin's alone) that accentuates the battle with Goddess herself, which is swiftly approaching in book 21. Merlin begins the proem with a comparison of a depiction of feminine frailty and a rank depiction of the beautiful gift of childbirth with an excellent pun on the syllabic quantity of the words *furto*/*viro*:

Qualis es, o mulier, facilis succumbere furto!
Furto? Parce rogo, volui succumbere viro
dicere, sed brevis est praecedens sillaba. Qualis
ergo viro facilis succumbis, femina, sive
officio voti, sive acta prurigine carnis;
ast ubi tamburri formam tua pancia sumit,
ac inflata uteri pellem distendier audis,
perque tuum gambar vadit rugando cavagnum,
tempus adest partus, vel mortis dicere possum,
quo meschina bonos debes padire boconos.
Angeris et numquam velles habuisse maritum.
Sed, postquam bellum sborraveris inde putinum,
nescis stare loco, tanta est tibi nata voluptas,
ad vomitumque redis transacto tempore poco.
Talis es, o Cingar, facilis succumbere furto!
furto? Sic furto, nec tam succumbere furto
sed tot criminibus variis tibi dicere possum
quot Sguirceros mandat montagna sguizarica morti.
Sed modo namque tibi confessio sancta levavit
ex humeris pesum quo non pesatior alter.
Laetus es et cantans in stroppa sistere nescis.[35] (21.1-21)

O woman, how easy you succumb to theft! Theft? Pardon me, I wanted to write "to lie with a man," but the preceding syllable is short. How easily therefore, O woman, you lie with man, either because of the duty of martial vows, or because you surrender to the itching of the flesh; but when your stomach adopts the form of a drum, and, pregnant, you feel the skin of your uterus stretch itself out, and a shrimp goes rummaging through your belly, the time of birth has come, or I could say death, when, unhappy, you have to evacuate the good little munchkins. You will suffer and wish that you never had a husband. But, after you have ejaculated a beautiful little boy, you know not where to stand, so great is the pleasure that has come to you, and you return to vomiting after a short time has passed. In such a manner, O Cingar, you

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[35]I have used the partial quotation and Italian translation of this passage helpfully provided in Roberto Galbiati, "Le streghe e la chiesa corrotta: il regno di Culfora nel *Baldus* della Toscolanese (1521)," *Strumenti critici* 36, no. 1 (2021): 10. The Italian translation is, unfortunately, not that faithful: the second "succumbere" is most certainly intended to have the double-valance of "yield to [a man]" as well as "to lie with [him]," so " cedere [all'uomo]" is insufficient in this case. The delightfully macaronic word *sbarraveris* is also clearly formed on the vernacular verb *sborrare*, which can be used to mean "ejaculate" in contemporary Italian slang. The rest of the proem, quoted below, is taken from the Portioli edition, which I have translated from sight.

are easy to succumb to theft! To theft? Yes, to theft, and not only to give into theft, but
I could say to as many various crimes as the Swiss the Swiss mountains send to die.
But the holy confession from a little while ago has lifted from your shoulders a weight
of which there is no other heavier. You are happy and, singing, you are over the moon.

The proem continues with a "Parenthesis" and "Contra Hypocritas" which clarify the moral and ethical intention of the episode, which is to detail why the sacrament of the confession is so important for everyone who is part of the True Faith, yet often so difficult because of the deep shame it instills in those unwilling to give it ("hoc opus, hic labor est"); in addition to this, the corruption of the Church, which hears confessions from deeply morally compromised individuals for piles of hard cash, has leveled its ability to do good and save souls from eternal damnation. It also does a great job temporally distancing the events of the poem from Teofilo's period ("nostras aetas"), and, indeed, the poet himself seems to have taken over for Merlin, and here is reflecting on the value of confession for those living in his own period—the "present of the poem", as it were—and thus the very real threat of carnality and sinful behavior to them. This is, then, not the Italy of Dante or Merlin, but "Italy" of 1517-21. Cingar's primary sin is the one that all post-lapsarian bodies cannot avoid, but God in his wisdom has granted us the gift of reason so that we may avoid falling into such temptations ("ratione vigemus"), and the fathers of the church thought up confession so as to absolve us from our guilt and liberate our consciences:

> Heu quia sunt omnes, si rem bene cogito, Cingar.
> Nostra velut Cingar facilis delabitur aetas
> in vicium, sed mox animi fastidia surgunt.
> Quis tam certus adest, quem non petulantia carnis
> pungat, et interdum tollat de tramite recti?
> Quis tam sanctus homo, qui non quandoque patescat
> esse caro, pressusque ruat sub pondere carnis?
> Ast peccare hominis, numquam emendare diabli est.
> Si quandoque caro sua nos post vota reducit,
> nunquid nos aliis animantibus aequa potestas
> dissimiles statuit frustra? ratione vigemus.
> Hinc ordita fuit patribus confessio, verum
> hoc opus, hic labor est, facinus committere paulum
> nos pudet ante deos, homini sed dicere multum.
> Offendisse Deum nobis minus esse videtur,
> At mage nos homini commissum prodere, vexat.
> Fallimur, ah miseri vitio sine posse putantes
> vivere, qua propter si carne gravante labamus
> Turpe quod in crimen veluti sors nostra ministrat,

Ire sacerdoti nudare pigrescimus illud.
Mente faticamur, timor urget, pectus acerbat
sinderesis, montemque humeris gestare videmur.
At postquam fuerint animo discussa recenti
crimina, laetamur tantum evasisse laborem. (22-45)

Alas, because everyone is Cingar, if I think on the matter well. Our age, like Cingar's, easily falls into vice, but soon distaste of mind arises. Who is so firm, who does not prick with the petulance of the flesh, and sometimes veer from the path of the righteous? Who is so holy a man, who does not sometimes show himself to be flesh, and, pressed down, is ruined under the weight of the flesh? But to sin against man is never to make amends for the devil. If sometimes his flesh brings us back after our vows, does he not in vain determine that we, unlike other animals, have equal power? We thrive on reason. From this confession was established by the fathers, but this is the task, this is the labor, we are little ashamed to commit great crimes before the gods, but say much to men. To offend God seems to be less of a thing to us, but it harasses us more to give a confession. Wretched ones, we are wrong to think we can live without sin, and on account of this, if we falter under the weight of our flesh, it is a shame that our lot serves as a crime and that we are reluctant to go to priest to strip it away. We confess our minds, fear compels us, our conscience aggravates our breast, and we seem to bear a mountain on our shoulders. But after the recent crimes have been cleared up in our minds, we rejoice that such hardship has been evaded.

One enjoys doing sinful things with the lights out much more than using one's reason to overcome one's natural shame, and welcome the absolution and clear conscious that comes only with Holy Confession. But the hypocritical, whose nefarious actions and dastardly deeds are carefully disguised by feigned graces to all they meet, are greatly displeasing to the Lord, who, while made flesh, condemned their vices as unable to be rectified, and forgave the sex workers and the thieves alike:[36]

Sed veh qui superos laedunt sub tegmine recti!
stat quia iustitiae sub imagine culpa frequenter,
dicitur hypocrisis vitium, simulataque virtus.
Deforis ellucet velut aurea petra sepulchri,
foeda sed interius putrefacta cadavera servat.
Noscite displiceat quantum fraus ista Tonanti,

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[36] Jesus, who is here referred to with the classicizing title "Tonantus" (perhaps due to problematic paganism of some of his readership), was well known to have interacted with subalterns of all sorts. This particular reference to thieves and prostitutes is likely an allusion to the story of Jesus and the prostitute (Luke 7:36, Mark 14:1, John 8:2).

> qui nostra sub carne latens reprobabat iniquos
> hypocritas, revocans meretrices atque latrones.
> Emendaturum genus istud namque sciebat,
> sed pietas simulata nequit mendarier unquam. (46-50)

> *But, oh, for who injure the Gods under the cover of virtue! For blame often falls under the spectre of justice, and hypocrisy is labeled a vice, a virtue feigned. On the outside it shines like the golden rock of a tomb, but inside it houses foul and putrid corpses. Know how much this fraud displeases the Thunderer, who while under our flesh condemned the unjust hypocrites, renewing prostitutes and thieves. For he knew that he could correct these sorts of people, but he could never correct piety feigned.*

Each episode of Book 21, from Merlin's proem to his extended description of the iniquities of Culfora's realm, serve to justify Baldo's actions and to accentuate the corruption of the Church under of the malign influence of the witch Goddess, whose and enticements and machinations have come to seduce and dominate its sacred offices and institutions from, as it were, 'the bottom up'. The story told to Baldo and his friends by the tavern keeper and "vecchio mendax" Luca Filippo, who they encounter accompanied by his daughter on the road from Culfora's palace, exemplifies how the use of religious imagery casts the witch's realm in a highly negative light.[37] In this story, Luca Filippo reports to Baldo an encounter between a poor old pilgrim and Nemo, one of the gatekeepers of Paradise (the pearly gates were just adjacent to Filippo's tavern).[38] On the one hand, as the tavern keeper, Luca tells Baldo that, as opposed to "pontiffs, kings, dukes, signors, marquesses, friars, bishops…" (844-448) he saw only the poor and the meek pass through the gates; the rich and the powerful make their way instead towards Culfora's palace (indicating that this space is functionally equivalent to Hell), as will Baldo himself when he is left alone a few verses later when his friends are whisked away and turned into animals by Culfora's magic. We are being prepared for a depiction of a fictional palace that is charged with negative moral valences to a high degree, and it is therefore understandable that the description of those who arrive at paradise conforms to Jesus' claim at *Matthew* 19:24 that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The souls that the gatekeeper Nemo witnesses pass through the gates of heaven are those of the destitute in life, not the rich and

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[37] Luca Filippo replaces the character Nardo in P.

