

(Re)visiting Délie: Maurice Scève and Marian Poetry*

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*Si iracunda, aut avaritia, aut carnis illecebra naviculam
concusserit mentis, respice ad Mariam.*

— Bernard, *In laudibus Virginis Matris*

*Factat animam Vulcanus, vestes aptat Pallas, fucat Venus,
& cesto cingit, ornant ceteræ Deæ, docet pessimos mores
Mercurius. Et quia omni genere rerum a Diis donata
esset, Pandoram appellat.*

— Jean Olivier, *Pandora*

*Celle qui est la Vertu, et la Grace . . .
Monstre, qu'en soy elle a plus, que de femme.*

— Délie, *D354 and 284*

This study proposes a new reading of Délie and tries to shed a new light on the poet himself. Scève appears here not only as the humanist we all know, but as a Christian poet, a poet as much interested in biblical and other religious sources as in Classical and Italian ones. In his canzoniere, Scève follows very closely, and even sometimes imitates, a corpus of fixed-form poems — rondeaux parfaits, ballades, and chants royaux — written by poets of the two previous generations for poetic contests known as Puys. And he constantly expresses his love and describes his idol in terms, images, and symbols directly borrowed from Marian poetry. To the Christian cult of the Virgin Mary corresponds for the Lover the pagan cult of Délie.

This study contributes to the view, recently advanced by some scholars of Scève's poetry — Donaldson-Evans and Skenazi, among others — that the *Délie* is at least as Christian in its inspiration — if not in its purpose — as it is Petrarchan or classical. It tries to add to this view and give a new cast to it by arguing two related points: first, that the religious language and images which characterize Scève's work serve to associate Délie, the poet's beloved "idol," with the Virgin Mary; and second, that the specifically Marian echoes and allusions contained in some of Scève's *dizains* derive mainly from a corpus of little-studied poems in praise of the Virgin, written in the

*My thanks (in chronological order) go to Patricia Ranum, Lance Donaldson-Evans, and Raymond C. La Charité for their precious help in translating this study into English. All remaining gallicisms are mine. I wish also to thank the three *RQ* readers. Their comments have been so precious to me that I have sometimes taken the liberty of inscribing them verbatim in the very text of this study. Given the decidedly intertextual nature of the enterprise, I have decided not to provide translations of the poems and texts I quote. I apologize for the possible inconvenience to English readers. Unless otherwise indicated, all italics in the texts I quote are mine.

previous generation for poetic contests known as *puy*s, poetic guilds whose main *raison d'être* was to celebrate each year the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December).

This association between Délie and Mary becomes quite evident when one reads those anthologies of *palinods* that have been preserved in manuscripts, some magnificently illustrated, kept in St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Carpentras, Rouen, Oxford and especially Paris — I am thinking in particular of those illuminated jewels, manuscripts BNF fr. 145, 379, and 1537, the mere contemplation of which would convert even the most hardy atheists. It seems clear, at any rate, that even a moderately attentive examination of the poems themselves, and of the collections in which they are to be found, will quickly reveal, even to the least receptive, the most skeptical and recalcitrant of readers, the considerable role played by the Puy of Dieppe, Caen, and Rouen in the history of French poetry between the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the middle of the sixteenth century, and even beyond. This veritable treasure contains an intellectual, poetic and textual corpus of singular modernity that no sixteenth-century scholar can any longer afford to ignore.

I. MARY IN HER GLORY: FROM SCRIPTURE TO SYMBOLS

To begin with, we shall not look at those beautiful manuscripts — not yet — but at a printed collection, referred to by experts like Gérard Gros and Denie Hüe as the “Recueil Vidoue.”¹ This collection of palinodic poems was published in Paris around 1525 under the title: *Palinodz / Chantz royaulx // Ballades / Rondeaux / et Epigrammes // a l'honneur de limmaculee Conception de // la toute belle mere de dieu Marie (Patron- // ne des Normans) presentez au puy a Rouen . . .* The beautiful woodcut on the cover contains Latin inscriptions on the phylacteries which surround the image of the Virgin. The reader, while admiring the traditional symbols associated with Mary — the city, the fountain, the well, the mirror, the door, the cedar, the lily, the rose, the olive tree, the sun, the moon, the star, etc. — can do as I did and, by scanning the engraving from top to bottom and from left to right, make out the following inscriptions (see fig. 1):

i) TOTA PULCRA ES, AMICA MEA, ET MACULA NON EST IN TE:
Song 4:7.

ii and iii) PULC[H]RA VT LUNA, ELECTA UT SOL: Song 6:9; see also Mal. 4:2: “Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum Sol Justitiæ.”

¹Gros, 1992 and 1996; Hüe, 2001. To be completed by the “actes” — to be published by Champion — of the international colloquium recently held in Rouen and organized by Jean-Claude Arnould and Thierry Mantovani: *Première poésie de la Renaissance: Autour des puy's poétiques normands*.

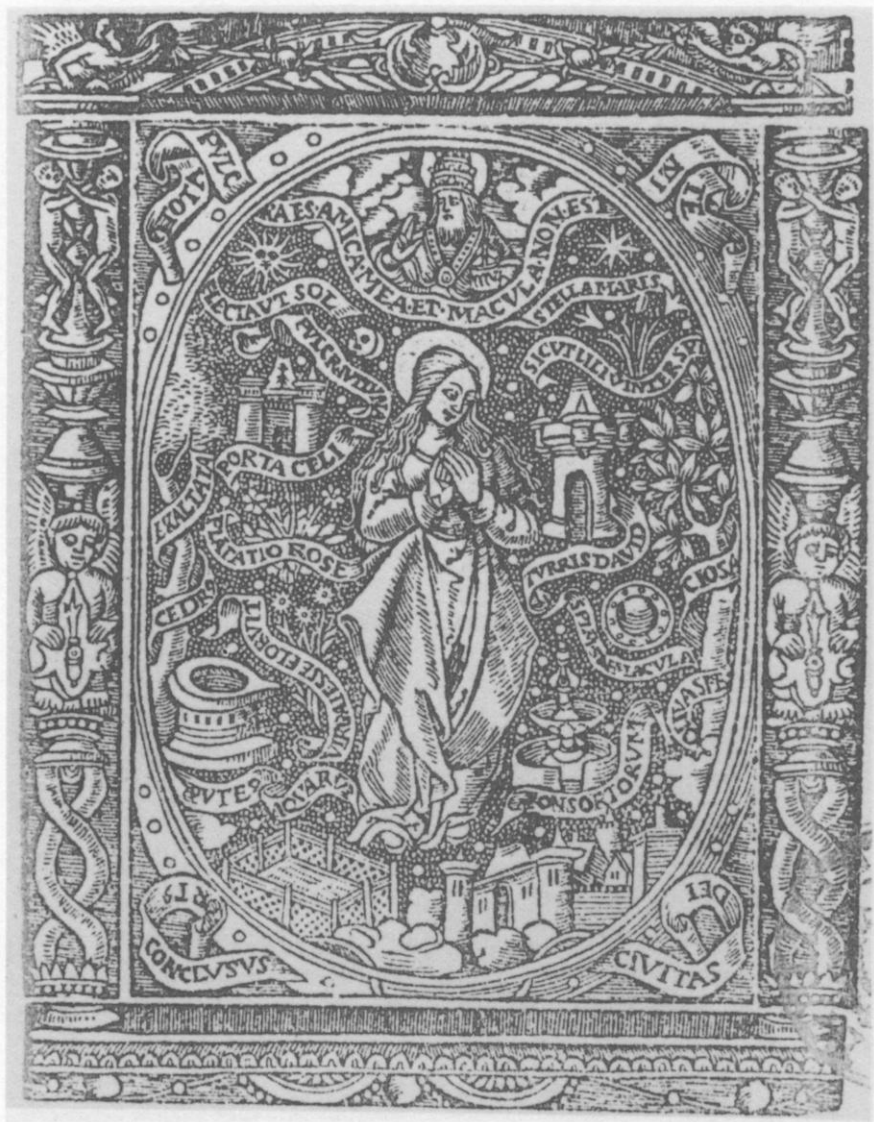


FIGURE 1. "Recueil Vidoue," title page. (Photo: Johns Hopkins University.)

iv) **STELLA MARIS**: Marie, says saint Bernard in his *In laudibus Virginis Martris*, Homily 2, § 17, is "Maris stella."² According to a well-established tradition, this symbol originates in St. Jerome's *Interpretation of Hebraic Names*, where, concerning the etymology of the name *Mariam*, a distracted (or inspired) scribe accidentally wrote "stella maris" instead of "stilla maris." In any

²Bernard de Clairvaux, 168-71: "In fine autem versus: Et nomen, inquit, Virginis Maria. Loquamur pauca et super hoc nomine, quod interpretatum 'Maris stella' dicitur, et Matri Virgini valde convenienter aptatur. Ipsa namque aptissime sideri comparatur quia sicut

case, "Ave Maris Stella" is a hymn sung in church by the faithful, doubtlessly since the eighth century.³ To this reference should be added Num. 24:17: "Orietur stella ex Jacob, et consurget virga de Israel."

v) SICUT LILIUM INTER SPINAS: Song 2:2.

vi) PORTA CELI: Gen. 28:17 (episode of Jacob's ladder: "Pavensque, Quam terribilis est, inquit, locus iste! non est hic aliud nisi domus Dei, et *porta celi*"); see also Ezek. 44:2 ("This gate shall be shut"), Matt. 7:13, Luke 13:24 (the "strait gate"); and the end of the first verse of the Marian hymn "Ave maris stella": "Ave maris stella / Dei Mater alma, / Atque semper Virgo, / Felix *celi porta*"; in the *Litanies of the Virgin*, Marie is also called *Juana celi*.

vii and viii) CEDRUS EXALTATA, PLANTATIO ROS[A]E: Eccles. 24:17-18.

ix) TURRIS DAVID: Song 4:4; in the said *Litanies*, one finds the following: "*Rosa mystica*, ora pro nobis. / *Turris Davidica*, ora pro nobis. / *Turris eburnea*, ora pro nobis", etc.

x) SPECULUM SINE MACULA: Wisd. of Sol. 7:25-26: "Vapor est enim virtutis Dei, / et emanatio quædam est claritatis omnipotentis Dei sincera, / et ideo nihil inquinatum in eam incurrit; / candor est enim lucis eternæ, / et *speculum sine macula* Dei majestatis, / et imago bonitatis illius"; again in the *Litanies*, Marie is also described as *Speculum justitia*, "Mirror of Justice."

xi) OLIVA SPECIOSA: Eccles. 24:19.

xii) VIRGA JESSE FLORUIT: Num. 17:8 ("virga Aaron"); Isa. 11.1-2.

xiii and xiv) FONS [H]ORTORUM, PUTEUS AQUARUM: Song 4:15.

xv) HORTUS CONCLUSUS: Song 4:12.

xvi) CIVITAS DEI: Ps. 86.3.

One can see that the majority of these emblems (ten out of sixteen) originate either in the Song of Songs or Ecclesiastes. The following excerpts, quoted *in extenso*, are the most significant of these passages and are the ones that, as we will soon see, drew Scève's poetic attention. He doubtlessly savored them above others and borrowed from them the most. As the reader will have understood, the point I wish to make here is that we need to become aware of the fact — a fact which previous generation of scholars have tended to ignore — that in the sixteenth century the Bible was the humanist's book par excellence, that it was the text to which writers, poets and scholars constantly referred, naturally and even spontaneously. Thus, when in our modern edi-

sine sui corruptione sidus suum emittit radium, sic absque sui laesione Virgo parturit Filium. Nec sideri radius suam minuit claritatem, nec Virgini Filius suam integritatem. Ipsa ergo est nobilis illa stella ex Jacob orta, cuius radius universum orbem illuminat," etc.

³On this subject, see Engammare, 388. Also see Fabri, 1514, a crucial work for this matter, which will reappear later in this study and which is described respectively by Gros, 1992, 125-26, and Hûe, 2001, 96-109. The latter kindly sent me a copy of the pages he dedicates to an analysis of Fabri's work.

tions of Scève's *Délie* we settle for citing Petrarch, Pliny, Virgil, or Ovid — that is to say, texts we believe to be exclusively “pagan” — we run the risk of not going back to the real source-text, of stopping halfway on our journey to the origins. We must instead return to Lucien Febvre's “cœur religieux du seizième siècle” — Lucien Febvre who, after all, did not err on all accounts — and remind ourselves as we embark on this study that there is perhaps in all our history no period more religiously oriented than the sixteenth century, and that it is this orientation we need to foreground if we are to meet the interpretative challenges presented to us by the texts of this period.

A) Song of Songs 2–4 — chapters consecrated to the admirable description that the Beloved makes of the physical charms of his companion, “the most beautiful of women”:

Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es!

...

Sicut turris David collum tuum,
quæ ædificata est cum propugnaculis:
mille clypei pendent ex ea,
omnis armatura fortium

...

Donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbræ,
vadam ad montem myrrhæ, et ad collem thurris.
Tota pulchra es, amica mea,
et macula non est in te.

...

Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa,
vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum
Et in uno crine colli tui.

...

Pulchriora sunt ubera tua vino,
Et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata.

...

Hortus conclusus soror mea, sponsa,
hortus conclusus, fons signatus.
Emissiones tuæ paradisus malorum puniceorum,
cum pomorum fructibus, cypri cum nardo.
Nardus et crocus, fistula et cinnamomum,
myrrha et aloë, cum omnibus primis unguentis.
Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium,
quæ fluunt impetu de Libano.

...

Quæ est ista quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens,
pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol,
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata!

B) Ecclesiastes 24:17-25, where Wisdom — prefiguring Erasmus's *Moria* — sings her own praises ("Sapientia laudabit animam suam": 24:1):

Quasi cedrus exaltata sum in Libano,
 Et quasi cypressus in monte Sion;
 quasi palma exaltata sum in Cades,
 et quasi plantatio rosæ in Jericho.
 Quasi oliva speciosa in campis,
 et quasi platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam in plateis.
 Sicut cinnamomum et balsamum aromatizans odorem dedi,
 quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris;
 et quasi storax, et galbanus, et ungula, et gutta,
 et quasi Libanus non incisus vaporavi habitationem meam
 et quasi balsamum non mistum odor meus.
 Ego quasi terebinthus extendi ramos meos,
 et rami mei honoris et gratiæ.
 Ego quasi vitis frutificavi suavitatem odoris;
 et flores mei fructus honoris et honestatis.
 Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis, et timoris,
 et agnitionis, et sanctæ spei.
 In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis;
 in me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis.

