The French Factor in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il libro del cortegiano*): From the Manuscript Drafts to the Printed Edition

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Résumé : *Les allusions de Castiglione sur la France et les Français dans l'édition de 1528 du Livre du Courtisan, notamment à propos des armes et des lettres, de l'activité physique et de la mode, sont bien connues. Une analyse des manuscrits comportant les versions précédentes du texte permet cependant d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les énoncés originaux de Castiglione relatifs aux Français et à leur culture ont été soumis à l'autocensure pendant la longue période que l'auteur a consacrée à la composition et à la révision de son œuvre. Les commentaires désobligeants à propos de la rusticité des Français sont atténués, de même que les passages trop manifestement flatteurs. En dépit de l'importance réduite qui est donnée à la culture française dans le texte publié, elle demeure un point de référence significatif dans le chef-d'œuvre de Castiglione.*

Castiglione's treatise is often hailed as a compendium of Renaissance culture and by that, one generally means Renaissance *Italian* culture. Influential as it was after it was first published in 1528,¹ the text is credited with having spread abroad the cultural systems and values that prevailed in Italy, among them the idea of refined manners and the concept of *sprezzatura* required of any *gentilhomme* or gentleman. The Neoplatonic theory of love, too, as it was systematized by Marsilio Ficino in the late fifteenth century, is believed to have made its way into other literatures mainly through Castiglione's formulation of it in Book Four of his work.

There is no doubt that, as he writes of various matters, whether it be generally on education or more specifically on humour, Castiglione has the underlying aim of advocating a typically Italian way of doing things. It is true that in certain cases he decries conditions in Italy, most notably those

regarding politics, and in fact he observes ruefully on several occasions that Italy is “prey” to other peoples (*e.g.*, II, 26: 121, and IV, 33: 317).² Nevertheless, the predominant mode is one of praise for things Italian.

In order to carry out his agenda of promoting a distinctively Italian culture Castiglione regularly draws comparisons with other peoples, including the French. The general refinement and versatility that he prescribes for his courtier, and for which he seeks a model founded on the best that Italian courts had to offer, is often contrasted with the less sophisticated mores of other peoples. Drawing sharp contrasts according to the traditional approach used by classical writers like Herodotus,³ on occasion he calls the others *barbarians* — a term which may etymologically have designated “strangers” but had, of course, negative connotations.⁴ However, in a number of areas, restricted as they may be, he does acknowledge the superiority of other cultures, including that of the French.

According to the data available from the digitized database of Letteratura Italiana Zanichelli, there are forty-one explicit references to France, the French people, or the French language in the definitive version of *Il libro del cortegiano*, compared to twenty-nine references to Spain, the Spaniards, and the Spanish language. Many of these passages in the printed text are well known. However, since the vulgate represents not the only version but indeed the last of three redactions of the treatise, it is worthwhile not simply to review the references themselves, but also and above all to see how these passages, and other related ones in the unpublished manuscripts too, evolved over the fifteen to twenty years, between 1513 or earlier and the date of publication, that Castiglione devoted to composing and revising his text.⁵ The five extant manuscripts examined for the present study — documents which are either completely autograph or contain autograph revisions throughout — consist of the early fragments, divided into two series, in the archive of the Castiglione family of Mantova, MS II 3 b (designated as A); the three manuscripts in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. 8204, 8205 and 8206, cited as B, C, and D, respectively) — the last of which, representing the second redaction, was published by Ghino Ghinassi;⁶ and the printer’s copy in the Medicio-Laurenziana Library of Florence, Ashburnham MS 409 (indicated as L). Following what is now standard practice, references in this paper to the manuscripts will consist of the identifying letter, and the indication of the series for A, followed by the number of the folio. Moreover, it appears appropriate to designate as A[B] a section of the Mantova manuscript that clearly belongs with the first of the Vatican manuscripts. As for the dating, manuscripts A, B, and C contain various versions of the first redaction, which, it is calculated, Castiglione began composing in 1513–14 and completed in 1518. The corrections to C, subsequently incorporated in

D for the second redaction, were completed in 1520–21, and the Laurenziana manuscript was dated by the copyist 23 May 1524. Corrections were made even to the last manuscript, and it was sent to the editor for linguistic revisions in April 1527, in preparation for publication the following year.

In the long gestation process of Castiglione's treatise that the manuscripts document, some allusions to France remained constant, but many underwent significant modification. By examining the corresponding parts of the earlier redactions, and tracing the evolution of the pertinent passages, it is possible to measure the changing impact of French culture on *Il libro del cortegiano*. The variants that have been noted, whether they involve the addition or deletion of whole passages, or minor revisions at the micro level, are quite telling. It is possible to demonstrate that, in the earlier drafts, Castiglione's recognition of the importance of France, especially from a political point of view, and his acknowledgment of the influence that French culture, especially that of the Middle Ages, had on sectors including chivalry, sports, fashion, and social behaviour, were even more explicit. At the same time, however, the denunciation of unfavourable aspects was also more pronounced originally than it eventually came to be in the definitive text.