[38] As Aquario indicates in a gloss ("Ut ego claudo et nemo aperit"), the name Nemo appears to be playing on a particular biblical passage (which is corroborated by a different gloss), and which Galbiati in "Le Streghe" (op. cit., p. 169) correctly identifies as Revelation 3:7: "Haec dicit Sanctus et Verus, qui habet clavem David: qui aperit, et nemo claudet: claudit, et nemo aperit." I would like to add only that Nemo is the name adopted by Odysseus (in the Greek, Οὗτις) to elude identification and retribution by the cyclops Polyphemus in the *Odyssey* and that the poet's interest in the name may not be entirely biblical, but either consciously or unconsciously proleptic to Baldo's assumption of an alias when captured by Culfora/Gelfora.

the powerful. Luca also reports that St. Peter, one of the twelve apostles, and the founder of the Church, actually spoke to him about the extent of ecclesiastical corruption. At his entrance, Luca immediately prostrates himself before the apostle ("Ille tapinellus vecchium prostratus adorat", 466), following which St. Peter reveals that it was Culfora who brought so many evils into the world:

> "Hinc," Petrus inquit, "abi, nihil est nunc aethere dignus,
> nec fueris, donec Mundo stria Culfora vivat.
> Quam dum permittet Deus inscrutabilis orbi
> vivere, qua pereunt animae sex mille quotannis,
> nec tu, nec tua stirps poterunt intrare chi dentrum.
> Vade, nec ulterius chiocches ne forte chiocheris." (469-474)

> *Peter said: "Go away from here, nothing is now worthy of heaven, nor will you be, while the witch Culfora lives in the world. For as long as inscrutable God permits her to live in the world, on whose account six thousand souls die each year, neither you nor your race will be able to enter within. Go, nor knock further lest you be knocked yourself."*

According to Luca, then, the first gatekeeper of paradise (Nemo) was informed by the soul of a poor priest who happened to be the *most* eligible to enter the Christian heaven that even *he* was unable to do so, and that St. Peter told him that his *entire race* would not be able to enter heaven while Culfora exists.[39] Clearly, the message is that Culfora is holding the human race back by preventing even the *most* faithful and righteous from achieving their due rewards in this life or the next. Textually speaking, the addition of a biblical voice to the description of Culfora and her influence on global politics, and therefore to the target of the task that Baldo and his friends have been given by Merlin and Guido—to defeat Culfora and to finally rid the world the world of her morally compromised assistants, unscrupulous courtiers, and corrupt Church officials—once again lends a positive, Christian valence to the *telos* of this remarkable anti-epic.[40] Crucially, St. Peter also informs the reader that Culfora is essentially a mass murderess, who is personally (or by association) responsible for the murder of over six thousand people *every year*.

As the heroes soon discover for themselves, Culfora's palace is not only a "scola striarum" but also a miniature city with a bustling micro-economy resembling the courts of Renaissance Venice or Rome; it is filled with music, merrimaking, laughter, and the smell of perfume. If the corruption of her kingdom is an allegory of the dirty dealings of *homo economicus*, what attracts the prelates, dukes, kings—and even some of the main characters of Merlin's poem (both Cingar

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[39] See Faini, *La cosmologia macaronica*, 210 for the "positive" religious valence of this character in VC.

[40] St. Peter's condemnation of Culfora is comparable to the irritated exclamation of Ariosto's St. John in book 34 of the *Furioso*.

and Baldo recognize *their own wives* among the witches)—is the promise of infinite wealth and luxury.[41] Merlin's correlation of the corruption of the church with the attitudes and manners of the Renaissance city is strikingly ambivalent, and it even nearly seduces Baldo himself. The elaborate transformation of Culfora between the two editions, as well as the proem and episodes inserted before it, reveal an author who is confident that his textual *phatasia* is *strongly* double-sided, that it will be read in profoundly different ways by different communities of readers, and that those readers will or will not take issue with his representation of these behaviors, or associate them with Teofilo, having been again and again reminded that the and Merlin are different voices which hold diametrically opposed positions on the religious and ethical issues 'plaguing' Europe in this period.

Hundreds of witches convene in the "scola striarum" to learn the skills to succeed in the high-paced lifestyle of the cosmopolitan witch industry. Many of these activities are basic life skills commonly associated with sex work (beautification, birth control, the brewing of love-potions), techniques which the require objects that Baldo sees in boxes ("scatolas"), the sight of which would make the misogynist reader very squeamish indeed (and, in the early modern period, easily murderous, as the many witch trials of the period make clear to us). Perhaps it is to deliberately provoke this intolerant audience that Teofilo has Merlin add that the witches-in-training learn how to forsake their baptism, deny Christ, betray the Eucharist, and do all sorts of other sacrilegious and blasphemous things, activities which are designed make the chauvinist censor of the poem have conniption fit:

> Est locus alter ibi ter centum brachia longus,
> quo docet, heu quantas! vecchiarum turma puellas.
> Sunt ibi dongellas scarcossae mille docentes,
> suntque pedantrices in despensare triacas,
> et pedagogarum dant ritus more tenedos:
> qualiter obsequio veneris sua vota sequantur,
> qualiter infantis tererini membra smedullent,
> Qualiter ungantur, moveantque tonitrua coeli.
> Qualiter et segetes, et vites grandine tollant.
> Qualiter in varias formas sua corpora mutent.
> Qualiter efficiant quod amantis forma diabli est.[42]
> Qualiter et Christum renegent, Christique batesmum,
> qualiter alliciant pretos sibi tradere sanctam

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[41] The theme of the corruption of the Church is of course a trope that is present in many of the sources possibly known to Folengo, such as Erasmus' *Iulius*, a point which is made by Galbiati in op. cit. 170-73.

[42] Aquario glosses "nam striae coeunt cum Diabolis sub imagine amantum," assuring us that these witches fear neither divine nor earthy repercussions for their innumerable crimes.

Eucharistiam, aut alicuius membra beati.
Qualiter, ah facinus! Crucifixum stercore turpent.
Qualiter ad stagnum Nursae sacrare quadernos
pergant, implentes pelagum terramque diablis.
Qualiter et studeant griffas scapolare Leonis[43]
Pontificis, cui cura bonam stat ponere gaurdam.

There is also another place there three hundred arms tall, where a squadron of old women teach (alas, how many!) girls. There, there are a thousand wizened women teaching the ladies, there are she-pedants to teach how to dispense treacle, and they administer rites in the manner of pedagogues: how their wishes are obeyed through the servitude of sex; how they extract the medulla from the limbs of village infants; how they anoint themselves and stir the heaven's thunder. How they raise crops and lives with hail; how they change their bodies in various forms; how they make it so that the devil takes the form of lovers; how they reject both Christ and the baptism of Christ, how they entice priests to betray the holy Eucharist, or other members of the faithful. How they—oh, outrage!—pollute the Crucifix with filth; how they proceed on Thursdays to the lagoon of Nursia, filling lake and land with devils; and how they desire the griffon to escape from the Pontifical Lion, against whom it is necessary to place a firm guard.[44]

As if saddened by Merlin's representation of the evils of the witches, in this part of the book one also finds a magnificent passage detailing the true feelings of the poet Teofilo, where he speaks as the "hidden author" (i.e. enlightened "author of the author"), and not as Merlin. As in the proem to book 7, here Teofilo is not nearly as double-speaking or misogynist as his alter-ego. His defense of reason over the scapegoating of old women and his pessimistic view of the socio-cultural situation confronting Italy are views that contrast quite sharply with the ignorance and skepticism prevading the "thought" of church elders and philosophers like Gianfrancesco Pico dell Mirandola, whose flawed understanding of magic and women directly led to the terrible witch-hunts that plagued this century of darkness, lit as it was by the cadaver-fueled bonfires of both "skeptics" and religious zealots alike. The following verses stand as a testament to Teofilo's enlightened temperament in 1521—his sensitivity to the ways that social class or *ordo* is what trumps the law more often than not, as well as his wariness of powers that he and his primary heteronym have developed over time ("metuo fierem praeceptor errorem") and concomitant fear of being punished by the

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[43] Aquario adds in a gloss that the "Leonis Pontificis" is "Leo Papa" (Pope Leo).