II. D372 AND D15: THE CEDAR, THE VENOM, AND THE UNICORN (NICOLE LESCARRE)

In addition to the "myrrha et aloë" closely linked by Solomon in his *Song of Songs* and this "myrrha electa" that gives off a "suave odeur," recognizable Scèveian echoes to which we will return later, it is the seventh of these emblems, the "Cedrus exaltata," which first and foremost held my attention and immediately made me think of a possible link with the beginning of D372 of *Délie*:

*Tu m'es le Cedre contre le venin
 De ce Serpent en moy continuel,
 Comme ton œil cruellement benin
 Me vivifie au feu perpetuel,
 Alors qu'Amour par effect mutuel
 T'ouvre la bouche, et en tire à voix plaine
 Celle douceur celestement humaine,
 Qui m'est souvent peu moins, que rigoureuse,
 Dont spire (ô Dieux) trop plus suave alaine,
 Que n'est Zephire en l'Arabie heureuse.*

This link, suggested by a fortuitous game of free association, was at first seemingly tenuous, but the “Serpent” of the second verse lent it a whiff of plausibility that made it all the more irresistible. Opening therefore the *recueil* in question, I soon discovered on folios xvii-xviii, in a chant royal by Dom Nicole Lescarre, the beginning of a confirmation of the hypothesis germinating in my mind. I will cite only the first two stanzas, although the entire poem merits being read and savored for its remarkable craftsmanship:

- Le filz de Amos remply de prophetie
 Veit ung hault mont sur tous mons préparé
 Ouquel viendroit le prophete Messye
 Affin que Adam fut du tout réparé /
 5 Lequel estoit par peché séparé
 Et interdit de la grace divine,
 Dont pleur survint, mort misere et ruyne
 Au ge[n]re humain dolent et gemissant:
 Mais dieu puissant pour son reclinatore
 10 Luy ordonna ce lieu resplendissant
 Mont distillant / paix / salut / grace et gloire.
- Le mont Thamor où Moyse et Helye
 Furent jadis bien nous a figuré
 Ce mont plaisant, où Dieu tant se humilie
 15 Qu'en corps humain si est transfiguré.
 Moralement il est prefiguré
 Mont de Syon preservé de vermine,
Mont de Lyban qui serpens exterminé:
Par la vertu de son cedre odorant,
 20 Cypre fleurant et palme de victoire
 Qui le monstroit en tout fruct prosperant
 Mont distillant paix / salut / grace et gloire.

As the proverb puts it: when it rains it pours. On folios xxxvi-xxxvii of the same Vidoue collection, in one of Maître Nicolle Le Vestu's *chants royaux*, “Le parc d'honneur / muny de toute grace,” we find that the “pur corps” of the Virgin is destined to “porter fruct de grand suavité.” This “parc d'honneur,” writes the poet:

- Bien fut planté d'arbres melliflueux
 Non tortueux: mais parfaictz en droicture,
 Garny de fleurs / de cedres fructueux
Moult vertueux: contre aspique poincture.

A third reference, which consolidates the association, is found on pages 19-22 of ms. 385 of the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine in Carpentras in a chant royal by a certain Jehan Couppel. Although a mediocre work, it invokes

Pliny in its "Argument" ("Pline dict que le pin oliban / Qui croist sur le mont de Liban / Estre sur tous le pur encens . . .") and incorporates into its palinode, "Pur encens chassant venin du monde," the motif of the "Vierge au Serpent" already used by Nicolle Lescarre in the chant royal I mentioned above. This motif, as all specialists in Mariology are aware,⁴ is extremely common in all forms of Christian art, especially iconography.

We are all familiar with the type of commentary that accompanies D372 in our modern editions of the *Délie*. For example, McFarlane notes that the cedar, because it had the reputation of being "harmful to snakes," could be used as an antidote to their bites. To corroborate his claims, MacFarland quotes his predecessor Parturier: "Cedrus est arbor . . . cujus odor serpentes fuget, et interimit." More recently, Françoise Joukovsky, in her Classiques Garnier edition, supports McFarlane's reading by evoking the "huile de cèdre ou *pisselaeon*," an oil to which Pliny refers in the fifteenth book, § 28, of his *Natural History*. All of this is, of course, interesting and yet insufficient, reductive. For one incontrovertible fact that emerges from our reading of the *chants royaux* in the "Recueil Vidoue" and the ms. of Carpentras is that all future commentaries on D372 should, in addition to citing Pliny or Vincent de Beauvais, also make room for Dom Nicole Lescarre,

⁴See, for example, Vloberg, chap. 2, "La Vierge au Serpent" (41-64), a work decorated with 162 helioengravings. We learn here among other things, by means of images and text — please reread the first dizain of *Délie* — that "le Basilic est la bête d'Enfer par excellence." As its Latin and Greek names indicate (respectively, *basileus*, emperor; and *regulus*, little king), it is, explains Vloberg, "le roi des serpents": "Il a le venin dans ses yeux qui peuvent tuer comme la foudre et qui fascinent l'oiseau en plein vol. Son souffle empoisonne l'homme, dit Honorius d'Autun . . . Il est le premier né de la race maudite. 'Du serpent,' dit Isaiah (14:29), 'sortira un basilic et son fruit sera un dragon volant' [*de radice enim colubri egredietur regulus, et semen ejus absorbens volucrem*]. La plupart des commentateurs, saint Jérôme, Cassiodore, saint Grégoire le Grand, s'accordent à reconnaître dans le basilic la figure de l'envie, par laquelle la mort est entrée dans l'univers." A little later, on the subject of the puits of Amiens and Rouen, Vloberg specifies: "Aux jours de la Rogation, à Rouen, les confrères de Notre-Dame, précédés de joueurs d'instruments, menaient en procession une image de la Vierge brisant du pied la tête du dragon" (56). And he reminds us, fortuitously, that fol. 50 of the ms. palinodique rouennais BNF fr. 1537, contains a *miniature* which depicts the Immaculate Virgin crushing Death and the Dragon of Hell under her feet (cf. *infra*, fig. 2). Therefore, when, as good lay humanists, the commentators of the first dizain of *Délie* find it sufficient to refer us to Petrarch and Plato, to the *Physical Dictionary* of 1657, or even to the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon, it is clear that they may be forgetting that which, for the tonsured monk that Maurice Scève was, remained the most essential reference. In this new Christian perspective, we must remember, in relation to the "basilisque" of D1, Psalm 91 (90), verse 13: "Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, / et conculcabis leonem et draconem." This verse, which for a long time was associated with Christ, progressively, due to the association of the Mother with the Son, came to represent, for the conceptionists, the immense powers of the Virgin.



FIGURE 2. *Délie's first impresa*. (Photo: Johns Hopkins University.)

Nicole Le Vestu, and Jehan Couppel, and to stress the fact that in this dizain as in many others, Scève discretely and, yet quite discernibly, does not hesitate to attribute to Délie — his Délie, this “object de plus haulte vertu” whom he calls his “idol” — certain symbols previously reserved by the poets of the Puy for the Virgin Mary, the only human being to have escaped the “plague” and the “venom” of original sin.

In fact, future commentaries on this dizain should accord a special place of honor to Dom Nicolle Lescarre, laureate at the *puy* competition in Rouen at least seven times — in 1512, 1513, 1514, 1515, 1517, 1521 and 1524 — a record surpassed only by Pierre Apvril, who was crowned ten times, and almost equaled by three other poets: Guillaume Tasserie and Guillaume Thibault (each rewarded six times), and Guillaume Cretin (rewarded five times). In addition to his chant royal already cited, Lescarre composed another equally remarkable one, which shows how in Scève’s poetry everything fits and holds together in spite of his “eruditio inaudita, & nova”⁵ — in spite, that is, of the incomparable richness of his text, steeped as it is in echoes of and references to Dante, Petrarch, Marot, Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, Plato, Erasmus, Marguerite of Navarre, Jean Olivier, Sperone Speroni, and, last but

⁵Dolet, 86: “Te iure laudant multi ob eloquentiam, / Atque eruditionem inauditam, & novam.”

by no means least, to the Bible. This chant royal appears in several manuscripts, notably the important ms. 385 of the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine at Carpentras (271) and the ms. BNF fr. 2205 (fol. 39v). Considered in relation to Scève's work, Lescarre's refrain, "Pure licorne expellant tout venin," invites a comparison with the "Cedre" of D372 and the *impresa* of the first of the fifty emblems in *Délie*, the one which, appearing between D5 and D6, represents a woman who, in a gesture of love and pity reminiscent of the beloved of the Song of Songs 2:6 ("Læva ejus sub capite meo, / et dextera illius amplexabitur me"), embraces a unicorn wounded by an arrow. Rarely does a text so willingly submit to the game of analysis and commentary which I am inflicting upon it here. In fact, the chant royal of Lescarre lends itself more easily to my purpose than do the device and epigram of Maurice Scève. When coupled with the *impresa* of *Délie*'s first emblem, it seems, notwithstanding the precise meaning that the poet intended to give it in his *canzoniere* — where the wounded unicorn no longer represents the Virgin, but rather the Lover — to have finally found its true purpose and raison d'être. The presence of this mythical animal confirms something we had long suspected about the unicorn. This Marian symbol par excellence is not only a virginal and Christ-like figure of the Incarnation — from the famous "Et verbum caro factum est" in St. John — but also, as Gérard Gros states in his discussion of this poem, the figure of the immaculate Virgin. Furthermore, it represents "une sublimation miraculeuse de la vie charnelle" which explains the concept of purification inalterably associated with the unicorn in this myth. Above all, it is the figure and source of purity, divine remedy against temptation, pollution, or stain, against what theologians call *fomes peccati*.⁶ Indeed, as nearly all palinodic works proclaim, whether they come from the Puy of Amiens, Dieppe or Rouen, Mary is the only human being to have escaped this universal law that Marguerite de Navarre recalls from St. Paul (Rom. 3:23): "omnes enim peccaverunt," we are all "enclos en peché." Mary is the only one to have been miraculously saved, "preserved," "exempted," from the original malediction.⁷ All the poets of the Puys celebrate the "pur concept" — in other words, the Immaculate Conception — of one who is "parfaicte au monde."⁸ Daughter of Adam, no doubt, and certainly daughter of Eve, yet blessed for all eternity; not only "esleue," but

⁶Gros, 1996, 288-92.

⁷See the palinode in a chant royal of the "Maistre Jacques Lelyeur," BNF ms. fr. 379, fol. 8 (it is of course the Virgin who is at stake here): "De tout peché exempté et preservée" (incipit: "Salut te rend Vierge sans vilité").

⁸Refrain of a ballad, or rather of an anonymous "demy champ royal." See Gros, 1992, 152-53.

“preesleue”⁹ by God to be the “Vray reconfort de l’humaine lignée” (Nicaise Sanale), “Source d’eau douce au parmy de la mer” (Geuffin Roger), “Femme qui feist l’impossible possible” (Guillaume Thibault), “Aube du jour qui le monde illumine” (Jean d’Ardre), “Mere de grace et de misericorde” (Antoine Louvel), “Royne des cieulx sans tache et toute belle” (Louis Chapperon), “Sainte cité: contre Sathan fermée” (Jacques Le Lieur), “Maison de dieu: de peché separée” (Guillaume Columbe), “Seule sans si divinement tyssue” (Guillaume Cretin), “Sans vice aucun toute belle conceue” (again Jacques Le Lyeur), “Vaisseau esleu preservé de tout vice” (Nicole Ravenier);¹⁰ and, to give the last word to the two Marots, and to their colleague, friend, and mentor Guillaume Cretin, Mary is, essentially, “belle de corps et d’ame,” “Pure en concept oultre loy de nature,” at once the “Parc virginal exempté de vermine,” “La fleur de liz preservée entre espines,” “La porte close, où peché n’eust entrée,” “L’humanité jointe á divinité,” the “saincte closture” and the “Tige d’honneur,” “La digne Couche, où le Roy reposa,” “Le jardin clos, à tous humains promis, / La grand Cité des haulx Cieulx regardée, / Le lys royal, l’Olive collaudée,” and finally, last, but not least, “l’honneur de la terre et des cieux.”¹¹ Genesis 3:15 states that after the Fall there would be enmity between woman and the serpent. As God predicted (“ipsa conteret caput tuum”), Mary is the one who came to crush the head of the “vipere” or the “aspic” (Lescarre uses “conterer,” conserving the Latin verb of the Vulgate: “conterer l’orgueil serpent”), to vanquish the seven-headed Dragon of Revelations 12:1-4, and, as Guillaume Cretin says in one of his palinodes,¹² to come face to face, victoriously, with the “fier regard du dragon basilique”:

⁹On the theme of pre-election, see Fabri’s well-informed commentaries, 1514, 112-16: “Il ne t’a pas seulement esleüe *super omnes Choros Angelorum ad celestia regna*, mais il t’a faicte Royne des Royaumes celestes . . . *Deus elegit eam et prælegit eam, & habitare eam facit in tabernaculo suo* . . .” A bit further (127), Fabri adds: “Et comme l’Eglise dit: *Ab initio & ante sæcula creata sum*, &c. Eccle. 24. Proverb 8. *Necdum erant abyssi, & ego jam conceptam eram*.” The term itself finally shows up on p. 243: “Ceste lumiere donc de Marie, a esté *ab aeterno* preesleüe de Dieu, & en l’instant de sa Conception Dieu dit: *Fiat lux, id est, voluit*, qu’elle fust conçëüe lumiere du monde . . .”

¹⁰These palinodes are found in three primary sources: i) the lists put together by Gros in his two works, 1992 (79-97 for Amiens; 182-96 for Rouen) and 1996 (notably 192-99 and 212-22); ii) the *chants royaux* found in “Recueil Vidoue”; and iii) the “Table des Chants Royaux sur la Conception” in BNF ms. fr. 1537, fols. 4r-6v.

¹¹For Cretin, see “Recueil Vidoue,” fols. viii-ix (incipit: “L’extreme dueil de noire couverture”); or Chesney. For Clément Marot, see “Recueil Vidoue,” fols. lviii (v)-lviii (v); or Marot, 1:127-29. For Jehan Marot, see “Recueil Vidoue,” fols. x (v)-xii (v); or Defaux and Mantovani, 53-56 and 179-94.

¹²In addition, in a “Morality” of 383 lines composed for the competition of the Puy de Rouen in 1520, Guillaume Thibault depicts the most symbolic confrontation between the

Chant royal¹³

- Le grand veneur, qui tout mal nous pourchasse,
 Portant espieux aguz et affilez,
 Tant pourchassa par sa mortelle chasse
 Qu'il print ung cerf en ses laqz et fillez,
 5 Lesquelz avoit par grand despit fillez
 Pour le surprendre au biau parc d'innocence.
 Lors la licorne en forme et belle essence
 Saillant en l'air comme royne des bestes,
 Sans craindre abboy envyeux et canyn,
 10 Montrer se vint au veneur à sept testes
 Pure lycorne expellant tout venin.
- Ce faulx veneur cornant par fiere audace
 Ses chiens mordantz sur les champs a rengez,
 L'esperant prendre en quelque infecte place
 15 Par la fureur de telz chiens arragez,
 Mais desconfictz, laz et descouragez,
 De luy ont fait morsure ou violence:
 Car le leon de divine excellence
 La nourrissoit d'herbes et fleurs celestes,
 20 En la gardant par son plaisir begnin,
 Sans endurer leurs abboys et molestes,
 Pure lycorne expellant tout venyn.
- Sur elle estoit prevencion de grace
 Portant les traictz d'innocence empaneuz,
 25 Pour repeller la veneneuse trace
 De ce chasseur et ses chiens obstinez,
 Qui furent tous par elle exterminiez
 Sans luy avoir inferé quelque offense.
 Sa dure corne eslevoit pour deffense,
 30 Donnant espoir aux bestes trop subjectes
 A ce veneur cauteleux et maling,
 Qui ne print oncq, par ses dardz et sagettes,
 Pure lycorne expellant tout venin.

"Dame à l'Agneau," aided by her champion "Noble Cueur," and the "Dame à l'Aspic," defended on her side by "Cueur Villain." The result can easily be guessed: "Deux dames, dont l'une a l'aigneau, / L'autre un serpent en l'armarie, / Assemblerent en la prayrie / Deux gardarmes en un troppeau: / Mais l'ung d'eux y laissa la peau." For an excellent introduction to this important piece, see Gros, 1992, 174-76.

¹³Preceded by the "Argument" — "Champ royal d'un veneur qui corne / Voullant prendre en impurité / Une pure et blanche licorne / Qui se vint rendre à purité" — the text of this chant royal figures in de Robillard de Beurepaire, 1907, 134-36.

