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Cervantes and Tasso Reexamined

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It has been a principle of recent Cervantine scholarship that Cervantes knew and was influenced by Italian literary theory, in particular the debate about the *romanzo* or chivalric poem, of which Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is the most famous example; Alban Forcione alleges that Cervantes took from this debate ideas about how to improve the *libro de caballerías*.¹ Of the participants in this controversy, Forcione claims that he had direct knowledge of,² and was especially influenced by, the central writings of Torquato Tasso. As stated by William Entwistle, Cervantes was "a passionate admirer of...Tasso";³ critical enthusiasm for the influence on Cervantes of Tasso's lengthy *discorsi* on literary theory, untranslated until Tomás Tamayo de Vargas translated the *Discursos sobre el poema heroico*⁴ and unpublished in Spanish to this day, has been such that he has been fantasied "walking about with a single-volume copy of Tasso's *Tratado del poema heroico*

¹He explores this topic in *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). I have commented, along somewhat different lines, on Cervantes' purification of the *libro de caballerías* in "The Ideal *Libro de caballerías*: The *Bernardo*", Chapter 2 of my *A Study of "Don Quijote"* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1987). (An earlier version, "El *Bernardo* de Cervantes fue su libro de caballerías", was published in *Anales cervantinos*, 21 [1983], 103-17.)

²"I am convinced that we are dealing with a case of direct influence" (p. 102, n.).

³*Cervantes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 18.

⁴Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*, edición nacional (Madrid: CSIC, 1962), II, 211.

and *Discurso del arte poética* in his pocket”.⁵

It is undeniable that Cervantes and Tasso shared many views. Both accorded much importance to truth, history, and literary rules, though Tasso was more lenient than Cervantes; both rejected the use of the supernatural; both were interested in chivalry and chivalric literature, and in the effect of the latter on readers. We would not, however, claim that Cervantes owed his interest in chivalry to Tasso; no more would we assume that he took from him a rejection of the pagan miraculous, so frequently censured by moralistic writers and by the church. In this article, I will argue that he did not take literary principles from Tasso either, and suggest that what knowledge he did have of Tasso’s theory was indirect. A consequence of this argumentation is the validation of E. C. Riley’s tentative, yet to my judgment more correct position: that to the extent that Cervantes’ literary ideas are the result of reading, and not his discussions of these then-common questions, his observations, or his personal experiences as an author,⁶ the “decisive event” (Riley, p. 12) in the formation of Cervantes’ literary ideas was his reading of the *Philosophía antigua poética* (1596) of Alonso López Pinciano, who knew Tasso well.⁷

The literary ideas themselves are difficult to study, and even more difficult to form firm conclusions about. Sixteenth-century literary theory, especially Italian literary theory, is so abundant that it is next to impossible for one person to read and assimilate all the texts Cervantes might have had access to, which of course is a much greater body of writing than what he in fact read. To trace the various ideas, to distinguish borrowing from coincidence, is equally

⁵Arturo Marasso, cited in Alban Forcione, “Cervantes, Tasso, and the *Romanzi Polemic*”, *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 44 (1970), 433-43, at pp. 433-34.

⁶These four sources for his literary ideas were outlined by E. C. Riley, *Cervantes’s Theory of the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 6.

⁷Joaquín Arce, *Tasso y la poesía española* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1973), says: “aun cuando no le cita ni una sola vez, es incuestionable que Alonso López Pinciano ha tenido muy en cuenta al italiano” (p. 88). The question of López Pinciano’s sources—a complex question—is largely unstudied, though Sanford Shepard has examined “Las huellas de Escalígero en la *Philosophía antigua poética* de Alonso López Pinciano”, *Revista de Filología Española*, 45 (1962), 311-17, and Judy B. McInnis, “Allegory, Mimesis, and the Italian Critical Tradition in Alonso López Pinciano’s *Philosophía antigua poética*”, *Hispano-Italic Studies*, 1 (1976), 9-22, offers some helpful comments on all of El Pinciano’s Italian predecessors. Antonio Vilanova, “Preceptistas de los siglos XVI y XVII”, in *Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas*, III, reprint with a new chapter (Barcelona: Vergara, 1969), 567-614, at p. 604, claims that besides Vida and Scaliger, whom he cites, López Pinciano “además de Robortelli y Castelvetro, conoce las poéticas del Minturno y de Fracastoro y sigue con especial preferencia los *Discorsi del poema eroico* de Torquato Tasso”.

difficult, and in some cases impossible. I therefore take a different approach, and will study this question externally, examining Cervantes' views about Italy, Italian literature, and Tasso's poetry, by means of which to arrive at some conclusions about the influence of the latter's literary ideas on him.

