Opening Pandora’s Box: Charles d’Orléans’s Reception and the Work of Critical Bibliography: The 2022 Annual Meeting Keynote

Elizaveta Strakhov
Marquette University, yelizaveta.strakhov@marquette.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/english_fac

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
Opening Pandora’s Box: Charles d’Orléans’s Reception and the Work of Critical Bibliography

The 2022 Annual Meeting Keynote

ELIZAVETA STRAKHOV

Good afternoon. It is a true honor to be here, having nurtured my own scholarship on the work of the very scholars who have given this lecture before me. In fact, Ann Blair, who gave this same lecture in 2017, was the one who first introduced me to book history in an undergraduate seminar. The main subject of my talk—Grenoble, Bibliothèque municipale MS 873—is an all-but-unknown manuscript miscellany of work by the late medieval poet Charles d’Orléans, a manuscript heretofore substantively treated only in A. E. B. Coldiron’s excellent study of the

Elizaveta Strakhov is Associate Professor of English at Marquette University. She is the author of Continental England: Form, Translation, and Chaucer in the Hundred Years’ War (Ohio State University Press, 2022); co-editor, with Megan L. Cook, of John Lydgate’s Dance of Death and Related Works (TEAMS, 2019); and co-editor, with Sarah Baechle and Carissa M. Harris, of Rape Culture and Female Resistance in Late Medieval Literature (Penn State University Press, 2022). Her work on medieval lyric, manuscript miscellanies, Chaucer, and Anglo-French relations in the Hundred Years War has appeared in Studies in the Age of Chaucer, New Literary History, Huntington Library Quarterly, and Yearbook of Langland Studies, among other places.

For Barbara Newman, in recognition for a lifetime of excellence in scholarship and mentorship. With warm gratitude to Barbara Shailor for inviting me to give this talk at the BSA’s Annual Meeting in February 2022, and to Megan Cook, Damian Fleming, Zachary Hines, and Georgia Henley for generous feedback on an earlier version of this piece.

The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, volume 116, number 4, December 2022. © 2022 Bibliographical Society of America. All rights reserved. Published by The University of Chicago Press for the Bibliographical Society of America.

https://doi.org/10.1086/722448
poet. Charles—Duke of Orléans as well as nephew to King Charles VI of France and thus in line for the French throne—was captured at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 during the ongoing Hundred Years War (1337–1453). Given his royal lineage, he spent nearly twenty-five years under royal house arrest in England. In this time, remarkably, he learned English as a second language so proficiently that he became a bilingual poet writing hundreds of poems in both French and English.

Grenoble 873 does not include any of Charles’s English poetry. Nevertheless, it demonstrates its own investments in questions of multilingualism by choosing to present its selection of Charles’s French verse with a facing-page translation into Latin, a striking decision for a period in which translation of secular vernacular poetry into Latin is all but unheard of. This Latin translation belongs to the pen of Antonio Astesano, the Grenoble manuscript’s compiler and a fairly prominent figure in northern Piedmontese humanist circles. Antonio was born ca. 1412 in Villanova d’Asti in the Asti region, as his family name implies; he studied at Pavia and taught there, as well as in Genoa and Asti, capital of the Asti region, between 1429 and 1436. He sent eclogues to the famous humanist Lorenzo


Valla and received verses from the no-less-famous humanist Eneo Silvio Piccolomini. In 1460, a German student at Pavia copied twenty-four letters that had been written by Antonio to a circle of Italian humanists: evidently, Antonio’s ideas held enough significance to be gathered by a non-native resident in the town where Antonio had taught some thirty years earlier. Besides his Latin translation of Charles d’Orléans’s work, Antonio’s extant writings—many found exclusively in the Grenoble manuscript—include a laudatory description of Paris and surrounding regions, a four-part set of elegies, a three-part set of “heroic verses,” as their scribal rubric describes them, and shorter political texts on the Hundred Years War and northern Italian political events. These and other works by Antonio are replete with the complex allusions to Greco-Roman mythology and classical authors that stamp them as humanist enterprises.

By ca. 1436 Antonio moved back to Asti, and it was this move that placed him into Charles d’Orléans’s orbit. The Asti region had been given in 1387 in dowry to Valentina Visconti, Charles’s mother, and inherited by her son upon her death, but from 1422, while Charles remained in English captivity, it was administered by Valentina’s brother Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan from 1412. Even though Charles was released in 1440, the wealthy Asti region remained under firm Milanese control until Filippo’s death in 1447. In the same year, a pro-Orléans Asti
faction successfully organized a massive triumphal entry for Charles into their capital city to mark his reclamation of his Piedmontese possessions.10

Renato Bordone and Donatella Gnetti have suggested that Antonio may have been one of the duke’s long-time Asti supporters, as one of the other texts in Grenoble MS 873, dated all the way back to 1435 (fol. 139v) and praising Joan of Arc, is dedicated to the duke and discusses him within the text.11 In the prologue to book 3 of his elegies, also copied elsewhere into the Grenoble manuscript, Antonio clarifies that he met Charles when the latter came to Asti for his triumphal entry and eventually became Antonio’s patron (fol. 122v). When Charles returned to France in 1448, he evidently brought his new protegé with him, as documents and letters in Antonio’s hand, as well as Charles’s household records, show Antonio residing in Charles’s household through 1453.12 Throughout the Grenoble manuscript, Antonio repeatedly refers to himself as Charles’s secretary (Antonii astensis illustriissimī...ducis primī secretarī) in numerous colophons (fols. 1r, 134v, 135v, 135r, 152v, 153r, 154v, and 155v), suggesting he was indeed an official member of the duke’s household, and two books of his “heroic verses” are indicated as having been composed in Blois in 1450 (fol. 146r) and 1451 (fol. 152v).13 Antonio’s time in France explains his encounter with Charles’s poetry, as he himself suggests in the prologue to his Latin translation of Charles’s work:


11. Bordone and Gnetti, “Cortesia,” 206. For a discussion and edition of Antonio’s treatment of Joan of Arc, which is regrettablly beyond the scope of this article, see Antoine de Latour, La vierge guerrière Jeanne de France, fragment d’un poème d’Antoine Astesan (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1874). The text’s dominant focus on Joan of Arc’s campaign to lift the siege of Orléans explains its relevance to Charles d’Orléans. Note that Grenoble MS 873 has been misnumbered at folio 36 as folio 37, but, for ease, I will follow the manuscript’s foliation, as does Coldiron.


