

*TEARSONG:*  
VALENTINE VISCONTI'S INVERTED STOICISM

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When her husband Louis of Orléans was assassinated on the orders of the duke of Burgundy John the Fearless in 1407, Valentine Visconti adopted the emblem of a *chantepleure* (fountain; literally, tearsong) with a devise “*Rien ne m'est plus, Plus ne m'est riens,*” or, in Mid-American translation, “that’s it, folks. I don’t care.”<sup>1</sup> It is a well-wrought devise, symmetrical in its oxymoric equation between more (*plus*) and nothing (*rien*). The Latin version is a perfect palindrome: “*Nil mihi praetera, praetera mihi nihil*”: there’s nothing more for me. Nothing is, from now on. She died scarcely more than a year later, in 1408.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I owe a debt to Eileen Joy for “tearsong,” the translation of *chantepleure*; to Nicola Masciandaro for the idea of “inverted Stoicism” and other suggestions, here and in “Beyond the Sphere: A Dialogic Commentary on the Ultimate *Sonnetto* of Dante’s *Vita Nuova*,” *Glossator* 1 (Fall 2009): 47-80; and to Jean-Marie Fritz, for first mentioning to me *chantepleure*, see: Jean-Marie Fritz, *Paysages Sonores du Moyen Age: Versant Epistémologique*. Paris: Champion, 2000, and his *Le discours du fou au Moyen Age*, Paris: PUF, 1992. See also: Emanuele Tesauro, *L’idée de la parfaite devise*, trans. Florence Vuilleumier, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1992, and Michel Zink, “Un paradoxe courtois: le chant et la plainte,” in: *Literary aspects of courtly culture: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature . . .*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994, 69-83. See also John Cherry, “La chantepleure: Symbol of Mourning,” in: *Signs and symbols. Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. John Cherry and Ann Payne, Shaun Tyas: 2009, 143-9. See also the exhibit catalogue, *Louis d’Orléans et Valentine Visconti: mécénat politique autour de 1400*, ed. Thierry Crépi-Leblond, Blois: Château et musée de Blois, 2004, and Ursula Baumeister and Marie-Pierre Lafitte, *Des livres et des rois: la bibliothèque royale de Blois*, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Among contemporary historians describing this episode are Jean Juvenal des Oursins, *Histoire de Charles VI, roi de France*, ed. Louis-Gabriel Michaud

There is enough material here to make up a romantic episode that started the civil war between the Burgundians (and the English) versus the Armagnacs (partisans of the Orléans family; Valentine's eldest son Charles, the poet, married Bonne d'Armagnac), protracting the Hundred Years War to its full 114 years and resulting, among others, in the burning of Jeanne d'Arc, whom the Burgundians captured and turned over to the English. From the nineteenth century to today, Valentine's devise is seen as an "expression of faithful love for her dead husband [that] became of great symbolic importance in a time when dynastic marriages of convenience were the norm among the nobility, and it was imitated and remembered for generations."<sup>3</sup> Love and longing were one side of the coin; perversity and politics were another. Valentine's husband's legend is that of an insatiable and queer philanderer, blamed for capturing the attentions of the queen, while Valentine was close to the king. The rivalry between Louis d'Orléans and the Burgundians was political and fuelled by such developments as the fact that, between 1405 and 1407, he directed the war against England, Burgundy's main trade partner, but

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and Jean-Joseph-François Poujoulat, Paris: Editeur du commentaire analytique du code civil, 1836 (Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires pour servir l'histoire de France depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe), vol. II, pp. 445, 447-8, as well as Michel Pintoin (religieux de St-Denis), *Chronique de Charles V*, and Jean Froissart. See Bernard Guénée, *Un meurtre, une société: l'assassinat du duc d'Orléans, 23 novembre 1407*, Paris: Gallimard 1992, 185, 202-210, and Guénée, *L'Opinion publique à la fin du Moyen Age d'après la 'Chronique de Charles VI' du Religieux de St-Denis*, Paris: Perrin, 2002, 59-60, 96-7. See also Alfred Coville, "Les derniers jours de Valentine Visconti, duchesse d'Orléans (23 novembre 1407-4 décembre 1408)," in: *Institut de France. Séance publique annuelle des cinq Académies du vendredi 25 octobre 1929 présidée par M. Louis Mangin, Président de l'Académie des Sciences*, Paris: Firmin Didot 1929, 35-50.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the related 'Loire Valley' Chansonniers*, Copenhagen: Alden, 2001, accessible online (<<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH029.html>>). Woetmann cites Enid McLeod, *Charles of Orléans, Prince and Poet*, New York, 1969, p. 50. For the sources on this use of *chantepleure*, Woetmann refers to Howard Mayer Brown, *Music in the French Secular Theater, 1400-1550*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1963, 164-6. As Woetmann notes, *chantepleure* is used in modern French in the sense of a *bouse*, tap or auger, for instance inserted into a wine barrel allowing to drain it. Woetmann notes the word *chantepleure* is given this definition in 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'academie française*, and that there exist numerous modern derivatives related to the wine business.

these pages of Michael Camille best convey the contradictions and lurid appeal of his legend:

a strange mixture of piety and perversity. . . Louis certainly shared [Charles V's] love of parchment, and yet he was notorious. . . as being a lover of other kinds of flesh. . . always plotting to take power from his uncles, the dukes of Berry and Burgundy. While he had been crucial in restoring to power his father's old advisors, men of humble birth, nicknamed the 'Marmousets' – the same word used to describe the crouching Atlases that seem to carry the weight of stones in Gothic buildings. . . his own hold on power was similarly simulachral rather than real. His fortunes took a downturn in 1392 with his brother's [Charles VI] first attack of insanity and the ascendancy of his uncle Philippe, duke of Burgundy, as regent. . . although his real power was eroded, he seemed to have plunged into its spectacular simulation in artifice. Christine de Pizan described him as a gabbling pseudo-intellectual. . . At the same time as he kept a private cell in the austere common dormitory of the Convent of the Célestins, whose evangelical eremitic order was much patronized by the royal family and where he heard up to six masses a day, he is recorded as buying twelve barrels of Damascus rosewater from a Parisian merchant. In the year he paid Remiet one hundred *sols* for gilding done in his royal chapel at the Célestins he paid a fool, "master Pierre d'Aragon," the far greater sum of ten gold crowns merely for "pulling faces." His collection of jewels outshone even that of his uncle the Duke of Berry, but according to his enemies this included magical rings that were used to fascinate. . . the unsuspecting victims of his lust.<sup>4</sup>

As in a kaleidoscope, the figures of Louis and Valentina are rearranged beyond recognition, leaving undeniable facts – adoption of the emblem – to the fictional context of its Petrarchan and other poetic antecedents. Petrarch's rain of tears in *Remedies* and *Canzoniere*, Guillaume de Machaut's *Remedy of Fortune*, Eustache Deschamps,

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Camille, *Master of Death: The Lifeless Art of Pierre Remiet, Illuminator*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 68-70.