- Ainsy saillit par dessus sa fillace
 35 Et dardz poinctuz d'ach[i]er mortel ferrez,
 Se retirant sur hautaine tarrace
 Sans estre prinse en ses lacz et ses rethz,
 Lesquels avoit fort tyssus et serrez
 Pour luy tenir par sa fiere insolence.
 40 *Mais par douceur et par benivolence*
Rendre se vint entre les bras honnestes
De purité plaine d'amour divin,
Qui la gardoit sans taches deshonestes
Pure lycorne expellant tout venin.
 45 Pour estre es champs des bestes l'outrepasse
 Et conforter tous humains desolez,
 Triumphant seule eschappe et surpasse
 Ses laqz infectz par icelle adnullez.
 Dont icy bas nous sommes consolez
 50 Par la lycorne où gist toute affluence
 D'immortel bien par celeste influence:
 Car, par ses faictz et meritoires gestes,
 A conteré tout l'orgueil serpentin,
 En se monstrant, par vertus manifestes,
 55 Pure lycorne expellant tout venyn.

Envoy

Veneur maudict, retourne à tes tempestes,
 Va te plonger au gouffre sulphurin,
 Puis que n'as prins, par tes cors et trompettes,
 Pure lycorne expellant tout venyn.

As all readers of Marian poetry know, behind the archetypal fight between God, the "leon de divine excellence," and Satan, "le grand veneur," stands another struggle which is just as symbolic: namely the struggle between *Eva* and *Ave*, the ancient Eve and the new Eve. The Demon, who had defeated woman, had in his turn to be vanquished by her. Mary is therefore the "strong woman," the "femme forte" sought by Solomon in his Proverbs (31:10). It is upon Her that humanity depends for its salvation; it is her mediation that brings about the restoration of innocence and victory against the enemy. It is in this specific perspective that Mary finds perhaps her most evocative and powerful symbol, the Brazen Serpent, this "Serpentem æneum" that Moses raised in the desert upon instruction by Yahweh (Num. 21:4-9); for She is also the Force and the Light of the world, "pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata." And so it is for this reason (and this is by no means a coincidence or an accident) that Scève uses

this image to close his superb evocation in D143: "En mon penser soubdain il te regarde, / Comme au desert *son Serpent eslevé*"; and it is also for this very reason that, as soon as D15, Scève talks about his idol in terms that, though specifically Délian, could nonetheless be applied to Mary (note in particular verses 7-10, infused with allusions to the Scriptures, including Rev. 12:3 and Gen. 3:15). Mary, as the great Nicolle Lescarre had already recalled in another of his *chants royaux* ("Recueil Vidoue," fols. xv-xvi), never sat in the "chaire de peste," the "*cathedra pestilentia*" of Psalm 1.¹⁴ She is not only the one who purified for us "L'Air putrefaict, mortel & veneneux" of sin, but she is also, most importantly, the one who was never herself offended by this "air infect" and "corrompu," this "mal contagieux" that the Serpent spread all over other creatures of the world. Following Lescarre, Scève's adoration faithfully imitates that of the Norman devotees of the Virgin, but only the better, as we shall see, to differentiate himself from them in order to make his point better understood:

Toy seule as fait, que ce vil Siecle avare,
 Et aveuglé de tout saint jugement,
 Contre l'utile ardemment se prepare
 Pour l'esbranler à meilleur changement:
 Et plus en hayt l'honneste estrangement,
 Commençant jà à cherir la vertu.
 Aussi par toy ce grand Monstre abatu,
 Qui l'univers de son odeur infecte,
 T'adorera soubx tes piedz combatu,
 Comme qui est entre toutes parfaicte.
 (D15)¹⁵

¹⁴Psalm 1:1-2: "Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, / et in via peccatorum non stetit, / et in *cathedra pestilentie* non sedit; sed in lege Domini voluntas ejus / et in lege ejus meditabitur die ac nocte." In Clément Marot's translation: "Qui au conseil des malins n'a esté, / Qui n'est au trac des pecheurs arresté, / Qui des moqueurs au banc place n'a prise: / Mais nuit & jour, la Loy contemple & prise / De l'Eternel, & en est desirieux: / Certainement cestuy-là est heureux"; see Defaux, 1995, 101. Regarding this double theme of contagion and purification, of miraculous healing, see also the chant royal of the "Guynguart appotycaire," "L'air cler & pur: venant du port de grace," "Recueil Vidoue," fols. liii.-liiii. The "Argument" of this poem leaves nothing unexplained (fol. liii.): "C'est air si pur que je veulx dire / C'est Marie en concept sans tache / Et le port que je nomme grace: / J'entends le divin ciel empire: / L'air infect qui tout corps empire / C'est peché regnant lors au monde / Le triacleur faulx & immunde: / C'est Sathan des mauvais le pire."

¹⁵For an illuminating illustration of this dizain, see fig. 3.



FIGURE 3. “Ipsa conteret caput tuum” (Gen. 3:15): Mary, Light of the world, surrounded by the seven Virtues, crushes under her feet Death and the Dragon of Hell. Ms. BNF fr. 1537, fol. 50. (Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

III. D127: THE CLOSED DOOR, THE "BENOIST CLOISTRE," AND THE DIVINE NAME (JEHAN MAROT)

Let us make no mistake. What we are dealing with here in Scève's text is not at all a coincidence, but rather a recurring practice, a strategy that is clearly deliberate and intentional. In fact, the encounter between Mary and Délie was inevitable. It was built into Scève's very project; it was inscribed in the spirit and the letter of his *canzoniere*. As Pierre Fabri, spokesperson of the "devotz facteurs" of the Puy of Rouen, proclaimed in his *Defensore de la Conception*, a work that Scève had no doubt closely studied, the task before them was to commemorate in solemn fashion the 8 December festival by boldly defending "l'honneur et la gloire de nostre sainte mere, patronne et advocate tresgloieuse, et sacree Vierge, mere de Dieu, Marie": Mary, lily or rose between the thorns; Mary, palm, cedar or cypress; Mary, star, sun and moon; Mary, the mirror; Mary, myrrh, aloe, and manna, harmony, balm, perfume, and incense; Mary, "benedicta (et pulcherrima) inter mulieres, tota pulchra, sine macula, gratia plena, quasi aurora consurgens, praelecta a Deo super omnes creaturas, omnibus virtutibus ornata, exaltata super choros Angelorum ad coelestia regna." It is She who saved humanity, and She whom humanity, full of gratitude and steeped in adoration, must worship with the greatest fervor. Scève's endeavor is similar. It consists in celebrating a miracle that is both divine and human, a Woman miraculously adorned, God and Nature supervising the process, with all the "beautés," all the "graces" and "vertus" imaginable, a woman who is as much "lune infuse dans ses veines" (see D22, 35, 106, 111, 176, 193) as "soleil de sa vie" (D79, 92, 223, 386 and 387, 409, 443). Scève, or rather the Poet and Délie's lover, his *persona*, spends his existence on his knees, "incliné," as he tells us himself, "Devant les piedz de [s]a divinité" (D 381), the "Deesse de [s]a vie" (D322), venerating with an "amour si saint" (D442) her "sainct nom" (D259), adoring the "divine" and "celeste face" (D124 and 207) of "cest Ange en forme humaine" (D409), greeting this creature who is "plus, que de femme" (D284), "la Vertu, et la Grace" incarnate (D354), describing her as "sur toutes belles" (D387), "la plus belle du monde" (D399), "De corps tresbelle et d'ame bellissime . . . Parfaicte au corps, et en l'ame accomplie" (D424) — admirable and subtle work of *amplificatio* and of *variatio poetica* based on the formula "pulcherrima inter mulieres" of Song of Songs 2:17. Everywhere in *Délie*, Scève wills his adoration in Marian terms. He borrows the words and gestures of Christian ritual. In his *canzoniere*, the Office of the Virgin has as a parallel the Office of Délie; or, to say it otherwise, in the role of Mary, we find Délie. It is as if love, be it human or divine, could speak only one language, the language used by Solomon in Song of Songs. The resemblance is so strong that we often can, almost without thinking about it, substitute Mary for Délie. Moreover, Scève is so aware of these simi-

larities between the Christian cult of the Virgin and the pagan cult of Délie that he devotes two dizains, D241 and 242, to a comparison between the two, taking as always advantage of the occasion to voice out his difference. Perhaps never before has a writer, a poet, admitted to such a degree his dependence on others and the fact that it is they who make him what he is. You get what you ask for, he complains, but I do not. The saints to whom you pray listen; the gods whom I implore are by contrast inexorable and deaf. On the one hand, there is music and dancing, the collective joy of the chosen people, the celebration of the “souhaitz entenduz” and of the fulfillment of wishes; on the other hand, there is solitude, the “sospirs” and the “plaintz” and the “pleurs,” a music that moves away and fades in the distance, towards that city from which the poet has banished himself. One understands, therefore, why Lyons, the new Jerusalem, the “fameuse Cité,” is “double”:

Ce n'est point cy, Pellerins, que mes vœux
Avecques vous diversement me tiennent.
Car vous vouez, comme pour moy je veulx,
A Saintz piteux, qui voz desirs obtiennent.
Et je m'adresse à Dieux, qui me detiennent,
Comme n'ayantz mes souhaictz entenduz.

Vous de voz vœutz heureusement renduz
Graces rendez, vous mettant à dancer:
Et quand les miens iniquement perduz
Deussent finir, sont à recommencer.

En ce saint lieu, Peuple devotieux,
Tu as pour toy sainteté favorable:
Et à mon bien estant negotieux,
Je l'ay trouvée à moy inexorable.

Jà reçois tu de ton Ciel amyable
Plusieurs biensfaictz, et maintz emolumentz.
Et moy plaintz, pleurs, et pour tous monumentz
Me reste un Vent de sospirs excité,
Chassant le son de voz doulx instrumentz
Jusqu'à la double, et fameuse Cité.

From this very perspective, it cannot be coincidental that the term “cloistre” — “benoist” for the former,¹⁶ “chaste” for the latter — is used in the same way by Jehan Marot in one of his *chants royaux*, and by Maurice Scève in D127. In Scève's poetry, there is no room for chance. Let us first listen to Marot, whose poem, one of the masterpieces of the genre, figures in the “Recueil

¹⁶The expression “benoist cloistre” also appears in another chant royal by Jean Marot, “Le grand pasteur jadis en ce bas estre,” BNF ms. fr. 2205, fols. 9v-10v, lines 40-44: “Le grand pasteur, comme il peult apparroistre, / Est le seul dieu qui par bonté immense / Voulut l'aigneau

Vidouie," on folios x (v)-xi (v). If one assertion can be made about the relation between Scève and Marian poetry, it is that the poet studied this "recueil" in great detail and that it shaped his *canzoniere* to a considerable extent:

- Après que dieu eut les haultz ciels parfaictz,
 Pour les emplir fit nature angelique,
 Dont Lucifer fut entre les parfaictz
 Hault eslevé en honneur magnifique.
- 5 Et neanmoins que dieu tout congnoissant
 En fut facteur, peché en fut yssant
 Quant presuma pareil estre à son maistre.
 Dont sy peché en paradis print estre
 Par ceste faulte envers dieu perpetrée,
- 10 Pour lors n'estoyt, à ce que puy congnoistre,
 La porte close où peché n'eust entrée.
- Anges tombez par leurs mauldictz effectz,
 Le plasmateur, par pouvoir deifique,
 Adam et Eve à son ymage a faictz,
- 15 Purs, innocens: par quoy peché inique
 Les voir tant beaulx fut triste et desplaisant.
 Et de l'orgueil, qui tant luy fut nuysant,
 Tant les prescha que peché vont comettre.
 A double mort eust pover de submettre
- 20 Eulx, leurs enfans: grace en fut sequestrée,
 Fors une vierge, escripte en sainte lettre,
 La porte close où peché n'eust entrée.
- Velà comment humains furent deffaictz
 Par le peché d'Adam leur pere antique.
- 25 Mais le temps vient qu'ilz seront tous refaictz;
 Misericorde ouvrira sa boutique.
 C'est ce beau jour aux pecheurs tres doubant
 De saint concept de la vierge plaisant,
 Où dieu voulut tous ses tresors transmettre.
- 30 Dieu avoir lieu, peché vint s'entremectre.
 Grace divine alors a rencontrée,

son filz au *benoist cloistre* / Corps de Marie obumbrer sans descroistre / Virginité par virille semence." The metaphor of the "cloistre" is also employed by maistre Jacques du Parc, "Recueil Vidoue," fols. xliii (v)-xliiii (v): "Pour triumphe sur la morsure austere / Le roy des roys fut jadis fondateur / D'ung cloistre saint & devot monastere: / Faict pour son filz, le dieu triumpheateur / Lequel en fut abbé, maistre & pasteur / Et protecteur sur toute region: / Mettant dedans ordre & religion / Pour envincer [*sic* for "evincer"] la vipere infernale / Et accorder avec dieu nature / Affin qu'il fut en regle virginalle / *Cloistre de paix*: sans envye & murmure."

- Qui deffendit à sa puissance dextre
 La porte close où peché n'eust entrée.
- Ezechiel, en ses beaulx dictz et faictz,
 35 Descript un temple en esperit prophetique,
 Des bastimens, et comment furent faictz.
 Mais, en parlant de la porte autentique,
 Dit: ceste porte est close à tout passant,
 Fors au seigneur d'Israel trespuissant.
- 40 Vous don[c], seigneurs, dite[s] qui pourroit estre
 Ce beau portail, *sinon le benoist cloistre*
Corps de Marie, en grace tant oultrée
 Qu'el[le] porta dieu sans ouvrir ne decroistre
 La porte close où peché n'eust entrée.
- 45 Les fondemens ne furent imparfaictz,
 Mais si bien faictz que la grand[e] fabrique
 De ce saint temple ont soustenu le faictz
 Sans esbranler marbre, porphyre, ou brique:
 Qui est figure à un chascun lysant
- 50 Que dieu voulut estre bien advysant
 Au saint concept de la vierge, et d'y mettre
 Toutes vertus sans une seulle obmettre.
 Car ains les cieulx l'avoyent enregistrée
 Mere à son fils, qui la trouva au maistre
- 55 La porte close où peché n'eust entrée.

Renvoy

- Prince, tu as faict ta mere apparoistre
 Digne trop plus que paradis terrestre,
 Anges ne cieulx: car tu l'as démontrée,
 En son concept, pour plus sa gloire acroistre,
- 60 La porte close où peché n'eut entrée.