13. All text from Grenoble MS 873 is from my own transcription with abbreviations silently expanded and punctuation added; unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.
When I had busied myself within the French realms so long that the French tongue had become known to me . . . favorable fortune granted me a pleasing little book . . . When I read the title, I came to the conclusion that it was the work of the prince of Orleans.14

CLASSIFYING GRENOBLE MS 873

Grenoble MS 873 is thus a manuscript of French poetry, written by a poet bilingual in French and English, with a facing-page Latin translation executed by a Francophile Italian humanist. So how exactly do we classify Grenoble MS 873? Should we understand it as a French manuscript, as a Latin manuscript, or, maybe, as an Italian work? Perhaps concentrating too heavily on the multilingual and peripatetic identities of the key figures involved is leading us astray, whereas the manuscript’s bibliographical features—that is to say, its codicological and paleographical details—may offer a more definitive means of identifying this compilation. For example, we might consider the classic question of where was this manuscript made?

The last poem by Charles that Antonio included in the manuscript has been dated 1453, and, as we will later see, Antonio’s arrangement of Charles’s poetry closely follows that of Charles’s own autograph manuscript of his French verse, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fonds français (hereafter BnF fr.) 25458, kept in his ducal household at Blois.15 This phenomenon, coupled with Antonio’s own claim in his preface that he encountered a book of the duke’s poetry while in France, suggests that Antonio began, or conceived, his project while staying with Charles. The presence of marginalia on fols. 18r and 34r reading “Symon

14. I thank Thomas C. Sawyer for translating these lines for me.
Cailleau” confirms this hypothesis: a squire in Charles’s household, Simon Cailleau also appears as the author of five poetic works in BnF fr. 25458.16

Charles’s verse takes up a substantial portion of Grenoble MS 873, running from fols. 9r–111r. This Franco-Latin content is framed by Latin writings by Antonio on various Italian events, such as an earthquake in Naples in 1456 and elegiac verses addressed to the ruling Marquises of Montferrat and of Saluzzo, minor principalities in northern Italy. The full list of the Grenoble compilation’s contents runs as follows:

fols. 1–5: an account of a 1456 earthquake in Naples and of the apparition of the Cross above Capua in Italy, dedicated to Charles d’Orléans, 1457 (followed by a blank page)

fols. 6r–7r: praise to Charles VII on the acquisition of Genoa, 1458 (followed by a blank page and leaf)

fol. 9r: Antonio’s Latin prologue to his selection and translation of Charles’s French verse, 1450s–early 1460s

fols. 9r–111r: Charles d’Orléans’s French verse with Antonio’s facing-page Latin translation, 1450s–early 1460s (followed by a blank page and leaf)

fols. 113r–34r: four books “elegorum” (of elegiac verses) with sections dedicated to John Jacob Palaeologus, Marquis of Montferrat, and his several sons, 1448 (followed by a blank page)

fols. 135r–52r: three books “heroici carminis” (of heroic song) dedicated to Charles VII, with internal sections dedicated to Charles d’Orléans; Ludovico I del Vasto, Marquis of Saluzzo; Charles’s brother John of Angoulême; and John II, Marquis of Montferrat; the three books are dated 1436, 1450, and 1451, respectively

fols. 153r–54v: account of the apparition of the Cross in Bayonne in France, dedicated to Charles VII, 1452

fols. 155r–38v: a “libellus de re funerea” (a small book of funeral verses) dedicated to Tommaso Franco, royal physician to Charles VII, undated

fols. 158r: short verse on the 1461 death of Charles VII (followed by a blank leaf)17

Colophons for the two texts on the Naples earthquake and the acquisition of Genoa, placed before the selection of Charles’s verse, declare them to


17. For a detailed overview of the manuscript’s contents, see M. Berriot-Saint-Prix, Jeanne d’Arc ou coup-d’œil sur les révolutions de France (Paris: Pillet, 1817), 279–320.
have been written in Asti (fol. 5r: “ex [...] civitate Astensi”; fol. 7r, “ex urbe Astensi”) in 1457 and 1458, respectively. Meanwhile, as noted earlier, the discussion of Joan of Arc, found in book 1 of Antonio’s heroic epistles, is dated 1435. Thus, Antonio not only evidently returned to Asti at some point and continued working on the texts anthologized into the Grenoble collection for some years after, but he also gathered texts written much earlier in his career for inclusion into the compilation. The very last item found in Grenoble MS 873, meanwhile, is a Latin poem by Antonio eulogizing the 1461 death of King Charles VII of France.

Notably, all the Latin works have detailed titles and colophons, rubricated in prominent red ink, except for the Charles d’Orléans section, though space has been left for them. This key distinction reveals that Grenoble MS 873’s selection of Charles’s work underwent a slightly different production process from its other Latin writings, even though both parts of the manuscript share a single scribe. Clearly, the compilation originally existed as two separate booklets, copied by one person, that were eventually brought together to form a whole. At that point, however, the whole manuscript was decorated cover to cover with a unified visual program, which, as Coldiron has observed, is far more characteristic of mid-late fifteenth-century French manuscripts, rather than humanist Italian ones. The lack of any references to Charles d’Orléans’s death in 1465 furnishes a definitive terminus ante quem for the Grenoble compilation, and the presence of the duke’s arms on fols. 1r, 9r, and 113r suggests that the whole collection was intended as a presentation copy for Charles. Nevertheless, the absence of any ownership marks indicates that Charles may have never received it.

The hybrid quality of this manuscript’s production process is underlined by the identity of its scribe, Niccolò Astesano, Antonio’s younger brother by approximately twenty years. Born ca. 1431 or 1432, Niccolò also ended up in Charles’s ducal household, possibly accompanying his brother from Asti in 1448 or sometime later. Niccolò’s other extant

18. See also Coldiron (Canon, Period, 194–95) on the stub in the final quire of Charles’s poetry and catchwords in the quires placed after the poetry selection, further suggesting at least two separate booklets later brought together.