Cervantes' love for Italy is very evident. In the *Persiles*, "El licenciado Vidriera", "La fuerza de la sangre", in his desire to serve the Conde de Lemos in Naples, we see that he admired Italian cities, architecture, wine, food, abundance, and comfort. Yet missing in his attitude, as known to us, is any belief that Spain and Spaniards had anything to learn from the Italian people;⁸ the only Italians of any significance in Cervantes' works are Rutilio, the dancing-master who tells his fantastic story in the first book of the *Persiles*, and the three Italian protagonists of "La señora Cornelia", whose problems are solved through the intervention of Spaniards. Italy's chief claim to greatness, as seen through Cervantes' works, was that the center of the Catholic church was located in Rome, and Cervantes' most eloquent praise (in the *Parnaso*, VIII; also "Licenciado Vidriera", II, 81, 16-21) is for Naples, the Spanish capital. To any Spaniard of Cervantes' day, Italy's greatness would have seemed a thing of the past, while the glory of Spain, despised for so long,⁹ was in the present. Italy was pleasant, but it was soft and decadent.¹⁰

⁸The only Italian university mentioned in Cervantes' works is that of Bologna, where there was and still is a Spanish college ("La señora Cornelia", III, 69, 25-70, 3) and there is only a second-hand report of one Italian academy, where the topic of the day was one already discussed in Spain and on which the pilgrims have themselves much to say, "si podía aver amor sin zelos" (*Persiles*, II, 182, 23-31, III, 19).

Although Don Quixote called Italian a "lengua fácil" (IV, 295, 18-19, II, 62), and Cervantes portrays himself as able to converse in that language (*Parnaso*, 117, 11-18, VIII), Cervantes' fictional travelers have little interaction with Italians, and this is especially significant when we consider how much pleasant conversation there is in Cervantes' works, and how he prided himself on having friends (*Novelas ejemplares*, I, 20, 7, Prologue). Cervantes twice makes the point that in Lucca the Spaniards are treated better than elsewhere ("Licenciado Vidriera", II, 80, 6-9; *Persiles*, II, 184, 4-10, III, 19), implying that he had been treated less than cordially.

⁹In Ariosto, for example, the Spaniards are Saracens, allies of the infidels against the Christians.

¹⁰The following quotations are from the chapter on Tasso in Francesco de Sanctis' *History of Italian Literature*, trans. Joan Redfern (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1931), Volume II: "The only exception [to European political progress] was Italy. Italians were not only not founding their *patria*, but had utterly lost their independence, their liberty, and the preëminent place that they had held till now in the world's history" (p. 622). "Feeling for art was exhausted, and inspiration and spontaneity in composing and in judging were spoiled by reasonings founded on conceptions of criticism acknowledged by every one and looked upon as Holy Writ"

What is also missing in Cervantes' works, which deal more with literature than those of any other writer of his generation, is enthusiasm for Italian literature, without which an interest in Italian literary theory is unlikely. With the single, though significant, exception of Ariosto, there are found in Cervantes' works few recollections, even fewer overt recollections, of Italian literature, in his day in frank decay.¹¹ Where are the reminiscences of Petrarch's lyrics, to compare with those of Garcilaso?¹² Where those of Dante, the greatest author both of Italy and of Christian poetry?¹³

There is, in Cervantes, a constant celebration of *Spanish* literature, and *Spanish* authors. In the *Parnaso* we learn that they

(p. 636). "In Italy there was no struggle because there was no conscience, that is to say, no convictions nor religious nor moral nor political passions" (p. 627). "In Italy it proved to be quite as difficult to restore faith as to restore morality. The only result was hypocrisy, the observance of forms apart from conscience. Sensible men took to dissembling in their talk and habits, and in public and private affairs: an immorality so profound that conscience was left powerless and the whole of life was robbed of its dignity" (pp. 625-26). Italians generally blamed, and many would still blame, Italy's decadence on the Spanish domination, the Counter-Reformation, and the Inquisition.

¹¹"Literature was only a mechanism, a technical artifice; people searched for the examples to be found in writers, instead of the intrinsic reasons for the forms in their relation to the things" (De Sanctis, p. 633). "Nothing was left [of Italy's literary life] but irritations, little excitements, accusations, slanders, storms in teacups on the subject of grammar, in short, the grossest, the most pedantic part of that life" (p. 635).

¹²The only overt citation of Petrarch ("El casamiento engañoso", III, 146, 20-21) is on the topic of *engaño*.

¹³The parallel cited by Forcione, "Cervantes, Tasso, and the *Romanzi* Polemic", p. 436 (also *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"*, p. 102, n. 21), is interesting but hardly conclusive; one would expect more evidence than this single, well-known simile. (See Riley's comment in his review, *Hispanic Review*, 41 [1973], 563-67, at p. 564, n. 1.) Francisco López Estrada, in his overwhelmingly negative examination of "La influencia italiana en *La Galatea* de Cervantes", *Comparative Literature*, 4 (1952), 161-69, also argues against influence of Dante (p. 168). Aside from Ariosto, the only Italian authors who have been clearly and unequivocally identified as Cervantine sources are Bembo, Tansillo, and Mario Equicola; see Eugenio Mele, "Il Cervantes traduttore d'un madrigale del Bembo e un'ottava del Tansillo", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 34 (1899), 457-60, and Geoffrey Stagg, "Plagiarism in *La Galatea*", *Filologia Romanza*, 6 (1959), 255-76; none of these, it should be noted, was a source for literary theory. Kenneth P. Allen, "Cervantes' *Galatea* and the *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi* of Giraldo Cinthio," *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 39 (1976-77), 52-68, while reinforcing the importance of Bembo, makes a case he himself admits is less than airtight for Giraldo. Other studies, such as those of Joseph Fucilla, "El papel del *Cortegiano* en la segunda parte de *Don Quijote*", pp. 17-26, and "Ecos de Sannazaro y de Tasso en *Don Quijote*", pp. 27-37 of his collection *Relaciones hispanoitalianas*, Anejo 59 of the *Revista de Filología Española* (Madrid, 1953), overgeneralize from commonplaces. (Even with this approach, Fucilla finds that "las huellas [de Tasso] son muy secundarias", p. 36.)