On the topic of the *questione della lingua*, Count Ludovico da Canossa, the speaker who leads the discussion in Book One of *Il cortegiano*, expresses a relatively tolerant theory of language, which, at least at the outset, was open to the assimilation of neologisms and some foreign terms. In addition to favouring adherence to elegant words from all parts of Italy, rather than exclusively from Tuscany, he also approves of the use of French and Spanish terms that had become current in Italian speech. While the words quoted as examples in the printed version of the treatise (I, 34) are in actual fact mostly Spanish (perhaps only *rimproccio*, a term belonging to the vocabulary of chivalry, as Vittorio Cian explains, could be considered to be of combined Franco-Hispanic derivation⁷), an earlier draft of the list (C 45^r) had included the word *despitto*. The phrase concerning it read "*despitto* ch'è in francese" ("*despitto*, which is used in French"), but was later dropped,⁸ probably because the term was not really part of current usage. Not only the occasional adoption of French terms, but also the serious study of French and Spanish is recommended by Federico Fregoso, the discussion leader on the second evening of conversation. As he explains, Italians have many relations with France and Spain. Given that the monarchs of these two countries are "very powerful in war and most magnificent in peace" (II, 37: 135)⁹ and have noble gentlemen in their courts,¹⁰ it is imperative — almost to the point of excess, he had commented earlier — that Italians deal with them. Having first written "a noi *pur troppo* bisogna conversargli" (italics mine), that is, "*unfortunately* we must deal with them" (B 139^v), he then eliminated the

word “troppo,” so that, in C 114^r and thereafter in the subsequent versions, the element of regret or irony was eliminated.¹¹ In its final form it has been translated by Charles S. Singleton as “we do *indeed* have occasion to hold converse with them” [italics mine] (135).

In addition to acknowledging the importance of the French courtly tradition in general terms, Castiglione refers to it in connection with specific topics. His depiction of the ideal courtier covers, among many other things, the subject of the physical activities deemed appropriate to him. As far as sports are concerned, the count specifies that for jousting tournaments one must emulate the French: “In tourneys, in holding a pass, in attacking a fortified position, let him be among the best of the French” (I, 21: 38).¹² This view, holding up the French model for what was a typically mediaeval sport, was expressed in the earliest drafts of the treatise (A, ser. 1, 6^r; B 48^v) and remained unchanged throughout the period of revision. Although Castiglione rejected discussion of some intellectual chivalric traditions, as shall be shown, in the practical matter of sports, instead, he continued to recognize French superiority.¹³

On the topic of apparel and fashion in Book Two, Chapter Twenty-Six, Federico laments the fact that Italy no longer has a distinctive national dress and observes that, by copying foreign styles, Italians were only manifesting their “servitù” (II, 26: 158) (“servitude” [121]). In an earlier version he had decried this penchant on the part of his compatriots in stronger terms, accusing them not simply of “dressing in the style of *other peoples*” (121) but actually of following the styles of the *barbarians* (“abiliarsi alla foggia *de barbari*” [italics mine], B 124^v; C 101^r). The unflattering term *barbarians*, used more frequently in the earlier versions in various contexts, was subsequently changed in this passage to *stranieri* (“foreigners”) in the second redaction (111), and then to *altrui* (“other peoples”) in L 90^r and the printed edition (158). Castiglione does point to a mitigating factor, however, in that Italians, as it is said, actually adapt and improve the exaggerated styles of the French and Germans. Overall, we may conclude, he recognized the influence of French fashion, but preferred for Italian attire the darker colours of the Spaniards.

In the course of the discussion on the degree of arrogance or modesty permissible in the courtier’s deportment, one of the minor interlocutors states that France had *one of* the most noble courts of Christendom (“the court of France . . . is today *one of* the noblest in Christendom” [II, 21: 115]),¹⁴ whereas in a passage added in the margin of an earlier draft, as the work was being expanded, it had been cited as *the most noble* (“*la più nobile di Christianità*” [italics mine], C 96^r). Regardless of the French court’s ranking as the best or one of the best, Castiglione does detect some flaws,

namely, the vulgarity displayed there. We learn (II, 37) that the *marchese* Febus di Ceva had had most unpleasant experiences at Amboise at the table of the former duke of Orléans who was now king of France, that is, Louis XII, who reigned from 1498 to 1515. The offensive details about the banquet, together with an account of the odoriferous art of courtiership shown by a gentleman as he rode next to his lady, originally whispered by the speaker in the early redactions, had brought “a look of disgust on the faces” of those present at the Urbino conversations (B 138^v has “volti amari et stomachosi”; in C 113^v it is shortened to “volti amari”; and the passage is cancelled in the second redaction).¹⁵ But all this is barely hinted at in the printed edition, where Federico simply indicates that the Marquess Febus could recount the unpleasant things that he had seen in France and that perhaps had been done to him.¹⁶ This change, meant to downplay some less than dignified incidents, is undoubtedly the result of Castiglione's wish to update his text to portray the reign of the current king, Francis I (1515–47). It also reflects the author's general tendency in his revisions to eliminate transgressions of a modern code of gentility and correctness in order to adhere to the principles of moderation and decorum.¹⁷ In addition to toning down the severe criticism, he has none other than Febus himself defend the French immediately after in the same passage. The character insists that Italians owe much to the French in the way of fashion, festivities, banqueting, jousting and other military sports, and every other facet of courtly activity. The attribution is quite explicit: “everything that is good among the Italians,” he states, “in the way of dress, sports, banquets, handling arms, and everything else that befits a Courtier — they have gotten it all from the French” (134).¹⁸ In this discussion the observation is also made that, try as they might, Italians do not succeed in imitating correctly the French manner of shaking their heads, bowing, and walking briskly — gestures and movements that must have been deemed agreeable.

As regards deportment, Federico Fregoso acknowledges that there certainly are proper French gentlemen, but he finds that Spanish, rather than French customs, are more in keeping with those of the Italians: “it strikes me that the customs of the Spaniards suit the Italians better than do those of the French, because the calm gravity that is peculiar to the Spaniards is, I think, far more suited to us than the ready vivacity we see in the French in almost all their movements” (II, 37: 135).¹⁹ In this instance, too, Castiglione had made a small revision that rendered the judgment on the French more flattering, since their “pronta vivacità,” mentioned also in the second redaction (124), had originally been termed “inconsiderata vivacità” or “rash vivacity” in B 139^r and C 113^v. An additional positively worded phrase about this character trait found in the vulgate was first formulated in C 114^r to read

thus: “is not unbecoming to them, nay, is charming”(II, 37: 135).²⁰ Earlier it had expressed guarded approval — “is not unbecoming to them”²¹ — but was then turned into the more flattering depiction of French vivacity that continues into the edition.