19. For a detailed description of the manuscript, see Coldiron, Canon, Period, 191–200; on the Frenchness of the decoration, 192n4, 196–97.

manuscripts point to a busy scribal career of rendering elaborate presentation copies for Charles: namely, two treatises on venoms (copied together in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds latin [hereafter, BnF lat.] 11230); a collection of theological works including texts by Augustine and Gregory the Great (BnF lat. 1863), with a colophon noting it was copied by Niccolò at Blois in 1453 and with Charles’s ownership mark on fol. 35v; and a treatise by Jean Gerson (BnF lat. 479).21

In this way, the deceptively simple question of where was the manuscript made yields only more complexity. Grenoble MS 873 emerges as a hybrid compilation with its Franco-Latin contents, Franco-Italian subject matter, and a transregional production process that betrays evidence of conception at Blois, compilation in the Asti region, yet finalization on French, rather than Italian, visual models with the intention of creating a presentation copy for the French aristocrat whose work occupies its core. To complicate matters still more, the manuscript’s Latin contents are dedicated not only to various Italian political figures, as noted above, but also to French figures like Charles d’Orléans himself; his father Louis, Duke of Orléans; his brother John of Angoulême; and King Charles VII of France, among others.

THE TASK OF CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts such as these, I submit, are precisely the kind of material object that requires critical bibliography to make sense of them. But what is critical bibliography, that elusive, difficult term that has given its name to a whole Society of Fellows at Rare Book School? In 2016, in his lecture before this Society’s Annual Meeting, Michael F. Suarez made the following remarks regarding the task and aims of bibliography:

the initial incomprehension characterizing our encounter with evidence that does not conform to our established interpretive practices may—if we are persistent, creative, and willing to take an intellectual risk or two—lead us to broader, more capacious understandings. […] I’d like to suggest to you that the animating question of bibliography is not, What is the ideal text of Shakespeare?

Rather, I think the question that preoccupies all of us is, *How did this book come to be the way it is?*22

Further on in his talk Suarez asks, “How by attending carefully to the textual artifact itself, am I taught what questions I need to pursue?”23

If you will indulge me, I would like to build on Suarez’s dicta. Beyond the question of *how did this book come to be the way it is and what questions do I need to pursue*, I would also ask: How did this book come to be the way it is and *how do we know the answers to the questions we are asking*? Whether we consider Grenoble MS 873 from authorial, generic, linguistic, or bibliographical perspectives, we end up with a material object that eludes contemporary classificatory containers that are still all-too-often predicated on an accepted stability of authorship—itself further artificially stabilized by considerations of an author’s spoken language and geographical origin—and on an over-emphasis on the bounded regionality of manuscript production processes. Material texts like the Grenoble compilation do not just push us to ask new questions; they invite us to critique the existing questions we have automatically asked of material texts.

But, you might be thinking, plenty of material texts are linguistically, formally, and generically hybrid. Is that all critical bibliography is, a concerted attention to bibliographical classificatory challenges? Is such attention not the task of any thorough bibliographical endeavor? Critical bibliography, I suggest, takes its analyses a step further: to perform critical bibliography is to use those classificatory challenges to problematize the dominant categories, informational silos, patterns of thought, and existing habits of the wider scholarly field to which the material text belongs. If bibliography asks, *How did this book come to be the way it is*, then critical bibliography asks, *How did this scholarly field come to be the way it is and how might this book change it?*

Grenoble MS 873 offers a cogent case study in critical bibliography not simply for its unusual project of Latinizing a secular French poet but for its choice of poet to Latinize in the first place. As we recall, Charles d’Orléans spent almost twenty-five years in English captivity

where many of his captors, as members of the English nobility, would have read and likely spoken quite fluent French. Nevertheless, Charles learned English as a second language so astonishingly well that he composed in it a complex cycle of poetry numbering 202 lyrics and several longer narrative poems that he carefully preserved. In ca. 1440, just prior to his release from English captivity, Charles commissioned the simultaneous production of two manuscripts of his collected works: the 148-folio London, British Library, MS Harley 682, left undecorated and containing the full English poetry cycle, and the aforementioned BnF fr. 25458, a massive, 537-page collection of French poetry by Charles and others with numerous sections written in Charles’s own hand. Copied by French scribes but containing English decoration in its earliest datable section, BnF fr. 25458 offers a fitting testament to Charles’s Anglo-French early life. Charles left the English collection, Harley 682, behind in England and took the French collection, BnF fr. 25458, back to France, where he continued greatly expanding it over the subsequent decades with new French and Latin poetry of his own as well as works by the numerous illustrious visitors to his ducal court—most famously François Villon—copied in over forty separate scribal hands.

Unsurprisingly, given the unusual nature of an autograph compilation-turned-public-poetry album, the overwhelming bulk of scholarly work on Charles focuses on Charles’s French verse and on BnF fr. 25458, as well as on Charles’s relationship to the numerous French poets who


25. For an edition, see Fortunes Stabilnes, ed. Arn.

26. Arn, Poet’s Notebook, 56; note that BnF fr. 25458 is paginated, rather than foliated. Harley 682 is available fully digitized at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_682. For a detailed bibliographical description of Harley 682, see Fortunes Stabilnes, ed. Arn, 101–22; for BnF fr. 25458, see Arn, Poet’s Notebook.

27. See further Arn, Poet’s Notebook, 33–36.

contributed to that collection. For decades, Mary-Jo Arn has been the primary and all-but-only scholar working on Charles’s English verse, despite the fact that the lengthy English cycle—which scholars, following Arn, collectively entitle *Fortunes Stabilnes*—is cohesive, intricately organized, and brimming with references to other French and English poets, including Guillaume de Machaut, Christine de Pizan, Geoffrey Chaucer, and John Gower. In fact, as author of well over two hundred English lyrics and longer poems, Charles d’Orléans has arguably composed one of the earliest and longest late medieval cycles of English poetry. I emphasize *arguably* because, despite the remarkable size and breadth of *Fortunes Stabilnes*, Charles d’Orléans is not—and has never been—considered an English poet. Earlier twentieth-century scholars even assumed that *Fortunes Stabilnes* was the work of some unnamed English translator until this theory was decisively disproved by Arn. Still, it took until 2020 for the appearance of the very first edited volume of literary criticism devoted to *Fortunes Stabilnes*. Left behind in England, Charles’s English poetry was also left behind by scholarship.