were—some of them—the beloved of Apollo, equal to or better than the great writers of antiquity.¹⁴ They certainly were as good as Italian authors. The heroic poems of Ercilla, Juan Rufo, and Cristobal de Virués “pueden competir con los más famosos de Italia” (*Don Quijote*, I, 105, 16-17, I, 6). According to the “venerable Telesio”, every one of the authors named in the “Canto de Calíope” “se aventaja...al más agudo extranjero” (*La Galatea*, II, 238, 4-5, VI). Enrique Garcés’ translation of Petrarch surpasses the original (II, 228, 21-28, VI),¹⁵ and a completely unknown Gutierre Carvajal wrote in Italian as well as did Ariosto (II, 213, 33-214, 4, VI); the Turia is more famous than the Po (II, 233, 32, VI), and the Betis “puede..., dignamente, al Mincio, al Arno, al Tibre aventajar[s]e” (II, 222, 29-30, VI). The Italian authors were good, but the Spaniards have improved on these predecessors.¹⁶

This is precisely the case with Tasso; there is much to indicate that Cervantes was far from an unqualified enthusiast of Tasso’s poetry or, by implication, his theory. Cervantes’ very enthusiasm for Ariosto, at the opposite pole from Tasso of the greatest literary debate of the sixteenth century,¹⁷ is itself sugges-

¹⁴Thus his “edad” was “más venturosa / que aquella de los griegos y latinos” (*La Galatea*, II, 214, 15-16, VI). The same point is made in a work of literary scholarship which Cervantes surely knew, but whose considerable influence on him is unexamined: Miguel Sánchez de Lima’s *Arte poética en romance castellano* (1580), pp. 21-23 of the edition of Rafael de Balbín Lucas (Madrid: CSIC, 1944). Even the verses of the Conde de Lemos “excedían a los de Virgilio y Homero” (Alfonso Pardo Manuel de Villena, Marqués de Rafal, *Un mecenas español del siglo XVII. El Conde de Lemos* [Madrid, 1911], p. 168).

¹⁵On Garcés, see Luis Monguió, *Sobre un escritor elogiado por Cervantes. Los versos del perulero Enrique Garcés y sus amigos (1591)*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 58, No. 1 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 1-64.

¹⁶As Lope intended to surpass Tasso (Arce, p. 46), so in Cervantes’ own works we see an intent to surpass the Italians and compete with the classics. The *Parnaso*, everyone agrees, is superior to its Italian predecessor, the *Viaggio in Parnaso* of Caporali, his *Novelas* are superior to those of the *novelliere* (that they are more *ejemplares* is undeniable), and he thought that he could, by purifying the *libro de caballerías*, write a work of the stature of those of Homer and Virgil (*Don Quijote*, II, 346, 10-12, I, 48). The *Persiles* “se atreve a competir con Eliodoro” (*Novelas ejemplares*, I, 23, 16-17, Prologue), and would “llegar al extremo de bondad possible” (*Don Quijote*, III, 34, 17-18, II, Dedication).

¹⁷This debate, to be treated at greater length shortly, was about the nature of the epic, and whether the *Orlando furioso*, with its casual approach to historical truth, religion, and chivalry, and lack of a single protagonist, should be so labeled or was something else, a *romanzo*. The best introduction to this debate is Camilo Guerrieri-Crocetti’s *G. B. Giraldis ed il pensiero critico del sec. XVI* (Milan: Dante Alighieri, 1932), which includes a chapter on “Aristotelismo e romanzo” and another on “Cervantes e Lope de Vega”.

tive. There are several explicitly favorable references to Ariosto in *Don Quijote* (I, 98, 31-99, 3, I, 6; II, 406, 7, I, 52; III, 50, 23-24, II, 1; III, 72, 27-73, 2, II, 4; IV, 294, 18-19, II, 62), and much that is suggestive of further influence.¹⁸ Ariosto, not Tasso, is mentioned before and alluded to in the “Canto de Calíope”. Cervantes cites Tasso’s *Aminta* (*Don Quijote*, IV, 295, 28, II, 62) in order to praise the translation of his friend Jáuregui, without mentioning Tasso’s name or praising the work.¹⁹ The references in the *Parnaso* to Tasso (28, 15, II; 74, 32, V) are ambiguous, and the reference to him in the *Persiles* even more so.