If, for his part, Scève did not find it appropriate to refer to the closed gate of the prophet, the gate through which only God can enter (Ezek. 44:1-3), he nonetheless preciousy preserves in D127 the metaphor of the “benoist cloistre,” exploiting for very personal reasons — reasons which explain, perhaps, the substitution of “chaste” for “benoist” — and with unequalled poetic mastery, the great mystery of the Incarnation of Christ-God in the body of a woman, this wonderful alliance between fecundity and virginity — “Virgo fecunda, casta puerpera, mater intacta” — which Bernard de Clairvaux found so sublime in his Homilies *In laudibus Virginis matris*. This fecundity is so miraculous that it unfailingly brings back to life, in the mind of the “lysant” (reader), the symbol of the inexhaustible manna;

brings back as well the symbols of the “fons ortorum” and “puteus aquarum viventium” of the Scriptures. Just as the body of Mary, in order to receive Jesus, made itself “parc,” “couche,” “maison,” “pavillon,” “mont,” “domicile,” “trosne,” “tabernacle,” “arche,” “siege,” “cité,” “jardin,” etc., Délie’s soul (“Ame”), this “chaste cloistre,” receives and lodges in itself all of the “Graces” and all of the “Vertus” of Heaven, these graces and virtues that are showered on her from above with all the abundance of the rain or of the dew on Gideon’s fleece (Judg. 6:37-40, Ps. 7:6). And just as in Jeremiah 31:22, where it is written that “[f]emina circumdabit virum,” these graces “tiennent ceintes,” contain and embrace within themselves countless virtues; and these countless virtues are in turn themselves “enceintes”; the term is clearly there — with other equally innumerable virtues. Rarely do we find a motif that has been reused, reworked, displaced, and recreated to such a point, and which yet remains at the same time so clearly recognizable. For Scève, Délie is at once the same as Mary and her other, *la même et l’autre*. In him, adoration, *hyperdulie*, is so strong that it almost succeeds in making the reader forget that the poet is and wishes to be, above all, an idolater, and that the drama being played out in his *canzoniere* is a strictly human drama.

L’esprit, qui fait tous tes membres mouvoir
 Au doux concent de tes qualitez saintes,
 A eu du Ciel ce tant heureux pouvoir
 D’enrichir l’Ame, où Graces tiennent ceintes
 Mille Vertus de mille aultres enceintes,
 Comme tes faictz font au monde apparostre.
 Si transparent m’estoit *son chaste cloistre*
 Pour reverer si grand’ divinité,
 Je verrois l’Ame, ensemble et le Corps croistre,
 Avant leur temps, en leur eternité.

(D127)

It is in this same spirit of appropriation and recasting, of radical displacement, that the poet once more addresses his Délie in D149. The poetic Muses and the Charites, companions of Venus, says he to his idol, will soon descend from their Helicon and their Parnassus to this “bas Caucasus” in order to see thee. And seduced by the “naïf de tes graces infuses,” they will hail “sans contraincte,” painlessly, “*La Deité en ton esprit empraincte, / Thresor des Cieulx*, qui s’en vont desvestuz / Pour illustrer Nature à vice astraincte, / Ore embellie en tes rares vertus.” And when, in *Délie*, it is not God who descends from Heaven towards his chosen creature in order to enrich her with gifts, to combine, for example, in her, as in Mary, “Chasteté” with “Beauté” (D232), it is the poet, Prometheus *redivivus*, who from dizain to dizain — one might even say from prayer to prayer — painfully strives towards the great height

what he says in D157 on the subject of Délie as a musician, a subject which he takes up again in D196 ("Tes doigtz tirantz non le doulx son des cordes, / Mais des haultz cieulx l'Angelique harmonie"), inspired perhaps by a recollection of the famous chant royal of Molinet, "Harpe rendant souveraine harmonie," which was in turn imitated by Nicolle Lescarre in his palinode, "Le luzc rendant souveraine harmonie" (fol. xix (v)-xx (v) of the "Recueil Vi-doue"). The purely religious dimension of the experience is unmistakable. Délie's "divine harmonie" brings the poet to a mystical "ravisement," leading this "plaisant martyre" to the most delicious but unbearable "passion":

Me ravissant ta divine harmonie,
Souventesfois jusques aux Cieux me tire:
Dont transporté de si doulce manye,
Le corps tressue en si plaisant martyre,
Que plus j'escoute, et plus à soy m'attire
D'un tel concent la delectation.
Mais seulement celle prolation
Du plus doulx nom, que proferer je t'oye,
Me confond tout en si grande passion,
Que ce seul mot fait eclipser ma joye.

A similar instance occurs in D168, this time with a very mystical reference to the title of a treatise by pseudo-Dionysius Areopagiticus. As Donaldson-Evans and Skenazi have so eloquently shown, Scève's poetry has profound affinities with "la pensée chrétienne."¹⁷ There is in it a constant elevation, an unending "esvertuement," a song which desperately seeks to tear itself away from the earth, to rid itself of its mortal body, the better to be united with Délie. But here as elsewhere (for example, in D449, where the poet refuses to distinguish between "feu" and "vertu"), "des siens deschassé," the body proclaims its rights. Consequently, and we see here that nothing in Scève is simple, it is the spirit and the heart, albeit superior, whose "estrangement" seems reprehensible. In absolute contrast with St. Paul, Scève does not seek to empty himself and to impoverish himself, but rather, at the cost of an incessant struggle, to harmonize the polarities within himself, to master the tensions and reduce the lapses, to unify within himself all of the instances of the subject, body, heart, soul, and spirit.¹⁸ The topos of the "nom divin" is, moreover, so important to Scève that he returns to it exactly one hundred dizains later, in D267, but this time in a more erotic context:

¹⁷ Donaldson-Evans, 5-15; Skenazi. See also Graff, 1980.

¹⁸ The best illustration of this endless struggle can perhaps be found in D387: "Toute fumée en forme d'une nue / Depart de feu avec grave maintien: / Mais tant plus hault s'esleve,

Toutes les fois qu'en mon entendement
 Ton nom divin par la memoire passe,
 L'esprit ravy d'un si doulx sentement,
 En aultre vie, et plus douce trespasse:
 Alors le Cœur, qui un tel bien compasse,
 Laisse le Corps prest à estre enchassé:
 Et si bien a vers l'Ame pourchassé,
 Que de soy mesme, et du corps il s'estrange.

Ainsi celuy est des siens deschassé,
 A qui Fortune, ou heur, ou estat change.

(D168)

Au doulx record de son nom je me sens
 De part en part l'esperit transpercer
 Du tout en tout, jusqu'au plus vif du sens:
 Tousjours toute heure, et ainsi sans cesser
 Fauldra finir ma vie, et commencer
 En ceste mort inutilement vive.

Mais si les Cieulx telle prerogative
 Luy ont donnée, à quoy en vain souspire?
 J'à ne fault donc que de moy je la prive,
 Puis qu'asses vit, qui meurt, quand il desire.

(D267)

IV. D2 AND D4: THE "ŒUVRE ESMERVEILLABLE"; THE WOMAN-GOD (JEHAN MAROT)

All of *Délie* is thus an act of perpetual adoration, an act that, as we know today, is repeated exactly as many times as, according to Lefèvre d'Étaples, St. Paul pronounced the divine name of Christ in his fourteen Epistles. Just as "quatre cens quarante neuf fois ou plus, [l'Apôtre] a en ses epistres nommé le nom de Jesuchrist," Scève, in his *canzoniere*, celebrates 449 times the idolatrous passion that he devotes to his *Délie*: the cries, the joys, the revolts, and the "deaths" that this passion renews in him.¹⁹ This celebration acquires in his mind the imperative tone of a "juste devoir," "devoir" which for the imperfect creature consists precisely of "adorer toute perfection," its "Graces du Ciel infuses" (D182) or, again, "celle beaulté / Dont les haultz dieux [l']ont

et se desnue, / Et plus soubdain se resoult toute en rien. / Or que seroit à penetrer au bien, / Qui au parfaict d'elle jamais ne fault? / Quand seulement pensant plus, qu'il ne fault, / Et contemplant sa face à mon dommage, / L'œil, et le sens peu à peu me deffault, / Et me pers tout en sa divine image." "Ne trop ne peu," Scève might say after Jehan Marot and Jean Le-maire de Belges.

¹⁹Graff, 1980, was the first one to comment upon this striking resemblance.

richement pourveue" (D162), "le parfaict d'elle" (D226), this "parfaict dont sa beaulté abonde" (D245). On the one hand, Délie is Nature's masterpiece. Nature placed in her "tout le parfaict de son divin ouvrage" (D278), says the poet of his Lady, it rendered her — and how can one avoid here thinking of Mary? — "en tous imparfaicte / Pour te parfaire et en toy se priser" (D247). On the other hand, God himself, as we just saw, also showered upon her all the possible "Graces" and "Vertus," to such an extent that he impoverished himself and left the heavens "devestuz:" "Plus je poursuis," notes Scève in D288, "Plus je poursuis par le discours des yeulx / L'art et la main de telle pourtraicture, / Et plus j'admire, et adore les Cieulx, / Accomplissant si belle Creature." This close collaboration between God and Nature gives rise in *Délie* to the admirable Marian tableau of D2, a tableau whose rewriting and mythical counterpart can be found in D4, the creation of Pandora being there substituted for that of the Virgin. And, since everything that applies to Délie is equally appropriate for Mary, and vice versa, it is this same collaboration which forms the subject of a beautiful chant royal by Jean Marot found in the "Recueil Vidoue," folios xi (v)-xii (v). This same poem earned the poet the second prize, the laurel, in the competition of the Puy of Rouen in 1521. Since it seems quite possible that this poem by Jean Marot served as a reference point and intertext for Scève, we will begin with it. This will enable us, once more, to see the poet at work, to rediscover his decisive act of sovereign appropriation and of absolute mastery, of radical recasting and "correction" already exhibited in the way he handled the texts of Petrarch, Marot, or Jean Olivier. On this subject, I refer the reader to the work of François Rigolot, JoAnn DellaNeva, and Terence Cave, in addition to my own analysis of Scève's use of the Prometheus-Pandora myth.²⁰ Where the respectful and subtle Clément Marot, and, to a lesser degree his father Jehan, destroyed none of their literary inheritance and inserted themselves discreetly into existing forms in order to make them say things they had never said before, transforming them radically from the inside, Scève in contrast, proud, severe, and solitary, insists upon leaving everywhere in his work visible trace of his interventions. Unlike the poetry of Jehan and Clément Marot, his always begins with a sacrifice:

Pour traicter paix entre dieu et nature,
 Jugée à mort pour son crime et forfait,
 Dame justice, esmeue par pointure
 De charité, voulut vuyder ce fait.

²⁰On Petrarch, see Rigolot, 1980, 93-106; DellaNeva, 1983; 1993, 195-202; 1994, 43-54; and Cave, 1985, 112-24. On Clément Marot, in addition to Rigolot's seminal study just quoted, see Fenoaltea, 136-49; and Defaux, 1994, 23-41. On the Prometheus-Pandora myth, see Defaux, 1993, 261-95.

- 5 Verité vint, qui narra le meffaict.
 Nature pleure et le serpent accuse.
 Misericorde en depriant l'excuse.
 Dieu prononça qu'il viendrait en la race
 D'Adam un corps tout plain de dignité,
 10 Qui porteroit, par le moyen de grace,
 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

 Lors quant nature entendit l'ouverture,
 Conclud de faire ung chef d'œuvre parfaict.
 Mais dieu luy dist, toute ta geniture
 15 Se sentira de ton peché infect.
 Or en ce corps ne fault cas imparfaict,
 Dont est besoing que de ma grace infuse
 Soit preservé. Neanmoins ne refuse
 Le tien labeur, mais j'entendz qu'il se face
 20 Soubz l'action de sainte purité,
 Car autrement n'y pourroit avoir place
 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

 Nature adonc d'une vierge trespure
 Forma le corps de tous biens satisfaict.
 25 Car le soleil, qui chasse nuyct obscure,
 L'organisa de clarté tout reffaict.
 Ciel, terre, et air, non pas air putrefaict,
 Ont assisté: Venus en fut excluse.
 Puis Jupiter y a sa grace incluse
 30 Par ung aspect de begnivolle face
 Dessoubz Virgo, signe d'amenité,
 Sachant que là seroit, en briefve espace,
 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

 Le corps formé, vindrent en sa closture
 35 Toutes vertus, et logis y ont faict.
 Dont le facteur contemplant sa facture
 D'amour espris, nous fist ung hault bienfaict:
 C'est que par paix tout discord a deffaict.
 Lors verité, sans cautelle ne ruse,
 40 A baisé paix qui rancune a forcluse.
 Et à l'instant une alyance brasse
 Du filz de Dieu, second en trinité,
 Avec Marie, affin qu'en soy embrasse
 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

 45 Au jour prefix la divine escripture
 De verité l'effect entier attraict,

- Car le filz dieu prent humaine vesture
 En lieu loingtain de vicieux attraict.
 Comme au myrouer entre l'humain pourtraict
 50 Sans fraction, avec grace diffuse
 Entra Jesus. Nature s'en recuse,
 Croire ne peut que tel[le] acte on parface,
 Sans avoir d'elle aucune affinité.
 Mais sans son sceu, fut par hault efficace,
 55 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

Envoy

- Prince du puy, ceste hystoire dechasse
 La grand erreur qui faulx semblant pourchasse
 Contre Marie, où n'eust impurité.
 Ne craignez donc des mesdisantz l'audace,
 60 Car vont disant, qu'en ung vil corps s'enchasse
 L'humanité joincte à divinité.

As we can easily see, the real but unusual charm of Jehan Marot's *chant royal* comes essentially from its narrative fluidity and amiable didacticism. No doubt, this pattern makes the theological truths that it seeks to convey more accessible, as Jehan Marot brings the heavens down to earth, thus situating the drama he is unfolding on a human level. He transports the reader to the stage, to the theater, and invites us to attend a five-act play, which one hardly dares call a drama, although it is one.²¹ This play begins in a court of law. Truth is transformed into the prosecutor, and God, as is logical, into the just judge. Nature, the defendant, who has undoubtedly read Quintilian, weeps and pleads not guilty, attributing to the Serpent the responsibility for her crime and preparing for the decisive intervention of Mercy who, as a good lawyer, effectively obtains her pardon. All of this proceeds at a lively poetic tempo, full of vitality and humor, completely secularized. In the second act, we witness a very instructive dialogue between on the one hand God, haughty pedagogue and preacher who is above all else interested in preserving the status quo, and on the other Nature, somewhat pretentious and scatterbrained, so incorrigible in her claims that she is told a few homely truths and is sharply reprimanded by the proprietor. In act 3, Nature, with the assistance of some duly appointed helpers (all the elements except water, and a few planets), creates her admirable and prodigious masterpiece. One might think oneself back in Vulcan's forge if Venus were not forcibly excluded ("excluse")

²¹ Regarding the strictly theatrical dimensions of the *chant royal*, see Gros's pertinent remarks, 1996: "La fonction de l'Argument, la méthode de construction et la dramatisation de l'idée, rapprochent de l'esthétique théâtrale ce genre auquel on prête l'ambition de montrer et de démontrer. Sur le Puy, le *chant royal* est une allégorie en représentation" (249).

from the proceedings. The result of this joint effort is of such perfection that it restores forever the peace between the Creator and his creatures (act 4). To Nature's great surprise — she cannot believe her eyes and confesses to feeling completely disoriented — the return of this peace, which was compromised by the sins of our first parents, is sanctioned by the miracle of the Incarnation, this mysterious union of the divinity of Jesus with the humanity of Mary. The miracle, beautifully expressed by the refrain, is confirmed by the metaphor of the portrait and the mirror, a variant of that of the sun and the stained glass. It is in fact through this metaphor that the miracle becomes comprehensible, and thus possible. This spectacle is all the more satisfying for the theater lover because it is discreetly imbued with a highly symbolic movement, a metamorphosis which gives it its true meaning. Harmony progressively replaces the initial discord, giving the denouement a resonance of glorious and tranquil epiphany. Nature has certainly no good reason to be surprised by the event, since what takes place happens "Au jour prefix," in order to fulfill the prophecy of divine Scripture: "At ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deum Filium suum, factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret" (St. Paul, Gal. 4:4).