Charles d’Orléans’s scholarly fate highlights two interrelated tendencies, against which modern research on this period has begun to push back. First is the tendency to pigeonhole multilingual figures into a canonical tradition that is defined by contemporary, rather than medieval, geographic borders: Charles is from France and a French poet, so his English output must automatically be secondary to his life’s work. Second is the tendency, shared by Anglo and French scholars alike, to view

32. See *Charles d’Orleans’ English Aesthetic*, ed. Perry and Arn.
England specifically as fundamentally separate from Continental Europe. When we think of late medieval English poetic production, our minds go to Chaucer, Gower, the Gawain poet, William Langland, Thomas Hoccleve, and John Lydgate—homegrown, homespun Englishmen writing on homegrown, homespun English topics. Charles d’Orléans’s English output is comparable to any of these poets in its formal and thematic complexity, as scholarship by Arn, Coldiron, Ardis Butterfield, Susan Crane, and Philip Knox, *inter alia*, has amply revealed. Yet he is not an English poet.

In this way, the classification challenges posed by Grenoble MS 873—is it French? Italian? a poetry collection? a translation project?—cathect onto the broader classification challenges inherent to scholarship on Charles d’Orléans. What do we even do with a bilingual poet in the first place? To whose national canon does such a poet belong? As the rest of this talk will demonstrate, the challenges of classification posed by Grenoble MS 873 as a manuscript and the challenges of classification posed by its primary subject, the poet Charles d’Orléans, are hardly coincidental. Grenoble MS 873 is a difficult manuscript because it deals with a difficult poet. Therefore, trying to understand the Grenoble compilation from a critical bibliographical standpoint that invites us to think around traditional bibliographical categories may, in turn, help us think around the traditional categories with which we approach Charles d’Orléans, his geography, his poetic language, and his later reception, both medieval and modern. Grenoble MS 873 offers an ideal case study for pursuing critical bibliography’s central objective, namely: *How might reopening a book reopen the scholarly field around it?*

LATINIZING AND “ITALIANIZING” CHARLES D’ORLÉANS IN GRENOBLE MS 873

Antonio’s translation of Charles’s verse, along with his brother Niccoló’s mise-en-page of the French original with its Latin translation, lavishly compliments both Charles and Antonio as poetic co-creators. Throughout the selection of Charles’s verse, the French text is placed on the left and the Latin on the right in facing-page columns. Each new French work and its Latin translation open with a two-line illuminated initial—one blue and the other red—followed by red and blue penwork initials for each subsequent stanza that either reflect each other across the page or else invert each other, emphasizing a visual balance between the French and Latin texts. As Coldiron cogently observes, “This color pattern has interpretive significance, for it stresses the interrelated and mirroring nature of the French and Latin versions and gives visual form to the venerable theoretical idea of translation’s dance between sameness and difference. Most of all, it encourages a particular way of reading, subtly and pleasurably guiding the eye back and forth across the page in a comparative process.”

Care has also been taken to fit discrete French works with their Latin translations to a page as much as possible. For example, two short poems will be generously spaced out within the ruled text block with blank lines at the top, bottom, and between, so that the page ends at the conclusion of a discrete poem to avoid splitting poems across page breaks (e.g., fol. 23v). In the process, the Latin text, often far more concise than its French counterpart, receives additional spacing so that each French work and its Latin translation take up identical visual weight on the page. For example, on fol. 10r, two of Charles’s ten-line stanzas are rendered as eight-line Latin stanzas; for balance, the shorter Latin verse is written with generous spacing above and below, so that it appears centered in relation to the French verse on its left. In this way, the French and Latin appear visually as interoperable linguistic systems that invite the reader to read back and forth comparatively in order to not only experience a French poet in lofty Latin but also, clearly, to marvel at the elegance of Antonio’s own Latin verse.

34. Coldiron, Canon, Period, 198–99.
Antonio suggests as much in his Latin prologue to the selection. He explains that he has performed the translation

Egre cum ferrem quod solum Gallia tanti
Ingenii tantum nosceret esse ducem.
Namque ut se totus terrarum noverit orbis
Exigit hoc mirum principis ingenium.

(fol. 9r, ll. 27–30)

since I was feeling vexed that only France knew that so great a prince has so great a talent. For surely this wonderful talent of the prince demands that the whole wide earth know it.36

Strikingly, Antonio also compares Charles to the Latin poet Ovid:

Admiratus eram Nasonis sepe libellos,
Quos in Pontana scripserat exul humo;
At tantum vatem mirari desino quando
Carmina captivi principis ista lego.
In versus igitur librum hunc transferre latinos
Institui [...]

(fol. 9r, ll. 19–24)

Often I had admired Ovid’s book of verse that he had written as an exile in Pontus. But I cease to marvel at so great a poet when I read those songs of the imprisoned prince. I have taken it upon myself, therefore, to translate this book into Latin verses.37

Continuing to compare Charles to the illustrious greats of classical antiquity, Antonio also makes a sly bid for his own transhistorical relevance:

Tantum grande michi reputo decus esse latina
Efficere istius gallica scripta ducis,
Quantum illi qui de grecis fecere latinos
Libros, quos magnus scripsit Aristotiles,
Quosve poetrarum princeps cantavit Homerus,
Seu quos Plutarci condidit ingenium.