A more fundamental comparison is drawn between the Italians and the French on the question of general cultural trends. Noting the substantial difference between the two peoples, he observes how the French glorify military endeavours, whereas Italians favour letters (“lettere”) or cultural pursuits. Thus, towards the end of Book One, Castiglione broaches the debate on the relative merits of arms and letters, using arguments that remained basically the same in the drafts of A, ser. 1, 12^r. Count Ludovico explains the two positions:

But, besides goodness, for everyone the true and principal adornment of the mind is, I think, letters; although the French recognize only the nobility of arms and reckon all the rest as nought; and thus not only do they not esteem, but they abhor letters, and consider all men of letters to be very base; and they think that it is a great insult to call anyone a clerk. (I, 42)²²

For Castiglione, as one may deduce from the discussion that ensues, the two are not mutually exclusive but are rather bound together or “conjoined” (I, 46: 73) (“concatenate” [97]), and many ancient examples are cited to support this belief. It is well known “how mistaken the French are,” Count Ludovico proclaims, “in thinking letters are detrimental to arms” (I, 43: 69).²³ Before rewriting this passage the author had referred to the “*barbari*” (A, ser. 1, 12^r) or persons who do not appreciate letters; but this was deleted in the subsequent version (B 63^v), where the passage was corrected to read from that point on as a less polemical condemnation of others “who hold an opinion contrary to mine” (68).²⁴ It should be observed, too, that in an early proem later discarded, Castiglione had dealt with the diversity of nature and peoples and included a statement about the difference between the “constantly warlike peoples” like the French, Germans and Swiss, as compared to the gentler Moors and inhabitants of India.²⁵ No further significant mention is made of the other peoples, but the French continue to constitute a standard of comparison. For Castiglione, though, eternal glory for heroic deeds is achieved precisely through literary commemoration. Forced to admit that Italians have neglected military matters, he places the blame on a few (the political leaders, one may assume), who have “brought not only serious harm but eternal blame upon all the rest” (I, 43: 70),²⁶ and chooses not to dwell on such a painful subject.

The general thrust and argumentation of this passage, so fundamental to the overall message about the centrality of culture conveyed by the text,

remained basically unchanged through the various redactions, as the manuscripts demonstrate, thus reflecting the author's unwavering conviction on this subject. In the field of music, he recognized the excellence of the composer Josquin des Prez, formerly believed to have been Flemish, but now known to have been a Frenchman.²⁷ Castiglione refers to him without indicating his nationality, and only in an anecdote, which did not undergo revisions, illustrating the importance of reputation (see II, 35, B 136^v; C 111^v; second redaction, 122). In II, 13 (and in all earlier versions of this passage, from A, ser. 2, 5^v; B 108^v–9^r; C 87^r–^v; second redaction, 95) he actually expresses his preference for what amounts to Italian musical styles, namely, solo singing or reciting accompanied by the playing of the viola. He continued to express dismay at the neglect of letters displayed by the French, especially in light of the fact that they could boast of having “a university such as that of Paris” (I, 42: 68).²⁸

On the subject of arms and letters, a few further revisions are of some relevance. In an early version, Castiglione had formulated a statement regarding the concept of the transfer of culture: he had written that the glory of arms had passed from an unspecified *us* (“*da noi*” [B 67^r, italics mine]) to the French. He may have originally equated his Italian contemporaries with the ancient Romans and then had second thoughts about this daring boast, for the phrase is corrected in C 53^r, where the reference to “us” is deleted, and the passage finally becomes one of great praise for the glory of arms that “flourishes and shines in France” (I, 42: 67).²⁹ In the earlier version, he had also written “*mainly in France*” (“*precipualemente in Franza*” [C 53^r, italics mine]; second redaction, 57), but this attenuation, too, was modified when the adverb was cancelled in L 46^v. Two further deletions of interest in this connection stand out in the collation of the texts. The phrase “to the great shame of the Italian name” (“*con grandissimo opprobrio del nome italiano*” [B 65^r and C 55^v]), decrying the humiliation inflicted upon Italy when the French invaded and subjugated the peninsula beginning in 1494, was not included in the second redaction. The author also expunged the allusion in an early manuscript to the fact that the French were subsequently chased out of Italy by a people, that is, the Spaniards, who were even more primitive and ignorant of letters than they were.³⁰ This omission was probably intended to lessen the likelihood of offending all involved — the Spanish, French, and Italians. Indeed, Castiglione's self-censoring revisions often involved the omission of passages that could be construed as offensive. There had been an earlier reference to Spain's glorious defeat of France in the kingdom of Naples at the hands of Captain Gonsalvo Ferrando (A, ser. 2, 99^v). This, too, vanished at an early point in the gestation of the treatise and is not found in C or any subsequent version. In Book Three,

Chapter Thirty-Five of the vulgate, we find just a brief reference to the captain and “his famous victories” and “egregious and worthy deeds” in peace and war (238)³¹ during the reign of Queen Isabella, but these heroic feats remain unspecified.