[44] I have used the Latin commentary in vol. 2 of *Theophili Folengi vulgo Merlini Cocaii Opus Macaronicum notis illustratum, cui accessit vocabularium vernaculum, etruscum, et latinum* (Amselodami, 1771), p. 186 to inform a few of my translation choices, viz *smedullent* = "medullas extrahere".

powerful Dominican inquisition that murdered thousands (possibly millions) of innocent women and "heretics" in Europe:[45]

> Sed metuo errores si quando reprhendere vellem,
> errorem fierem praeceptor, meque tomistae
> dignum censerent mitra Christique cavallo,
> sed de more briae mihi cauda daretur aselli.
> Tali pro magno nec haberent, namque poetas
> ac oratores, medicos legumque ministros,
> namque senatores et qui dant iura brigatis
> quamplures retegunt ad cursum pergere noctu,
> sed quia respectu legi praevertitur ordo
> —namque solent grossi pisces mangiare minutos—
> desventuratae quaedam solummodo vecchiae
> sunt quae supra asinos plebi spectacula fiunt,
> sunt quae primatum multorum crimina celant,
> sunt quae sparagnant madonnis pluribus ignem. (568-581)

> *But I fear that when I wish to reprehend the errors that I will become a master of errors, and that the Thomists would judge me worthy of the miter and of Christ's horse, and that the tail of the ass would be given to me as a bridle. Perhaps they would not consider my actions of such great importance, for they find that so many poets, orators, doctors, servants of the law, senators, and those who make the laws for the people, go riding by night, but because social class comes before respect for the law—and since big fish are wont to eat little ones—only a few unfortunate old ladies are those who are made a spectacle for the people on asses; they are the ones who conceal the crimes of many first citizens; they are the ones who spare many noblewomen from the stake.*

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[45] It is extremely likely that the felicitous phrase "praeceptor errorem" is a direct inversion of Ovid's self-description in the *Ars Amatoria* as "praeceptor amoris" ("ego sum praeceptor amoris", 1.17), a teacher of dangerous, illicit, and corrupting erotic arts. For the complex role denoted by this title in the erotic elegiac poetry Ovid and Propertius, see Robert M. Durling, "Ovid as Praeceptor Amoris," *The Classical Journal* 53, no. 4 (1958): 157–167. The pose struck by Ovid at the beginning of the *Ars* becomes so similar to that of Merlin in these lines (Durling reminds us that "The *praeceptor* himself is a fictitious *persona*", p. 159) that the "hidden author" feels the need to make his persona acknowledge this dangerous association, alerting us to the 'purity' of his intentions: he will not lapse into the *errorem* of an *magister amoris* who seductively lists the wiles and stratagems of lovers in a text like the *Ars Amatoria*, but will rather, in solidarity with Baldo and the teleology of his and his companions' quest, move on from this material to narrate the undoing and near-destruction of the both *scuola striarum* and the entire realm of Culfora. Merlin may thus be said to recognize and to have skillfully evaded the illicit arts of love which are clearly symbolized by the school of the witches (a space that is occupied by none other than the wives of two of the heroes, Baldo and Cingar!), all while suggesting that he, like an anti-Ovid, has at least flirted with the illicit skills and techniques that so greatly challenge the ideologically dominant discourses of his period.

The "rispetto drittezza" that replaces the more literal "ordo" in the later versions calls attention to the refined, even aristocratic touches the poet will gradually introduce to many episodes and passages of his epic between 1521 and the 1530s, changes that both emphasize the ennoblement and even "classicization" of Macaronic, and the project of the poet, marking the critical and historical distance between the last two versions and the linguistic and textual traditions that brought the poem and book into existence between 1517 and 1521.

One of the ways that the *Phantasiae* responds to the abrupt turn—whether textual, contextual, or paratextual—to history is the introduction of a potent rival to Merlin in the *mago* Seraphus, who is first introduced in the Virgilian proem of book 10 by the verse "dexter ades Serraffus pater, vatumque magister". As I have shown in chapter 3, this particular proem signals a change in the subject of the later versions of the *Baldus* as well as a change in the poet's muses, plus a renewal of Merlin's emulative rivalry with the Vergil-poet by way of a layered allusion to a famous transition at the beginning of book 7 of the *Aeneid*. But whereas in the *Baldus* the character Zoppino is summoned to join with Merlin in performing the *macaronicen*, here Seraphus governs the raising of the subject matter, with Aquario reminding us that "Serraffus maximus in quibuslibet liberalibus artibus fuit". His tricks on the barrons of Cipada bear not passing resemblance to those of the powerful *mago* of the *L'innamoramento di Orlando* and the *Orlando furioso*, Atlante, but he is more playful and sincerely invested in the successful completion of Baldo's journey, as opposed to antagonistically preventing the hero of the dynastic epic from reaching its equally bloody and violent conclusion. Beyond what has already been said about Seraphus' function as Merlin's double and alter-ego to the poet, it is my argument that he is much more than the poet-trickster that, at first blush, he might appear to be.[46] The introduction of Seraphus and the complications he creates for reading the *Phantasiae* spotlights Folengo's desire to make his epic as *fully* 'fictional' *as well* as integrated within its historical reality as possible, a paradoxical desire that generates a set of very meaningful errors in the text. Seraphus, in other words, serves as yet another example of what Macaronic as language, genre, or text does to historical truth, sublimating potential contraries into Merlin's game of generating a highly original *literary* object that will, in spite of its grounding in history, generate textual traditions that survive the brute, material, facts of history.

From his magician-like clothing (see fig. 3.3) to his interventions in the action of the plot, Seraphus is both a clear double or foil to Merlin as well as to the witch-antagonists of the narrative. Like Merlin, he is a deeply learned poet-philosopher who possesses magic tools able to aid the adventurers in various ways, such as wondrous unguents (16.453-5, 21.223) and magic stones that are luminescent or render their users invisible (19.464-467, 21.183); it is Seraphus who composes the epitaph for Leonardo (16.500) and displays overtly homoerotic behavior towards his helpers (the musician and humanist poet Giubertus, the low-born bandit Pizza Capelletus or "Pizza Guerra," and the handsome Milanese Raffellus, 21.154-169), as well as Cingar himself. In the case of Cingar, Seraphus provides a contrast to the perversity and profound danger of the twisted sexual

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[46] See section 2.4.3 in Mullaney's dissertation, op. cit., pp. 105-8.

nature of the witches and their many helpers. In fact, Seraphus can be said to desire to restore human sexuality to an agreeable and ameliorative homoerotic state, forestalling the death spiral of hetero- and gyno-philic relations. In a memorable interlude, which arrives halfway through book 21, after Seraphus' four helpers have teased Baldo and his companions by poking and prodding them repeatedly while invisible, the magician appears to Cingar and compassionately shrinks his enormous (phallus-like) inflated nose, which had been stretched to a Pinocchio-like state by the tugging of Giubertus. Seraphus works his magic with an unguent-lubricated caress ("molzinat", glossed by Lodela as "mollitur ungit"):

> Supplicat inde, velit de vultu tollere nasum
> Cingaris ingentem, primaeque reducere formae.
> "Non cogat," Serraffus ait, "me Cingar ad istud,
> namque malum proprium, nec non nihil utile poscit."
> . . .
> Ergo Serraphus motus pietate cavavit
> extra scharsellam cerottum nescio qualem.
> Molzinat nasum veluti si mungeret hircum,
> qui callat sensim, candelae more brusantis.
> Ut fuit ad primam speciem, festinus ab illo
> se tollit Cingar, saltat velut haedus in altum,
> nec fuit ordo unquam post hac sibi tangere nasum,
> iugiter addubitans rursum ne cresceret ille.
> Hinc fuit addagium (verum salvando) repertum,
> "quando quis non vult sibi nasi pinza tocari."

> *Then he begs, he wants to remove from Cingar's face the huge nose and restore it to its first form. "Don't force me to do this, Cingar, for it calls for proper evil, and it ain't not nothing good"... Therefore Seraphus, moved by piety, removed from a bottle I don't know what kind of ointment. He caresses the nose as if milking a cow, which gradually shrinks like a burning candle. As if it was at first sight, Cingar removes himself from there speedily, and dances on high like a kid; after this no one was ever anyone allowed touch his nose again, as he continually worried that it would grow again. Hence was the adage (the truth being saved) created, "when he who does not want himself to be touched, pinches his nose."*

However much Seraphus's unguent can be said to be charged with positive sexual energy, it too remains tainted by association with the 'polluting' influence of witchcraft. Cingar, though appreciative of the skilled assistance of this master of his craft, from this point forward allows no one

Figure 4.3: Folengo, woodcut showing the sartorial refinement of Seraphus and Giubertus, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 291r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

touch his nose again. The episode brings into the preceding discussion of the textual importance of the second edition several things which are well worth considering: first, it raises serious questions about the connection between the character Cingar and the myth of Pinocchio, a tale that is deeply concerned with the relationship between lies and the truth, and for which Carlo Collodi is known to have extensively utilized (Tuscan) folklore.[47] What is more immediately important for our purposes is to consider how Seraphus plays a playful yet ambiguous role in the *Phantasiae*, not only confusing its characters in episodes, like this one, but making Merlin and his careful editor, Lodela, make mistakes as well. Like Merlin, Seraphus is a fictive construct who is based on the poet's impressions of various mythical and real, historical persons. In fact, he appears as an authority who writes about the "real world" of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century art in Italy. In book 13, Cingar mentions him as an authority on the genealogy of Mantegna, a "pictor celeberimus" from Padua who was poached for Mantua early in his career by Ludovico Gonzaga (1412-1478), here nicknamed "Il Turco":

> Quis fuerit rerum pictor vel sculptor earum
> nescio, sed forsan magnus fuit author Apelles,
> cuius progenie noster Mantinea venit,
> de quo, sicut apud Serraffi scripta catatur,
> maximus alter erit pictor Mantegna vocatus
> gentibus e Paduae, quem parvum nostra robabit
> Mantua, desegni mirum fictique coloris,
> qui sub Francisco Turco cognomine vivet
> atque Triumphantis depinget Caesaris actus,
> ars ubi pictorum veterum perfecta trovatur,
> post quem succedat mirabilis ille Michael
> Angelus et Raphael, quos nos ars, immo docebit
> ipsa parens natura leves tirare penellos.[48] (444-456)

I do not know who was the painter or the sculptor of these things, but maybe the author was the great Apelles, from whose offspring descend our Mantinea and from whom, as is found in the writings of our Seraphus, descended another most excellent painter, named Mantegna, descended from the people of Padua, who was stolen as a child by Mantua, wondrous of drawings and fictive color, and who lived under Francesco,

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[47] The picaresque qualities of Pinocchio and his adventures through Italy of the Collodi's period also seem to corroborate the notion that the thief Cingar could be a distant literary cousin to Pinocchio and his famous tell-all nose. For Collodi's debt to the episode of the whale in Ariosto's *Cinque Canti*, see Allan Gilbert, "The Sea-Monster in Ariosto's "Cinque Canti" and in "Pinocchio"," *Italica* 33, no. 4 (1956): 260–263.