(fol. 9r, ll. 37–42)

I reckon it to be for me as great an honor to execute in Latin the French writings of that prince as it was for (the translator) who made Latin books

36. Quoted after Coldiron, Canon, Period, 117.
37. Quoted after Coldiron, Canon, Period, 118.
from the Greek books that the great Aristotle wrote or that the first of poets, Homer, sung, or that the genius of Plutarch produced.38

In addition to laudatorily comparing Charles to the classical greats, Antonio also vaunts his own achievement by describing his project as a form of *translatio studii*, that foundational medieval literary topos going back to Hugh of Saint Victor’s *Didascalion* (1120s) and popularized in a famous passage from Chrétien de Troyes’s *Cligès* (ca. 1176). In this topos, medieval authors trace a historical transfer of human knowledge from the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and the Levant through classical Rome and medieval Latin to the vernacular languages of their day, thus articulating themselves as the intellectual heirs to a globalized tradition of *belles-lettres*.39 Antonio inverts this process somewhat by Latinizing a vernacular project, instead of the other way around, but his allusion to Greek and Latin literary authorities places his prologue into an established *translatio studii* discourse prevalent among contemporary late medieval humanist translators.40

This humanist emphasis is, while certainly unusual in application to a vernacular poet, not entirely unfitting to this specific French poet. In the 1440s Charles d’Orléans was in correspondence with the humanist circle formed around Zanone da Castiglione, Bishop of Bayeux in Normandy, that included contemporary Italian humanists such as Tito Livio Frulovisi and Pier Candido Decembrio.41 Zanone also functioned as an important

---

intermediary between this northern Italian humanist circle and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, whose father-in-law, Reynold Cobham, third Baron Cobham of Sterborough, was one of Charles’s jailers.42 Charles received from Zanone a copy of Valerius Maximus’s Facta et dicta memoria-bilia in 1440. This manuscript—Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Hamilton 648/I—is now joined to Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Hamilton 648/II, a commentary on Valerius’s Facta based on one by Dionigi di Borgo San Sepolcro, Petrarch’s confessor, and copied by none other than Niccoló Astesano in 1453.43 The provenance of these two manuscripts aptly demonstrates the complex interconnections within this tight circle of European intellectuals.

At the same time as he Latinizes and humanizes Charles in this way, Antonio also “Italianizes” him. This move again seems fitting for a French poet with an Italian mother and established connections to Italian humanism, but it turns out to be far more than a commentary on Charles’s cultural connections with northern Italy: recall that Antonio’s selection of Charles’s work is framed by numerous Latin writings on contemporary Italian political affairs. Antonio also selects a pointed title for Charles, referring to him throughout the compilation as “Dux Aurelianensis et Mediolanus” or “Duke of Orléans and Milan” (fols. 1r, 132r, 134v, 135r, 135v, 152v, 153r, 154r, and 155r). The position of Duke of Milan was never actually held by Charles d’Orléans, but it was one to which he could and did pretend as the grandson of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, first Duke of Milan from 1395 to 1402. Charles’s Milanese association is visually foregrounded in the Grenoble manuscript through the aforementioned prominent placement of Charles’s arms, in which the Valois fleur-de-lys of his father, Louis, Duke of Orléans, is quartered with the Visconti serpent of his mother, Valentina. Significantly, in 1447 the patrilinear Visconti line died out with the aforementioned Filippo Maria Visconti, and in the ensuing power vacuum, Francesco I Sforza seized control of Milan,

42. On Zanone as intermediary for Humphrey, see Susanne Saygin, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390–1447) and the Italian Humanists (Turnhout: Brill, 2002), 144–71; on Cobham and Charles, see Askins, “The Brothers Orleans,” 42–43.

thus inaugurating a long period of Sforza family rule.44 As noted earlier, although Charles was able to regain control of his Asti territories in the same year, Sforza’s coup dashed any potential plans to claim control over Milan.45

Antonio’s insistence on Charles’s being “Duke of Milan” runs as a thread through several of his works. Book 4 of Antonio’s elegiac verses, dated 1448 and included in the Grenoble compilation, praises Charles d’Orléans and his brother John of Angoulême, thanks the people of Asti for recognizing Charles’s rightful rule, and urges the Milanese to do the same (fols. 130r–131r, 132r–134r).46 Book 2 of Antonio’s heroic verses (fols. 140v–146r), dated 1450 and also copied into the Grenoble manuscript, exhorts the Milanese to recognize Charles as the rightful Duke of Milan.47 Antonio even wrote in 1448 a whole work entitled De origine et vario regimine civitatis Mediolani (On the Origin and Changing Rule of the City of Milan) contextualizing and defending Charles’s Milanese rights.48 One of its extant manuscripts, BnF lat. 6166, identifies Antonio in its colophon (fol. 68r) as secretary to Charles, Duke of Orléans and Milan, just as in Grenoble MS 873.

The emphasis on the French duke’s Milanese rights is further picked up by Niccolò in several of his presentation manuscripts for Charles. The aforementioned BnF lat. 11230, copied by Niccolò after 1447, consists of two Latin treatises on venoms by Guglielmo da Saliceto and Pietro d’Abano.49 Besides, like Grenoble MS 873, displaying Charles’s quartered Orléans-Visconti arms (on fol. 1r), BnF lat. 11230 also includes an excerpt on the genealogy, immediate family, and relations of Gian Galeazzo Visconti taken from a funeral oration for the latter delivered in Milan in 1402 (fols. 28v–30v).50 The excerpt begins with the descendants of Trojan Aeneas and ends with a discussion of Valentina’s marriage to Louis, Duke

46. See overview in Berriat-Saint-Prix, Jeanne d’Arc, 301.
48. See further Tallone, Antonii Astesani, xxii; Revest, “La France decrite,” para. 2 and n6.
of Orléans, and their offspring (fol. 30v: *pulcherrima germina filiorum*) before moving on to discussing Milan’s consanguineal and marital ties to other royal houses in Europe.51 By including this much earlier text about Gian Galeazzo but not including the names of Valentina’s offspring, who include Charles and John of Angoulême, Niccoló reminds the reader of Charles’s Milanese rights without overtly stating them. Nevertheless, and just like his brother Antonio, Niccoló also identifies himself in a colophon placed just before the excerpt (fol. 27v) as secretary to Charles, whom he also names Duke of Orléans and Milan. The same self-identification is repeated in the commentary to Valerius Maximus in MS Hamilton 648/II (fol. 174’) and in BnF lat. 1865 (fol. 35”), both copied by Niccoló in 1453.52