The allusions we have seen so far to certain shortcomings of French culture are counterbalanced by the extensive praise reserved for Monseigneur d’Angoulême (I, 42: 67), the future King Francis I, who, the interlocutor Giuliano de’ Medici hopes, will make letters flourish in his kingdom together with arms. Nevertheless, in the earlier redactions of this chapter, the king’s many good qualities were listed at even greater length. Laudatory phrases found in the early manuscripts about “all his rare virtues that are practically never to be found in the world nowadays”³² and “the belief that God guides him and will make him greater than other monarchs”³³ were later deleted in L 46^v and L 47^r, respectively. These revisions were probably the result of changing European politics and the author’s growing personal ties to the new superpower, Spain,³⁴ the country where he was sent as papal nuncio in 1521 and where, of course, he was to die in 1529. Nevertheless, the kingdom of France continues to be cited, from A, ser. 2, 98^v through C 215^v and all subsequent versions, as a positive model in the discussion of politics in Book Four of the treatise. A rhetorical question asked by Ottaviano Fregoso, which implies the importance of kingdoms in terms of the quality rather than quantity of their subjects, cites France as an illustration. The query is formulated as follows: “If some Circe were to change all the subjects of the King of France into wild beasts, would he not seem to you a petty lord even though he ruled over so many thousands of animals?” (IV, 35: 318).³⁵

In the revision of *Il libro del cortegiano*, criticism of the French may be softened in certain cases, as we have seen, but there is overall a reduction in the number of references to France and its people, as José Guidi has observed.³⁶ Further changes to the text, by way of deletions and additions, involved other important figures in French history, in addition to the current king. The original praise — found in the earlier redactions of the section on the female counterpart of the courtier, or lady of the palace — for both the heroic “pucella” Joan of Arc (d. 1431) and the ancient peace-loving Celtic women of the region that later became part of France, was eliminated. The story of Joan of Arc was not included in L, and the passage on the Celtic women was deleted in L 174^v–75^v. Of these admirable women he had previously written the following:

a young girl of very humble status, who appeared miraculously from no one knows where, was admitted into the council of captains. With so many good arguments

and so very prudently did she show them what needed to be done that she was deemed to be worthy of leading the expedition. She immediately mounted her horse and they followed her. She fought against the English with such personal skill and the favour of fortune, that she routed and defeated them several times and caused many deaths, thereby freeing all of France. The French call her "the Maiden" and continue to speak highly of her.³⁷

There broke out among them [*i.e.*, the Celts] a serious and difficult insurrection, which in a short time deteriorated into civil war (with the destruction and deaths that usually accompany this plague). Seeing the serious harm that was resulting from it, the women took it upon themselves to settle all the differences and, having heard the reasons for the dissension, they arrived at a judgment so prudently and correctly that there was immediately loving peace both in the city and in the private homes, to the great amazement of all. This is why from then on the Celts, when consulting about peace and war and complex matters with their confederates, always consulted the women. (C 251^r)³⁸

On the other hand, acknowledging the powers of his own day, the author added another two French examples toward the end of the revision stage by means of marginal glosses to L: a reference to Julius II's conquest of Bologna "with the help of the French" (I, 6: 17)³⁹ in the description of the setting for the conversations at Urbino at the beginning of the treatise; and the mention, in the list of women leaders, of Anne of Brittany (d. 1514), said to have been the equal of her husbands Charles VIII and Louis XII ("Queen Anne of France, a very great lady no less in ability than in station . . ." [III, 34: 236]),⁴⁰

Certain references to France in the embedded narratives are instead gratuitous and not historically determined to any significant degree. A tale about a woman's suicide by drowning (III, 47) alludes to the French sack of Capua, an event that occurred in 1501. Castiglione altered the joke about the simpleminded guard who had failed to defend his city and then expected recompense from the liberator. The original setting was in Brescia at the time that the French ruled; the guard was freed by the Duke of Nemours, who delivers the witty response (A 24^v; A[B] 43^v–44^r). In C 146^v and the second redaction (155), the characters were Spanish instead, and the locale had changed to the "terra del reame," but the reference to the French occupation was still kept. In the next phase, in L 127^{r-v}, the tale was transformed radically: the event takes place in an ancient setting, with Livio Salinatore as the unsuccessful defender of the fortress of Taranto eventually freed by Fabio Massimo. This version is crossed out, and in the margin the author has inserted the contemporary version found in the printed text featuring the Duke of Montefeltro, who recovers a territory that had been lost to the Borgias (II, 75). Cian points out that the original source for the anecdote, featuring the ancient characters, was Cicero (*De oratore*, II,

273).⁴¹ Given the comic context, it was clearly the punch line of the anecdote that concerned the author, not the specific circumstances, which he chose to modify several times.

The French have roles as protagonists in other humorous stories: King Louis XII is reported to have devised a clever retort to ward off potential plaintiffs, by stating that as king he could not punish the enemies he had previously had when he was duke of Orleans (II, 65)⁴²; captain Molart utters a witticism about his soldiers' lack of religious faith (II, 80)⁴³; and Bernardo Bibbiena narrates the prank he had played on a friend in Lyons, convincing the alarmed passers-by that he was holding down his companion out of fear he might try to commit suicide (II, 88) — a tale found in all the versions and that remained basically unchanged from the early fragments to the vulgate. The *double entendre* about Siena being "possessed" by the French is also preserved intact ("cavalcata alla franzese" [II, 68; A, ser. 2, 22^v; A[B] 39^r]), whereas another witticism told by the brother of the Grand Turk about the ridiculous slippers worn by the French at the time of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy was removed. It was included in A[B], 37^v–38^r, immediately preceding the Grand Turk's comment on jousts that "seemed to him too much if done in play and too little if done in earnest" (II, 66: 165).⁴⁴ It read as follows:

To someone who showed him the slippers worn by Frenchmen at the time that king Charles was in Italy, he said that if his father, who had been a great hunter, had found the prints of that slipper in the country, he would have thought they were the footprints of some great beast.⁴⁵

Since it was included in the category of witticisms that "can often be facetious and have a certain gravity that does not cause laughter" (II, 66: 165),⁴⁶ Castiglione may have decided to remove this passage out of a sense of political correctness or plain courtesy, in order to avoid offending the French.