[48] I have quoted from edition of the text provided in Zaggia, "Cingar astrologo" (p. 102) and have used his helpful commentary to inform this argument.

nicknamed "The Turk" and will paint the deeds of Triumphant Caesar, where one finds perfected the arts of the ancient painters, and after whom will follow the marvelous Michelangelo, and Raphael, to whom will teach how to move the light brushes not art, but indeed mother nature herself.

This passing mention of Seraphus-historian in the context of a Gonzaga praise says loads about our poet, Merlin: in a few words, the mention of the *mago* and his *historical* knowledge suggests that he is not just an expert in the seven liberal arts, but analogous to Ariosto's Melissa, who reveals to Bradamante the paintings that disclose her genealogy as well as the fate of poor Ruggiero. Moreover, as an *historian* it is Seraphus who, more than either Merlin *or* Aquario, is said to be actively interested in tracing the ("*progenie*") of prominent court artists to their most ancient analogues; he has thus carefully constructed fictive genealogies for them with the aim of appeasing the competitive desire of his dead Gonzaga patron. The immediately recognizable slip-up on the part of the poet (Folengo mistakenly exchanges the name of *his* patron, Francesco, for Ludovico, though he is only half wrong, since he has correctly identified Montagna's patron by his nickname), is even more revealing, as it points to the fertile *slippage* in the mind of the poet between his own subject position and the semi-fictive status of Seraphus, whose identity within the Toscolana version has now become closely tied to the same powerful Italian dynasty. My argument concerning Seraphus' importance for spotlighting the overlap between Folengo's fictional authorial figures and his own deeply historical "subject position" in 1500s Italy is further supported by a different piece of evidence, again in the Toscolana version. This time, when Merlin mentions Seraphus' prophecy about the papacies of Julius II and Pope Leo X at 25.67-73 ("Serraffus cecinit, nascetur Iulius ille. . . leo qui claras undique sphaeras") while narrating the speech of Alecto, Aquario adds the glosses "Prophetia Serraffi. Iulius. Leo. Pontifices." As we have seen above, this must be the location in the text which had led Lodela to believe that Merlin had prophetic powers, and which he cites in his epistle to Count Passarino as evidence that *Merlin* was indeed a prophet. But here we discover that he was either making a mistake about Merlin's powers, or was distorting the truth about whether either Seraphus or Merlin is responsible for predicting these pontificates. What the inconsistency reveals is that Merlin *and* Seraphus have become difficult for either Lodela or *his* author (e.i. Folengo) to easily distinguish in their mind, particularly when their statuses *as* fictions—figures within a text, however "in touch with reality" it may or may not be seem to be to their gentle readers—become associated with *very* real matters of historical record.

Yet another example of Seraphus' importance for situating the text of the *Baldus* within its immediate literary-historical context, as well as his connection to Cingar, is his role in poking fun at the work of a different poet—not a figment of Teofilo's imagination, but in this case a *real* artist, the semi-famous author of the *Libro chiamato Leandra, libro d'arme e d'amore*. Pietro Durante is the first of the poets historical who are named in the poet's famous Pumpkin, the first who "patiales patriae, propriique tyranni, / complevere libros follis verisque bosiis" (515-6). Like all of these vain

and vacuous scribblers, Durante endures an endless *contrapasso* or recompensatory punishment commiserate with his many literary foibles. For each of the lies and inadequacies of his *sesta rima* verse, a tooth is removed from his skull by a demon instructed by a herbalist-barber, "Quottidies quantas Vates fecere bosias, / quottidie tantos opus est amittere dentes" (525-6). And the pumpkin resounds with the groans of his and many other poets punished for their tyrant-appeasing lies (521). The most important take-away from this highly satirical portrayal of Durante in the Pumpkin is that he is not just a poet, like the near-contemporary poets encountered by Dante-pilgrim in his vision of the afterlife, but that he is first recognized by *Cingar* and then crowned by Seraphus (in that order):[49]

> Inter eos igitur Cingar cognoverat unum,
> nomine Durantum, qui dum cecinisse Leandram
> se iactat, doctis sbeffatur ubique poetis,
> ardimentum habuit, quamvis magrissime cantet,
> magnanimo Orlando praeponere gesta Rinaldi.
> Perque gulam mentit, quod sic scripsisse sbaiaffat
> Turpinum, nec opus Turpini viderat unquam.
> Composuit quendam, quem nolo dicere librum,
> sed scartafazzum nomen ponendo Leandram.
> Cui dignum fecit noster Serraffus honorem,
> namque sigillatus caera fuit ille culina.
> Heu! quales streppos misero dabat ipse diavol!
> Sgretolar suas audiebas longe ganassas.
> Cingar compatiens fecit restare diablum,
> Durantumque rogat, quare sic absque rasone
> Orlandum biasmat, nimium laudando Rinaldum.
> Ille sed avulsis pro dentibus, oreque balbo
> respondet, quia iam pacueunt futa ialdi.
> Sic ergo, quicunque volunt praeferre Rinaldum
> Orlando, dicam quod amant hi furta Rinaldi.

Among them, thereupon, Cingar recognized one named Durante, who, while singing the Leandra, he boasts; he is taunted everywhere by learned poets; he had courage

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[49] The depiction of Durante flanked by a demon in the woodcut included around these verses not only confirms that Dante's *Inferno* is the inspiration for his torturous *contrapasso* but discloses the central importance of Cingar in the episode, who the woodcut shows *holding aloft* Durante's recently-removed tooth between his fingers—perhaps taunting the poet with it. While this obscene gesture is certainly meant to poke fun at the poet of the *Leandra*, it also stresses the crucial link between Seraphus and Cingar, who recognizes this soul and, like another Dante-pilgrim, superciliously questions him mid-punishment.

> *to place the deeds of Rinaldo (however poorly he sings) before those of magnanimous Orlando. On this count he lied through his throat, because he gets wrong what Turpin wrote, nor has he ever even read the work of Turpin. One day he composed that which I do not want to call a book, but a scrawled thing, giving it the name Leandra, to which our Seraphus gave a deserved honor, for it was sealed with kitchen wax. Woe! What yanks the devil gives to this miserable man! You could hear his jaw being crushed from a long away off. Cingar compassionately made the devils pause and asked Durante why so without reason he blames Orlando, excessively praising Rinaldo instead. But he's being yanked by the teeth, and with a mumbling mouth responds: "'cause I 'oved ialdo's 'fts." Thus, whoever wishes to prefer Rinaldo to Orlando, I say it is because they love the thefts of Rinaldo.*

The encounter with Durante shows that Seraphus is somewhat subordinate to Merlin, who is the one to crown Durante with an exquisite "caera culina," while it is Merlin who must weigh in on the accomplishments of the truly respectable poets named at the end of the *Phantasiae*; a final humorous and stercorous duty for a playful wizard, but nothing like an epoch-making performance by this famed author-figure. Both he and Merlin are together doomed not only to the same exile and punishment in the hermeneutical Pumpkin, but Merlin will indeed perish before the readers' eyes after his boat has come to shore and his duty is finally complete. Durante's mumbled response to Cingar (Aquario translates: "Quoniam placuerunt furta Rinaldi"), which is cruelly distorted by the demon's pliers and the poor poet's many missing teeth, furnishes at least one reason why this must be his fate: like him, Merlin has also enjoyed too greatly the "thefts" of a hero quite like Rinaldo (and one who is in fact related to him, via his father, Guido!). Like Durante's failure of a poem (which actually seems to have been quite popular in the period) Merlin's epic is about a figure of lesser accomplishment than Orlando.[50] In spite of this pettiness, Merlin is not wrong in either his predictions or his prognosis of the state of humanist poetry in Italy, the inadequacies of which came to light slowly over time, as a hundred years of increasingly sophisticated technical imitation of ancient stylistics revealed to the humanists of Italy that the ancient world was truly irrecoverable and therefore *long* gone. Shortly after his pillorying of a lesser poet with the help of Seraphus, Merlin predicts that it will be Ariosto and Boiardo who will be remembered for their verses, and not the Quattrocento humanist versifiers and their imitators. This comment is in itself remarkable for its both its accuracy in poet's immediate context and for the future of humanism in Italy and the world:

<div align="center">

Ast veri Auctores Orlandum praeposuerunt,

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[50] The *Leandra* went through at least twenty six editions, more than half of which were printed over the course of the sixteenth century. See the entry *Durante, Pietro*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 42 (Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993), by Floriana Calitti.

> ac in venturo praeponent tempore vates.
> Maxime Boiardus, dictusque Maria Matheus,
> plus sentimento facili, quam carmine dives.
> Surget Alovisus, tuscus Franciscus et orbus,
> magnus Ariostus, laus, gloria, palma Ferarae,
> tempore mancus erit Petrarcha, carmine sed non.
> Inveterata nocet laus nobis saepe modernis.