ANTONIO’S ORGANIZATION OF CHARLES’S VERSE

As a result, Antonio’s Charles emerges before us a humanistically Latinized, intentionally Italianized, and altogether politicized figure. As Coldiron contends, Antonio’s politicization of Charles is further evidenced by the Grenoble compilation’s unique reorganization of the duke’s poetry, whereby Antonio arranges Charles’s verse in an idiosyncratic order for a brand-new characterization of the duke. Grenoble MS 873 opens, like BnF fr. 25458, with an introductory narrative that sets up Charles’s ensuing love poems, but it ends with a lengthy section of his political poetry, containing items such as a lament over the Hundred Years War’s impact on France, a prayer for peace, and, as the final work of the selection, a poem celebrating the waning fortunes of the English on the Continental theater of war. Within these broad divisions, the compilation steers erratically between clusters of Charles’s ballades, sequences of his chansons, and strings of his rondeaux that do not outwardly resemble the broader organization of BnF fr. 25458.53 Moving markedly away from the presentation of poetry as a community building tool that is so clearly visible in the coterie album features of BnF fr. 25458, Grenoble MS 873 offers, as Coldiron contends, “a decidedly patriotic, even a nationalistic revision of [Charles’s]

51. Text from my transcription of BnF lat. 11230 with abbreviations silently expanded.
52. For Hamilton 648/II, see Boese, Lateinischen Handschriften, 317; for BnF lat. 1865, see online catalog entry at: https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc59815p.
53. Coldiron, Canon, Period, 114n2.
In this new revision, the earlier poems centering on love become sidelined for poems on the Hundred Years War in order “to place [the verse] in a new, specifically political, moral, and patriotic context [. . . ] for a cosmopolitan readership,” as further fleshed out by the Latin, humanistic, and Italianate contexts of the larger manuscript.

Strengthening Coldiron’s argument is the fact that the manuscript draws significant visual attention to its organization of Charles’s lyric through a detailed decorative program that is much more extensive than elsewhere in the compilation. The opening folio (fol. 1’) of the whole manuscript, containing the beginning of the Latin text on the Naples earthquake, features an eight-line historiated initial containing Charles’s arms and marginal decoration in the top, bottom, and side margins of the lefthand text column. The opening folio (fol. 6’) of the compilation’s second text, on the acquisition of Genoa, is similarly decorated, with a slightly smaller four-line illuminated initial. But fol. 9’, containing Antonio’s Latin prologue to Charles’s work, and fol. 9’r, where Charles’s poetry and Antonio’s translation begin, are significantly fancier. Here all margins—top, bottom, outer, inner, and intercolumnar—are filled in with decoration and two-, four-, and six-line illuminated initials (the one on fol. 9’ also featuring Charles’s arms). The same decorative schema, again with Charles’s arms, is found on the opening folio (fol. 13’) of the remaining Latin material in the compilation. Other than that folio, however, the decoration of the Latin material at the end consists only of six-line illuminated initials at the opening folios of new texts; four- to six-line illuminated initials at major internal textual divisions; and two- to three-line illuminated initials within textual divisions. By contrast, Antonio’s selection of Charles’s verse is further internally subdivided into sections at fols. 22v, 38r, 53r, 68r, 83r, and 97v, each of which has fully decorated top, bottom, and intercolumnar margins. This significantly more extensive decorative program fragments the selection of Charles’s verse into tidy quire-length sets, many of which are headed by complaints. These especially lengthy poems accentuate in formal terms the codicological-cum-visual divisions emphasized by the manuscript’s decorative schema, emphasizing Antonio’s apparent reorganization of Charles’s work.

54. Coldiron, Canon, Period, 120.
55. Coldiron, Canon, Period, 144.
However, Coldiron’s analysis of the Grenoble manuscript predates Mary-Jo Arn’s groundbreaking study of the complex codicological organization of BnF fr. 25458, which permits far more in-depth consideration of Grenoble’s codicological arrangement in comparison with BnF fr. 25458. This comparison, in turn, points to a far closer relationship between the two manuscripts than heretofore posited, altering our understanding of Antonio’s organizational aims in the Grenoble compilation and, in particular, his choice to end the selection with a section of political poetry. As I am about to show, despite its emphatic presentation of a Latinized, humanistic, and Italianized Charles, the Grenoble compilation offers no decisive break with nor reconfiguration of Charles’s own organization of his verse. Instead, Antonio works remarkably closely from Charles’s own curation of his poetry in BnF fr. 25458 and by extension, as we will see, Harley 682. The similarity of Antonio’s project to that of Charles does not negate the force of his choice to end the compilation with Charles’s more overtly political poetry, but it does offer a different rationale for that choice. Rather than sideline Charles’s love poetry for weightier, proto-nationalist political concerns, as Coldiron suggests, Antonio is making a still stronger political statement about Charles d’Orléans: that his poetic output while in English captivity renders him a poet fit to be celebrated by a European, humanist, and transnational audience. Antonio’s selection of Charles’s verse makes of the poet’s English captivity a formative precondition for his contemporary humanistic appeal, suggesting that the contemporary scholarly neglect of Charles’s time in England calls out for reevaluation.

THE ORGANIZATION OF GRENOBLE MS 873 COMPARED TO HARLEY 682 AND BNF FR. 25458

As we may recall, besides the opening section of BnF fr. 25458, Charles simultaneously commissioned the English poetry compilation Harley 682 prior to leaving England. Although they are written in two different languages, Harley 682 and the section of BnF fr. 25458 completed by ca. 1440

57. Arn, Poet’s Notebook.
58. I leave aside the question of Charles’s potential collaboration with Antonio on the manuscript’s organization; nevertheless, as will be presently made clear, whether working independently or in collaboration with Charles, Antonio was closely working with BnF fr. 25458.
comprise an almost identical set of poems; presumably, Charles wrote the
cycle originally in French and then translated the bulk of it into English.
Table 1 outlines the organization of both manuscripts, with the works in
the Harley column representing the English-language versions of the
French works listed in the BnF fr. 25458 column, in terms of both their
content and formal structure. Both compilations, despite some minor
differences in the ordering of individual works, relate an identical over-
arching story. Charles is in England, he is in love with a lady, she passes
away, so he renounces love and organizes himself a formal “retirement”
from Love’s service. The effect of this near-identical order of translated
lyrics between both manuscripts is striking: both offer the same autobio-
graphical account of Charles’s life in English captivity, once in English
and once in French. This intriguing choice to copy the same poems, in
much the same order, yet across two languages, in two simultaneously com-
missoned compilations, feels like bibliographical testimony to Charles’s
understanding of his time in English captivity, and his acquired Anglo-
French bilingualism, as fundamentally constitutive of his poetic identity.