Naturally, in Scève's rendition, everything changes: not only the form, which is compact, constraining, hard, and square (ten verses, ten syllables long), but also the tone, the register and the style, the stakes themselves. The playful, engaging, and somewhat prolix language of the story is replaced by the poetic and infinitely more dense language of the fabulous, the language of hyperbole and the sublime. One could almost say that, in Scève's hands, Marot's human *sermo* give way to God's *Verbum abbreviatum*. Any edifying or didactic dimension disappears. Philosophy, cosmology and the Greek myths (Plato, Aristotle, the scholastics, Pandora, the Charites, the nine planets, and the nine Heavens) seemingly take the place of the Bible as the reference texts. The drama played out is apparently no longer eschatological and Christian. It is no longer a question of humanity's salvation or damnation. The issue is now primarily the poet's plight, for he is the only one who is not fully able to "[se] delecter," to fully enjoy the miracle that the arrival of this "œuvre esmerveillable" provoked, in heaven and on earth. The intention is no longer to teach, to explain, to convince, and to denounce the "erreur" of the "mesdisantz" — that is, the Dominicans, virulent and forceful adversaries of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception — but rather to surprise, to transport, and to dazzle the reader, to incite in him the awe of the sacred. It is even less a matter of representing on stage dramatic characters and allegories, of presenting a spiritual drama by rooting it in the physical world, but to leave this world, to elevate piously and passionately one's gaze, to "s'esvertuer" towards "les haultes idées." But let us not be deceived: in spite of all the differences, these are the same ac-

tors — God, Nature, the planets and the heavens, the gods, the human kind — and the same hierarchy as before. And it is indeed the same drama being played and the same event being described, namely the creation of a woman so perfectly made in the image of God that the latter, seduced by his own creation, fascinated “de soy à soy” by the beauty with which he endowed her, decides, like a happy Pygmalion, to live in her flesh by becoming incarnate in her.²² As much as Scève transforms the atmosphere and the setting, Jehan Marot is never far from his mind, nor from that of the reader. In the dizain, just as in the chant royal, it is God, “Le Nourant,” the “hault ciel Empirée,” who is the great and decisive master of the work, the great architect; and it is Nature herself who, deified, sublimated, “admirable,” inspired by the “vertu” of the “hautes idées” of the demiurge, accomplishes that which must be accomplished “au jour prefix.” In other words, God “parfait” a body whose sublime perfection provokes the desire and the admiration of the Heavens themselves; He engenders a creature whose virtue is equal to her beauty. The spiritual and sensual contemplation (*odorer*) of such a creature “dissout” (that most Pauline of terms, Phil. 1:22: “desiderium habens *dissolvi*”) the contemplator:

Le Nourant par ses haultes Idées
 Rendit de soy la Nature admirable:
 Par les vertus de sa vertu guidées
 S'esvertua en œuvre esmerueillable.
 Car de tout bien, voyre es Dieux desirable,
 Parfeit un corps en sa perfection
 Mouvant aux Cieulx telle admiration,
 Qu'au premier œil mon ame l'adora,
 Comme de tous la delectation
 Et de moy seul fatale Pandora.

(D2)

Voulant tirer le hault ciel Empirée
 De soy à soy grand' satisfaction,
 Des neuf Cieulx a l'influence empirée
 Pour clore en toy leur operation,
 Où se parfeit ta decoration:
 Non toutesfoys sans licence des Graces,
 Qui en tes mœurs affigent tant leurs faces,
 Que quand je vien à odorer les fleurs
 De tous tes faictz, certes, quoy que tu faces,
 Je me dissoulz en joies, et en pleurs.

(D4)

²²On this topic, see Nash's analysis, 1991, chap. 3 (“Embodying the Sacred and Ineffable”), 65-95.

V. D 418: "COLUMNA DEI VIVENTIS"

(GUILLAUME THIBAUT, JEHAN MAROT, GUILLAUME CRETIN)

As the clues accumulate, it becomes clear that Scève showed a strong interest in Marian poetry. Rather than working from manuscripts that were probably still in circulation, it seems most likely that he consulted those printed works he could get hold of, the most important of these being the "Recueil Vidoue" of 1525.²³ Were it necessary to add to the examples gathered in this study, one might, for example, elaborate on the striking similarities between D418 and two *chants royaux*, similarities which until now have been notably ignored. It goes without saying that these two *chants royaux* can be found, predictably enough, in the "Recueil Vidoue." One of these is by Guillaume Cretin (fols. v-vi, "L'Altitonant supreme plasmateur"), the other by Guillaume Thibault (fols. xxxviii-xxxix, "Les ennemys de la chair virginale"). Modern commentators of Scève's D418 — notably McFarlane and Joukovsky — refer with great conviction to Petrarch and the Petrarchan tradition; and they justifiably stress the section of the *Microcosme* that the poet dedicates to architecture (section 3, lines 2725 sq.). While it is true that Petrarch may, at least in part, have been the source of Scève's choice of the metaphor he uses, it is not, as Joukovsky claims, by means of the first verses of R269 ("Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro / che facean ombra al mio stanco pensiero," etc.) but by way of verses 45-50 of the preceding canzone ("Che debb'io far? che mi consigli, Amore"), which we will now cite along with verses 145-47 of canzone 360, where appears exactly the same metaphor. Indeed, one finds in these two poems by Petrarch the origin of the exact expression used by Scève in the last verse of his dizain. The link is all the more striking because it draws upon the most Scévian of motifs, namely the "nom divin" ("l'altra è 'l suo ciaro nome"). Following are excerpts from the two canzoni of Petrarch, along with D418. The echoes between the texts are made quite clear by this juxtaposition:

²³In this matter, one must question the troubling similarities between *Délie* and ms. BNF 1537, which in Scève's time was among the treasures of the Bibliothèque royale. Just as Scève's *canzoniere* contains fifty emblems, ms. 1537 contains fifty *chants royaux*, illustrated by fifty magnificent full-page miniatures. Is this a coincidence, stemming from the importance that, since St. Augustin, Christian numerology has accorded to the Jubilee? Or is it possible that Scève had in his keeping this splendid work of art? After all, under François I, the court made frequent and long stays in Lyons. Nothing a priori seems to prohibit the hypothesis that Maurice Scève might have consulted ms. 1537. According to Gros, 1992, this manuscript, previously numbered 7584, was executed in the first quarter of the sixteenth century (226). It is, Gros specifies, "une anthologie des cinquante meilleurs chants royaux présentés au Puy de la Conception, de 1519 à 1528."

Piú che mai bella et piú leggiadra donna,
 tornami inanzi, come
 là dove piú gradir sua vista sente.
 Questa è *del viver mio l'una colonna*,
 l'altra è 'l suo ciaro nome,
 che sona nel mio cor sí dolcemente.

(R269, lines 45-50)

Or m'à posto in oblio con quella donna
 ch'i' li die' *per colonna*
de la sua frale vita . . . [It is Love who is speaking]
 (R360, lines 145-47)

Soubz le carré d'un noir tailloir couvrant
 Son Chapiteau par les mains de Nature,
 Et non de l'art grossierement ouvrant,
 Parfaicte fut si haulte Architecture,
 Où entaillant toute lineature,
 Y feuilla d'or à corroyes Heliques,
 Avec doux traictz vivement Angeliques,
 Plombez sur Base assise, et bien suyvie
 Dessus son Plinte à creux et rondz obliques
 Pour l'eriger *Colonne de ma vie*.

(D418)

In the same way that Pandora and the Virgin Mary are united in Délie — do they not all three share the characteristic of having seen Heaven and Nature, God or the gods, endowing them with all their gifts? — the presence of Petrarch in D418 is coupled with that of Guillaume Cretin and Guillaume Thibault. Upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that Scève does nothing more than combine two symbols which were of great importance to Puy poets. On the one hand, there is the symbol we already encountered in the parallel with Jehan Marot: God as architect and the Virgin as architecture. This motif can be traced back to Ezechiel 40-44 (the prophetic vision of the Temple of Israel), to 2 Chronicles 3 (Solomon's construction of the "House of God" made of Lebanon cedar, especially the passage consecrated to the erection of the two bronze columns), and to Proverbs 9:1 ("Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem"), a verse which, as we shall soon see, finds a distinct echo in the chant royal of Cretin, a chant royal whose motif is architectural and in which the seven pillars of Wisdom represent for the devotees the seven virtues of the Virgin, the miraculous perfection of this Chosen Vessel. On the other hand, there is the symbol of Mary as light of the world, *Sun* or *Stella maris*, guide and guardian of souls, or to be more precise, "Colonne du Dieu vivant," "Columna dei viventis."

The origin of this trope can be found in a passage of Exodus where, after the flight from Egypt, Moses and his people escape through a desert path to the Sea of Reeds, thanks to the presence of Yahweh's "colonne de nuée et de feu" that protects and guides them night and day. It is worth citing the entire passage here, since it helps one to better understand Scève's unswerving strategy in *Délie*, the continual process by which he renders sacred the love he vows to his idol and makes his readers share in the profound and painful spiritual experience, in the authentically religious dimension of his "passion." Thus the "colonne de [sa] vie" suddenly acquires a much richer meaning than that the one it had for Petrarch. What in Petrarch was a metaphor of the self broken by the death of the beloved, of the self literally attempting to remake itself, to find itself again and to reconstruct itself in a fidelity proclaimed for that which no longer exists, becomes for Scève a striking religious symbol. *Délie* is for the poet what Yahweh was for the people of Israel fleeing through the desert, an all-powerful and tutelary divinity which, while protecting and fostering like a mother, is at the same time imperious, demanding and jealous. This is the Yahweh, who, as Moses sings after the passage through the Red Sea, is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," but who is also a formidable incarnation of the Law, always ready to break the Covenant with his people and to harshly punish their disobedience and their slightest grumbling. A divinity of love but also of destruction and death, holding manna in one hand and lightning in the other. With such a divinity it is not a question of asking "What will we drink?" but of obeying and marching on. Indeed, in order to understand the nature of the ties woven by Scève between the Lover and his idol, one must read Exodus 13:20-22:²⁴

Profectique de Socoth castrametati sunt in Etham. Dominus autem præcedebat eos ad ostendendam viam, per diem in columna nubis, et per noctem in columna ignis, ut dux esset itineris utroque tempore. Numquam defuit columna nubis per diem nec columna ignis per noctem, coram populo.

It is with this text in mind that Molinet, in one of his numerous "Oraison[s] à la Vierge Marie,"²⁵ had written that she was "du mondain fabricque

²⁴Regarding the terrible, vengeful and blood-thirsty God of the Old Testament, see, for example, the admirable and violent evocation of D194, where the rhyme "dorer/adorer" recalls the baneful Pandora: "Suffise toy, ô Dame, de dorer / Par tes vertus nostre bienheureux aage, / Sans efforcer le monde d'adorer / Si fervement le saint de son image, / Qu'il faille à maintz par un commun dommage / Mourir au joug de tes grandz cruaultez. / N'as tu horreur, estant de tous costez / Environnée et de mortz, et de tombes, / De veoir ainsi fumer sur tes Autelz / Pour t'appaiser, mille, et mille Hecatombes?"

²⁵Molinet, 1:487-88.

/ Chief d'œuvre exquis, *colonne* et brique, / Precieuse pierre angulaire, / Pillier de la foy catholique." And it is undoubtedly in reference to this same passage from Exodus that we should read the chant royal of Guillaume Thibault. There is no doubt that Scève found in these texts and others ample material for admiration. And it is this admiration, more than Petrarch's *canzoniere*, which may also have inspired the idea of the "si haulte Architecture" with which Scève raises his dizain up into the clouds:

Chant royal.

Columna dei viventis. de qua Exod xiii.²⁶

- Les ennemis de la chair virginal
Sont à grand honte abolis & vaincuz.
Le hault seigneur en bataille finale
Leur a rompu / lances / picque & escuz,
5 Et devant luy sont demourez percuz
Sur la coulumne où la Vierge est congneue,
Portant de jour couleur de blanche nue
Et par la nuyct jectant feu lumineux.
Ses vrays amys en la nue el conforte.
10 Et garde au feu contre aspicz veneneux
Du hault seigneur: la coulumne tresforte.

La blanche nue en sentence morale
Representant grace aux cueurs d'elle infuz,
Menoit hebreux plains de fierté rurale
15 Par les desertz: qui se tenoient confuz
Si de la nue ilz eussent faict refuz
Du dieu en gloire / & en voix entendue.
Manne donnoit des haultz cieulx descendue
Pour substanter les povres crimineulx
20 Et pour monstrier / que celuy qu'elle porte
Conduyt sans choir par desertz espineux
Du hault seigneur: la coulumne tresforte.

Si forte fut sur la force infernalle
Que infernaulx sont par elle rompuz.
25 Si forte fut / par vertu cardinale
Qu'on voit sans elle humains tous corrompuz,
Qui toutesfoys restaurez & repeuz
Se sont jadis de manne d'elle yssue.

²⁶See also the palinode of a chant royal presented by Jean Delattre at the Puy of Amiens in 1478 (according to Gros, 1992, 87): "Du feu d'amour *colonne lumineuse*" (incipit: "Quand Moyse de servitude osta"). This poem appears in BNF ms. fr. 145, fol. 29, a manuscript prepared for Louise de Savoie available in facsimile (see bibliography and fig. 4).



FIGURE 4. The Virgin Mary as "Columna Dei viventis" (*Exodus*, 13: 20-22): "Du feu d'amour colonne lumineuse," Ms. BNF fr. 145, fol. 29. (Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

- Si forte fut que le mal rigoureux
 30 Jadis causé de sa serpente torte
 N'a faict branler par peché douloureux
 Du hault seigneur: la coulumne tresforte.
- Le hault seigneur plain d'amour cordialle
 Voyant à paine humains par faulx art deuz,
 35 Descend en elle, & soubz loy specialle,
 Descouvre à nous ses misteres arduz,
 En nous rendant biens de grace perduz
 Par le transgrez d'Eve salle & polue.
 C'est la coulumne en nostre esglise esleue
 40 Pour vaincre erreur contre elle impetueux:
 C'est la coulumne & la celeste porte,
 Celle qui rompt le serpent tortueux,
 Du hault seigneur: la coulumne tresforte.

Renvoy

- Prince du Puy, pour conclusion deue,
 45 Force adversaire est par elle fondue.
 La main de dieu qui joint la terre aux cieux
 En une vierge avecques soy s'assorte
 Pour denoncer sans reprise en tous lieux
 Du hault seigneur: la coulumne tresforte.