Tasso was the subject of a monument in Rome, and in the visit to Rome which concludes the *Persiles* it was logical to mention him. Cervantes says of him there: “el qual avía de cantar Jerusalén recuperada con el más heroico y agradable plectro que hasta entonces ningún poeta huviesse cantado” (II, 243, 13-16, IV, 6; italics mine). Immediately thereafter, however, he says of the then-unpublished (and now forgotten) Francisco López de Zárate, that his “voz avía de llenar las cuatro partes de la tierra, y cuya armonía avía de suspender los coraçones de las gentes, contando²⁰ la invención de la Cruz de Christo, con las guerras del emperador Constantino; poema verdaderamente heroico y religioso, y digno del nombre de poema” (II, 243, 18-24, IV, 6; italics mine).²¹

This juxtaposition of an Italian and a Spanish work, also seen in the contrast in *Don Quijote* (II, 62) between the Italian *Bagatelle* and the Spanish *Luz del alma*, speaks eloquently of Cervantes’ view of the two literatures, especially on topics related to religion and chivalry, two matters of the greatest importance to him. The Spaniards were the military (chivalric) leaders of the world, as well as the ones spreading the cross to the farthest reaches of the globe. They were the experts on Christian warfare, and the fervent and patriotic defenders of the Catholic faith. They were in addition the

¹⁸See Maxime Chevalier, *L’Arioste en Espagne* (Bordeaux: Institut d’Études Ibériques et Ibéro-Américaines de l’Université de Bordeaux, 1966), pp. 439-91.

¹⁹On the lack of influence of the *Aminta* on Cervantes, see the second article of Fucilla cited in note 13.

²⁰“Cantando”, in the edition of Avalle-Arce.

²¹López de Zárate was very highly regarded in his day, praised extensively by Lope, Gracián, and Pérez de Montalbán; Nicolás Antonio “le atribuyó casi el principado de los poetas” (María Teresa González de Garay Fernández, *Introducción a la obra poética de Francisco López de Zárate* [Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1982], p. 25). For the dedication of his *Varias poesías* in 1619, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia rewarded him with a gold crown for each verse, a truly fabulous sum (González, p. 59).

defenders of Italy, incapable of defending, much less unifying, itself. What was an Italian doing writing about these matters? What inspiration could readers take from the crusade described by Tasso, ultimately a failure?

But to limit ourselves to literary theory. If Cervantes were interested in Italian theory, if he had been exposed to it—as is often suggested—during his early visit to Italy, we might well expect to find some influence of it on his works. Jean Canavaggio and E. C. Riley have already pointed out that this influence is not found in *La Galatea*.²² I would like to point out that it is also completely missing from his *comedias*. Cervantes was keenly interested in the *comedia*; it would have been just as logical for him to read theorists on it as on the epic, and there was, in Italy, a large body of criticism on comedy. Yet no Italian influence on Cervantes' drama has ever been proposed, nor is any to be found. Whether one looks at characterization, plot, language, or purpose, the differences between Cervantes' practice and the Italian theorists on comedy are overwhelming.²³

There was, of course, in Italy a similarly voluminous debate about the *romanzo* or chivalric poem: its value, proper characteristics, and relationship to the epic. This debate, which is supposed to have influenced Cervantes, was focused on Ariosto, and attempted, as literary theory must do with every new classic, to harmonize rules with a work which does not follow them. That Cervantes had heard of the debate, and knew what the major issues were, seems to me beyond any doubt.²⁴ I believe, however, that the use of the English term “romances of chivalry” as a label for the Spanish *libros de caballerías*²⁵ has led to a conclusion which neither the Italian theorists—Pigna, Giraldo Cintio, Torquato Tasso, and others—nor the Spaniards would have shared: that this debate

²²Canavaggio, “Alonso López Pinciano y la estética literaria de Cervantes en el *Quijote*”, *Anales Cervantinos*, 7 (1958), 15-107, at p. 22; Riley, *Theory*, p. 11.

²³See Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 34, Nos. 1-2 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950).

²⁴The canon refers to one of them: whether a heroic work may have multiple protagonists (quoted below). This may, however, have reached him via López Pinciano, III, 150-64, where it is discussed.

²⁵The English term is a somewhat misleading translation of the Spanish, and deemphasizes the works' historical pretense, giving them a link with fiction which was neither the authors' clear intent nor the readers' expectation. See my *A Study of “Don Quixote”*, p. xxi, and “The Pseudo-Historicity of the Romances of Chivalry”, *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, Nos. 45-46 (1974-75), 253-59, now in *Romances of Chivalry in the Spanish Golden Age* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982), pp. 119-29.

about the *romanzo* had much to do with Spanish *libros de caballerías*. The Italians were scarcely going to discuss something held in little repute, in learned circles, in its native country;²⁶ they scarcely mention the Spanish works, which were seen as having little merit or relevance to the problems being examined. When they mention Spanish *romanzi* they may be, and in one case certainly are,²⁷ alluding to *romances*, or ballads; on the few occasions when Italians do mention a name like Amadís or Palmerín they may be referring to the popular *romanzo* of Torquato Tasso's father, Bernardo Tasso (*Amadigi*, first published in 1560 though written somewhat earlier),²⁸ or those of Dolce (*Palmerino*, 1561; *Primaleone*, 1562). When they do refer to the Spanish heroes, they are contemptuous.²⁹

The Italian *romanzi* and the Spanish *libros de caballerías*

²⁶*Romances of Chivalry*, pp. 10-13 and 44-47.