One very significant deletion in connection with Frenchmen merits greater attention: in an early preface (found in C 1^r–6^r and an earlier draft in A, ser. 1, 3^r–^v, 16^r–17^r, and believed to have been written in 1515–16), Castiglione had originally shown even greater deference to King Francis I than is evident in the definitive text. There he announced that the French king, the "re christianissimo" (2^r), had actually commissioned the work on the courtier — clearly a fiction, as Cecil Clough pointed out,⁴⁷ since, by the time Castiglione first met the king in late 1515, the composition of his work was well advanced. In any case, he lavishes praise on the king, describing him, for instance, as being "endowed with those divine qualities that are so rarely seen on earth among mortals,"⁴⁸ and indirectly, through the mediation

of the dedicatee Alfonso Ariosto, exhorts the king in highly passionate terms to lead a religious crusade. This mission, which “will clearly show the whole world that he is a worthy successor not only to the status and name but also to the virtues of Charlemagne and many other princes of France like Godfrey, Baldwin, and Hugh,”⁴⁹ would appear to owe much to the French chivalric tradition. Francis I is urged to embark on this holy war in order “to remove from the world the Moslem sect that is so engrained and powerful”⁵⁰ and to follow the example of the Hungarian king who had defeated the Turks (in the mid-fifteenth century, that is). The French monarch, he writes, must live up to the reputation of his predecessors, and, relying on an army — *our* army,⁵¹ which is stronger than that of the infidels, Castiglione says, using the first person, as he involves himself deeply in this holy mission — must recover Christ’s burial place and thus avenge, among other injuries inflicted on the Christian religion, the more recent deaths of the French soldiers at Mytelene (in 1502) at the hands of “these treacherous dogs.”⁵² He will thereby acquire great glory for himself and will equal the king of Aragon, for “can we believe that the Spanish nation is of greater valour than the French? Or that the Catholic king is more Christian than the *christianissimo*?”⁵³ In our day, Castiglione writes early on, this is the way to equal and surpass the ancients, so that there will be no need to envy the ages of Achilles, Alexander, and Caesar. This passage comparing Francis I to ancient heroes, it should be noted, is cancelled in the early draft itself (A ser. 1, 15^r) and is not found in the fair copy of C.

All references to the King’s having requested the work, all praise of him and of his holy mission, and the declaration that the author had wished to serve him with both pen and arms — the latter found in A, ser. 1, 15^v and C 5^v — were deleted in C. The section crossed out in C is extensive and goes from folio 2^r to folio 6^r. In the final version of the treatise, the question of the religious mission against the Muslim world stands much differently. After the revisions, the sole references remaining to the crusades in the vulgate are much muted, ultimately occupying a rather unimpressive brief passage in the section on politics in Book Four, where it is stated, in a pseudo-prophetic manner, that the crusade could succeed if Monsignore d’Angolem [Francis I] were to become king of France:

what more noble, glorious and profitable undertaking could there be than for Christians to direct their efforts to subjugating the infidels? Does it not seem to you that such a war, if it should meet with good success and were the means of turning so many thousands of men from the false sect of Mohammed to the light of Christian truth would be as pleasing to the defeated as to the victors? (IV, 38: 321–22)⁵⁴

As a result of these changes, Francis I loses considerable ground in the text. Traditional explanations for the elimination of the preface featuring Francis I (beginning with those of abbot Pierantonio Serassi in the eighteenth century, and continuing with the views of Ghino Ghinassi, Piero Floriani, and José Guidi in our time) point to mainly historical and political factors. Castiglione reduced his praise of the French, it is thought, as his relations with the Church and Spain grew closer.⁵⁵ Serassi and, more recently, Quondam have pointed to stylistic considerations, too, noting that the excessive length of the three-folio early preface may have induced the author to excise it.⁵⁶ Indeed Quintilian does recommend that proems not be too long, too detailed, or too ornate (*The Education of the Orator*, IV, i), and Castiglione's adherence to the rules of rhetoric is undeniable. Another reason for the deletion could be that the issue of the crusade, which had been advocated by several popes in the late fifteenth century, among others by Pope Leo X in 1516–17,⁵⁷ had diminished in urgency in the 1520s, in part as new alliances among the European nations were being formed. To counter the power of Spain, France had actually established friendly ties with the Turks in 1519, so that the idea of a war against them was no longer applicable.

What should also be pointed out, though, is that, by reducing the emphasis on crusades, Castiglione was also rejecting more medieval values. When he first introduced the discussion of the courtier's main profession, namely arms, in an early manuscript draft (A, ser. 1, 4r), he had included a commentary, later discarded, on the importance of loyalty ("la fidelità"). In it he had lamented the fact that "to our great shame the crown of this virtue is worn by the barbarians" and that "its opposite vice" — treachery, we may deduce — is "the plague that has infected much of Italy."⁵⁸ But the virtue that he was eventually to exalt most in his treatise was a far cry from this. Glory for Castiglione, as has been seen, is to be achieved not through crusades or feudal loyalty or other chivalric ideals, but through intellectual, worldly accomplishments. Letters, in as much as they commemorate events, provide true lasting glory, true salvation and eternity: "it is true glory," he writes, "that is entrusted to the sacred treasury of letters" (I, 43: 69).⁵⁹ Moving beyond the medieval glorification of chivalry and the crusades, he transfers his focus and the concept of glory to cultural and artistic activities, thus attaining a system of thought that can safely be labelled as high Renaissance ideology, and eminently characteristic of Italy.⁶⁰