Par Guillaume Thibault

As for the architectural motif itself, Scève no doubt found the most beautiful rendition in Guillaume Cretin's chant royal. In this poem, the act of creation is described in terms whose resonances are far more biblical than in Scève's dizain: "temple," "paraclit," "fondement," "portail," "nef," "cœur," and so on. It is clear that Cretin is much more concerned with God, His Church, and the mysteries and miracles of dogma than with the "Angelicques traitz" and other "attraits" of Délie's body, her precious and undulating "lineature" which deploys itself "sur Base assise et bien suyvie," "creux et rondz obliques" of the "Plinte" — nothing is missing, it is all there — splendors which the eye caresses and upon which it feasts. Even the technical precision of the terms used by Scève ("tailloir," "chapiteau," "Base," "Plinte," "Heliques," and so forth) make it impossible to forget the flesh and blood Venus inscribed and carved into this column of marble.²⁷ And yet it is the same symbol and the same process in both poems. We even find, in verse 16 of Cretin's chant royal — is it pure chance that it also shows up in Scève's

²⁷ Scève's admirable dizain irresistibly evokes the palinode of a Chant royal reproduced by Gros, 1996, 319-21, from BNF ms. fr. 25534, fol 28-29: "Sur marbre froid une image en chair vive."

epigram? — the verb *eriger*. Délie's bard could not have been insensitive to the fact that, like the menacing καλὸν κακόν of Hesiod's *Theogony*, Mary is also the chosen receptacle of all of the gifts of heaven. She is a new Pandora, graced not only with the plenitude of the seven virtues, three theologals and four cardinals,²⁸ but also with humility and truth:

- L'altitonant supreme plasmateur,
 Monarque & chief en l'art de architecture,
 Avant qu'il fut des secles formateur
 Feist un pourtraict de nouvelle structure
 5 Pour reparer l'offence et fourfaicture
 Du pere Adam / et lors la trinité
 Preordonna ça bas ung edifice
 Où decreta le filz en deité
 Y desdier en sa solennité
 10 Temple construit / par divin artifice.
 Le paraclit de l'œuvre conducteur
 Tel fondement y assit et closture
 Que le malin serpent faulx seducteur
 Ne sceut jamais [y] congoistre fracture.
 15 De droit compas et juste quadrature
 Fut erigé en telle summité
 Que le renom: richesse: et dignité
 Du temple où feist Salomon sacrifice
 Moult exceda: lors sacrée unité
 20 De dieu et homme eust en sublimité
 Temple construit / par divin artifice.
 D'or pur et net le portail / nef / et cueur
 Murs: pavemens: pilliers: et couverture,
 Furent bastis du magnifique aucteur,
 25 Ouvrant sus tous à l'antique sculpture,
 Tresbien gardant perspective paincture,

²⁸ See lines 27-30. These seven virtues appear in one of the most beautiful miniatures of ms. BNF fr. 1537, fol. 50 (fig. 3). Symbolically surrounded by the seven virtues is the Virgin of Light, holding under her feet Death and the Dragon of Hell. This miniature is also reproduced by Vloberg, 96. It recalls a rondeau presented at the Puy of 1533 by a certain Tourmente (BNF ms. fr. 1715). It is the Virgin who speaks, a rather marotique Virgin who has no doubt read the *Deploration de Florimond Robertet*: "Pour tous humains, j'ay mys à mort la mort; / J'ay conteré peché qui l'homme mord; / Destruict sera tout infernal palud: / Car mon fils vient, qui de faict absolut / Rompra enfer et brisera son fort. // Mort et enfer ont perdu leur effort, / Car leurs captifz brief auront reconfort: / Ce jour je viens apporter le salut / Pour tous humains. // Où est la mort, qui maint homme rend mort? / Où est peché, dont Adam se remord? / Mort ne me mord, peché ne me pollut: / Devant les cieulx, mon fils me preesleut, / Sa fille et mere, à estre sceur confort / Pour tous humains."

- Au tour du cueur paignant humilité
 Foy: esperance: avecques charité
 Et en la nef attrempance, justice
 30 Prudence et force: au surplus verité.
 Pour tiltre mist l'escript d'auctorité
 Temple construit / par divin artifice.

This unexpected association between pagan and christian myth comes so naturally that all Marian poets make more or less direct allusions to it and in terms that often evoke Pandora rather than the Virgin. We see this, for example, in Jehan Marot's chant royal cited earlier, "L'humanité joincte à divinité,"²⁹ where we witness the sun, the elements and the planets collaborate in the fabrication of this miraculous body, in other words playing the part assumed by the gods of Olympus (Vulcan, Venus, Pallas, Mercury, Apollo, etc.) in the Pandora myth and obeying Jupiter's orders. As the poet tells us, once this body was formed: "vindrent en sa closture / Toutes vertus, & logis y ont faict" (lines 34-35). It is this same implicit assimilation of Mary and Pandora that undoubtedly prompted Jehan Marot to write the following ballad, which at that time had not yet been published (I discovered it in two manuscripts, ms. 385 of the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine in Carpentras, pp. 331-32, and ms. BNF fr. 19369, fols. 79r-80v). Upon inspection, this ballad shows itself to be nothing other than a rewriting, a delicate and subtle reformulation of the chant royal just cited:

Ballade

- Quant dieu voullut former Marie,
 Il appela dame nature
 Et luy dit: Il fault que marie
 Mon filz à une creature
 5 Que produyras par geniture
 Exempte de cas vitieux,
 Pour estre dicte en l'escripture
 L'honneur de la terre et des cieulx.

Nature

- J'enrichiray son armarie
 10 De tous mes biens. J'en prens la cure.
 Sur elle n'auront seigneurie
 Le fier dragon, Mars ne Mercure,
 Ny Saturne, planette obscure:
 Car l'aspect doulx et gratieulx
 15 De Jupiter si luy procure
 L'honneur de la terre et des cieulx.

²⁹ Compare this palinode with D372, where Délie is said to be "celestement humaine."

Dieu

- Ton vieil peché te contrarie
 A former si belle figure.
 Donc fault que de moy soit cherye
 20 Par dons divins en sa facture.
 Du manteau d'innocence pure
 Vestiray son corps precieux,
 Affin qu'il porte en sa closture
 L'honneur de la terre et des cieulx.

Envoy

- 25 Adonc chacun fit ouverture
 De ses tresors à qui myeulx myeulx,
 Pour bastir sans tache ou laidure
 L'honneur de la terre et des cieulx.

This example justifies once more the need for these intertextual comparisons. The subtle echoes and similarities which, from poem to poem, put into relief the differences, allow us to discern with great clarity what we may now call the poet's signature, the trademark by which he identifies his craft, in other words his poetics and his identity. Another excellent example of this pattern of intertextual composition is found in Cretin's chant royal cited above, "Temple construit par divin artifice." At the beginning of the fourth stanza, the "supresme plasmateur," when confronted with His creation, is overcome by a feeling of *vertige* that is once again reminiscent of Pygmalion,³⁰ a vertigo that comes from the contemplation of His own power, which originates in self-love and allows us to grasp the implicit sexual dimension — one might call it the Jupiterian, or the Arnolphian, dimension — of the myth. After all, despite the obvious differences between the two works, neither in Scève nor in Cretin is the distance between the Architect and the Lover insurmountable. Just like Délie's Lover, the aptly-named "Altitonant" of Cretin dreams of becoming one with his creation, of penetrating and installing himself there and of preventing others, namely, the "Serpent," from entering the "closture" of this exquisite "Temple." No

³⁰This myth is exploited in an even more explicit fashion in the chant royal alluded to *supra*, note 27, and reproduced by Gros. One reads: "Ce grand ouvrier, pour faire tribut taire, / Fit tel pourtraict parfait en ses vailleurs / Que veu l'image en ses traictz et coulleurs, / Gecta dessus les yeulx de son couraige / Si qu'amoureux fut de son propre ouvrage, / Et pour pourvoir à ses grandz appetitz, / Il l'embrassoit en voullant qu'elle vive. . . ." (verse 25-33). Indeed, the God represented here is endowed with very human desires. In Genesis, God stops at regular intervals (1:4, 1:10, 1:18, 1:25, 1:31, etc.) in order to contemplate what he has just created and decides each time that "it was good": *Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum . . . Viditque Deus cuncta quae fecerat: et erant valde bona*. It suffices for the poet of the Puy to reread these verses in a Marian perspective in order to arrive at Pygmalion.

“artifice” could be more “divine” and transparent than this one. *Et vidit deus quod esset bonum*:

- Si plaisant fut ce temple au createur
 Qu'en luy voulut se faire creature.
 35 C'est le saint corps où nostre redempteur
 Fut incarné et print sa nourriture,
 C'est sa sacrée et digne genitrice
 De Anne conceue au terme limité
 Dont le concept en toute immunité
 40 Dieu preserva de crime et malefice . . .

VI. D10, D11, D378: THE MANNA, THE ALOE, AND THE MYRRH
 (JEHAN MAROT, PIERRE FABRI, NICOLLE LESCARRÉ)

A final confirmation of the crucial role that Marian poetry plays in the “concept” of *Délie* may be found in the three poetic jewels which are D10, D11, and D378. These examples are all the more suggestive because they bring us back to a work that we have only referred to in passing, but which played a decisive role in the history and extension of the Puy of Rouen in the years 1515 to 1530. I am referring to a work by Pierre Fabri, orator and poetician, published in November 1514 in Rouen by Martin Morin. As Denis Hüe says in his thesis, the work's title summarizes perfectly the author's project: to present “a synthesis” of the theological controversy which, “at the dawn of the sixteenth century,” pitted the partisans and the adversaries of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. In other words, this book is the perfect vademecum of the little “conceptionist,” of the devout Catholic, of the poet and champion of the Virgin. This vademecum, we can affirm, was undoubtedly part of Scève's library, most likely on the shelf beside the “Recueil Vidoue.” We can also be very sure that *Délie*'s worshiper, our idolatrous lover, read this book and meditated on it assiduously:

Ensuyt ung petit traicté // dialogue fait en l'honneur de Dieu et de sa mere,
 nommé *Le De // fensore de la Conception*, auquel trai // té sont produictz deux
 personnages // C'est assavoir l'amy et le sodal qui // par maniere de argumen-
 tacion ramainent toutes les auctoritez et raisons qui sont de la part de // ceulx
 qui dient qu'elle est conceue en peché originel. Et l'amy les declare / glose / ou
 efface selon le // cas, et avec ce amaine à son pro // pos toutes les opinions et
 auctoritez des modernes docteurs // avec la sainte escripture et de // cretz de
 l'eglise comme de Balle [*sic* for Basle] et // de Sixte en les soustenant et de //
 fendant vertueusement.

Faithful to their habits, which are also unfortunately our own, the commentators of D10 generally limit themselves to exclusively classical and

profane references. I shall refer only briefly to D11, a poem that, with the exception of a few details (lines 5 and 9), does not appear to present any major problems of interpretation. We have long been aware, thanks to the work of McFarlane, of the difficulties raised by the periphrasis of the first verse ("De l'Océan l'Adultaire obstiné") and the mythical couple, Adonis-Clytie. We also have, thanks again to McFarlane, uncovered the presence of Petrarch in the last verse of the same dizain (see R269, line 4: "dal borrea a l'austro, o dal mar indo al mauro"). D10, on the other hand, is of greater interest here. In reference to the incipit, "Suave odeur," McFarlane directs his reader to the pertinent and yet too allusive "suave odor" of verse 104 of Petrarch's *Triumph of Love*. While it is true that the importance of Petrarch in Scève's *canzoniere* should not be underestimated, it is nonetheless useful to go more deeply into the origin of these references, since, as any avid reader will know, one reference can easily hide another. Joukovsky in this case has more to say and is more incisive. Of course, she also refers her readers to the inevitable Petrarch, but this time to R360, a sort of elegiac lament that enumerates the Lover's complaints about the god of Love, stressing in particular (lines 24-26) the "falsa dolcezza . . . d'esto ingrato," the bitterness with which this "lusinghier crudele" taints the pleasures that he parsimoniously accords to humans: "O poco mèl, molto aloè con fele," a variant of the famous sentence "Pour un plaisir mille douleurs." Joukovsky has the further merit of identifying Tibulle (bk. 2, elegy 4, line 12) behind Petrarch, as well as Serafino, Ariosto, Pernettes du Guillet, and even Clément Marot, citing lines 43-44 of his fourth elegy: "Sais-tu pas bien, qu'Amour a de coustume, / D'entremesler ses plaisirs d'amertume," seemingly forgetting that the same topos appears already in the preceding elegy (lines 63-68) and in a form that relates directly to Petrarch — once more and always Petrarch:³¹

Certainement si bien ferme vous n'estes,
 Amour vaincra vos responses honnestes.
 Amour est fin, et sa parole farde
 Pour mieulx tromper: donnez vous en doncq garde,
 Car en sa bouche il n'y a rien que Miel,
 Mais en son cueur il n'y a rien que Fiel.

Although these references are of interest to any study of Scève, they nonetheless abandon us once more midway en route to the common origin of this motif. In fact, a little more attention paid to the work of Clément Marot would have allowed Joukovsky to definitely slack our thirst. The two verses that she cites — I note, in passing, that they belong to the fourth elegy of *La Suite* and not, as she writes erroneously, to the third — do indeed belong

³¹ See Marot, 1:240; for "La Quatriesme Elegie, en Epistre," 1:242.

to a syntactic grouping of four verses, in the second part of which appears the Marian and biblical metaphor of the rose and the thorns. Marot uses for example the same image to conclude a poem written while traveling to Ferrara in 1535. The poem, an epistle, is dedicated to two mysterious and “trescheres Sœurs” from Savoy, sisters, he says, “que j’estime deux roses / Entre buisson & espines encloses.” Here are the verses of Marot’s fourth elegy:

Sçais tu pas bien qu’Amour a de coustume
D’entremesler ses plaisirs d’amertume,
Ne plus ne moins comme Espines poignantes
Sont par Nature au beau Rosier joignantes?

As quickly becomes evident, the addition of the last two lines significantly modifies the text. Suddenly, the perspective ceases to be merely classical and Petrarchan; it is enriched by strong Christian tonalities, including, in this case, precise references to the Song of Songs 2:2 and to Ecclesiastes 24:14. The metaphor employed by Clément Marot results from the combination of the “lilium inter spinas” of the Song of Solomon with the “plantatio rosæ in Jericho” of Ecclesiastes. Its use is quite frequent in Marian poetry. One could even say that, for reasons which are as much linked to doctrine as they are to poetry, the symbol of the rose in the thorns is, along with that of the star, the *Stella maris* which guides lost souls and ships to harbor, the symbol *par excellence* for the Virgin Mary. As Pierre Fabri obligingly explains in his *Defensore* of 1514, Mary and the rose share the same story, the same fate. Just as “la rose nasquist entre les espines” and without having “toutesfois de poincture,” miraculously intact and preserved by the hand of God, the great gardener, “Ainsi il est de Marie, que combien qu’elle soit née de l’espineuse Judée, jamais ne eut en elle quelque espine, ou esguillon de peché” (247). Jean Marot had no need of this passage of the *Defensore* when, most likely around 1511-1513, he composed one of his most beautiful “rondeaux parfaits,” a rondeau that I discovered in ms. BNF fr. 2205, fol. 100r-v. The metaphor had long been familiar currency among the “conceptionists” in Rouen, Caen, and elsewhere. One also finds it, for example, in one of Lescarre’s ballads, in ms. 385 of Carpentras (329), a ballad whose refrain is precisely “La rose en Hiericho plantée,” and where one finds the following verses: “De ung vert esglantier espineux / Dieu produisit une blanche rose.” Another such example occurs in Guillaume Cretin’s chant royal, “La fleur de liz preservée entre espines,” found in the “Recueil Vidoue” (fols. viii-ix): “Comme est le liz d’espineuse poincture / Envyronné sans nature eschanger, / Aussy Marie est, entre la closture / Des filles, non asservee au danger.” But let us not turn to Jehan Marot’s “Rondeau parfait.” It is the Virgin who speaks:

- Comme la rose entre espines fleurit,
 Sans de l'espine avoir quelque pointure,
 En corps humain prins forme et esperit,
 Sans tache avoir du forfaict de nature.
- 5 Du mal d'Adam je n'euz onc fracture,
 Aussy mon dieu jamais ne me guerit:
 Dont fut conceue exempte à forfaicture
 Comme la rose entre espines fleurit.
- La rose suis qui oncques ne perit
 10 D'oudeur ne taint. Car j'ay prins nourriture
 En Jherico, dont la belle fleur yst,
 Sans de l'espine avoir quelque pointure.
- Et quoy que Adam par sa malla aventure
 Le puis de grace à tous humains tarit,
 15 Belle de tout, par pure geniture,
 En corps humain prins forme et esperit.
- Adonc mon dieu tant m'ayma et cherit
 Qu'en moy daygna prendre humaine bouture,
 Et de ma cher (*sic* for "chair") divinité couvrit
 20 Sans tache avoir du forfaict de nature.
- J'ay donc porté à ma sainte closture
 Mon benoist dieu qui les cieulx clos ouvrit:
 Dont dicte suis, en la saint[e] escripture,
 Belle sans sy, que dieu du ciel florit
 25 Comme la rose.