Chaucer and Lydgate are, paradoxically, more familiar to us than the historical figures. I will look at both the remote and the recent echoes of symbols chosen by Valentine – the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on one hand, and the nineteenth on the other – to show how the legend of Valentine’s loving mourning came to be, and what work it was doing. It will be a recuperative, but also a somewhat suspicious reading. My intention is to uncover a forgotten but vibrant tradition that was constitutive of nineteenth-century passion for medieval stories. My suspicious reading will show how medievalism, or “modern” (as opposed to neo-classical) history fit in with political, catholic, and heterosexual preoccupations. I will also look at Valentine’s emblem in the period following her. Whether a free-floating symbol or anchored to Valentina, the emblems of her mourning – the tear-song, the *devise* – are moving. That is the recuperative part of my commentary.

#### I. *PLUS NE M’EST RIEN*

Valentine’s signal expression of grief reverberates since the medieval period, not the least because her son is the important poet Charles d’Orléans (1394-1465), and because his son, in turn, became Louis XII, king of France. From the point of view of the English literary canon, it is noteworthy that both Charles and his entourage, including his younger brother the Duke d’Angoulême and his third wife Marie de Clèves, were instrumental in introducing English poets and Chaucer to France, having commissioned, respectively, a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* and a treatment of *Troilus and Criseyda*, the *Roman de Troille*.<sup>5</sup> Valentine herself patronized Deschamps, a contemporary and admirer of Chaucer. Valentine is the daughter of Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, also known for his book commissions. Among those who remembered Valentine’s emblem and the *devise* are the French sixteenth century author Brantôme, and the episode he describes was also incorporated into the encyclopedic histories of France from the 17th and 18th centuries, the sort of commonplace, frequently copied and republished mid-market reference book that ensured the survival throughout that period of a narrative about

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<sup>5</sup> *Le roman de Troie*, vol. 2. Louis de Beauveau, Giovanni Boccaccio, Gabriel Bianciotto, Rouen: Université de Rouen, 1994: “au haut du fo1 du mss, sur une demi-page, un dessin a la plume représente deux chantepleures, vases distillant des larmes,” p. 53.

French medieval history that we can call a national legend, with recognizable, repetitive elements.

The heyday of the popularity of Valentine is the nineteenth century. She is known to all the notable Romantic French writers and to the group of painters (professional and amateur) who flourished between 1802 and 1820, under the rubric of the “troubadours.” Among the writers who mention Valentine we find Chateaubriand, a royalist and author of *Le Génie du christianisme* (1802).<sup>6</sup> The novelist and essayist Stendhal mentions a tableau of Valentine with her devise shown in the Salon of 1812, only to complain that grieving Valentine has unlikely rosy cheeks – but, as we will see, other critics reproached the troubadour school for its token “realism” and depiction of the Middle Ages *via* the predictable stereotype of emaciated bodies.<sup>7</sup> The poet Alphonse de Lamartine appropriates Valentine’s devise in a private letter.<sup>8</sup> Alfred de Musset quotes it in his play *Faustine*.<sup>9</sup> As for the painters, apparently, Fleury François Richard’s (1777-1852) famous *tableau* of Valentine was inspired by his visit to the Musée des monuments français, in the 1790s, located in the former convent of the Petits Augustins in Paris, where he saw Valentine’s tomb.<sup>10</sup> Shown in the Salon of 1802, the painting inspired a trend. Soon, Parisian artists, including Fleury Richard and his fellow students from the workshop of Louis David, traded their usual sketching sessions of the antiquities in the Louvre for visits to Petits Augustins, where Romanesque and Gothic architectural fragments were assembled when the property of the Church was nationalized during the

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<sup>6</sup> François-René de Chateaubriand, *Oeuvres Complètes de M. le vicomte de Chateaubriand*, vol 16: *Mélanges littéraires*, Paris: Lefèvre, 1831, p. 355, an essay first published as “Sur l’histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de M. de Barante,” 1824-5.

<sup>7</sup> Stendhal, *Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, vol. 1, Paris: Didot, 1817, p. 245.

<sup>8</sup> *Correspondance d’Alphonse de Lamartine, Deuxième série (1807-1829)*, ed. Christian Croisille and Marie-Renée Morin, Paris: Champion, 2007, p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> Alfred de Musset, *Oeuvres posthumes*, Paris: Charpentier, 1866, p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> He is sometimes called Fleury or Richard or Richard Fleury. *Valentine Visconti, Duchess of Orléans*, ca. 1802 (Hermitage, St. Petersburg; a copy exists in Rueil-Malmaison, musée national des châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau). Specific information about paintings in French collections in this essay is based on the Joconda database of French museum collections, <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/joconde/fr/pres.htm>.

Revolution.<sup>11</sup> Fleury became the favorite painter of the empress Josephine Bonaparte, and was written up by Mme de Staël. His success and his medieval inspirations continued in the Salon of 1804, where he presented three medieval and Renaissance-inspired paintings, including *Francis the 1st and the queen of Navarre*, and [king] *Charles Writing his Adieux to [his mistress] Agnès Sorel* (Massonauud 35). The troubadour enthusiasm continued until the 1820s, when the independence war in Greece (1821-32) and a new regime in France turned the attention again to Antiquity.

Not everyone loved the trend. A critic describes Dominique Ingres's *Roger delivering Angelica* (1819) as "a composition of inexplicable bizarrerie" and adds: "the new troubadours try as they might: a verse, a line is enough to unveil the artifice and destroy the illusion" (Massonauud 88).<sup>12</sup> The new *vogue* of painting "modern" (i.e., medieval) history was classified as middlebrow, *genre anecdotique*, or *genre* painting, as opposed to highbrow historical painting inspired by Antiquity. Genre divisions were institutionally entrenched in French academic painting and determined market value and reputation; as a *genre* painter, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin could never aspire to be an elite painter like, later, Jacques-Louis David, or to have a similarly large *école*, although Chardin's contemporary reputation among artists and influence on later movements are perhaps unequaled. What fuelled troubadour painters' popularity, in spite of their middle-brow affiliation, was the relation between Medieval fantasies and visits to Petits Augustins, and politics and religion. David's student, painter and critic Etienne-Jean Delécluze (1781-1863), makes it clear in a book that was partly an *apologia* for David in early the 1800s, that the newly acquired interest in the French Middle Ages was related to the transition from the Republic to the Empire. A connection between Napoleon and Charlemagne (and the Middle Ages more generally) legitimated the founder of a new French dynasty:

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<sup>11</sup> Dominique Massonauud, *Le nu moderne au salon (1799-1853): revue de presse*, Grenoble: Ellmud, 2005, pp. 35, citing as her source for the exodus of David's studio from the Louvre to the Petits Augustins, Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Louis David: son école et son temps*, Paris: Didier, 1855.