As the early clarion call for a crusade is whittled down in the vulgate, there is also evidence of Castiglione's growing indifference to the topic of the orders of chivalry. We find in Book Three, Chapter Two, an outline of the discussion of chivalric orders — their origins, purposes, procedures —

that the author had at one point intended to develop but subsequently abandoned. He has Federico Fregoso state, in fact, that talking about the orders of chivalry (for example, that of St. Michael in the House of France, instituted by Louis XI in 1469) is not important or pertinent to courtiers, for the topic is alien to the subject at hand: "But, truly, now is not the proper time for this discussion, especially as something else is to be said, which is far more to our purpose than this" (III, 2: 204).⁶¹ Even this reference through preterition to the topic of chivalry, found first in A, ser. 2, 14^v, C 181^r–82^v, and then in the second redaction (187–88), is shortened in L 149^v, where mention of the significance of coats of arms is finally removed. As a reflection of Castiglione's general rejection of the culture of medieval chivalry — a conclusion which perhaps runs counter to the assessment of Aldo Scaglione⁶² — we find that the more feudal term *dama*,⁶³ in all likelihood of French derivation, was deleted in many instances in favour of the more modern *donna* (see, for instance, the change in terminology from B 138^v to C 113^r).

In conclusion, Castiglione clearly intended to update his allusions to France, preferring contemporary references to medieval ones, but downplaying even modern French figures when it appeared opportune to leave them in the shadows of their Spanish counterparts. Although the changes would seem to indicate that France's political influence had begun to fade, the courtly culture of that nation continued to play an important role in the author's thinking. Some of the qualities of the French courtly tradition are retained, as we have seen, but overall they appear to be assimilated in the author's proposal for a distinctly Italian system. This is especially true of the more modern treatment of the theme of love that emerges over the course of the various redactions. As noted scholars, principally Piero Floriani and Guidi, have shown by comparing the last two printed redactions of the text,⁶⁴ a courtly approach to love involving the discretion required of the lady of the palace being courted is superseded in the last version of *Il cortegiano* by a full-fledged exposition of the Neoplatonic theory of love that philosophers had formulated late in the fifteenth century — a doctrine that had subsumed the earlier chivalric tradition into a more contemporary ideological framework. It may be useful to recall, however, that according to Cecil Clough, Castiglione added a strong appreciation of spiritual love not only out of ideological conviction, but also for practical purposes, in order to demonstrate that he was suited for papal service.⁶⁵

Those qualities of the French courtly tradition that Castiglione does retain, and that have been reviewed in the present analysis — some indicated in little known passages of the manuscripts — occupied a more prominent and explicit place in the early formulations of his work. Although some were

expunged, others remained intact or were incorporated in some way in the final version of the text. Their more obvious visibility and higher profile in the earlier redactions, although transformed into a more subtle presence later, indicate that these and other aspects of the text that focus on the French constituted a substantial factor in the make-up of *Il libro del cortegiano*. For Castiglione they clearly remained a significant point of reference for his literary masterpiece.

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Notes

1. See Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
2. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959). All quotations in English from the printed version are taken from this edition. The Italian word "preda" to describe Italy is found in Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1981), II, 26: 158, and IV, 33: 403. All subsequent quotations from the original text are from this edition. Book, chapter and page references for both the English translation and the Italian original are given in parentheses in the body of the text. Translations of the passages from the earlier manuscripts are mine.
3. Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pp. 25–26.
4. "Italy has not only been harried and ravaged, but long inhabited, by the barbarians" (I, 32: 52).
5. The fundamental studies on the manuscripts are the following: Ghino Ghinassi, "Fasi dell'elaborazione del *Cortegiano*," *Studi di filologia italiana* 26 (1967): 155–96, and, more recently, Amedeo Quondam, "*Questo povero Cortegiano*": *Castiglione, il libro, la storia* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2000).
6. Baldassare Castiglione, *La seconda redazione del Cortegiano*, ed. Ghino Ghinassi (Firenze: Sansoni, 1968). Page numbers are given in parentheses after references to this edition of the second redaction.
7. Vittorio Cian, ed., *Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1947), p. 45n. Castiglione uses *reprochio* in A, ser. 1, 4^r and B 42^r. It becomes *remprochio* in C 27^v and the second redaction (28), but is changed to *rimprochio* in L 19^r. In the vulgate we find *rimproccio* (I, 17) and also *rimprocchio* (I, 34).
8. The term is not found in the second redaction or any later version. It is interesting to note that Castiglione used Spanish but not French for parts of the dialogue in some of the witticisms he includes in his treatise. See my paper entitled "Gli spagnoli, lo spagnolo e le facezie nel *Libro del cortegiano*: dagli abbozzi autografi alla vulgata," to appear in the proceedings of a conference held at the University of Mexico in 2001.
9. The early versions had, instead, the phrase "very powerful in war and peace" ("potentissimi e ne la pace e nella guerra" [B 139^v; C 114^r; second redaction 125; italics mine). In L 101^r,