We should not be surprised by — nor do we need to scrutinize in detail — the density of scriptural references into this poem, superficially so graceful and simple, and yet, which contradicts its appearance in nearly every line. This is common practice in Marian poetry, whose intention is to be faithful to the "vérité" of a cause and which always seeks corroboration of its sayings in the authority of the divine *loquela*. Aside from the incipit and allusion in lines 11-12 to the roses "entre espines" of Jericho, lines 9-10 reveal the discrete presence of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. I will first cite from the former, Ecclesiastes 24:20-21: "Sicut cinnamomum et balsamum aromatizans odorem dedi, / *quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris*; / et quasi storax, et galbanus, et ungula, et gutta, / et quasi Libanus non incisus vaporavi habitationem meam / et quasi balsamum non mistum odor meus"; and, then, 39:17-19: "In voce dicit: Obaudite me, divini fructus, / et quasi rosa plantata super rivos aquarum fructificate. / Quasi Libanus *odorem suavitatis* habete. / Florete flores quasi lilium; / et date odorem, et frondete in

gratiam.” From the second text, the Song of Solomon, I would first like to call attention to 1:2-3 and 4:10: “fragrantia unguentis optimis, / Oleum effusum nomen tuum . . . Trahe me, post te curremus, / in odorem unguentorum tuorum . . . Pulchriora sunt ubera tua vino, / et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata”; to 3.6: “Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum / sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ, et thuris?”; and finally, to 4:14: “Nardus et crocus, fistula et cinnamomum, / cum universis lignis Libani; / *myrrha et aloe*, cum omnibus primis unguentis.” If the reader of *Délie* is to draw a lesson from this voluptuous and delicate celebration of the senses, this feast of the body, this profusion of odors, tastes, colors, forms, and perfumes, it is that, just like his predecessor Jehan Marot, Maurice Scève was also intoxicated by these verses from the Scriptures. Everything he tells us in his epigrams (notably in D10) concerning the “Suave odeur” or the “goust trop amer” of his love, concerning also aloe and myrrh — to say nothing yet of manna — comes essentially from these sources. Let us therefore no longer content ourselves with thinking that these savors and perfumes are due solely to Petrarch’s *Trionfi* or *Rime sparse*. Rather, we should recognize in them the disturbing charms of the Beloved in the Song of Songs, the perfumes of her body. At the same time, the reader should acknowledge the importance of Marian poetry in *Délie* and in its symbols. “Quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris,” says the companion of the beloved “sponsus.” And the Lover to *Délie*:

Suave odeur: Mais le goust trop amer
 Trouble la paix de ma douce pensée,
 Tant peult de soy le delicat aymer
 Que raison est par la craincte offensée.
 Et toutesfois voyant l’Ame incensée
 Se rompre toute, où gist l’affection:
 Lors au peril de ma perdition
 J’ay espruvé, que la paour me condamne.
 Car grand beaulté en grand perfection
 M’a faict goustier Aloes estre Manne.

Upon reading this dizain, it becomes obvious that it exceeds a simple reference to Petrarch, since the game that Scève undertakes here is the same one that he plays in D1 and D449 with the “primo giovenile errore” of the *Rime sparse* and the “grave e mortifero lethargo” of the *Triumph of Death*: he “corrects” the “errors” of his illustrious predecessor, radically subverting what he says. If he appears at first to imitate him, remarking in the same way (line 1) “le goust trop amer” of Love — “molto aloè con fele” — it is only so that later he may further differentiate himself from his model. Unlike Petrarch in his canzone, Scève does not set out to accuse the god of Love, that capricious

and ungrateful god, nor does he express regret for having served this tyrant and “cruel flatterer.” On the contrary, he points out to what extent the “crainte” that always characterizes “le delicat aymen” offends the “raison” of the Lover and troubles “la paix de sa douce pensée.” Here, as in all of *Délie*, it is not Love, the god of Love, who stands accused and “condamné,” but rather the Lover himself, the Lover who reproaches himself for his scruples and his “paour,” who is clearly aware of the risks he incurs — that of his “perdition”³² — but who, led on by his “Ame incensée” — a soul which, in other words, is burning with the desire of love (Latin *incensus, incensa*, from *incendo*)³³ — finally decides to take the risk. It is indeed to stress this “correction” imposed upon Petrarch’s text that Scève concludes his dizain in the same way that he begins it (“M’a faict gouster Aloes estre Manne”), thus not only replacing, but reclaiming, reconfiguring and “correcting” the “goust trop amer” of the incipit. The aloe, which is implicitly present from the beginning of the poem due to the reference to Petrarch, ends by being converted into “manna,” more precisely by “estre Manne.” This reference is especially meaningful because it immediately shifts attention from the *Rime sparse* to the Bible and from Petrarch to the poets of the Puys. Once again, the terrain is suddenly altered and enriched, since, as Nicolle Lescarre (“Recueil Vidoue,” fols. xvi-xvii) makes it amply clear in one of his *chants royaux*, just like the cedar and the unicorn, the column, the cloister and the portal or the gate, manna — of which it is said in Exodus 16:31, “gustusque ejus quasi similæ cum melle” — is also a symbol of Marian poetry. In addition to the density of Scriptural references — note in particular, in lines 40–44, the allusion made to Elijah sleeping “in umbra juniperi,” an allusion which immediately evokes the immortal “Genevre” of D449 — one remarks the skillful way in which Scève manages to combine in this poem Petrarchan and biblical intertexts. There are more than two dozens identifiable references to the Scriptures in this poem. A biblical scholar might well find others:

³²A new Prometheus, aware of the gravity of the crime that he commits against God — he transgresses the first commandment against idolatry — *Délie*’s Lover succumbs to the condemnation pronounced by the Apostle, Rom. 1:20-25: “ita ut sint inexcusabiles, quia, cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt. . .; et mutaverunt gloriam incorruptibilis Dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis.” If Scève is undoubtedly a Christian poet, perhaps even, as surprising as it may seem, a Catholic one, *Délie*’s Lover is definitely neither Christian nor Catholic. *Audax Japeti genus* . . .

³³I am here refuting the interpretation proposed by McFarlane, 371. *Incensée* is by no means “a common spelling for *insensée*,” but a pure latinism. The soul of *Délie*’s servant is on fire, it burns with desire — with fire — lighted by its idol. Like the Yahweh of Deuteronomy 9:3, *Délie* is “ignis devorans atque consumens.” In fact the Lover at the end of D26 exploits Exodus 3:2-3 (“Apparuitque ei Dominus in flamma ignis de medio rubi; et videbat quod rubus arderet, et non combureretur”), “Las tousjours j’ars, et point ne me consume.”

- Chant royal d'ung desert sacré
 Que dieu pour luy a consacré
 Et preservé d[u] vice immunde
 Qui regne au desert de ce monde
 Pinguescent speciosi deserti³⁴
- Baptiste saint, de dieu herault disert, Matt. 3.1-3, Luke 3.18
 Ta forte voix peult par tout annoncer
 Que le hault verbe en un secret desert Luke 1.80
 Se f[leis]t humain sans es cieulx renoncer, John 1.14
- 5 Pour paix & grace en terre prononcer
 Aux gens qui sont de bonté volontaire: John 1.29, Luke 2.14
 Car le fort vent de ce lieu salulaire
 Vint evertir la dure mansion
 De aspre discord & de fureur bellique,
- 10 Pour exalter en haulte [region]³⁵ Exod. 14.2
 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque. Exod. 16
 Secte envieuse où mainte injure appert Matt. 3.7
 Jamais n'y voit par vent rompre & casser
 L'enflé roseau du peché qui nous perd. Matt. 11.7
- 15 Car en plain cours dieu y faict surpasser
 Fleuves de grace à noz maulx effacer, Rom. 5.15, 20
 Qui prennent source en la pierre angulaire Matt. 16.18-19
 Pour abreuer christian populaire, Exod. 15-17, Num. 20.2-11
 Luy muant l'eau de contradiction
- 20 En large estang d'eau doulce & pacifique, Exod. 15.22-25, 17.1-7
 Qui magnifie en benediction
 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque.
 Dieu du ciel manne y a plus & offert Exod. 16.15
 Pour nostre fain du tout recompenser.
- 25 Concupiscence entrée n'y a souffert
 Pour aucun vice & peché y penser.
 L'ost d'Israel n'y peult dieu offencer:

³⁴See Ps. 64 (65), verse 13: "Pinguescent speciosa deserti, / et exultatione colles accigentur." The Osty Bible gives an inaccurate translation (*pinguesco* = engraisser): "Les pacages du désert ruissellent / et les collines se ceignent d'allégresse." King James's version: "The pastures are covered with flocks; the valleys also are covered with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." No better: *traduttore*. But see verse 38 of the chant royal by Lescarre: "Grace a tant faict ce desert engraisser."

³⁵The text here bears "mansion" as in line 8. Given that Lecarre is an excellent "facteur" who never falls into this sort of *facilité* one can conclude, as I have, that this must be a printer's error, and that this misprint should be corrected by substituting "region" in the place of "mansion." See Exod. 14:2: "Loquere filiis Israel: Reversi castrametentur e regione Phihihiroth, quae est inter Magdalum et mare contra Beelsephon."

- En sa murmure il n'est point tributaire. Exod. 9.12
 Le bon Moyse, affecté secretaire
 30 De dieu, n'y fait de ses loix fraction:
 Veau d'or s'enfle [?] n'y cause erreur inique: Exod. 32
 Parquoy blasmer ne peult detraction
 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque.
 Nous au desert de misere couvert
 35 Mordz d'ung serpent sommes par transgresser: Num. 21.6
 Mais ung sans mordre nous a tous recouvert Num. 21.8-9, John 3.14
 Au desert saint pour salut radresser.
 Grace a tant faict ce desert engresser Ps. 64.13
 Que à l'œil divin pour nous debvoir complaire,
 40 Si ung triste cueur se voit à dieu desplaire
 Genyevre n'y sent de consolation
 Où print repos Helye homme pudique, I Kings 19.5-8
 Qui desiroit en tribulation
 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque.
 45 En ce saint lieu qui gloire & loz desert
 Pharaon roy ne pourroit pourchasser Exod. 14
 Le peuple saint qui envers dieu y sert Exod. 19.6
 Tant qu'il en veult la priere exaulcer
 [C]e sont vertus & bienffaictz sans cesser Exod. 15.11-21 and
 50 Qui font pour nous sacrifice ordinaire. Deut. 8.14-16, Lev. 1-7
 Aaron saint prebstre en ardant luminaire Exod. 28.1-5
 Y offre & rend la sainte oblation. Deut. 15-1.12, Lev. 2 and 6
 Devotion s[o]eur de foy catholique
 Y vole & tient par contemplation
 55 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque.
 Renvoy
 Prince amateur du desert solitaire
 Sathan le noir & cornu sagitaire
 Souffler n'y peult vent de temptation Matt. 4.1-11, Luke 4.1-13
 Car il estinct son regard basilique
 60 Dont tout pur veoit ta meditation
 Le saint desert plain de manne angelicque.
 Dom Nicolle Lescarre.

Here again, *Délie* is, for the Lover, that which Yahweh was for the chosen (and rebellious) people waiting in the desert after the flight from Egypt: a protecting and nourishing divinity, imperious, demanding and jealous, at once “colonne” and “manne” of his life. And it is precisely because Scève was influenced more by the Bible than by Petrarch when writing D10, because he was under the charm of the “suave odeur” exhaled by the bewitching brown creature in the Song of Solomon, that, in the following dizain, D11,

the Ovidian myths that he revives take on a decidedly Marian aspect. As in D10, the profane intertext acquires tonalities dear to the Puy poets. For example, in order to understand why “les seches fleurs en leur odeur vivront,” it suffices to recall Jehan Marot’s “rondeau parfait,” “Comme la rose entre espines fleurit,” linking with it the precision provided by lines 9-10 (“La rose suis qui oncques ne perit / D’oudeur ne taint”); or reread, alongside Maurice Scève’s dizain, one of Cretin’s *chants royaux*, “La fleur de liz preservée entre espines” (“Recueil Vidoue,” fol. viii(v), quoted below before D11). They shall live because they are not only the heliotrope of Clytie or the anemone of Adonis, figures of pagan myth, but because, thanks to the Marian poet Maurice Scève undoubtedly is, they have been endowed with the qualities of resistance and vivacity proper to the roses of Jericho, or to the lily,³⁶ these flowers, which, no doubt because they grow along the banks of streams (Eccl. 39:17: “et quasi rosa plantata super rivos aquarum fructificate”), live on eternally. Despite the sun and the weather, both equally “obstinés” in their attempt to destroy the beauty of things, they maintain their original “oudeur” and “tainct.” Like the Lover-Prometheus and his love for Délie, they resist death; their fate is “De non mourir, et de revivre encore”:

*En tige & fleur non par agriculture
 Perdure odeur / & couleur sans changer
 Porte le liz / et peult de sa nature
 Des cueurs afflictez / les douleurs allegier.
 De ceste fleur: entendz pour abreger
 La fleur des fleurs sur toutes specieuse
 Pour les servantz à tousjours curieuse
 Grace implorer vers le roy supernel
 Qui l'exempta d'espines proserpines.
 Elle triumphe au royaume eternel
 La fleur de lyz preserveree entre espines.
 De l'Occean l'Adultaire obstiné
 N'eut point tourné vers l'Orient sa face,
 Que sur Clytie, Adonis jà cliné
 Perdit le plus de sa nayve grace.
 Quoy que du temps tout grand oultrage face
 Les seches fleurs en leur odeur vivront:
 Prœuve pour ceulz, qui le bien poursuyvront
 De non mourir, mais de revivre encore.
 Ses vertus donc, qui ton corps ne suyvront,
 Des l'Indien s'estendront jusqu'au More.*

³⁶On the relation between the rose and the lily in mariological poetry, see Gros's remarks, 1996, 263-69.

Before D449, D378 is the last dizain in *Délie* which is metamorphosed by the grace of the symbols of Marian poetry, a tradition that played a crucial role in Scève's *canzoniere*. It also speaks of eternity and fidelity to oneself. Indeed, in this case the evidence of the relationship between Scève and Marian poets is so clear that it seems best simply to juxtapose the dizain with the text that most certainly inspired it. In Fabri's *Defensore de la Conception* (242-47), one reads, on the part of "L'Amy," the following demonstration. The important passages — those from which, it seems, Scève composed his immortal epigram — have been boldfaced:

Plus, la sainte & Immaculée Conception fut prefigurée, & l'a [*sic* for "la"] peut l'en appliquer aux figures de la sainte Escripiture, laquelle la prefigurant estre sans macule: ainsi que l'en peut entendre du Temple de Salomon, & de *Sancta Sanctorum*, & de la sainte Arche, qui fut faicte du bois de Cethin, qui est **bois incorruptible, & imputrable**. Car la Vierge fut le vray Temple, & l'Arche de divinité, *Exod.25. Compingite Archam de lignis Cethin, c'est Marie incorruptible*, si l'en parle *de Sancta Sanctorum sicut habetur Levitici 15. & ad Hebraeos nono cap.* dedans lequel le grand Prestre seul estoit entré. Qui est ce grand Prestre, autre que Jesus-Christ, qui est seul entré au ventre de la Vierge prendre chair humaine? La-quelle Vierge faicte du bois de Cethin, a esté Temple de Jesus-Christ, sans quelque corruption. . . . En l'Arche du vieil Testament fut mis un vaisseau plain de Manne devant qu'il fut mis en l'Arche, *Exod.26*. Et par l'Arche, s'entend le corps de Marie: & par le vaisseau plein de Manne s'entend l'ame de Marie, pleine de grace, *saltem prioritare natura*, devant qu'elle fust unie au corps. . . .