<sup>12</sup> Massonauud is citing C. P. Landon, "Salon de 1819," in *Annales du Musée et de l'Ecole moderne des Beaux-Arts*, Paris: Imprimerie des Annales du Musée, 1819. [BnF Tolbiac, V-24753].

The story [*histoire*] of Charlemagne and his warriors, bandied about in public to bring the minds back to monarchist customs, when Bonaparte wished to pass from the dignity of the consul to that of the emperor, was not without influence on the reaction, which became apparent at that time, against the severe mode of painting adopted by David; and in fact, beginning at that time in particular, in 1803, chivalric ideas and subjects drawn from modern history having returned to fashion, a number of artists abandoned the museum of Antiquities in the Louvre to frequent the Petits Augustins.<sup>13</sup>

In David's studio, Fleury Richard stood out as a *pieux* (believer). At the time when he joined David's atelier, in the late 1780s-90s, not only was religion abolished, it was also unpopular, a state of affairs that lasted from the Revolution until Napoleon reopened churches (Delécluze 78-9). As Delécluze notes, in the 1790s, Christianity and the Bible was regarded as one of three "new" inspirations, the other two being Homer and Ossian (Delécluze 77).

The episode of 1407-08 defined Valentine for the nineteenth century and made her into a figure familiar enough that she is identified in cameo roles, as in Charles Marie Bouton's (1781-1853; also a student of David) *The Madness of Charles VI, or View of the 14th c. Room in the Musée des Monuments français* (Salon of 1817). Bouton shows Charles at the tomb of his father, with Valentine in the background, ordering courtiers away.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the Fleury Richard, an important and often imitated painting of Valentine in mourning is an 1822 *tableau* by Marie-Philippe Coupin de la Couperie (1771-1851), *Valentine Visconti at the Tomb of Louis d'Orléans, or the Incarnation of Mourning* (Blois, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

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<sup>13</sup> "L'histoire de Charlemagne et de ses peux, à laquelle on a donné du retentissement dans le public pour ramener les esprits aux habitudes monarchiques, quand Bonaparte voulut passer de la dignité de consul à celle de l'empereur, ne fut pas sans influence sur la réaction qui de déclara alors contre le mode sévère de peinture que David avait adopté; et en effet, c'est particulièrement à compter de cette époque, 1803, que les idées chevalresques et les sujets tirés de l'histoire moderne ayant été remis en vogue, un certain nombre d'artistes abandonnèrent le musée des Antiques du Louvre pour fréquenter celui des Petits-Augustins" (Delécluze 242).

<sup>14</sup> Now in Musée de Brou, Bourg-en-Bresse. With Louis Daguerre, Bouton is the creator of first dioramas (1822).

But the interest in Valentine survived the 1820s and the heyday of the troubadours, and even intensified. That was obviously due to the patronage of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, "the citizen king" ("July monarchy," 1830-48), head of the "modern" Orléans family that begun when Louis XIII gave his brother the title of the Duke d'Orléans in 1623. Louis-Philippe's father supported the French Revolution and adopted the name of Philippe Egalité, while Louis-Philippe joined the Jacobin party, but neither that nor his military success on behalf of the new Republic saved the family from the decimation of the Terror (1793-4). When he came to power, Louis-Philippe was a generous sponsor and, much like Napoleon, saw art as a means to legitimate his rule. Among his numerous commissions related to Valentine are a copy of her portrait for the historical museum at Versailles (1834),<sup>15</sup> and Alexandre-Marie Colin's *Valentine of Milan Asks for Justice for the Assassination of the Duke of Orléans, November 1407* (1836), commissioned for the Apollo gallery in the Louvre (shown in the Salon of 1837).<sup>16</sup> Thus, both the origins and the prolonged interest in Valentine were enmeshed in politics and religion, and skewed towards the Empire, catholicism, and later, the Orléans monarchy.

Novelists Honoré de Balzac and Alexandre Dumas both capitalized on and helped sustain the interest in Valentine and her time. Dumas's successful *Isabeau of Bavaria or the Rule of Charles VI* (1835) is part of his "Valois cycle" of historical novels that also includes the *Queen Margot*.<sup>17</sup> Twelve years earlier, young Balzac's

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<sup>15</sup> Léon de Lestang-Parade (1810-87), *Valentine of Milan, Duchess of Orléans*, a copy of a painting in the chateau of Beaugregard; now in Versailles, MV 3048, INV 6222, LP 964.

<sup>16</sup> Musée de Versailles, MV 7235; INV 3300; LP 2578. A sketch of Colin's painting is in Versailles' Musée Lambinet, no. 78.4.7 (formerly in the Bibliothèque de Versailles). To the list of sketches and copies we can also add: Jean-Claude Auguste Fauchery, engraving after Richard, 1831 (see Emile Bellier de la Chavignerie and Louis Auvray, *Dictionnaire général des artistes français*. . . , vol. 1, Paris: Renouard, 1882-85, pp. 275, 535).

<sup>17</sup> A book review of 1903 mentions that treatments of Isabeau de Bavière are infrequent since Dumas, and mentions as small exceptions Leroux de Lincy's *Les femmes illustres de l'ancienne France* (1854) and Vallet de Viriville's *Isabeau de Bavière* (1859), as well as Fromental Halévy's opera *Charles VI* (1843); it does not include the character of Valentine, but would have contributed to the interest in the period, and by extension, in Valentine. See Alfred Coville, review of M. Thibaut, *Isabeau de Bavière, reine de France. La Jeunesse, 1370-1405*,



(1799-1850) novel *La dernière fée* (1823) popularized the romantic (and frankly, creepy) legend of Odette de Champdivers as Charles VI's selfless mistress chosen by his unfaithful wife Isabeau de Bavière in 1407, the year of the assassination of the duke of Orléans. Odette is represented as a rival to sulking Valentine in a painting so campy it sets a sort of record for the genre, Anna Borrel's *Valentine de Milan and Odette de Champ-Divers* (1837), exhibited in the Salon of 1838. Other treatments represent the king and his mistress, as in the painting by Eugène Delacroix (1796-1875; ca. 1825) and sculptures by Jean Pierre Victor Huguenin (1802-60) from ca. 1836.<sup>18</sup>