> *But the true Authors put Orlando first, and in the coming time they will put poets first*
> *as well. Particularly Boiardo, called Maria Matteo, rich more in easy sentiments than*
> *in poems. Alovisus shall rise up, and the destitute Tuscan Francesco; great Ariosto,*
> *fame, glory, and palm of Ferrara will be lesser than Petrarch in fame, but not in poetry.*
> *Praise of the ancients often hurts us moderns.*

Merlin is rarely wrong when he stoops to making predictions about the world, and in this his powers of poetic prophecy and progonstication prove entirely correct. Because Ariosto's nearly contemporaneous, Petrarchizing revisions to what would become the 1521 *Orlando furioso* were quite possibly known to the "hidden author" of the Toscolana *Phantasiae*, his Merlin has evidently gone out of his way to compare the two poets and to place them within a poetic lineage that carefully circumvents Dante, who is only passingly mentioned as a model for imitation below (584) and quite noticeably second to the more fortunate and "lepidus" Petrarch.[51] Our poet is fully aware of the fact that, as early as the 1510s and continuing through the very early 20s, the tides appeared to have turned away from the Latin poetry of the generation of his uncle and, for a brief span, towards the vernacular in its full bloom; but he is *also* aware that this shift would bring the wave of archaizing, Tuscanizing changes to the regional koinè of the Italian north—a project spearheaded by Bembo throughout this period, and that was by this point *de rigueur* in the most prominent literary circles of Italy. What matters is that Folengo's macaronic style both reinforces the sense that the rigorous Latin of the humanists was gradually loosing its grip on the hearts and minds of readers in Italy, while at the same time demonstrating again and again the astonishing instability and tremendous flexibility of Latin when it successfully (or unsuccessfully) mixes with the kinds of Latin familiar to the poet-monk. As language, genre, and text, Macaronic is and remains not just double-sided, but many-sided, not just 'polyphonic,' but all-tongued, a text capable of surprising, delighting, instructing, or upsetting those brave enough to confront and come to terms with the full range of meanings it presents to readers. Textually speaking, much in the same way that the poet's language becomes less Latin and more Macaronic between the first and last editions, the changes that transform it—as well as the macaronic book—do not transform the

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[51] It is possibly also important that the name "Durante" verbally evokes the name "Dante", the latter being a diminutive of the former. I owe this helpful observation to Professor Albert Ascoli.

core features of the poem, so much as strip them of biographical resonances which would impede them from achieving the standards of novelistic fiction established by later writers and conventions. For this, we must be ready to forgive our poet their trespasses.

* * *

In spite of the inevitable belatedness of the *Phantasiae* and the final comments its poet delivers to his readers, Merlin's litany constitutes one of the most astonishing act of meta-poetic bravery in the history of Renaissance literature, boldly (and correctly) proffering to its aristocratic Italian audience a who's who and what's what of poets, languages, and narratives that endures to this day. Teofilo's construct both anticipates Renaissance self-fashioning and is nevertheless a radical statement of poetic individuality, placing this poem and its many intertexts among some of the most influential innovations of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: the end of the Toscolana *Baldus* reveals a highly self-conscious authorial voice which is utterly sure of the importance of the contribution of anti-epic to the "questione della lingua", the "dibattito sull'imitatione," and eventually the "querelle des Anciens et des Modernes" (not to mention "querelle de Femmes") and who is also aware of the decline or ossification of poetic culture in Italy as he remakes and performs this poem for his world. Merlin is much more aggressive in these verses than is Ariosto in the famous salute to the noble ladies and men of contemporary Italy at the end of the *Furioso*, who are drawn into the romance as the poet's spectators, standing and applauding him from the shore of the Po. In fact, anticipating later poet-critics, the end of the *Phantasiae Macaronicon* has the effect of making Merlin and his controller into a *literary critic* as well as a poet: so absolutely sure is he of his place among the giants of his field, he who "implevi totum Macaronibus orbem" ("filled the world with macaronics"), that now, unlike Ariosto, Merlin-Folengo may stand back from his *satura* and gaze down on it, as if from the "outside" of both the Latin and the vernacular traditions that generate and sustain it, from the vantage point of Macaronic.

In the course of this remarkable and enduring response to Virgil's *Aeneid* and the teleology of Empire, the macaronic book has risen above—or completely undermined—the languages, genres, and texts of an erstwhile normative culture centered on classical learning and ancient languages. The young poet has chosen to use the unprecedented rhetorical opportunity opened by the possibility and the recreation of the Macaronic text to to harp on the distinction between ancients and moderns (which was to become a topic of considerable discussion over the course of the following centuries), as well as provide a list of neo-Latinists who could never hope to best Vergil in their imitations of his poetry (Spagnoli, Pontano, Sannazaro, Marullo, Raphael Zacharius, Bembo, Tebaldeo, Serafino, Cornazano are mentioned by name in the concluding paragraphs). Merlin, boldly giving his Good Work 'unto this last'[52], arrogantly, but also presciently and, to a certain degree, sympathetically (especially if we remember that Teofilo is always in control), reminds

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[52] *Matthew* 20 KJV: "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee."

Figure 4.4: Folengo, woodcut depicting Durante being taunted by Cingar, *Opus Merlini Cocaii* (Toscolano, A. Paganini, 1521), fol. 249r (A). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

each and every reader that, regardless their particular position in life, or the sophistication of their knowledge of ancient languages, it will never be possible to truly recreate (or restore, even in part) the glory of ancient poetry.

At the same time, the hidden author knows that trends are quickly changing for the vernacular tongues and traditions that swirl around him; indeed, a linguistic and "moral" distance now comes to separate even vernacular romances, such as the *Innamorato* and the *Furioso*, from the poems of the generation of Boiardo and Poliziano. And so it is again: most humanists of the Quattrocento are barely read in the twenty-first century, let alone celebrated as models of imitation outside of tiny pockets of neo-Latin revivalists: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen".[53] And while Bembo is mentioned in the *Laus Merlini*, it is important to note here that the poet has mentioned his vernacular *Asolani* and *not* the Latin poems (581), a deliberate choice which aims to register his growing appreciation for what Bembo has and will do to the vernacular over these years, and which points back to the link just made between Ariosto and Petrarch. In fact, as I have argued more extensively in the second chapter, Merlin, his *Phantasiae*, and the now extensive corpus of *satura*-like texts found in the first and second editions, are not only components but now eager *participants*, like so many Cadmian *Spartoi*, in a very pro-Bembian attack on Dante and *his* oeuvre, language, and meta-poetic and metaphysical goals. They *extensively* parody, rather than problematically reify, Trissino-like, Dante's late-life *Egloge*, linguistic treatise, separation of church and state, abrasive style, and theologizing "*alta fantasia*", while at the same time paying tribute to Dante and his prophetic vision. Teofilo knows that his view of both the history of humanist poetry as well as the future of the vernacular are not incorrect—he knows that the season of innovation and excess marked by his adaptation of Tifi's playfully corrupted Latin has finally come to an end—and that he represents the final stop in this lineage of macaronic "signs". Yet, both his acknowledgement of these influences and the "death" of the author after this final grand gesture and salute, is relentlessly unapologetic, cuttingly ironic, and not surreptitious in the least: an act of truth in a world of falsified appearance and anxious dissimulation. The Gonzaga are barely mentioned, and Merlin even takes one last opportunity to launch a jab at the Church, making their holy Men the measure of his punishment in the Pumpkin: "The task now is to lose as many teeth,"

> quantos Roma viros nunc obtinet inclita sanctos,
> religiosorum mores quot habentur honesti.
> Quotve forum iusta doctores lege gubernant,
> quot divas habitat matronas integra Pallas.
> Denique quot sanctae gentes, urbesque Romagnae
> aut Lombardiae, Toscanae, aut totius orbis.

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[53] *Matthew* 20:16 KJV.

> *. . . as holy men illustrious Rome now holds, as religious habits are possessed by the honorable, as many doctors govern the forum by fair legislation, as many holy wives dwell in unblemished Athens. Last but not least, for as many holy people the city of Romagna, or Lombardy, or Tuscany, or the whole world.*

Whether or not Merlin will end up loosing an infinite amount of teeth, or none at all, is a question that is left to the reader to decide. How many holy men can be said to truly live in Rome? How many truly holy men are currently living in all the world? Whether the answer is a few hundred thousand or just one, none can erase what this poet has written: the originality of his epic and its world-building inter- and intra-textual architecture valiantly resists their efforts to throw it into the bonfire of the vanities together with all other secular literatures.