²⁷Pigna's discussion of brief Spanish *romanzi*, eventually linked together to form larger works (Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"*, p. 25, n. 32), evidently refers to ballads. This is the earliest statement known to me, and perhaps the origin, of the theory that Spanish ballads were the origin of longer works, rather than (as neotraditionalist theory maintains) fragments of them (see C. Colin Smith, *Spanish Ballads* [Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1964], p. 11).

²⁸Thus, in the quotations from Torquato Tasso reproduced below, *Amadigi* is one of "i nostri". A note on Bernardo Tasso's contact with *Amadís* is provided by Harold Livermore, "The 15th Century Evolution of the *Romance*", *Iberoromania*, 23 (1986), 20-39, at p. 26, n. 13.

²⁹Pigna, who first proposed the *romanzo* as a new genre, distinct from the epic, wrote: "Le Spagnole Romanzerie quasi tutte di vanità son piene: stando elle solo in su i miracoli: & con li spiriti ò del'una sorte ò dell'altra facendo sempre nascere cose dal naturale lontane, & del diletto, che per le leggitime maraviglie suol nascere. Molto meno gli altri in cio peccano: & molto meno perciò errato hanno" (*I Romanzi* [Venice: Bottega d'Erasmus, appresso V. Valgrisi, 1554], p. 40). And Giralaldi Cintio, author of the *Discorsi...intorno al comporre dei Romanzi, delle Comedie, e delle Tragedie, e di altre maniere di Poesie* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito, 1554), says (p. 37): "Credo io...che non piu l'havrebbon lodato, che loderissimo noi l'Ariosto, s'egli nel suo Poema havesse posto gli svenimenti che vengono in Amadigi ne i furori delle battaglie, quando vede la sua Oriana, all'aspetto della quale gli cadono tante volte ne i conflitti l'arme di mano, et egli come morto se ne rimane, come se fusse una feminuccia, od un tenero fanciullo". Giralaldi's attacks on all foreign *romanzi*, in which "puoco di buono si contiene" (p. 41), should also be considered.

The treatises of Pigna and Giralaldi are available in the microfilm series *Italian Books before 1601* (Erasmus Press and General Microfilm Company), reels 65 and 181 respectively. That of Giralaldi is also included in his *Scritti critici*, ed. Camilo Guerrieri Crocetti (Milan: Marzorati, 1973), pp. 43-167; it was translated by Henry L. Snuggs (*On Romances* [Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968]).

are very different works;³⁰ an Italian Hispanist, studying Dolce's "rifacimento" of *Palmerín*, calls the differences in the genres "abissale" (like an abyss).³¹ Bernardo Tasso's *Amadigi*, to cite an obvious comparison, differs dramatically from *Amadís*.³² The Italian works are much more literary, with elaborate, colorful imagery and a complex structure. The Spanish books not only claim to be true histories, which the Italian works never do, they imitate historical writing, and tell their tales in a straightforward, unpretentious, and unpoetical way. In the Spanish books, perhaps reflecting national character, the interest is on chivalric deeds, battles, and tournaments; love is secondary. In the *romanzi* love is given a focus that it has in none of the Spanish works.³³ Speaking

³⁰One of their greatest similarities is their abundance and length; "over sixty of them [*romanzi*] survive, and no man lives with enough patience to work through the whole" (Edward Williamson, *Bernardo Tasso* [Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1951], p. 136). For this reason, though there is abundant scholarship on the major authors, there is no more recent overview of the *romanzo* than Francesco Fòffano's *Il poema cavalleresco dal XV al XVIII secolo* (Milan: F. Vallardi, 1904). The best introduction in English is that found in the introduction of Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti's edition of William Stewart Rose's translation of the *Orlando furioso* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968); also valuable is 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*, ed Giuse Rimanelli and Kenneth John Atchity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 265-307. See also Ruggero M. Ruggeri, *L'umanesimo cavalleresco italiano da Dante all'Ariosto*, nuova edizione riveduta e ampliata (Naples: Conte, 1977).

³¹F. Bacchelli, "Il *Palmerín de Olivia* nel rifacimento di Ludovico Dolce", in *Studi sul "Palmerín de Olivia"*. III. *Saggi e ricerche* (Pisa: Istituto di Letteratura Spagnola e Hispano-Americana dell'Università di Pisa, 1966), pp. 159-76, at p. 166.