The political was also sexual. We have already seen that ca. 1800 royalist, catholic heterosexual medievalism, perhaps as pious as Fleury Richard's, is pitted against homoerotic neoclassicism of the majority of David's students, whom Delécluze recalls swimming in the Seine, "as distinctive by the elegance of their bearing and the agility of their movements, as by their faces. The students of painting schools were distinguished among others, and in David's studio there were many young men, remarkably beautiful and agile. David took advantage at the same time of this bounty and of their willingness," as they both collaborated and posed, "combing their hair, tying their shoe, or presenting a crowns of flowers" (228-9) in the openly homoerotic *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, a *tableau* that Napoleon repeatedly

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in: *Le Moyen Age: revue d'histoire et de philologie*, 1903, p. 450-4, at p. 450. Dumas's Valentine consoles Charles VI from the infidelities of his wife and other intrigues. *Isabeau de Bavière* is listed as one of Dumas's most popular novels with the *Three Musketeers* (1844) and the *Count of Monte Cristo* (1845), in Edwin Emerson and Maurice Magnus, *A History of the Nineteenth Century, Year by Year*, vol. 3, New York: Ciller and Son, 1901, p. 1516. Halévy's opera was very popular. Its first Paris staging run to 61 performances in six seasons, ending in 1849. It was in the repertoire at the New Orleans opera from 1846 to 1874, and was revived there in the 1880s and 90s. What shortened its popularity in France (but not in New Orleans) was its anti-English historical libretto.

<sup>18</sup> Huguenin's sculpture was shown in the Salon of 1836 (plaster model) and 1839 (marble sculpture). The plaster model is in the Musée de Brou, Bourgen-Bresse (no. 860.1), and plaster casts of the finished marble in the musée des Beaux-Arts in Angers (MBA 55 J 1881S) as well as in a dozen other locations (Joconde lists Cambrai, Niort, Perpignan, Bar-le-Duc, Orléans, Toulon, Moulins, Laval, Laon, Condom, Clermont-Ferrand). For the Delacroix painting, see Lee Johnson, *The Paintings of Eugène Delacroix: A Critical Catalogue*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, p. 96, and the *Heritage Auction Galleries* catalog, November 9, 2006, Dallas, TX, p. 24070.

couldn't "get" (Delécluze 227-39). In the end, David let himself be seduced by Napoleon and left his Leonidas project behind to paint his new hero: "David's conversion to the monarchy was . . . so complete and, we can even say, so sincere that he himself did not realize it" (Delécluze 234), as he adopted both the ideas and the dress in his new, post-1800 incarnation.

Aesthetic considerations in the press of the time can, and have been, interpreted as a sublimation or closeted references to politics as well as sex and sexual preferences and practices.<sup>19</sup> It is in that context that we must position the troubadour trend as a locus of negotiation between "authenticity" and the canon of beauty. As in the citation above, "any little thing could upset the effect" of the immersion in the historical past: a phrase that, as I understand it, implies that present concerns encroach on the past so strongly that they emerge as primary, in spite of their being intended as "secondary" ("little thing") to the historical "sense" (in French, *sens* means "sense" but also "orientation," the ostensible topic) of the painting. For the unconvinced critic, the feeling of being immersed in the-past-in-and-of-itself is fleeting, it gives way to suspicion about what present and partisan concerns are given play in historical reconstruction, thus undermining the collective ("national") consensus that art commands by its appeal to the senses and emotions. If Stendhal felt that the Valentine of the 1812 Salon was not gaunt enough, in 1827 a now-forgotten critic expresses dislike for the standard-issue, emaciated Medieval bodies of the troubadour trend that woefully displaced interest in Antiquity and the cult of the sculpted, naked body: "now, they make emaciated (*étique*) bodies as if emaciation was the normal state of the human constitution in the Middle Ages. They avoid painting the nude, because in general they don't know how" (Massonau, 115).<sup>20</sup>

Along with amateur copies of the troubadour paintings, the legend and portrayals of Valentine were widely circulated in popular historical books, such as François Guizot's *Histoire de France* (1875). Historical truth *oblige*, in these illustrations she looks much older and

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<sup>19</sup> See Satish Padiyar, *Chains, David, Canova, and the Public Hero in Post-Revolutionary France*, University Park: Penn State University Press, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> The critic follows with desecrating the "anti-classical" trend and Delacroix. The source cited by Massonau is Augustin Jal, *Esquisses, croquis, pochades, ou tout ce qu'on voudra, sur le Salon de 1827*, Paris: Dupont, 1828 [BnF Tolbiac, microfilm M-6119].

less appealing, and she is often cast on her deathbed surrounded by her children (Valentine as mother), a sadistic choice (it seems to me). This constitutes an obverse to the sexy supplicant image forged by the troubadour pictorial tradition (Valentine as lover). If we were to translate Valentine into a female character in Hitchcock, the Salon troubadour tradition portrays the tortured, blonde, young heroine, while the history books depict the unattractive, fast-talking, middle-aged female sidekick.

Buoyed by consecutive restorations of monarchy and empire, medievalism and Valentine were a favorite subject for architecture and sculpture, including by Victor Huguenin in the Jardin de Luxembourg, part of the cycle of 20 sculptures by different authors representing “French queens and famous women,” commissioned by Louis-Philippe in 1843.<sup>21</sup> The sculptures were shown at the 1847 and 1848 salons. Louis-Philippe also breathed new life into the ruins of the chateau of Pierrefonds, once Valentine’s domain. One of the duke d’Orléans important building projects, along with Blois, La Ferté-Milon and Coucy, Pierrefonds was sold as a Bien National in 1789, and then purchased by Napoleon in 1810. In a Romantic tradition, Louis-Philippe used the ruins of Pierrefonds as the backdrop of a wedding banquet for his daughter in 1832, and in 1848 the chateau was included in the list of historical monuments. With the change of the government and the establishment of the Second Empire by Louis-Napoléon (the nephew of the emperor), who visited the castle in 1850, came the extensive reconstruction of Pierrefonds (Fig. 1). A restoration/reinvention by Violet le Duc was conducted from 1857-66 and beyond, interrupted by the fall of the Second Empire in 1870, just as the interiors were supposed to be furnished with le Duc’s designs. The restoration, continued after le Duc’s death in 1878 by his son-in-law, included, among others, sculptures of Valentine and her husband by Gaudran, which were placed in the entrance to the chapel of the chateau.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Huguenin also sculpted a group of *Charles VI and Odinette de Champdivers*, mentioned above.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Grodecki, *Le chateau de Pierrefonds*, Paris: Caisse Nationale des Documents Historiques, 1957.



Figure 1. Chateau of Pierrefonds. A. D. White Architectural Photographs, Cornell University Library Accession Number: 15/5/3090.01441. Courtesy of the Cornell University Library.