We may apply a particularly apt de-theologizing twentieth-century phenomenological vocabulary to Merlin in these verses, which may help to clarify the being of the poet with regard to the double-sided irony of the finale of his text, as well as its relationality with the authors and works that have been interpolated and marked as "moderni" by it. Merlin is resolute in his anticipation of his death, and, despite his laughing mask, is being quite serious indeed with the writers to whom he speaks final verses of warning, with one foot in his poem and the other "in the grave," as it were. Merlin half-seriously dramatizes his death to underscore the 'realism' of his poem for the writer and to confirm to his reader, by surprising them with this ending, that his is perhaps the most "authentic" voice of a generation.[54] It is important to recall that Lodela discovered the poem within

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[54] This particular philosopher has written that "only in anticipatory resoluteness is the potentiality-for-Being-guilty understood *authentically and wholly*—that is to say, *primordially*." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Row, 2008), p. 354. Overcoming Heidegger's Dasein, Merlin anticipates and rebuffs via laughter the kind of paranoid reading that Eve Sedgwick has beautifully critiqued in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 130-31 (under the paragraph title "PARANOIA IS ANTICIPATORY"): "The unidirectionally future-oriented vigilance of paranoia generates, paradoxically, a complex relation of temporality that burrows backward and forward: because there must be no bad surprises, and because learning of the possibility of a bad surprise would itself constitute a bad surprise, paranoia requires that bad new be always already known. . . the temporal progress of paranoia are, in principle, infinite. . . Hence perhaps, I suggest, Butler's repeated and scouragingly thorough demonstrations in *Gender Trouble* that there can have been no moment prior to the imposition of the totalizing Law of gender difference; hence her unresting vigilance for traces in other theorists' writing of nostalgia for such an impossible prior moment. No time could be too early for one's having-already-been known, for its having-already-been-inevitable, that something bad would happen. And no loss could be too far in the future to need to be preemptively discounted." Merlin's poise (as well as Teofilo's) is anticipatory of *precisely* this kind of ontic paranoia, which results from the "uncontrollable spread of the experience of negative effect" embraced by a "strong affect theory": "The contingent possibilities of thinking otherwise than through 'sexual difference' are subordinated to the paranoid imperative that, if violence of such gender reification cannot be definitely halted in advance, it must at least never arrive on any conceptual scene *as a surpise*. In a paranoid view, it is more dangerous for such reification ever to be unanticipated than often to be unchallenged" (p. 133). In overcoming it by way of a recuperative and reparative laughter that truly does surprise its viewers, Merlin parodies, subverts, and ulitmately overcomes the militaristic paranoia of anticipatory resoluteness.

the space of death *par excellence*—and thus the text that we read is "of the tomb", as is its poet, and it is to the entombed state that the poet will now depart the stage of the poem. In these verses, in other words, Merlin motions towards a space of nullity and non-essence, of which the pumpkin is but another, Inferno-like figure, as the ultimate resting place not just of his own physical body, but the texts that indeed comprise who he is both now and in some distant future.

By identifying the writers and texts that come before and after his own with this same space, he claims for his text, and thus his Being, a penitent, authentic guiltiness, which nevertheless exists *outside* of theological definitions; by embracing its singularity in the face of death and annihilation, the Macaronic text both embraces and evades the "lostness in the they" (taken here as the writings/texts of *all moderni*, whether humanist or otherwise, compared to the irrecoverable models they vainly and unashamedly imitate) by claiming responsibility and authorship of this idolatrous mixture of signs and forms.[55] Like a Kierkegaardian Knight of Faith, Merlin is resolute in the anticipation that his guilty accumulation and synthesis of sundry textual elements within Macaronic, as well as the incorporation of many other texts into this body, will immortalize both the poem and his name as indelible signs from a period of tremendous instability and dramatic change in Italy and around the world. In this, heavily qualified, sense, the sign-system that is Macaronic is emblematic of not just it author's "being", but operates as a defense of the belatedness of all semiotic acts, beginning with his macaronic *Phantasiae*. It is in this individualized and de-theologized sense that Merlin's poem performs a "guilty" justification of all poetry—whatever the form, arrangement, language, or visual medium—and even all visual mimetic sign systems *in toto*, against the brutal and dehumanizing critiques of anti-mimetic Platonists "critics" and the barbarous, bubbling, corrupt pagan idolatry of abstract forms—for the immediate future and for

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[55] Ibid, p. 354. For distinguishing Merlin's textual guilt from Augustinian or Petrarchan sin, see n. ii: "The Being-guilty which belongs primordially to Dasein's state of Being, must be distinguished from the *status corruptionis* as understood in theology... the existential analysis of Being-guilty, proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin. Taken strictly, it cannot even be said that the ontology of Dasein *of itself* leaves this possibility open; for this ontology, as a philosophical inquiry, 'knows' in principle nothing about sin." In linking the end of himself and the text with the topoi of the pumpkin and the tomb, Merlin parodistically secures for his textual Being a non-theological basis for guiltiness before his now "sinless" audience of readers, a group which is now individualized via their reading of this unspeakable work. In delivering a message from his own-most Being, Merlin may also be said to preclude any "outstriping" of his textual-being (especially by the ineffectual pen of counter-reformation "officials" and plotting future cardinals). Cf. p. 354-5: "When, in anticipation, resoluteness has *caught up* the possibility of death into its potentiality-for-Being, Dasein's authentic existence can no longer be *outstripped* by anything."

the rest of recorded history.[56] Merlin may die, but before he departs from the stage of the play, he uses the ancient language of poetic immortality to ensure that macaronic project survive for all time: in Ovidian terms, the *Baldus* will be famous "perque omnia saecula," even if his not-so-funny response to the legacy of Vergil's *Aeneid* arrives to port beaten nearly to smithereens by the aggressiveness of his meter ("navis mea straccula").[57] Macaronic both paradoxically rejects *and* deeply identifies the Poet with the "cabale de sublime," the circle of Bembo to whom this performative utterance has been addressed from the first edition.[58]

If Merlin keels over and dies at the end of *his* performative utterance, whether ancient or modern, and as the libraries of the land close and more and more books are banned, burned, and expurgated, his poem and his heteronyms *live*. We will continue to return to it and consume its 'flawed' wisdom whenever we must confront how moments of epistemic change, transition, rupture, and realignment are represented in literary texts. For, as the tombs that dot the poem and its 'prefaces' suggest, from that of the protagonist to perhaps the closest analogue and rival to the author–Manto–this monk's rustic *vates* has constructed in not just one poem but *many* interconnected written artifacts an enormous linguistic sepulcre, filled with piggish Latin and delightfully vulgar turns of phrase. From this finely-wrought sepulcre of words he mercilessly exposes the

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[56] The poem thus performs not just a defense of the being of the poet as *magus*, who, according to Pico, "Marries heaven to earth", but ends with one of the vividest representations of the lying "truth" that is poetry/literature as well as the anticipated recompense for these lies: infinite punishments), a representation that guilty resoluteness towards finality and the end of the Macaronic project creates in order to overcome it, exploding binary dualisms which plagues the possibility of rebirth *after* the being of the individual self has been displaced by a new, converted self, or even destroyed—i.e. responding to Iago's "I am not what I am" with Othello's "Speak of me *as I am*". See Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, p. 197 particularly n. 123: "The risk, which is run in any event given the fact of temporal displacement, is that in dying to the old self so that a new one may be born, we will become not so many Augustine's secure in our new life, but Iagos who can say 'I am not what I am.'" For Shakespeare's use of Ariosto in *Othello*, see Jane Tylus, "Imitating Othello: The Handkerchief, alla Italiana," *Renaissance Drama* 36/37 (2010): 237–260.

[57] A direct allusion to Ovid is suggested by "promerui" ("quamvis promerui Baldi cantare bataias", v. 589), a verb used by Ovid in one of the more stirring *Epistulae ex Ponto* (1.VII.62).

[58] For the use of this expression to define the position of the Ancients in the famous quarrel, see Larry F. Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 26. Adding only that the trauma of the realization that the past is irrecoverable does not to have prevented generation after generation of Ancients from rigorously imitating the most celebrated authors of antiquity, from Cicero to Virgil, I agree with Norman's diagnosis that "the humanist infatuation with antiquity unfolds something like the sad arc of romance embodied in the cliché 'I love you, you're perfect, now change.' The more one learns of the loved object, the more its imperfections are first visible, then unavoidable; impassioned identification thus gives way to painful decoupling. Such is the trauma that the scholars of antiquity experience in their relation to the classical past... " (36) On this view, Merlin is a confused fourteenth-century Ancient who has become a Modern and is attempting to defend his writing, as he does here in and in the *Apologetica*, as the offspring of the deliberate mixture and contamination of Trecento proto-humanist and vernacular conventions, whereas Bembo and the other neo-Latinists of the late Quattro and Cinquento are most assuredly Moderns who write as as Ancients as rigorously as they can (excluding all other models for imitation other than Virgil, Petrarch, Cicero, and Boccaccio), and are therefore to be taken most seriously indeed.

affected and false purity of the high style, all while masterfully contributing to World Literature episodes of the highest literary distinction. This poet has chosen *his* crude and boisterous Merlin and loyal Lodela to erect this towering edifice of texts and con-texts before our eyes—a vertiginous construct of languages, genres, and texts that can equally seduce us, make us chuckle, cry out in protest, begrudgingly agree, or just stun us into a dazed silence with verbal pyrotechnics and explosive learning. It is a protean performative display which doubles as distinct warning to its audience—and to an entire a world—which is quickly departing from all humanisms, human rights, and the Humanities in general—as well as a successful response to the faithless sacrilization of the works and language of a poet patronized by a genocidal ancient Emperor, and the idolatrous, profane lyrics of an exiled Florentine, which will nevertheless be sponsored by a future cardinal as the *only* acceptable model for poetry in Italy. Merlin has elected to write *this* epic in Macaronic. And he lives.

Chapter 5

Manto's Ark and the Tradition's Alchemy

To bring to a conclusion this dissertation on the making and remaking of Macaronic in Folengo's remarkable epic, I will return to a reading, now nearly two years old, from the fourth section of the second chapter of this dissertation, in which I made several interrelated claims about the most important of several grottoes spread across the diluvean landscape of this protean poem. I shall use this episode to make a final assertion about the striking originality, and coherent teleological vision, of a text which, perhaps more so than any book printed in this span of years, is anchored to a multitude of regions, speech habits, and literary and textual traditions co-existing in its country and place of origin; while at the same time preternaturally capable of anticipating and imagining new textual, oral, and narratological horizons for its readers, past and future. By way of my reading of the meaning of the enormous mechanical structure created and adorned by Manto, I will show how Folengo stages a remarkable synthesis of myth, history, and philosophy at the heart of his poem, in what is the most powerfully emblematic moments in the *Baldus* for Macaronic, forging by way of this learning episode both a solitary figure and an intimidatingly intelligent and generative celestial factory, a powerful engine of creation that allows her to produce a stone granting control over life and the production of wealth in this Italian city. By way of this reading, I will both describe the relationship between Merlin's writing and the final, shadowy *antrum* in which the protagonists find themselves, the poet's *zucca*, in which the poet speaks of his final punishment, as well as forecast the ends of Macaronic with respect to its readership in 1500s Italy.