After the account of “retirement” from Love’s service, however, the
manuscripts diverge. Harley 682 goes into a lengthy series of rondeaux
and then continues with thirty-six ballades recounting a second love af-
fair between Charles and a lady in England. These thirty-six ballades,
crucially and unlike the earlier ones, are all original English composi-
tions with no analogues among Charles’s extant French verse. As I have
argued elsewhere, these ballades are striking given the formal choices
made in them by Charles. Contemporary Continental ballade prosody
was astonishingly complex: ballades differed by line syllable count,
ranging from five to ten; stanza length, ranging from six to sixteen lines;
and rhyme scheme, ranging from simple aabb couplets to schemes like
ababcddeefgfg for a fifteen-line stanza. Charles was particularly mas-
terful in this regard. Writing in stanzas ranging from seven to fifteen

59. See also the appendix to my “Charles d’Orléans’ Cross-Channel Poetics,” 68–81.
60. On the rondeaux, see Jenni Nuttall, “The English Rondeau, Charles’s Jubi-
lee, and Mimetic Form,” in Charles d’Orléans’ English Aesthetic, ed. Perry and Arn,
82–100.
61. See Poirion, Le poète, 374–99, esp. the charts on 374–75, 385–87; Marc-René
Jung, “La naissance de la ballade dans la première moitié du XIVe siècle, de Jean
Acart à Jean de le Mote et à Guillaume de Machaut,” L’analisi linguistica e letteraria
lines in length, Charles deploys no less than sixteen separate rhyme schemes in his French verse, while his English verse uses nineteen, including several unique schemes completely unattested in the work of other late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poets.62

By comparison, contemporary English ballade rhyming was drastically more limited. Poets such as Chaucer, Gower, and John Lydgate largely use only two rhyme schemes—ababbc (rhyme royal) and ababc (known as the “Monk’s Tale stanza” after Chaucer’s Monk’s Tale)—to the nearly complete exclusion of all others.63 As noted above, Charles employs no less than nineteen separate rhyme schemes in his English verse throughout Fortunes stabilness. And yet his final thirty-six ballades on the second love

affair with a lady in England, which have no analogues among his French poetry and thus represent exclusively English-language compositions, use only rhyme royal and the Monk’s Tale stanza. In this way, by writing in only the two rhyme schemes predominant in rhymed Middle English verse, despite his patent ability to compose in many more, Charles articulates a formal commitment to the prescriptions of English ballade prosody in relating his English love affair. This move in turn suggests that the second part of Harley 682 is reifying a sort of symbolic acceptance by Charles of life in England through its embrace of peculiarly English form.\footnote{64}

BnF fr. 25458 features an identical juncture at which, in the French version of Charles’s lyric cycle, Charles also retires from Love’s service. Here, however, the collection does not continue with the account of a new love affair but instead details numerous other subjects, including a lengthy set of political poems in which Charles discusses the Hundred Years War, seeks peace, entreats his political supporters on the Continent (mainly Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy) to help him negotiate his release from English captivity, and updates them on the progress he has made in securing his freedom. (Table 2 outlines the order of ballades and narrative poems in the early section of BnF fr. 25458 produced ca. 1440, by the time that Charles left England.) The rest of the manuscript, copied in France over the next twenty-five years, contains that poetic record of visitors to Charles’s ducal court noted earlier. In this way, the textual organization of Harley 682 and BnF fr. 25458 conceptually narrates the story of Charles’s two lives: Harley 682 offers readers an overview of Charles’s life in England, symbolized by the language of the compilation and the formal shift of the final set of verse, while BnF fr. 25458 begins with the same overview of Charles’s life in England, proudly presents Charles’s release from English captivity, and then goes on to chronicle his dazzlingly cosmopolitan court life at Blois post-captivity.

Grenoble MS 873 uses its textual organization to extend yet another conceptual narrative of Charles’s life during and after English captivity but with differently placed accents. As is visible from table 2, the narrative poems and ballades comprising the earliest copied section of BnF fr. 25458 tell the story of Charles’s entry into Love’s service, his first love affair, his retirement from Love’s service, and his release from English captivity and commentary on the Hundred Years War. Cumulatively these works make

\footnote{64. See further my “Charles d’Orléans’ Cross-Channel Poetics.”}
up the first 234 pages of BnF fr. 25458, primarily copied in England ca. 1440 with some later additions. Antonio includes almost every one of these poems into his own compilation: as table 3 shows, Antonio is heavily reliant on BnF fr. 25458 as the guiding principle for organizing his own selection. The depth of Antonio’s reliance, however, is challenging to see because, as the table reveals, Antonio has intercut the ballades lifted sequentially from BnF fr. 25458 with reshelved sequences of Charles’s chansons and rondeaux from subsequent parts of BnF fr. 25458. However, although the narrative poems and ballade sequences are broken up by these sections of chansons and rondeaux, they still follow the original order present in BnF fr. 25458. Thus, fols. 9v–22r contain the introductory narrative of