It is also instructive to trace the history of the sculptural source of that antiquarian romance: the tomb of Valentine Visconti that, as we have seen, was the initial inspiration for Fleury Richard's Salon painting of Valentine, and by extension, for the birth of the troubadour style. The tomb that Fleury saw in the former convent of Petits Augustins was among other works of art rescued from destruction or reuse of former Church property for building materials following the Revolution, the Constitutional Assembly having decided, in 1789, to transfer the property of the Church to the Nation. It was not the original monument. Rather, it was commissioned ca. 1502 by the king Louis XII, to house the remains of his grandparents Valentine and Louis d'Orléans – replacing a previously destroyed tomb of Louis – as well as his father Charles and his uncle Philip. It was executed by Italian sculptors in a transitional Gothic and Renaissance style, for the church of the Célestins convent that Louis and the royalty favored (mentioned above). From there it was transported to the National Museum at the Petits Augustins, to end up at the abbey of St Denis – the burial church of the French dynasty – after 1817, the fall of the First Empire

and the restoration of the monarchy.<sup>23</sup> While other royal tombs were simply returned to St. Denis, this one was new to the location. Other monuments from Petits Augustins were replaced in their churches or transferred in the 1830s to the Louvre, Versailles, the cemetery Père Lachaise, and the Cluny medieval museum in Paris. Only some copies of famous sculptures were left in Petits Augustins buildings that now were to house the Art Academy.

## II. INVERTED STOICISM

Having sketched the nineteenth century fortunes of Valentine, let us now look at her presence in the period following her life, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We will first turn from the *devise* and the narrative of her final year, to the image or emblem she associated with her mourning, the *chantepleure*. Like her *devise*, Valentine's emblem, tearsong, is an oxymoric palindrome: what begins in singing ends in tears, as the morality plays and farces teach us.<sup>24</sup> The object, *chantepleure*, evokes an intricately wrought miniature world of sweet and sorry allusions, like a nostalgic reading of Dante's purgatory by Dan Remein: "this purgatory would not be purgative, it would be a moment of ease."<sup>25</sup> True to that insight, *chantepleure* is not only a purgatorial but also a pleasant object: a musical instrument, used for curing madness. A watering can (*irrigium*) is called *chantepleure* in French, and *depsydra* in Greek, as a Renaissance French author Jean Coignet reminds us in a book title, *Penitential irrigium, la chantepleure gallice vocatum, graece depsydra* (Paris, Mahieu, 1537). Thus, *chantepleure* is also a water clock and a hydraulic device, an artificial fountain that imitates the pleasures and sounds of a naturally bubbling spring. *Chantepleure* also means a song or dance, or both.

In addition to the *chantepleure*, Valentine used tears and peacock's feathers, also called *regrets*. Thus, in addition to tearsong, she surrounded her mourning with a tearcloth, *larmier*. Below (Fig. 2) is an example of a tent made from tearcloth, from the *Dame à la licorne* tapestries:

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<sup>23</sup> The sculptors are Michele d'Aria, Girolamo da Rovezzano, Doni de Battista Benti and Benedetto Grazzini, known as Benedetto da Rovezzano.

<sup>24</sup> See Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the related 'Loire Valley' Chansonniers*, Copenhagen 2001, available online <<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH029.html>>.

<sup>25</sup> Dan Remein, email, 2010.



Figure 2. *Dame à la licorne* tapestry (Musée de Cluny, Paris)

*Chantepleure* also participated in medieval interest in mechanical devices, as in this example of a chalice with a miniature fountain by Villard de Honnecourt (center right):



Figure 3. Villard de Honnecourt's *chantepleure* (fountain). *Carnet de Villard de Honnecourt* (BnF ff 19093). Courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Finally, *chantepleure* is associated with Venus, as in 15th c. *jetons à la Vénus* (Venus tokens), although the object schematically portrayed there is identified as either *chantepleure* or a firebrand, an interesting

quasi-Petrarchan conflation of opposites that is, as I will show below, relevant to Valentine's use of the emblem.<sup>26</sup>

Valentine's *chantepleure* is an iconic instrument of remembrance, stopping time; as well as measuring time (water clock or clepsydra). Isidore of Seville says: "if man does not retain sounds in his memory, they perish, because they cannot be written."<sup>27</sup> Time can be measured, though, and identical sounds produced: *chantepleure* and other mechanical sound producing devices are an exception to Isidore's rule. As an instrument that cures madness, Valentine's *chantepleure* may also point to her close friend and cousin the king of France, plagued by frequent periods of homicidal madness; she was accused of causing that madness by sorcery, as well as extolled for assuaging it, as in the Romantic tradition (above).<sup>28</sup> Alice Burry Palisser notes:

Valentine took for device the watering-pot (*chantepleure*) between two letters S, initials of Soucy [sorrow] and Soupir [sigh], with the motto "*Rien ne m'est plus, Plus ne m'est riens*" These two melancholy lines were repeated in every part of the rooms of the duchess, the walls of which were hung with black drapery *semée* of white tears . . . Her device is to be seen at Blois, and in the magnificent tomb raised to her memory by her grandson, Louis XII . . . It is of frequent occurrence as the device of the Duchess of Orleans in the inventories of the time: the entries document commissions for jewelry makers for *chantepleure* motif on a hat pin for

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<sup>26</sup> See photographs at <<http://sites.google.com/site/lesjetonsdecomptes/jeton-la-venus>>. The references cited on the website are Mitchiner, p. 265-273; De Beeldenaar, mai / juin 1981, pp 87-88. Perhaps the tokens may refer not only to Venus but also Flore?

<sup>27</sup> Wallace M. Lindsay, ed. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, Book 3, chapters 15-23 (no pagination). Trans. William Strunk, Jr., and Oliver Strunk, revised by James McKinnon, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

<sup>28</sup> On the rumors concerning Valentine's role in the king's madness, see Alain Marchandisse, "Milan, Les Visconti, l'union de Valentine et de Louis d'Orléans," in: *Autour du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Journées d'étude en l'honneur d'Alberto Varvaro*, ed. Paola Moreno and Giovanni Palumbo, Geneva: Droz, 2008, 92-9.