- the original phrase is corrected with an autograph marginal gloss to read “*potentissimi ne la guerra, e splendidissimi nella pace*” (italics mine), as in the edition (176).
10. “always have their courts full of noble cavaliers” (135); “sempre hanno la corte piena di nobili cavalieri” (176).
 11. Salvatore Battaglia's *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 14, 1052, confirms that these meanings were conveyed by the adverb *pur troppo* in Renaissance as in modern usage.
 12. “nel torneare, tener un passo, combattere una sbarra, sia bono tra i miglior Franzesi” (53).
 13. In his article in this volume, my colleague John McClelland makes a distinction between the theory and practice of sports *vis-à-vis* the respective superiority of the Italians and French in the Renaissance.
 14. “la corte di Francia . . . oggidì è *una delle più nobili de Cristianità*” (150, italics mine); the same reading appears in the second redaction (105).
 15. See Ghinassi's note in *La seconda redazione*, p. 124n.
 16. To Ludovico Pio's question about some of the disgusting practices at certain courts, Federico replies, “Get Marquess Febus to tell you, who has often seen them in France; and perhaps they were done to him” (134). The Italian original reads: “Fatevele dire al marchese Febus, che spesso l'ha vedute in Francia, e forse gli è intravenuto” (174–75).
 17. I have dealt briefly with revisions on other topics including humour and women in “Time and Space in the Composition of *Il libro del cortegiano*,” *Studi d'italianistica nell'Africa australe/Italian Studies in Southern Africa* 14.2 (special issue: *Time and Space in Italian Culture and Beyond*) (2001): 17–32. Another two essays of mine treat the evolution of the dialogue form: “L'evoluzione della struttura dialogica nel *Libro del cortegiano*,” in *Il sapere delle parole: Studi sul dialogo latino e italiano del Rinascimento. Giornate di studio Anversa 21–22 febbraio 1997*, ed. Walter Geerts, Annick Paternoster, Franco Pignatti (Roma: Bulzoni, 2001), pp. 59–68, and “The Development of Dialogue in *Il libro del cortegiano*: From the Manuscript Drafts to the Definitive Version,” in *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue*, ed. Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).
 18. “ciò che hanno di bon gli Italiani nei vestimenti, nel festeggiare, banchettare, armeggiare ed in ogni altra cosa che a cortegian si convenga, tutto l'hanno dai Franzesi” (175).
 19. “a me par che con gli Italiani più si confaccian nei costumi i Spagnoli che i Franzesi, perché quella gravità riposata peculiar dei Spagnoli mi par molto più conveniente a noi altri che la pronta vivacità, la qual nella nazione francese quasi in ogni movimento si conosce” (175).
 20. “non disdice anzi ha gratia” (175).
 21. “non disdice tanto” (B 139^f).
 22. “Ma, oltre alla bontà, il vero e principal ornamento dell'animo in ciascuno penso io che siano le lettere, benché i Franzesi solamente conoscano la nobiltà delle arme e tutto il resto nulla estimo” (90).
 23. “quanto s'ingannano i Francesi pensando che le lettere nuocciano all'arme” (92).
 24. “altri che fosseno d'opinion contraria alla mia” (91).
 25. “popoli sempre bellicosissimi” (B 88^f and C 71^v).
 26. “aver dato, oltre al grave danno, perpetuo biasmo a tutti gli altri” (93).

27. I am most grateful to Professor Bill Bowen of the University of Toronto for informing me of the recent scholarship on Josquin proving that he was probably a Frenchman; see, e.g., Paul A. Merkley and Lora L. M. Merkley, *Music and Patronage in the Sforza Court* (Cremona: Brepols Turnhout, 1999), ch. 11 ("Jossequin Lebloitte dit Desprez, son of Gossard"), pp. 425–90. The remarks made at the February 2003 conference by Professor Maureen Epp of the University of Waterloo have also been very useful to me.
28. "un così *nobil* studio come è quello di Parigi" (90 and also L 47^v). In B 67^v, C 53^v, and the second redaction (57), he had called it, instead, "un così *florido* studio come è Parigi" (my italics, highlighting the change from "flourishing" to "noble").
29. "fiorisce e risplende precipuamente in Franza" (I, 42: 90).
30. "cacciati da gente assai più efferata et più ignorante de lettre che essi non sono" (deleted in B 65^r).
31. "le sue famose vittorie" and "quelle egregie e virtuose opere" (305). The same thing is found also in C 253^v and the second redaction (256).
32. Camillo Paleotto speaks of "tutte quelle rare virtù che hoggidì quasi non si trovano al mondo" (B 67^r, C 53^v).
33. Count Ludovico states that "creder si può che Dio lo governi et voglia farlo grande sopra gli altri" (B 67^r, C 54^r).
34. The Spanish factor involved in these changes has been studied by others on the basis mainly of the printed texts: see Piero Floriani, "La genesi del *Cortegiano*: prospettive per una ricerca," *Belfagor* 24 (1969): 373–85; Piero Floriani, "Idealismo politico del *Cortegiano*," *La rassegna della letteratura italiana* 76 (1972): 43–52; and José Guidi, "Baldassar Castiglione et le pouvoir politique: Du gentilhomme de cour au nonce pontifical," in *Les écrivains et le pouvoir en Italie à l'époque de la Renaissance*, ed. André Rochon, vol. 1 (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1973), pp. 243–78.
35. The fact that this passage is found in A 98^v, C215^v, and all subsequent versions, but not B, may prove that parts of the fragments in A were written after B and that A is not necessarily the earliest manuscript for all parts of the text.
36. José Guidi, "De l'amour courtois à l'amour sacré," in *Images de la femme dans la littérature italienne de la Renaissance. Préjugés misogynes et aspirations nouvelles* (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1980), p. 68.
37. "una fanciulla de bassissima conditione la quale non si sa donde venisse quasi miracolosamente apparve et adnessa nel consiglio de li capitanei, con tante ragioni e così prudentemente mostrò loro quello che far si dovea che fu estimata degna di governare quella espeditione e senza più montò a cavallo e fu seguitata e andò contro li englesi con tanta sua virtù e favor di fortuna che più di una volta li ruppe e disfece con grandissima loro occisione, onde liberò tutta Franza e questa chiamano francesi la pucella che anchor di là molto se ne parla" (C 245^{r-v}; second redaction, 249; not found in L).
38. "tra essi nacque una grave seditione e difficile, la quale in poco processo di tempo si converse totalmente in guerra domestica (con quelle ruine e morti che sogliono accompagnare questa peste). Vedendo adonche le donne el grave danno che di ciò seguiva, tolsero impresa de assettare ogni lor differentia, et havendo inteso le cause de le contentioni così prudentemente e senza errore le iudicarno, che subito nacque amorevol pace e ne la città e ne le case private con molta maraviglia de ognuno. Per questo dipoi volsero sempre li Celti consultando della pace et guerra e de cose ambigue, con li suoi confederati, haver el