³²The author himself was concerned that it not resemble its Spanish source closely (Williamson, p. 127); to please an Italian audience, as well as avoid the charge of being a mere translator, he had to give the work more variety and structure than *Amadís* had (p. 106).

The differences between *Amadís* and *Amadigi*, of the latter of which there has been no edition since 1832, are described thus by Francesco Fòffano, "L'*Amadigi di Gaula* di Bernardo Tasso", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 25 (1895), 249-310: "Tre sono le azioni principali dell'*Amadigi*: gli amori di Amadigi ed Oriana, quelli di Alidoro e Mirinda, e quelli di Floridante e Filidora. Di queste la prima è tolta dal romanzo spagnuolo: le altre due sono invenzione del poeta" (p. 272). And: "Ciò che rende prolisso e noioso l'*Amadís*, sono le descrizioni minuziose...i dialoghi frequenti...le tirate rettoriche, le riflessioni morali, le lettere, i soliloqui e va dicendo; ma il poeta italiano accorcia le prime, compendia o toglie via i secondi, salta a piè pari gli ultimi" (pp. 272-73).

³³See my *Romances of Chivalry*, pp. 70-71; *Amadís'* sentimentalism was not imitated by the books which followed it. Even it was not amorous enough for Italian tastes; Bernardo Tasso focused the *Amadigi* even more strongly on the love element, and described its consummation (Williamson, p. 125).

of the genres as a whole, in the Spanish books love is a pretext for chivalric adventures, in the Italian poems the adventures are a pretext for love.³⁴

Furthermore, the Spanish books of chivalry are much more realistic than the *romanzi*. To be sure, their realism pales when compared with that of Cervantes, yet it is still noteworthy when they are compared with the Italian poems. In contrast with the *romanzi*, in the *libros de caballerías* the emphasis is on the external, rather than internal, world; it is focused more on action than emotions. The descriptions of foreign locales—Greece, North Africa, Asia—were intended to satisfy a Spanish desire to learn about strange and wonderful places. There is similarly, in the Spanish books, a greater sense of purpose and morality. It is a simple, even superficial morality, but its existence is undeniable. The comment of Francesco de Sanctis about Ariosto's work, "it is utterly wanting in any motive connected with religion, patriotism, or morality",³⁵ could never be said about any *libro de caballerías*.

Added to this is the fact that the *romanzi* were written in verse, a point the Italian theorists address at length, and the *libros de caballerías* in prose; Cervantes' skepticism about verse, and preference for prose, is well known, and I have elsewhere speculated that he may have seen prose literature as an authentically Spanish contribution, an innovation rather than an inadequacy.³⁶ When the verse *romanzi* were such vastly different works, different in focus, subject matter, and structure and style, when the Italian writers on the *romanzo* showed scorn for the Spanish heroes, it is unlikely that Cervantes, a patriotic Spaniard, would have turned to the Italians for guidance about how to write about the heroes which Italy herself lacked. The literary philosophy López Pinciano presented was *antigua*, as he stated in the title. The implication is that it was therefore better; it came from the people who really

³⁴Thus, in Torquato Tasso's one favorable comment on the Spanish *libros de caballerías*, in which he compares them positively with not Italian but French books, what he admires in them is not their deeds, but their loves. (The Italian text is conveniently available in Henry Thomas' *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry* [1920; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1969], p. 195, n. 2; the excerpt from Tasso's *Apologia* for his *Gerusalemme liberata* quoted on p. 183, n. 2, praises the story of Amadís, not the book *Amadís de Gaula*.)

³⁵*History of Italian Literature*, I, 436. De Sanctis' view has been attacked, and Ariosto's goals much discussed; still, the comment would not have been made about a Spanish work.

³⁶In "The Ideal *Libro de caballerías*: The *Bernardo*", cited in note 1.

knew about heroism, the Greeks.³⁷

Torquato Tasso's *Discorsi del poema eroico* is, of his theoretical works, that most likely to have attracted Cervantes. Yet looking through it,³⁸ I find it hard to accept that Cervantes had read it. He certainly shows little influence of it. His categories of literature are those of López Pinciano, not Tasso; López Pinciano shares Cervantes' enthusiasm for Heliodorus, whom Tasso hardly mentions;³⁹ Cervantes follows the Aristotelian division of a work into beginning, middle, and end, not Tasso's division into introduction, perturbation, reversal, and conclusion; he shows no influence at all of Tasso's lengthy and illustrated (even overillustrated) discussion of style.

So if there was any influence, it was, at most a very selective one. Yet even that does not resist examination. Let us look, in their original languages, at the words of Cervantes' canon (I, 47) which

³⁷While we today see ancient Greece as the birthplace of philosophy and literature, it was seen in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as the age of great heroes, from whom contemporaries had much to learn. I commented on this briefly in a note to my edition of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros*, Clásicos castellanos, 193-98 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975), I, 29.