Alof de Clèves, on a pair of garter buckles also decorated with enameled pansies and tears, all for the Duchess.<sup>29</sup>

But there is perhaps another, political reason for Valentine to adopt the *chantepleure*, as a commitment to remembering the assassination, especially given that later the son of the assassin, Philip the Good, adopted the flint and sparks as his emblem. These emblems were included in the decorations and outfits, and circulated widely to the whole household as New Year's presents.<sup>30</sup> Valentine's husband begun by adopting knotty sticks (*bâtons nouveaux*) and the devise *Je l'ennuie* (I bother him; i.e., his rival to the throne John the Fearless). In return, John adopted the plane or *rabot* and the devise *Je le tiens* or, in Flemish, *Ik houd* (I got him), implying that he will plane off the knots on the stick, as in the collar decoration in this portrait (fig. 4):

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<sup>29</sup>Alice Dryden Burry Palisser, "Historic Devices and Badges: Part III. The Visconti of Milan," *The Art-Journal*, London, August 1, 1867, 181-2: "1455. Pour avoir fait une chantepleure d'or, a la devise de ma dicte dame (La Duchesse d'Orléans), par elle donnée à MS Alof de Clèves, son frère pour porter une plume sur son chapeau (Inv. des Ducs de Bourgogne, no. 6, 732). 1455. A Jehan Lessayeur, orfèvre, pour avoir fait deux jartieres d'or pour Madame la Duchesse (d'Orléans) esmaillée à larmes et à pensées (ibid). 1455. Une chantepleure d'or à la devise de Madame (La Duchesse d'Orléans) pour porter une plume sur le chappeau (ibid, no. 6782)" (Burry Palisser 182). The note to this article on *Chantepleure* reads: "the chantepleure, or water-pot, was made of earthenware, about a foot high, the orifice at the top the size of a pea, and the bottom pierced with numerous small holes. Immersed in water, it quickly fills. If the opening at the top be then closed with the thumb, the vessel may be carried, and the water distributed in small or large quantities, as required" (Burry Palisser, 182).

<sup>30</sup> On John the Fearless branding his *étrennes* gifts with his emblem, see Brigitte Buettner, "Past Presents: New Year's Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400," *The Art Bulletin* 83:4 (2001), 598-635, at 619.



Figure 4. John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. 16th c., Versailles. Courtesy of the Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et Trianon.<sup>31</sup>

After the dramatic murder of John the Fearless in 1419, John's successor Philip the Good took up the emblem of flint stone and sparks (*fusil* or *briquet* and *pierre à feu*, documented in 1421; fig. 5), and the devise *ante quam flamma micet* (strikes before the fire). The firebrand

<sup>31</sup> Inventory number MV 4005 ; INV 9274 ; LP 5722.

eventually became associated with Burgundy.<sup>32</sup> The firebrand emblem is perhaps an antinomy of the Orléans *chantepleure*, which Charles d'Orléans and his family also adopted, following his mother. Another reason for that choice on the part of Philip is the resemblance between the firebrand and John the Fearless's plane, which in turn opens the possibility that Valentine chose the *chantepleure* as a threat to John's plane/firebrand.<sup>33</sup>

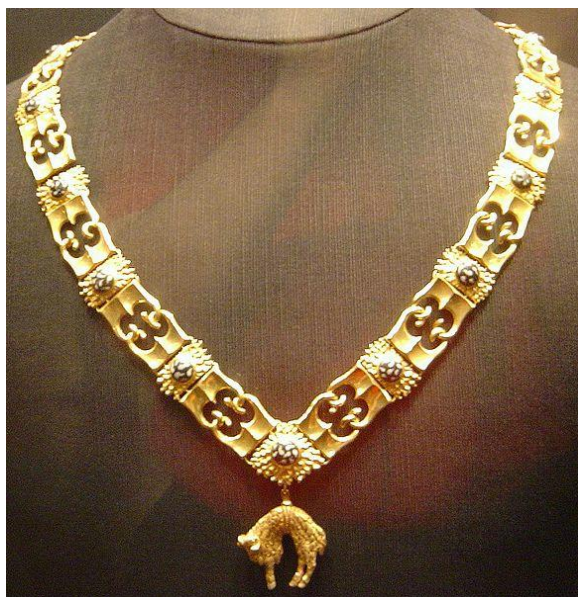


Figure 5. 15<sup>th</sup> c. chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece with the firebrand (E shape) and sparks motif. Photograph David Moniaux.

<sup>32</sup> The duke also adopted the devise *Aultre n'auray* at his third marriage with Isabelle of Portugal in 1430. Bernard Bousmanne, "*Item a Guillaume Wyelant aussi enlumineur*": *Willen Vrelant: un aspect de l'enluminure dans les Pays-Bas Méridionaux sous le mécénat des ducs de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire*, Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Turnhout: Brepols, 1997, p. 172. See also: Pierre Cockshaw, Christiane van den Bergen-Pantens, Evencio Beltran, *Ordre de la toison d'or de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Bel*. Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Turnhout: Brepols, 1996, p. 104. A popular biography of Philip the Good is Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy*, with a foreword by Graeme Small, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2002 (repr. of the 1970 edition).

<sup>33</sup> Adolphe Marlet, *Eclaircissements historiques et critiques sur le titre de France-Comte*. . . , Beaunçon: Dodivers, 1863, 11-113.

Chaucer's and Lydgate's use of *chantepleure* takes us away from the circulation of Valentine's emblem in France, but research into English examples ca. 1400 echoes what Cerquiglini-Toulet finds about French literary tradition. Essentially, the question is the same as across the Channel: was tearsong an emblem of endless grief, a bottomless reservoir of tears; was it a poetic fountain, as Nicola Masciandaro suggests, a figure of "inverted Stoicism" or "moving freely between the extremes of passion" (on that, more below); or was it a more traditional Boethian figure of Stoical remedy against fortune? If we return to France to follow *chantepleure*, passed on from Valentine to her son Charles, we are not leaving the circle of acquaintances and texts drawn up by Maura Nolan in her discussion of Lydgate and Chaucer: Charles d'Orléans, Chaucer, his granddaughter Alice, Alice's husband William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk (who, generously released by Charles's half-brother the Bastard of Orléans, advocated the release of Charles against Lydgate's patron Gloucester), and the courtly patrons who circulated Chaucer's poetry and its translations, such as Charles's younger brother John of Angoulême who accompanied Charles in exile in Britain and owned a copy of *Canterbury Tales*, or Charles's third wife Marie de Clèves. As the new Duchess of Orléans, Marie de Clèves (1426-1487) adopts *pensées* ("thoughts," or pansies, that share mnemonic virtues with forget-me-nots) as well as Valentine and Charles's emblems of *chantepleure* and tears with their devise ("Rien ne m'est plus"). For example, a copy of the *Roman de Troille* by Pierre d'Amboise (that is, *Troilus and Criseyda*, with fifteen miniatures in grisaille) with that emblem has long been attributed to her, rather than to Valentine.<sup>34</sup> Marie adopts her husband's emblem of the *chantepleure* and the devise well before becoming a widow, likely with the intention to connect the present, impoverished duke and the château of Blois to a grand, rich, politically prominent past.<sup>35</sup> Alof or Adolphe of Clèves, to whom Valentine gave the *chantepleure* hatpin in

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<sup>34</sup> *Le roman de Troille*, ms fr BnF 25528. Leopold Delisle mentions documents dating from 1455-57 listing *chantepleure* and the devise as Marie's personal emblems; these seem to be the same documents as those listed by Burry Palisser, above, but she attributes them to Valentine. Delisle's identification of *Troille* with Marie de Clèves is repeated in later scholarship. See Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, vol. 1, Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1868, 120-1.