- consiglio delle donne . . . ” (C 251^r). The extra phrase denouncing civil war was not included in the second redaction (254). The whole passage was crossed out in L 174^v–75^r.
39. “con l’aiuto de’ Franzesi” (L 6^v; I, 6: 25).
 40. “Anna regina di Franza, grandissima signora non meno di virtù che di stato . . . ” (L 175^v; III, 34: 302).
 41. Cian, pp. 256–57n.
 42. In an interlinear correction “duca d’Orliens” is substituted for the original phrase “in basso stato” [in a low station] in C 139^v.
 43. It remains the same from A, ser. 2, 27^r, onward.
 44. “gli pareva troppo per scherzare e poco per far da dovero” (214).
 45. “disse . . . ad uno che gli mostrò le pantoffole che portorno gli francesi al tempo di Carlo in Italia, ché se suo patre, quale era stato gran cacciatore, havesse trovate le pedate di quella pantoffola in campagna, le haria estimate per pedate di una gran bestia” (in A[B] 37^v–38^r, where it is deleted).
 46. “Si morde ancora spessa facetamente con una certa gravità senza indur riso” (214).
 47. Cecil H. Clough, “Francis I and the Courtiers of Castiglione’s *Courtier*,” *European Studies Review* 8 (1978): 24–26.
 48. “dotato di quelle divine conditioni che così rade volte in terra tra mortali se ritrovano” (A, ser. 1, 15^r; C 2^v).
 49. “deve chiaramente mostrare a tutto `l mondo di essere degno successore non solamente del stato et del nome, ma anchor de le vertuti . . . di Carlo Magno, molti altri principi de la nation francese” (A, ser. 1, 3^r; C 3^r).
 50. “rimover dal mondo una così inveterata e potente setta come la maumetana” (C 2^v; A, ser. 1, 15^r).
 51. “la nostra militia” (A, ser. 1, 3^v and 16^r; C 3^v).
 52. “questi perfidi cani” (A, ser. 1, 16^r; C 4^r).
 53. “potremo noi credere che la nation spagnola sia di più valor che la francese, o che `l re catholico sia più christiano che `l christianissimo?” (A, ser. 1, 16^r; C 4^{r-v}).
 54. “qual più nobile e gloriosa impresa e più giovevole potrebbe essere, che se i Cristiani voltasser le forze loro a subiugare gli infideli? Non vi parrebbe che questa guerra, succedendo prosperamente ed essendo causa di ridurre dalla falsa setta di Maumet al lume della verità cristiana tante migliaia di omini, fosse per giovare così ai vinti come ai vincitori?” (408–9).
 55. See the studies cited in note 34 above and also the brief comments by the following: Pierantonio Serassi, ed., *Lettere del conte Baldessar Castiglione*, vol. I (Padova: Giuseppe Comino, 1679), p. 181n.; Ghinassi, “Fasi,” pp. 180–81.
 56. Serassi, *Lettere*, p. 181n. Quondam, p. 83.
 57. J. R. Hale, *Renaissance Europe 1480–1520* (London: Collins, 1976), pp. 101–4. I wish to thank Mark Crane, the respondent to this paper as originally presented, for his remarks on the need to consider Castiglione’s revisions in the context of French politics, too.
 58. “`l vicio a quella [fedeltà] contrario . . . [ha] a tempi nostri di tal peste infettato tante de la natione italiana, che con grandissimo biasmo nostro la corona di questa virtù è restata a barbari.”

59. "la vera gloria [è] quella che si commenda al sacro tesoro delle lettere" (92).
60. See my paper entitled, "Renaissance Ideologies in *Il libro del cortegiano*: From the Manuscript Drafts to the Printed Edition," to appear soon in *Studi rinascimentali: Rivista internazionale di letteratura italiana*.
61. "Ma invero non è ora conveniente entrar in questo ragionamento, essendovi massimamente altro che dire, e molto più al nostro proposito che questo" (III, 2: 262).
62. In his remarks on Castiglione, Aldo Scaglione, in *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry, and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 230, 236, and 240, points to many medieval and chivalric elements in the text. He argues that the idea of courtiership is a continuation of the earlier courtly tradition. The same author, in his article, "Vita segreta delle corti nel Rinascimento italiano," *Annali di italianistica* 13 (1995): 439–54, distinguishes between the tradition of the *curialis* and that of the secular knight (pp. 448–49), arguing that Castiglione's courtier owes more to the former. Walter Barberis, in the introduction to his edition of *Il libro del cortegiano* (Torino: Einaudi, 1998), p. xxvi, maintains that the treatise marks the last in a long line of courtly books and represents the end of the courtly tradition.
63. See the explanation of this old chivalric term, meaning at one time the mistress of a feudal territory or wife of a feudal lord or knight ("anticamente, signora di un feudo o moglie del signore di un feudo o di un cavaliere"), in Battaglia, 4, 2.
64. Piero Floriani, "Dall'amor cortese all'amor divino," in *Bembo e Castiglione: Studi sul classicismo del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1976), pp. 169–86; Guidi, "De l'amour," pp. 9–80. See also brief observations in Ghinassi, "Fasi," pp. 173–74.
65. See Clough, p. 26.