My claim is that by way of the figures of Manto's machine and stone, the author of the poem stages a deliberate and successful confrontation with, and triumph over, the normative poetic, theological, and even legal discourses of the poet's period, and that this representation of a mythical founder's knowledge of the deepest biopolitical and economic truths that structure power in her city, and which she seeks, unheeded, to teach her ward Baldo, work to secure for Merlin, Lodela, and the Author which made them, a firm place as one of the strongest and most original writers in Italy during this remarkable span of years.

Located at the heart of not just the *Baldus*, but each edition of the macaronic book subsequent to T, Manto's grotto is clearly, even from its first version, a set piece addressed to its initial dedicatee, Federigo II Gonzaga, whose interventions and interest in the revision of the macaronic book ensured that it was successfully published and disseminated throughout Italy, Europe, and the world.[1] The space that Manto adorns with gems and precious metals is also one which harbors representational artifacts culled from different literary and historical traditions, some concerning the dynastic history of Mantua painted by Apelles; I have earlier suggested that this space can also be seen to function as a kind a symmetrical emblem for the transformative and combinative poetic style that is Macaronic. Manto's direct genealogical relation to Merlin, as well as the economic and cultural patrimony of the birthplace of Vergil in the early modern period, act strongly to ally this space, and the *Baldus* in particular, with the powerful dynasty that rules this city and funds its production of art, literature, and theatre. I have also claimed that Folengo constructs his Manto from each prior literary representation of the seer, including Virgil's, Dante's, Boccaccio's, and Ariosto's, but that her associations not only with the destiny of Virgil (vividly captured in the *Sylva* of Poliziano, "Manto") but that her association with alchemy is a deliberately historicizing innovation to the tradition calculated to link the episode, and Manto in particular, with both 'real' monetary policies of Mantua, as well as the *telos* of Macaronic as a whole—with its mixture (or 'debasement') of the 'valuable' words and expressions of the humanist tradition in Italy with those of less prestigious, vernacular dialects. It also sets Manto, and the macaronic project she figures forth, in relation to the production and verification of cultural-artistic products in Mantua, for, in a world which lacks secure means for distinguishing truth from falsity—for establishing, as it were, the authenticity of artifacts or words, whether economic *or* interpersonal—Folengo's Manto and her command of alchemy and the generative forces of nature are both attuned to the actual processes of wealth creation, 'falsification',and the poetic and philosophical fonts that authenticate and authorize these procreative powers.

As at least one scholar has shown, Manto is explicitly mentioned by Guido, Baldo's father, as the one and only sincere ("syncera") witch of *all* the witches of a list that stretches from Homer's Circe to Boiardo's Fallerina.[2] If Manto's magic is powerfully ambiguous, situated at the boundary between natural magic and sinister witchcraft, it *is* enticing for what it reveals about the sources of the production of wealth in Mantua: her technologies are predicated by her control of an ark-like machine and Authorial stone that produce and secure wealth hoarded beneath the earth as treasure for her and her city alone. It is also Manto's lesson which is the most valuable in the poem for *its*

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[1] As has been noted many times by the critics, a letter preserved in the archives of Mantua records Federico's direct involvement in the publishing of a manuscript he sent to Alessandro Paganini, to whom he sent a manuscript he had obtained from the poet.

[2] See Capodivacca, "The Witch as Muse," 127. Unlike most critics, Capodivacca does not limit her investigation of the Manto episode to the last, 'definitive' version of the poem, nor is her analysis of the theme of witchcraft in Folengo's works restricted to the *Baldus*, but extends to the *Orlandino* and *its* authorial figures.

listeners, for with it we learn the only truthful words of the thousands of nonce expressions and 'useless' coinages bandied about by Merlin in the macaronic text.[3]

Manto's alchemy is itself a macaronics of knowledge and poetry: it combines ancient and heretical epicurean doctrines about the denial of carnal love as well as the immortality of the soul with early-modern scientific discourses concerning the transmutation of alloys and the creation of a *prima materia*. This combination of knowledge and poetry (as her allusion to the *De Rerum Natura* (13.334) as well as Merlin's mention of the alchemical texts in his description of the contents of the spheres makes clear) suggest that they playfully counter the 'white' magic sponsored by the Christian kabbalah of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; it is the vats of her enormous decanter-like device, housed deep in the heart of her grotto-cave, which is the source of this New-Atlantis like technological power. Among the many devices to which her marvelously decorated object is is compared by Merlin (a clock (T 12.357), spindle (358), theater (368), pyramid (345), room (487), and gyre (491) the one which I have not examined is the most intriguing for both its literary *and* biblical allusiveness: an ark or "arca" (367).[4] In its function as a tomb for Federico as well as a space filled with valuable metals and forbidden technical know-how, Manto's ark captures the double-valance of the word in Latin and Italian: *arca* may be used to refer to a sarcophagus, tomb, or coffer in which valuables are stored for safe-keeping. There are two specifically biblical allusions, however, activated by the use of this word which can be meaningfully located in this episode, and used to think about the critical stakes of Macaronic as a textual artifact of some value for understanding its period of composition: the two arks created by man in the Old Testament at the commandment of God. And it is with reference to this double allusion to the arks of Noah and Moses, as well as the systems of law and belief to which they are tied, that I will now make a departing observation on the utter novelty of *Baldus* respective to the normative, nominally Christian, culture from which the poem emerged in the early 1500s, and to which it responds in each version subsequent to the *Toscolana*.

The first biblical ark to which this structure may more loosely allude, is the ark of Noah described in Genesis, the ark in which the people and animals of the globe were saved from the ravages of a world-depopulating deluge.[5] The second biblical ark is the most valuable relic of the Israelite's—the Ark of the Covenant—described in Exodus as containing two stone tablets on which God inscribed the Ten Commandments in the dialect of Aramaic spoken by the Moses using a paleo-Sinaitic alphabet. Besides the specific structural echo of the eight celestial spheres of the Spindle of Necessity witnessed by Er in the last book of the *Republic*, which I argued either directly or indirectly informs the heavenly form of the whorls of Manto's whirling machine, knowledge of

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[3] See, however, my reading in chapter 1, section 4, for the failure even of this instruction to alter Baldo's fate.

[4] It is made of marble studded with precious jewels surrounded by columns of gold, clear crystal pilasters, and walls of various precious materials, all housed in a large shell of lead.

[5] Needless to say, the size and capacity of the ark of Noah call to be compared to Manto's construction, together with the fact that both arks are positioned on island (in the case of the ark of Noah, the peak of Ararat.

and control over a specific artifact housed within this structure—the philosopher's stone—leads one naturally to the conclusion that this structure functions as a literary, macaronic counterpart and competitor to the Ark of Covenant, and that Manto may be construed as an alter-Moses for *her* listeners.[6] The fact that both of these treasure chests contain objects on which writing is fixed by supernatural forces and that, when uttered, have magically transformative effects, granting their users death-defying powers, confirms that the allusion to the Ark is present in the episode: Manto's knowledge of how to use this stone to generate life from death, as well as her instruction of Baldo in how to use it for himself, is predicated on its inscription, which she, Moses-like, teaches to him.[7] Both are objects of sacred and inestimable power—one the holiest and most precious vessel containing the Law conferred upon mankind by God, the other a source of powerful natural magic that generates wealth and eternal youth—and their conflation in the mind of the poet generates a key interpretive moment in the macaronic project as a whole.[8]

In this interpretation, Federico's coffer-like tomb functions as the final resting place for not only the syncretic and multilingual writing style that is macaronic, but is also the final resting place of the entire macaronic tradition, which extends well beyond the second edition to all future writings, in any *grottesco*, regardless the narrative form or specific mixture of languages these mixtures of styles might assume, or whether it might be in poetry (like Folengo's), or in prose.[9] The Way of Macaronic may have antecedents in the poetics of dissimulated irony and disbelief, witnessed in such satirical texts as Alberti's *Momus*, but its hybridity and allusiveness are far more extensive with respect to the various oral and textual tradition that surround it: with Macaronic, Folengo wields an entirely new kind of writing that is both living and dead, present and absent, equally improvised 'on the spot' before its readers, and the result of a meticulous and violent combination of linguistic traditions for bi- and multi-lingual readers from all over Europe and beyond; a laughingly zombified speech masking both the truth of the ends of humanism (and the vernacular) in his peninsula as well as the "misery of public history" out of which his poem has sprung, Phoenix-like—and from which the world of Merlin's Italy and his adroitly-named characters—Cingar, Baldo, Fracasso—and the rest, have been so compellingly drawn. If Manto's

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[6] For the ways that the myth of Er (specifically, the Odyssey's choice to live a private life when reincarnated) can be used to think about Rinaldo in the two tales at the end of the *Furioso*, see Martinez, "Two Odysseys," 47. The *scoglio* under which Manto's grotto, palace, and ark are located are clearly figures for the island of Mantua itself, and thus might be compared to the Belvedere island near Ferrara, praised at length by Ariosto in the *Furioso*.