<sup>35</sup> R. de Maulde, "La mère de Louis XII, Marie de Clèves, Duchesse d'Orléans," *Revue Historique* 36 (1988), pp. 81-199, at 86-88.

1408 (the commission of this jewel is mentioned above), was Marie's father.

In the sixteenth century, we see echoes of Valentine's *chantepleure* in Brantôme's account of her in *Femmes Illustres*. Earlier, in the first half of the century, a poet and lady-in-waiting of Claude de France, Anne de Graville, also adopts the emblem, this time with the devise *musas natura, lacrymas fortuna* (Muses by nature, tears by fortune). Anne eloped and, for a short time, was disinherited by her father, the admiral Louis Malet de Graville.<sup>36</sup>

At the end of the 16th c., the widowed queen Louise de Lorraine used the emblem in her bedroom in Chenonceaux after the murder of king Henry III (1589):<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Maxime Brenier de Montmorand, *Une femme poète du 16e siècle: Anne de Graville, sa famille, sa vie, son oeuvre*, Paris: Picard, 1917, p. 101, mentions the use documented in: Paris, Bibliothèque de France, Cabinet des Estampes, collection Gaignières (Pc. 18, fol. 65), "a watercolor copy of a tapestry made in 1523 for Pierre de Balzac and Anne de Graville," representing a French garden. On Anne de Graville, see Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, "Claude de France: In her Monther's Likeness, a Queen with Symbolic Clout?," in Cynthia J. Brown, ed., *The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne: negotiating Convention in Books and Documents*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010, pp. 123-146, at 128, and Catherine Müller, "Anne de Graville lectrice," pp. 231-41, as well as Henri Lamarque, "Autour d'Anne de Graville: Le débat de la 'Dame sans sy' et l'épithaphe de la poétesse," in *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V-L Saulnier*, Geneva: Droz, 1984, pp. 603-11. Anne de Graville's daughter, Jeanne de Balzac, married Claude d'Urfé in 1532, and her library was transferred to d'Urfé family manor in La Bastie. Claude was the grandfather of the novelist Honoré d'Urfé (see Mary Catharine MacMahon, *Aesthetics and Art in the Astrée of Honoré d'Urfé*, Washington: Catholic University of America, 1925, p. 6). See also: Anne Malet de Graville, *Le beau roman de deux amans Palamon et Arcita et de la belle et sage Emilia*, ed. Yves le Hir, Paris: PUF, 1965.

<sup>37</sup> Louise multiplied Valentine's double "S", which flanked her *chantepleure*, with this devise: *solem saepe seipsam sollicitari suspirunque*.



Figure 6. Chateau of Chenonceaux, paneling in Louise de Lorraine's bedroom, with the *chantepleur* motif. Copyright MFSG.

Medieval *chantepleur* that, by the end of the sixteenth century, has fallen out of usage among gardeners, was retained in its symbolic sense.

If we turn from the visual to the textual *chantepleur*, we enter the realm of literary rather than personal connections – although Lydgate (1370-1451), our main source, may be connected to the Orléans family through his association with his patron, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (from 1422), who constantly opposed the release of Charles of Orléans, prisoner at the English court for 25 years (1415-1440, captured at Agincourt). Nolan, in her article on the Ovidian roots of the rhetoric of “wo and gladness” in Lydgate, focuses on several references to *chantepleur* in Lydgate, especially in the *Fall of Princes* (ca. 1433).<sup>38</sup> Lydgate also uses the word in his translation of

<sup>38</sup> Maura Nolan, “Now wo, now gladnesse’: Ovidianism in the ‘Fall of Princes,’” *ELH* 71:3, 2004, 531-558. Among Lydgatean occurrences of *chantepleur* Nolan mentions Lydgate’s “The Servant of Cupyde Forsaken,” *Troy Book*, translation of Deguilleville, and laments (“A Complaint for My Lady of Gloucester and Holland), as well as *Fall of the Princes*, her focus, where the word occurs repeatedly: book 1, 6, and most ostensibly in the concluding stanza of the *Fall* (Nolan, 533).

Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*.<sup>39</sup> As a source for Lydgate, Nolan identifies Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite* ("I fare as doth the song of Chaunte-pleure,/ For now I pleyne, and now I pleye," ll. 533-4).<sup>40</sup> Nolan notes that Robert Skeat and Lee Patterson misunderstood Chaucer's use of the word *chantepleure*, which they mistook for a moralizing, penitential reference: who sings in this world will weep in the next. Instead, Nolan argues, Chaucer, followed by Lydgate in the 1430s, both clearly use the word in the sense of changeable emotions, coherent with common French usage, and particularly suitable to Ovid. The use of the word hinges on the difference between tragedy (in the moralizing sense) and elegy, the latter more germane to Ovid, Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, who were no moralizers, according to Nolan (534). Lydgate's *chantepleure*, "Sorwe meldid with gladnesse" (*Fall of Princes*, l. 2406), or "worldly blisse meynt with bittirnesse" (*Fall of Princes*, l. 2161), as Nolan shows, connotes "a secular, aestheticized vision of humanity in a contingent (here, magically comic) universe . . . without regard for ultimate punishments or rewards" (542). As Nolan remarks, Lydgate's Ovidian stories differ from moralizing renditions by Laurent de Premierfait and Boccaccio in their *Famous Women* (543). Nolan identifies this with a trend for a non-moralizing – or a-historical, because a-causal and a-linear, and instead, aesthetic – reading of Ovid in England in the 1430s and later, already foreshadowed in Chaucer and Gower in the 1370s and 80s. She notes that Lydgate's best known use occurs in the *Troy Book* where he described Trojan tragedians: "Now trist, now glad, now heavy and now light, / And face chaunged with a sodeyn sight, / so craftily thei koude hem transfigure, / conformyng hem to the chauntepleure, / now to synge and sodeinly to wepe" (Nolan n3, p. 555). As Masciandaro comments, this "non-moralized, open idea of contingent life" seems to configure a "weird and wonderfully inverted Stoicism," where "instead of belonging to something above passions via ascesis, one moves freely between their opposites."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *ELH*, vol. 71, no. 3-4, p. 555, citing the standard Old French dictionary, Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française*.

<sup>40</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Minor Poems*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888, p. 114.

