of the Arundel Harington manuscript, the *Liber Lilliatii*, and the Dalhousie manuscripts.

North's final chapter, on women's authorship, shows convincingly that, pace Virginia Woolf, Anon was not usually a woman. She presents some very fruitful readings of anonymous verse that demonstrate the social predicament of early modern women writers. She suggests, uncontroversially, that authentic women's authorship may not be marked by gender at all. What is missing here is the examination of the opus of a recently identified woman author, perhaps Hester Pulter, who does not always choose an explicitly feminised voice in which to speak. This might provide some markers for woman's authorship which are not to be found in anonymous poetry in which, as Marcy North states, it is impossible to judge the gender of the writer.

In the end, establishing the identity of Anon, and therefore reducing the amount of suggestive and mysterious material she has to work with, is not in Marcy North's interest. It is, however, a paradox that a meaningful study of anonymity has to deal with its opposite—identification. This tension is found throughout this study, but it is a fruitful tension that produces many important insights into the nature of authorship in the early modern period, as well as some crucial frameworks for the reading of individual texts.

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Jo Ann Cavallo. *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Place*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. 294.

Jo Ann Cavallo's book examines the development of the Italian chivalric romance tradition in its *durée*, from Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (1482; 1483 and 1495) and Cieco da Ferrara's *Il Mandriano* (1509) to Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (in two extensively surveyed versions of 1516 and 1532), and *Cinque Canti* (composed 1519–21). Cavallo then moves to Giangiorio Trissino's *L'Italia liberata da' Goti* (1547–48), Bernardo Tasso's *L'Amadigi* (1560), and concludes with two works by Torquato Tasso, the youthful *Il Rinaldo* (1562) and *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581). This is a tall order, by any means.

Cavallo's intent, as she states briefly, is to examine how the genre of chivalric romance was used to foster an ideological program of education through literature, along the lines that humanists such as Guarino da Verona (in Ferrara 1429–60) were advocating. This means that writers of romances of chivalry are analyzed for the way they tried to form good individuals and honourable rulers through their poetic fictions. Cavallo repeatedly encourages us to read the actions of a knight intervening to bring justice in the larger context of his "role of a civic-minded reader." The notion that literature and history produce a civic sense informs Cavallo's interpretations of all the above-mentioned authors, the first of

whom, Boiardo, advances a program of education, while Tasso—the last of the authors here examined—is the least interested in such an agenda.

Boiardo is identified as the author keenest in constructing what might be termed a narrative of empire, while Ariosto becomes increasingly aware of the ethical responsibilities a writer has when embracing a policy of unconditional support for his patron. “Ariosto’s negative rewriting of Boiardo’s civic virtues trilogy and its surrounding narrative context,” Cavallo writes, “not only casts doubt on the *Innamorato*’s essentially humanist belief in the ability of literature and history to promote justice in the civic arena, but also questions the power of good actions to make a difference for the better” (p. 120). The most interesting part of this argument involves Cavallo’s bold reinterpretation of the last author in her study, Tasso: Cavallo daringly overturns the assumption that the *Liberata* is the most politically conservative of the romances of chivalry here examined, for it ends with Tasso casting a suspicious eye over his Estense patrons. In the end, according to the author, “we have moved from a politically engaged Boiardo, whose poem proclaimed the tenets of civic humanism, to an individualistic Tasso repelled by the repressive aspects of the Counter-Reformation society he is often thought to represent” (p. 233). Cavallo leaves unanswered the question of why Tasso would even have wanted to pursue the goal of political guidance through writing, particularly after Guarino and other humanists like him had been dead for a century.

The author is at her most cogent and thoughtful when she writes of Tasso, especially in the context of the seductress episode. The topos of the glamorous and alluring siren—first loved, soon used, and eventually abandoned—is typical of chivalric romances and Cavallo retraces it through the narratives of the different authors of her book. So in Ariosto, for example, Alcina appears as an old hag with sparse white hair and no teeth when Ruggiero has to abandon her to follow his superior call to duty; and in Trissino, the knight Trojano lifts the skirt of the seductress Acrasia—in abandoning her for his manly goal of state building—thus exposing her genitals, from which two horrific Medusean snakes emerge and a fierce stench emanates. In the case of Tasso, however, things are different, Cavallo argues, for he indeed has his seductress, Armida, abandoned by the Christian hero, Rinaldo, after the pleasures of love have been duly enjoyed; but Rinaldo then finds his “ancilla” again. Will he marry her and reverse this dominant literary motif? Tasso will not tell. In this silence a myth is rewritten and the establishment of an empire questioned.

Cavallo ambitiously challenges narratives of silence, but as an astute reader, she could have strengthened her argument by including an example from chivalric romances written by women. For if the imperative of the main male character in romances of chivalry is the founding of a proper genealogical line for the prince from which a nation springs — thus necessitating an appropriate selection of the “good” and the elimination of the “bad” woman—one might wonder whether women writers develop their stories of *real politik* by a debasing female *hara-kiri*. Moderata Fonte, for one, did not. Her enchantress—an aptly named Circetta,

daughter of Circe and Ulysses in her *Tredici canti del Floridoro*, published the very year of Tasso's *Liberata*—is neither abandoned nor killed. In fact she stays youthfully vivacious and smells marvellously. Because they worked with the much imitated and imitative genre of the chivalric romance, it was unthinkable that women writers would avoid adopting the key narrative topos of the enchantress. But the way Fonte did it (and Lucrezia Marinella did as well with the figure of Erina in *Enrico*), shows that her decision was not only politically motivated but also informed by questions about culture and gender.

Cavallo is at her best when she engages in close readings and details the wealth of cross-references embedded in a large number of episodes. Such a painstaking enterprise, in which redeployed, modified, clarified and rewritten stories illuminate each other contrapuntally, makes the book a most valuable teaching tool and shows the extensive amount of imitation from which the genre of chivalric romance developed. I would have wanted the critical premises of this study to be explained in more detail and some of the recurrent concepts (“humanism” for one) to be better contextualized and their relevance to sixteenth century authors clarified; I would also have welcomed direct engagement with questions of authority and literary ghosts. But as it stands, and specifically because of its span and the wealth of episodes examined, Cavallo's *Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso* has vibrant new things to say on how our Renaissance *corone* constructed, with and against each other, enduring and entertaining narratives.

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