[7] At least one hermetic tradition conflates the stones of the commandments and the jar of white manna placed within or in front of the Ark with the stone of the Philosophers (A white stone and manna were already linked in the Bible: see Rev. 2:17: "To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

[8] Needless to say, this episode, and the importance of the stone for the instruction of its protagonist, provides an indirect but important narrative precedent for the first of the series of novels about witchcraft and wizardry by the author J.K. Rowling.

[9] Or, for that matter, the literary-critical traditions which attempt to encompass and interpret macaronic texts such as Joyce's, Pound's, Gadda's, or many others, and in doing so, are themselves macaronized.

Ark operates as a closed figural analogue for the temporal horizons Macaronic, its alchemy is perhaps the most faithful of the many lies contained in this book of crass, dissimulated words. Her extensive powers, channeled through the magical three-letter word of the *lapis*, allow Merlin to circumvent *all* systems that would disenfranchise Macaronic and its project in the *Baldus*, or place this language within the boundaries of a normalizing, controlling discourse (most importantly here, religious and legal ones, as testified by the contents of the Ark of Moses' tablets, which here become the source of Manto's powers, but also the 'standards' of either Petrarchan vernacular or Vergilian Latin promoted by Bembo). As the Moses of the macaronic "code", Manto's lesson is a curative, if Lucretian and therefore 'forbidden', infusion of truthful knowledge, whose healing force is in what it ultimately reveals about the Italy and Mantua of this period: the arbitrariness of the mechanisms of power and authority that supply value to things, ideas, money, and people.

At the same time, like the speech from the tomb of Ariosto's Merlin, this power over names and values is ambiguously tied to the patronage of her Gonzaga lord, for whom the ark has been constructed as a tomb, and to whom she addresses words of praise; her lesson, which goes unheeded by the adventurers which she seeks to protect, entirely by way of good magic and the studious help of proxies, like Merlin and Seraphus, has little effect on the outcome of their journey. Like the pavilion/veil of Cassandra transported to Paris by demons in canto 46, but that retreats to Constantinople after the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante, Manto is left alone with her Ark inside her grotto-island—the final refuge and resting place not for Federico, but for this *genetrix* and her strange creations, a repository for the powerful magic and (un)natural knowledge, long associated with Manto and the medieval Virgil (and now with Macaronic) in which it will be safely preserved. It is a both a shrine and time capsule of the forces which conspired to created Macaronic, and which now evade the betrayals of all poets and patrons. Her machine harnesses the full potential of the exceptional position and language Folengo has carefully crafted for the world of Renaissance Italy, but it also sequesters it—removes it from the eyes of all but a privileged few. In a radical departure from both Dante and Ariosto/Virgil's versions of Manto, it is she *alone* who founds Mantua in the macaronic universe of T (neither Ocnus nor his father, the river Tiber, is mentioned in this version), with Aquario confirming in a gloss that "Manto fabricatrix Mantuae".[10]

By imaginatively restoring the mythical-historical Manto to her rightful place as the sole founder of Mantua, the poet challenges both the post-Virgil and post-Dantean traditions that marginalize her role in the foundation of the city, or emphasize the male line of descent in its founding (for Vergil, it is Ocnus who supplies Mantua with his mother's name). Indeed, the emphasis placed on the female origins of the city and the presence of a matrilinear line of descent in Mantua is strengthened by Manto's status as the direct ancestor to the poet, for Merlin has claimed already to be "de sanguine Mantos" ("of the blood of Manto"), and in the *Libellus de Laudibus* Aquario confirms that he is "de genologia *mulieris* mantos"). So far as I am aware, no Renaissance poet other than Merlin can be said to claim direct, filial relationship with the mythical founder of a Renais-

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[10] Op. cit., p. 126r.

sance city, let alone a female founder. Manto as *fabricatrix* is therefore not a composite of earlier versions of the Theban, but a daring and unprecedented superimposition of authorial identity onto an elaborate amplification of the most important myths of poetic origins available to Mantua, the Gonzaga, and the classical tradition in Italy, and which associates Folengo even closer to founder of this city than Vergil himself.

In a *macaronicen* that places such a high premium on the value of words, the human knowledge used to create life and wealth that words encode, it is no wonder that the earliest object thought to be written in a historical alphabet—the Ten Commandments—has been closely associated to both the stone of Manto and the Macaronic arts themselves. Indeed, the letter 'A', which begins the Hebrew *aleph*-bet, is being both implicitly and explicitly emphasized throughout the episode, from the "Vi*a*" of the inscription to the "*ar*ca" that houses it; at the explicit level, the letter appears at the beginning of the capitalized word "*A*uthor" (T, 12.403, V 13.248)—the second and last appearance of this word in the entire poem. In the final analysis, the *auto*-nomous self that writes Macaronic has reserved this powerful, authorizing word (from which the words authority and authenticity are both ultimately derived), for the most powerful competitor with Folengo as Author of his poem:

> Ipsius Author enim post vanas mille fadigas,
> post consumatum nequicquam tempus et annos,
> post ganger, mardach, nitron, post napsu, vel albar,
> Post gry, brunesich, clymastroi, danidos, esig,
> Post fu, girapiron, licodemon, ilfil, oriza,
> post quasappa, reif, saragin, centumque facendas,
> quae fastidirent, si vellem dicere,
> Verbitrium lapidem retrovavit philosophorum.

> Indeed, the Author herself, after a thousand vain labors, after a years of fruitless time expended, after ganger, mardach, nitron, after napsu, or albar; after gry, brunesich, clymastroi, danidos, esig, after fu, girapiron, licodemon, ilfil, oriza, after quasappa, reif, saragin, and a hundred other trials, which would annoy you if I said them them all, discovered the three-word philosopher's stone.

It is Manto who has founded and named the city from which both Vergil and Macaronic Merlin have trumpeted their songs of triumph, and at some point between their respective textual performances to their very different audiences (Augustus and the literati of Mantua and Venice), she has became the greatest practitioner of alchemy the macaronic world has ever known—and, according to Guido, the only witch worth saving. Even if this be but a pleasing fiction, with it, Folengo and his language achieve poetic immortality.

To take stock of the dark arts of Manto's Ark is to confront what Macaronic meant to its readership and the world of Renaissances, to world splittings, which brought this language, genre,

and text into being.[11] Like their journey through the rotating spheres of her machine, the heroes of the poem spin about through the revisions to the Macaronic poem, and as they do, it generates 'revolutions' in *its* world.

I claimed at the end of the last chapter that Merlin's address to his contemporaries in the pumpkin, as well as his escape from the garish punishment and death, which he falsely predicts for poets like himself in this version, depends on his critique of the desire of *moderni* to compete with, or enact a restoration of, the writing of the ancients. It also containsa desacralizing and ironic statement equating the number of truly holy men and just legislators in Rome to the number of teeth to be removed from Merlin's head during his punishment (very few, if any). Indeed, their verses are not even equivalent to those of Dante or Petrarch (T, 25.586-7). Merlin lies, and his lying macaronic speech make all words in all languages just as macaronic as his own. The truth of this language is that signs, in every language, are always already compromised by their belatedness, especially those written by moderns in the style of long-dead ancients. After this devastating critique of the value of all semiotic systems, we are left to wonder whether the only poetic words left with any meaning at all, both in this poem, and in Merlin's Italy, are those of Manto and her unheeded message, and "VIA" inscribed onto her most unholy and self-generating stone.[12] Her prophetic powers and the alchemy that she alone wields by way of this word—the alchemy of not just Macaronic, but the poetic writing poetry which filters down from her Cadmean bloodline through Virgil and beyond—are what has ultimately endowed Folengo's strange epic with its most powerful statement on the relationship between fact and poetic fiction, belief and unbelief, the truth of treasured words and the lying speech perpetuated by the corrupt juridical and religious institutions that rule life in Italy in this period. It is not a coincidence that the clearest and most memorable mention of alchemy is made by Manto's double, Apollo, in the famous biographical proem of *Grugnae Stryacis Carcossae Macaronicorum Liber Secundus* of C (i.e. *macaronicen* 21). There, we learned that all writing by moderns is nothing more than a kind of alchemy, the same mixture of old and new to which this poet's language of opposites and contraries provides both playful commentary and profoundest condemnation: "Crede mihi: alchemia est quidquid dixere moderni". The truth of the Tradition, if the West can be said to have one, is one that is far from Golden; it is, in fact, the product of alchemy unable to mask its systematic debts and distortions to any tradition—classical or post-classical—which it might claim to restore to a pristine integrity. The truth of the Tradition, a truth worth more than all the lies of all the poets, good, bad, or just

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[11] It is also possible that the *Via* is a thinly-veiled allusion to unutterable tetragrammaton, the Hebrew word for name of God, which, as Egidio da Viterbo explains in his *Book on Hebrew Letters*, is divided "into the four chosen letters of which the first is *iod*... they also put a complete Name in the half that sounds like *IA*, which is enclosed in the secret of *alleluia*... placed at the foot of the *Psalms*". See p. 15 in Brian P. Copenhaver, *Magic and the Dignity of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[12] For a review of the sources and possible meanings of the *verbitrium*, including that it is an "immagine del Christo, della sua nascita, della sua morte e delle sua resurrezione," see the reading above as well as Signorini, "L'Arca Gonzaga e il cosmo alchemico di Manto," 76.

mediocre, is that it is nothing other, and thus worth no more (or less) than Manto's alchemy.

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