³⁸I have used the translation of Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), on which there is a review article by Anthony Oldcorn, "Tasso's Theory of the Epic", *Italica*, 53 (1976), 495-502. They say on pp. xx-xxi: "[The influence of Tasso's *Discorsi*] probably cannot be attributed to the cogency of their argument; though basically lucid and sequential, in detail it too often loses itself in side issues, sometimes set off by a mere word, as the author wanders into elaborate agreement or disagreement with his authorities, as if in fear lest his reader otherwise suspect him of not knowing what others have said on his subject. The style shows corresponding defects: overelaboration of the trivial or subordinate at the cost of logical continuity, unwarranted repetitions, excessive citation of irrelevant testimony, an awkward vein of self-deprecation. The writing is diffuse, at times verging on incoherence." Contrast this with McInnis' comment on López Pinciano's work: "He does more than repeat commonplaces: he supplies an original framework which organizes these ideas into a coherent system accessible to the layman. His successful incorporation of the principles of allegory and mimesis into the very structure of his treatise reveals his mature assimilation of the major critical ideas of his time" (p. 21).

Both of Tasso's critical works have been translated into English by Arlow Fielding Hill: "Tasso on Epic Poetry. *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* and *Discourses on the Art of Poetry*", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970 (abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 33 [1973], 5680A).

³⁹Nor do the other Italian theorists: "Considering the bulk of Italian theoretical writings, the attention which they devote to Heliodorus' work is very slight" (Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"*, p. 69, n. 43).

Forcione claims reflect direct borrowing from Tasso:⁴⁰

naufragios, tormentas, rencuentros y batallas

ordinanzi d'esserciti... battaglie terrestri e navali...espugnazioni di città, scaramucce e duelli...tempeste

pintando un capitán valeroso...mostrándose prudente, previniendo las astucias de sus enemigos, y elocuente orador... maduro en el consejo

opere di credulità, di audacia, di cortesia, di generosità

pintando ora un lamentable y trágico suceso, aora un alegre y no pensado acontecimiento

avvenimenti d'amore, or felici, or infelici, or lieti or compassionevoli

Puede mostrar las astucias de Ulixes, la piedad de Eneas, la valentía de Aquiles, las desgracias de Éctor, las traiciones de Sinón, la amistad de Eurialo, la liberalidad de Alexandro, el valor de César, la clemencia y verdad de Trajano, la fidelidad de Zopiro, la prudencia de Catón, y finalmente, todas aquellas acciones que pueden hazer perfecto a un varón ilustre, aora poniéndolas en uno solo, aora dividiéndolas en muchos.

Si ritrova in Enea l'eccellenza della pietà, della fortezza militare in Achille, della prudenza in Ulise, e, per venire a i nostri, della lealtà in Amadigi, della constanza in Bradamante.

Hanse de casar las fábulas mentirosas con el entendimiento de los que las leyeren.

con la sembianza della verità ingannare il lettore

Where in this is the direct influence of Tasso on Cervantes? And whose are the more thoughtful comments?

That Cervantes was at some point exposed to some of Torquato Tasso's literary ideas seems to me all but certain. Yet if López Pinciano's treatise is not a sufficient vehicle to explain Cervantes knowledge of these ideas, we still need not assume, to account for his knowledge, that Cervantes read the *Discorsi* in

⁴⁰I have taken the Italian texts from Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"*, pp. 101 and 109.

Italian. Tasso's principles were much discussed in the literary circles he frequented; Lope, for example, refers to them in Book IV of the *Peregrino* (1604) and in the prologue to the *Jerusalén conquistada* (1609). Yet I will suggest another specific channel, a Spanish channel, through which knowledge of Tasso could have come. I refer to Cristóbal de Mesa, a fanatical promoter of Tasso, who stated proudly in his writings that he had spent five years in close contact with him; Mesa knew Tasso's literary theory well.⁴¹ The paths of Cervantes and Mesa crossed at many points. Both frequented literary circles in the capital; both received assistance from the Conde de Lemos, and wanted to accompany him to Naples; both dedicated books to the Duque de Béjar, although it is not documented that Cervantes received the help from Béjar that Mesa did. Cervantes praised Mesa in both the *Parnaso* and in the "Canto de Calíope"; Mesa thanked and praised Cervantes in his *Restauración de España* (1607).⁴² The two obviously knew each other, and Tasso would have been a logical topic to discuss.⁴³

⁴¹Allí [Italy] gusté del agua de Pegaso / comunicando la gentil persona / y la doctrina del Torquato Taso"; quoted by Giovanni Caravaggi, *Studi sull'epica ispanica del Rinascimento* (Pisa: Università di Pisa, 1974), p. 247, whose Chapters 8 ("Un divulgatore fanatico: C. de Mesa") and 9 ("Significato dell'imitazione tassiana nelle opere di C. de Mesa") are the best introduction to Mesa's role in transmission of Tasso's literary ideas; Caravaggi also includes in an appendix "La fortuna critica de C. de Mesa". On Mesa's life and Spanish friendships, see the annotators of Cervantes, especially José Toribio Medina, in his edition of the *Parnaso* (Santiago de Chile, 1925), II, 164-69, and Joaquín de Entrambasaguas, "Una guerra literaria del Siglo de Oro. Lope de Vega y los preceptistas aristotélicos", in his *Estudios sobre Lope de Vega*, segunda edición corregida y aumentada (Madrid: CSIC, 1967), I, 149-56.