Balaam a dit: *Orietur stella ex Jacob, & consurget Virga de Israël*. Certes, elle est bien comparée à une estoille, **qui de sa nature est incorruptible, & invariable, & permanente in sempiternum**. C'est celle estoille qui luit la nuit, laquelle peché ne peut obvier: mais sous sa clarté tous nautonniers, ou mariniers viennent au port de salut. Parquoy l'Eglise chante: *Ave maris stella*. . . .

Et aussi Salomon en ses Cantiques demande: *Quæ est ista, quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens*. L'aurore du jour, elle commence en jour, & en jour tous-jours croist, jusques à ce qu'elle soit jointe au Soleil, & jamais n'est privée de lumiere. Ainsi Marie, Vierge pure, enluminée de la divine grace, fut aurore en sa conception, & commencement de jour sans ce que jamais il y eust tenebres, ne obscurité de peché: mais tousjours creüe en lumiere de grace, jusques à ce qu'elle ait esté avec le Soleil de justice, son cher Fils en gloire eternelle . . .

L'autre figure est ainsi, que les enfans d'Israël. qui passerent la mer rouge à pied sec. *Exod.14*. Aussi a Marie passé la mer de tous pechez sans estre coinquinée, ne maculée en quelque maniere. Et aussi se leurs vestemens furent preservez, & gardez de toute corruption par quarante ans *Deuter.29*. Se doit l'en esbahir, se Marie a esté au desert de ce monde preservée, & gardée de toute corruption? Qui est sans comparaison plus digne chose le corps de Marie, que les vestemens des enfans d'Israël.

Il y a en l'Ecclesiastique une figure, qui parle en la personne de Marie. *Ego quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris*. Le myrrhe est de ceste nature, que il chasse les vers & de soy, & des autres. Et telle propriété ne conviendrait pas à Marie, se par ung temps elle eust esté rongée de ver[m] de peché originel. Et encore il dit: *Et quasi plantatio rosa in Hiericho*. La rose nasquit de entre les espines, & toutesfois elle n'en a point de pointure. Ainsi il est dit de Marie, que combien qu'elle soit née de l'espineuse Judée, jamais ne eut en elle quelque espine, ou esguillon de peché.

In addition to the obvious doctrinal interest that this text presents, it has the additional merit of exposing Scève as he flagrantly commits *imitatio*. The entire content of his epigram can be found in Fabri's text, not only a few pages apart, but also in nearly the same order: the "incorruptible" Virgin, "l'Aurore du jour" that "tousjours croist, jusques à ce qu'elle soit joincte au Soleil" (cf. line 2 of the dizain: "D'orner son chef d'or luisant"), the "suave odeur" of the "myrrhe,"³⁷ and even the purifying "propriété," the truly medicinal virtue it seems to be endowed with, that of "chasser les vers & de soy, & des autres."³⁸ All that remains is for Scève to create, from these *membra disiecta*, one of his most beautiful masterpieces: note the lily "blancheur" of the Dawn (line 1), the roses that decorate Délie's "chef" (line 2), the certitude of being able to resist victoriously, not only time, but death (line 6), the knowledge that his goddess is the only "possible" redeemer (line 7), the only one who can nullify the "fatalité" of sin. A bit of luck suffices, and suddenly, in spite of oneself, without thinking it possible and above all without having intended it, the activity known as literary criticism becomes an exact art. "Quæ est ista, quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens?" It is Délie. And behind Délie is Mary:

La blanche Aurore à peine finyssoit
D'orner son chef d'or luisant, et de roses,
Quand mon Esprit, qui du tout perissoit
Au fons confus de tant diverses choses,
Revint à moy soubz les custodes closes
Pour plus me rendre envers mort invincible.

³⁷Gros, 1992, 96, notes that at the competition of the Puy of Amiens of 1535, when Scève was beginning to make himself known, there was a palinodical device chosen by "Maistre" Charles Leclerc, "bachelier en Décret" and cathedral chaplain, containing this mariological symbol: "Myre donnant odeur incomparable."

³⁸The purifying virtue of myrrh was common knowledge at the time. See for example, Marguerite de Navarre, 1547, "Comédie de l'adoration des trois Roys," 2:241 (Gaspar, one of the three kings, is speaking): "J'ay en ma terre aussi la myrrhe esleuë, / Qui est contraire à la corruption: / J'en porteray, [sic] pour en dilection / Faire present à l'Enfant de valuë."

Mais toy, qui as (toy seule) le possible
 De donner heur à ma fatalité,
Tu me seras la myrrhe incorruptible
Contre les vers de ma mortalité.

VII. D22: DÉLIE'S "SURNOM LOUABLE" AND MARIAN POETRY
 (PIERRE FABRI, NICOLAS DE SENYNGUEHEN)

Given the light that Marian poetry sheds on Scève's *canzoniere*, it seems quite possible that the name "Délie," this "surnom louable" (D59), was in fact itself chosen for reasons other than its onomastic properties or its assonances (Diana, Delos, Délie, "l'Idée," etc.) and its undeniable evocation of ancient myths (Hecate, Luna, Proserpina, etc.). When they approach this topic, most scholars generally recall D22 and its admirable commentary by Edwin Duval.³⁹ They also refer the reader to the subtle paronymic analyses of François Rigolot in his cratylic *Poétique et onomastique* of 1977.⁴⁰ As is always the case with Scève, everything, at first glance, the atmosphere and décor, the gods, the allusions to their stories, brings us back to Henri or Robert Estienne, Ovid, Tibulle and Virgil, Servius, Nicolas Perottus and his successor Ambrosius Calepinus. It brings us back to the Latin magic and the conjuring up of spirits, or to the *Commentary* of Ficino on Plato's *Symposium*. Everything conspires to make us think that Scève is a humanist before being a Christian:

Comme Hecaté tu me feras errer
 Et vif, et mort cent ans parmy les Umbres:
 Comme Diane au Ciel me resserrer,
 D'où descendis en ces mortelz encombres:
 Comme regnante aux infernales umbres
 Amoindriras, ou accroistras mes peines.
 Mais comme Lune infuse dans mes veines
 Celle tu fus, es, et seras DELIE,
 Qu'Amour a jointct à mes pensées vaines
 Si fort, que Mort jamais ne l'en deslie.

In spite of the undeniable pertinence of the mythographical and cratylic approaches of Coleman, Duval, and Rigolot, we must ask ourselves, do they suffice to give a full account of everything that Scève wittingly inscribed in his text? The answer is no. After all, as we discovered on the title page of the "Recueil Vidoue," Mary is "pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol," and consequently the moon, like the unicorn, the cedar, the star, the lily, the manna and the

³⁹Duval, 7-22. See also Coleman, 1-16.

⁴⁰Rigolot, 1977, 105-26 ("Paronymie et sémantique nominale chez Pétrarque et Scève").

myrrh, is a Marian symbol. Therefore, it would make sense, following Lance Donaldson-Evans's reading,⁴¹ not only to recall that the last four verses of D22 contain, in addition to a distinct echo of Revelations 16:5 ("Justus es, Domine, qui es, et qui eras"), an unmistakable reference to that most Marian of texts, the Song of Songs (8:6: "quia fortis est ut mors dilectio"), and to conclude with him that, as a result, "Délie is intimately associated not simply with 'pagan divinities' — Hecate, Diana, Proserpina — but also with the love of the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible." And even if one hesitates to follow Donaldson-Evans when he suggests that Délie's name, "in addition to all its other onomastic ramifications," could also be "a composite of *Dé* and *lier*: *Dé-lie*, *Dé* being a common old French form of Dieu," it is all the same true that the quote from Matthew that he uses to support his argument and to make it as credible and convincing as possible, incontestably played a major role in the Lyonnais poet's choice of the name of this "objet de plus haute vertu" which he imprudently makes his idol, this name which he admits, in a moment of despair and rancor, was "Sinistrement pour [s]on mal inventé" (D394). One finds indeed in Matthew 18:18 the following statement by Jesus to Peter and the other Apostles: "Amen dico vobis, quæcumque alligaveritis super terram, erunt ligata et in cælo; et quæcumque solveritis super terram, erunt soluta et in cælo" (En vérité, je vous le dis: tout ce que vous *lierez* sur la terre se trouvera *lié* dans le ciel, et tout ce que vous *délierez* sur la terre sera *délié* dans le ciel).

This verse did not escape the pious attention, the thirst for the "plus haut sens" and the rhetorical mastery of the poets of the *puy*s — especially since some of them had, so to speak, the additional advantage to be named Pierre or Jacques *Le Lieur*, the latter being the respectable lord of Houteville and a Canon of the Church.⁴² This sufficed to cause the pens of our poets to produce interminable series of onomastic wordplay. In his book on *Les Puy*s *de palinod de Rouen et de Caen*, Eugène de Robillard de Beaurepaire cites, for example (183) this passage of a chant royal by Jacques Minfaut, clearly inspired, not only by the name of the current president ("Prince") of the Puy,

⁴¹ Donaldson-Evans, 8-9. One must reread these two extremely dense pages which I merely summarize here.

⁴² This Jacques Le Lieur is an infinitely respectable Mariological poet. One of his *chants royaux*, "De tout peché exempte et preservée," can be found in ms. BNF fr. 379, fol. 8r-v. He also has the honor of appearing in the "Recueil Vidoue," fols. xxv(v)-xxvi(v) ("Dung povre ver triumpante vesture"), in the company, moreover, of the other Le Lieur, Pierre (fols. xxxiv(v)-xxxv(v): "Sainte cité / contre Sathan fermée"). And he figures in ms. BNF 1537, with the same chant royal (number 16), in company of other *facteurs* of the Puy, such as Guillaume Auber, Pierre Avril, Pierre le Chevalier, Guillaume Cretin, Pierre Crignon, Nicole Dupuy, Nicole Les-carre, Jehan and Clément Marot, Jean Parmentier and Nicole Le Vestu. *Rien que du beau monde*.

Jacques Le Lieur, but also by the verse in Matthew quoted above — the “grand Lyeur” being only a pretext for these verbal fireworks, behind which is the distinct presence of the words of Christ. Because He is Love, the Logos is invincible. That which He unites (“lie”) on earth, is united in heaven; that which it separates (“délie”) is separated there. The powers of the Verb are indeed miraculous:

Le grant Lyeur qui tout lie et deslie
Si que ne peult vrais humains deslyer
Sans son vouloir ce que de son don lye
Et s'il deslye encore moins les lyer.

Another verbal pyrotechnician, even more dazzling than the Minfaut with whom Marot scholars are familiar — it seems the name is Nicolas de Senynguehen⁴³ — also composed a rondeau on this theme. It was so brilliant that Pierre Fabri used it as a model in his *Grand et vray art de plaine rhetorique* of 1521. It is reasonable to say that Scève also owned this very important book. Without any doubt, it was conceived of by the “Norman Quintilian” as a poetic complement to his *Defensore* of 1514, since he expressly dedicates it to the “devotz facteurs du champ royal du Puy de l'immaculée Conception de la Vierge,” in order, as he says, that they “ayent plus ardent desir de composer.”⁴⁴ Moreover, this rondeau by Senynguehen contains a verse that the reader of *Délie* cannot help but recognize, a verse whose harmony seems forever engraved on Scève's memory. Here is this beautifully crafted rondeau. It is once again the Virgin who speaks. But behind the Virgin, one can clearly hear Délie's Lover:⁴⁵

Par vraye amour, qui deux cueurs en ung lye,
Mon cher amant voulant que à luy me allie
S'est en ce jour avec moy allyé
Et a son cueur avec le mien lyé
Pour tout jamais sans que nul l'en deslye.

Combien que sois d'Eve et d'Adam saillie
D'aulcun venin ne fuz onc assaillie.
A m'en garder Dieu [s]'est humilié
Par vraye amour qui deux cueurs en ung lye.
Mon cher amant voulant que à luy me allie
S'est en ce jour avec moy allyé.

⁴³See the well devised “fiche signalétique” of Gros, 1996, 363-64: “Nous connaissons deux poètes normands du nom de Senynghehen, N, peut-être N[icolas], et Guillaume de Senynguehen: ils sont très probablement apparentés.”

⁴⁴Fabri, 1969, 2:2.

⁴⁵Ibid., 1521, xxxix.

Le fier serpent par la pomme cueillie
 En ses liens ne m'a point accueillie.
 Car Adam triste et merencolié
 Par son peché du limbe ay deslié.
 Grace aux humains est en moy recueillie
 Par vraye amour qui deux cueurs en ung lye.
 Mon cher amant voulant que à luy me allie
 S'est en ce jour avec moy allyé
 Et a son cueur avec le mien lyé
Pour tout jamais sans que nul l'en deslye.

A final touch to this Marian tableau, in the guise of a provisional conclusion. In his work entitled *Le Poète, le Vierge et le Prince du Puy*, Gérard Gros informs us that from 1486, the time of the official constitution of the Puy of Rouen, until 1510, one particular genre, the chant royal, stood out at the competition on 8 December. The winner was awarded the palm and the runner-up received a crown of laurels. In 1510, the Prince, Jean Le Lieur (or was it perhaps Jacques?) created the prize for the rondeau, which consisted of a "signet" or "cynet," in other words, "une marque, un cachet ou un sceau," or, by metonymy, "un anneau portant un cachet." In 1514, the "Prince régent," Jacques des Hommets, finally instituted the prize for the ballad, a rose which was awarded for the first time that year to Pierre Apvril.⁴⁶ I believe that it is in the light of this particular detail — the fact that the rose was given to the "facteur" who wrote the most beautiful ballad — and in a decisively Marian perspective that it makes sense to read D251, a dizain which seems to have been written by Scève in order to inform the reader of the unbearable, flagrant injustice to which he has just fallen victim. What was this injustice? One imagines a return to the dispute between Marot and Sagon, in which Sagon, having been crowned four times at the Puy of Rouen, triumphantly holding in his hand the "Palme, Lys, Signet [et] Rose," insolently shuts up Frippelippes and his master, the "rat pelé." It is I, and not my "unworthy" rival, who deserves the prize. In its inherent mastery, its sovereign verbal density, its lucidity, at once playful and biting, the irony here is a pure miracle. The rose is not only Délie, whom the husband has taken to put in his bed — "luy indigne, il la tient, il la touche" (D161) — but it is also the prize awarded by the Prince of the Puy to the best poet of the year. As Guillaume de Lorris noted years before Marian poetry was in vogue and Scève wrote his *Délie*, when "la rose entre espines fleurit," it is always the poet whose heart is pricked:

⁴⁶Gros, 1992, 132-36.

Au commun plainct ma joye est convertie
De dueil privé et mon particulier,
Par la Fortune en mon sort compartie,
Quasi pour moy un malheur familial,
Qui m'a frustré de ce bien singulier,
Par qui raison contre debvoir opine.

Doncques voyant la tresriche rapine
En main d'aultruy, indigne d'elle, enclose,
De mon labeur me fault cueillir l'Espine
Au loz, & heur de qui a eu la Rose.

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