<sup>41</sup> Masciandaro, email, September 2011. On the presence of Stoicism in the Middle Ages (from Seneca and Cicero to Boethius and beyond), see Michel Spanneut, *Permanence du Stoïcisme de Zenon à Malraux*, Gembloux: Duculot,

This “third term” interpretation by Masciandaro – neither moralizing nor neo-Stoical – can be related to Petrarch’s oxymoric vacillation between joy and tears, not in the morality play sense of paying with one extreme for another, but rather, as if a quilting point or tunnel opened in the fabric of the universe, and we could pass from joy to tears without sense and without transition. Masciandaro’s “third term” can also be related to Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet’s thinking on the non-binary nature of late medieval lyric. Cerquiglini-Toulet puts tear-song among the tierce or dialectic figures that characterize fourteenth century lyric.<sup>42</sup> Against Eric Auerbach’s thesis about “feudal thought” as a binary, she evokes a series of third or intermediate terms: *dorveille* (waking sleep), *nonchaloir* (not-caring), melancholia (joyful sorrow), tear-song, associated with literary production or reflective mode.<sup>43</sup> Against the debate paradigm (*disputatio*, *psychomachia*, battle, joust, carnivalesque reversal, or marriage, as in Martianus Capella’s *De noctis Philologiae et Mercurii*) rises

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1973, and his *Le stoïcisme des pères de l’Église de Clément de Rome à Clément d’Alexandrie*, Paris: Seuil, 1957, 1969 (2nd ed.), and for the later patristic period, Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to Early Middle Ages*, Leiden: Brill, 1985; Gerard Verbeke, *The Presence of Stoicism in Medieval Thought*, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1983, and Verbeke, “L’influence du Stoïcisme sur la pensée médiévale en Occident,” in *Actas del V Congreso de filosofía medieval*, 2 vols, Madrid: Edit. Nacional, 1979, vol. 1, p. 95-109. More recently, see Letizia A. Panizza, “Stoic Psychotherapy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque Fortunae*,” in: Margaret J. Osler, ed., *Atoms, Pneuma, and Tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 39-66. In France, Abelard and Heloise are notable readers of Seneca and Cicero before the more general *vogue* for Cicero in the twelfth c. In the second half of the fourteenth century, there was a lot of interest in the Stoics in the courtly circles, following the translation projects undertaken by Charles V and others. Among these, the most prominent seem to be the translation of Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* by Simon de Hesdin (1375-84), completed in 1404 by Nicolas de Gonesse for Jean de Berry, the uncle of the duke of Orléans; the *Distichs of Cato*, with six translations ranging from the 12th to the 15th c.; and Laurent de Premierfait, mentioned by Nolan (above), who translated Cicero’s *De senectute* (1405) and *De amicitia* (1416).

<sup>42</sup> Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, “Penser la littérature médiévale: par-delà le binarisme,” *French Studies* 64:1 (2009), pp. 1-12.

<sup>43</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, New York: Doubleday, 1957.



the tradition of philosophical distinctions, associated with the poetics of dream visions or metamorphoses (Cerquiglini-Toulet, 9), and summarized by Charles d'Orléans: "Neither good nor evil, but in between" (Rondeau 286), or by Jean de Meung: "So it is with opposites/ One is the *commentary* on the other" (Ainsinc va de contreres choses/ Les unes sont des autres *gloses*, 21543-44; my emphasis) (Cerquiglini-Toulet, 3).<sup>44</sup> This distinctive tradition is also associated with the preference for sequences of three or four terms over dyads (8-10). Purgatory is the invention that corresponds to it in theology, as Jacques le Goff has shown, and *mise en abyme* constitutes its acute literary figuration (Cerquiglini-Toulet, 3-4). Terms such as *ambiguity* and *ambiguous*, *perplexity* and *perplexed* appear in the fourteenth century and characterize certain authors (Christine de Pizan, Bersuire; 5). Instead of succession of opposites, we have *both* succession *and* simultaneity, a *dialethea*, for which Cerquiglini-Toulet lists multiple and stunning examples, an "orgy of ambiguity" (5-8). One word, she says, "reveals that double postulate. It demonstrates the creativity of language, the *thought* of language: the word *chantepleure*" (8; my emphasis). Tearsong can be both a "space open by the succession of the two parts – tear, song" and/or a "radical overlap": "it's the situation *par excellence* of those whom love makes into poets" (8).

In turn, the reflection on limits, abuses, and dangers of *disputatio* forms the vast medieval tradition of meta-commentary on the nature and vicissitudes of *commentary* and *gloss* (10-12). Commentary "develops what the text wraps up: *complicatio* and *explicatio*" (10), establishes a conversation between texts; in a radical version of the same practice, in the later Middle Ages, the authors gloss their own words (Jean Froissart, *Love Prison*, among others; Cerquiglini-Toulet, 10). Our commentary belongs to the same order of desire as medieval commentary: "*locus desperatus*, *crux* both torment and excite the philologist" (11). Finally, medieval commentary and composition are one: "to compose for the form, by piece and by part, by citation and compilation; to compose for the meaning, by grafting, erasure, transformation, conversion; *composer* [to compromise] in every sense of the word, that is, to reconcile and to reconcile oneself" (12).

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<sup>44</sup> Charles d'Orléans, *Ballades et Rondeaux*, ed. Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, Paris: Librairie Générale française, 1992. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols, Paris: Champion, 1965-70, vol. 3.

What will the twenty-first century remember of *chantepleure*? If Valentine places tearsong between Sorrow and Sighing, this essay places it between Love and Commentary. Masciandaro notes that, in Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, "Anelida endless circling lament" and her "living-suicidal inwardly Dido-ish traumatic remembrance" ("Myself I modre with my privy thoght," l.291):

operate as an unfinishable self-iterative commentary. Here, the discourse and interpretive pondering of love must be brought to end, as life can only continue if the discourse becomes song: "Than ende I thus, sith I may do no more. / I yeve hit up for now and ever-more, / For I shal never eft putten in balaunce / My sekernes, ne lerne of love the lore. / But as the swan . . . So singe I here my destinee or chaunce" (*Anelida and Arcite*, ll. 342-8).<sup>45</sup>

Thus, tearsong is indeed an instrument that cures madness: the performance of tearsong opens a way out of the self-destructive loop where thoughts gnaw at the heart until nothing remains ("Myself I modre with my privy thoght," conflating *mordre*, bite, gnaw; and *modre*, murder). The poetry of the device cures madness by nurturing beauty. To recall Cerquiglini-Toulet: tearsong, the word-emblem of dialectic imagination, is the *thought* of language: a show of the capacity of language to make new concepts, and a name for a promise of creativity.

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<sup>45</sup> Masciandaro, email, September 2011.