⁴²Fol. 177^r, Book X, Stanza 112 (misnumbered 102): "Tú que en tu Galatea, Miguel Cervantes, / Ganando nombre en siglos infinitos: / Vaticinaste aquestas obras antes, / Paloma heroica anunciando a mis escritos...."

⁴³Mesa also discussed Tasso and his literary ideas in the prologues to his epics *Las navas de Tolosa* (1594) and *La restauración de España* (1607). The less important of these, the latter, is extracted by Gallardo, *Ensayo de una biblioteca española de libros raros y curiosos*, III (Madrid, 1888), cols. 781-83. In the more important, that to *Las navas de Tolosa*, Mesa says: "con todo quanto Grecia se jata y blasona no es poderosa para darnos más que un perfeto eroico en Homero, ni la antigua Italia mas que un Virgilio, y la moderna un Taso. Y quanto aya imitado el Latino al Griego, y el Toscano al Latino, es de suerte que la Eneida podría tener nombre de Iliada, y la Jerusalem de Eneida; que aun en esto parece que tuvieron tanta correspondencia, que como el Poema más perfeto es el que trata una acción de uno imitó el uno al que entonó la ira de Achiles, y otro al que cantó las armas de Eneas: y assí a venido una edad como eredando la riqueza de la otra. Y porque no es mi intento hazer comparación aquí de los escritores de nuestros tiempos dando nombre de eroico a solo el Torcuato, ni entrar en la controversia de las academias Florentina, y Napolitana en si al Ariosto por no conocersele sujeto señaladoço de Orlando, o del cerco de Paris, o guerras de Agramante, y aver hecho medio poema prosiguiendo el

Cervantes could well have learned through Mesa something of Torquato Tasso's life. Robert A. Hall, Jr. has already pointed out the surprising similarities between the personalities and experiences of Alonso Quijano and Torquato's father Bernardo, both of whom were admirers of Amadís and believers in chivalric ideals.⁴⁴ Yet the parallels with Torquato, also an admirer of Amadís (his father's *Amadigi*; De Sanctis, p. 649), are even more extensive, for which reason Torquato was, like Don Quixote, a favorite subject of the Romantics.⁴⁵ Torquato Tasso, a poor, unmarried, but dignified and principled gentleman, was the most famous *loco* in the Europe of Cervantes' day. Like Don Quixote, he suffered from a "mania di persecuzione", melancholy, and hallucinations.⁴⁶ Just as Don Quixote was a *cuerdo loco*, Torquato was known in the 1580's and 1590's as a "savio-pazzo",⁴⁷ in "a state fluctuating between sanity and madness" (De Sanctis, p. 643), possessed of a special wisdom precisely because of his madness (Godard, p. 14). His melancholy, balanced by choleric outbursts of rage, was widely considered to be the result of a humoral imbalance (Godard, p. 15). On two occasions, believing himself sane, he escaped from his semi-confinement, secretly of course,⁴⁸ and wandered around Italy; friends were much concerned about him and tried to get him back to circumstances under which he could be cared for.

An assessment of the significance of these parallels between Torquato Tasso and Cervantes' protagonist lies outside the scope of this article; I would not want to be taken as saying that Tasso

enamorado, y comegar por el episodio de la huida de Angélica se le aya de atribuir antes nombre de Romançador que de Épico, solamente diré que por la deuda natural que deven los hombres a sus patrias...e querido hazerle esta oferta de mi talento...."

Mesa is also the author of an undistinguished "Compendio del arte poética", published in his *Diversas rimas* (Madrid, 1607), fols. 148^v-51^v, and, according to Palau, separately, with a different title page.

⁴⁴"A Possible Italian Model for *Don Quixote*", *Italica*, 24 (1947), 233-34.

⁴⁵Hugh Honour, *Romanticism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 264-71. I would like to thank William Cloonan for this information and reference.

⁴⁶Giovanni Getto, "Torquato Tasso", in *Letteratura italiana. I maggiori* (Milan: Carlo Marzorati, 1956), I, 459-93, at p. 461; De Sanctis, p. 643. For further details, the standard biography is that of Angelo Solerti, *Vita di Torquato Tasso* (Turin: Loescher, 1895). Williamson (pp. 148-49) cites some nineteenth-century examinations of Tasso's madness, which I have not seen.

⁴⁷Alain Godard, "Le 'sage délirant': la 'folie' du Tasse, selon les premiers biographes", in *Visages de la folie (1500-1650) (domaine hispano-italien)*, ed. Augustin Redondo and André Rochon (Paris: La Sorbonne, 1981), pp. 13-22, at p. 14.

⁴⁸"In circostanze romanzeschi" (Getto, p. 461).

was Cervantes' model. What I do hope to have established is that Cervantes did not take literary ideas from Tasso's writings.