65. See Arn, Poet’s Notebook, 55–68, 184 (table 1).

### Table 2

#### Detailed Organization of the Earliest Section of BnF fr. 25458

Copied ca. 1440 and Containing Charles’s Ballades and Longer Narrative Poems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BnF fr. 25458 page numbers</th>
<th>Poem type and order</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–17</td>
<td>Narrative poem: Introductory Narrative (Ou temps passe), Copie de la lettre de retenue,</td>
<td>Charles’s entry into Love’s service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17–99</td>
<td>B1–71</td>
<td>1st love affair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100–19</td>
<td>Songe en complainte, La requeste, La departie d’amours en balades, Copie de la quittance</td>
<td>Charles’s retirement from Love’s service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119–28*</td>
<td>B72–78</td>
<td>post-retirement ballades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191–94</td>
<td>Complainte de France</td>
<td>lament over the Hundred Years War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194–96, 203–34</td>
<td>B114–43</td>
<td>poems focused on Charles’s negotiations and release from English captivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The pagination of BnF fr. 25458 does not reflect the order of its production: specifically, pages 129–190 were produced in the mid-1440s through ca. 1465 and then re-inserted back into the compilation. For a quick overview, see Arn, Poet’s Notebook, 184 (table 1); for a detailed study, 101–44.
Charles’s entry into Love’s service and B1–9; fols. 39v–52v continue with B10–36; fols. 54v–65v continue with B37–56; fols. 68v–75v continue with B57–71; and fols. 83v–93v contain the retirement from Love’s service and three post-retirement ballades.66 The story, as presented in BnF fr. 25458, has been heavily broken up, but it is nevertheless present as a thread winding through the compilation and closely following the order originally found in Charles’s autograph manuscript.

Antonio’s fragmentation of BnF fr. 25458’s narrative by means of chansons and rondeaux certainly alters the experience of reading Grenoble MS.

66. Abbreviations and numbering system follow the organizational taxonomy for Charles’s poetry used in *Poetry of Charles d’Orléans*, ed. Fox and Arn, where B stands for *ballade* and R for *rondeau*, and the numbers refer to the order of poems as scribbally marked in BnF fr. 25458.
vis à vis BnF fr. 25458. Crucially, however, the final folios of Antonio’s selection of Charles’s verse (fols. 97’–111’) are particularly organizationally similar to BnF fr. 25458. These final folios contain the poems devoted to politics that Coldiron argues represent Antonio’s drastic elision of Charles’s love poetry in favor of his political and protonationalist pronouncements. But these final folios reveal themselves to be fully consonant with their equivalent section in BnF fr. 25458, reproducing much of it in its entirety and in the same order, as shown in table 4. Rather than uniquely reconfiguring Charles’s work as Coldiron suggested, Antonio is actually performing the diametric opposite move: he is using the organization of BnF fr. 25458 as a remarkably close template.

**Table 4**  
“Political” Section of Grenoble MS 873 in Comparison with BnF fr. 25458

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grenoble fol. numbers</th>
<th>Incipits</th>
<th>Order in BnF fr. 25458</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97’–99’</td>
<td>France jadis on te souloit nommer</td>
<td>C03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99’–100’</td>
<td>En regardant vers le pais de France</td>
<td>B114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100’</td>
<td>Priez poir paix doule vierge Marie</td>
<td>B115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101’</td>
<td>Je fu en fleur ou temps passe d’enfance</td>
<td>B120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101’</td>
<td>Cœur trop es plain de folie</td>
<td>B121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102’</td>
<td>Nouvelles ont couru en France</td>
<td>B122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102’</td>
<td>Mon gracieux cousin Duc du Bourbon</td>
<td>B124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102’</td>
<td>Mon chier cousin de bon cueur vous mercie</td>
<td>B125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103’</td>
<td>Puis que je suis vostre voisin</td>
<td>B127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103’</td>
<td>S’il en estoit a mon vouloir</td>
<td>B128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104’–5’</td>
<td>De cœure de corps et de puissance</td>
<td>B130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105’</td>
<td>Des nouvelles d’Albion</td>
<td>B131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105’</td>
<td>J’ay tant joue avecques aage</td>
<td>B132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106’</td>
<td>Visage de baffe venu</td>
<td>B133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106’–7’</td>
<td>Beau frere je vous remercie</td>
<td>B135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106’–7’</td>
<td>Pource que je suis a presant</td>
<td>B136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107’</td>
<td>Par les fenestres de mes yeulx; refrain Es mains de madame jeunessesse</td>
<td>B137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108’</td>
<td>Par les fenestres de mes yeulx; refrain Avant que je les face ouvrir</td>
<td>B138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108’</td>
<td>En tirant d’Orleans a Blois</td>
<td>B140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109’</td>
<td>L’autre jours je fis assembler</td>
<td>B141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sourcing Charles’s poetry directly from BnF fr. 25458, or a copy thereof that he may have acquired through his stay at Charles’s household in Blois, Antonio is not reorganizing Charles’s work _ab ovo_. Instead, he is guided by Charles’s own curation of his work and, specifically when it comes to Charles’s longer poems and ballades, by the duke’s curation of his work ca. 1440, while he himself was still in English captivity. In fact, Antonio’s aforementioned Latin prologue already recounts this very origin story, when he describes coming across Charles’s book of poetry in France in the following terms:

\[
\text{Fausta michi gratum tribuit fortuna libellum} \\
\text{[.............................]} \\
\text{Cuius cum titulum legerem, michi constitit esse} \\
\text{Aurelianensis principis illud opus} \\
\text{Confectum teneris ab eo et iuvenilibus annis} \\
\text{[.............................]} \\
\text{quod carcere clausum} \\
\text{Magnam eius partem composuisse scio.} \\
\text{(fol. 9r, ll. 5–16)}
\]

Favorable fortune granted me a pleasing little book . . . When I read the title, I came to the conclusion that it was the work of the prince of Orleans, created in his tender and youthful years . . . I know that he composed most of it while locked in prison.  

Antonio is drawing heavily on BnF fr. 25458, a compilation telling the story of Charles’s life in English captivity and eventual release that was intentionally designed by Charles, as we saw above, as the French companion volume to an English compilation telling an English version of the same story. By following BnF fr. 25458 so closely, Antonio is repeating in Latin the same narrative already told before, once in English and once in French.

In ending on Charles’s political verse, furthermore, Antonio makes Charles’s release from prison the apogee of his compilation, as this section not only centers the Hundred Years War, as Coldiron argues, but in particular centers Charles’s laments over his prolonged English captivity and his eventual release. In B114, for example, Charles describes himself standing upon the cliffs of Dover in England, gazing longingly across the Channel at his homeland:

\[67\text{. Translation by Thomas C. Sawyer.}\]
En regardant vers le pays de France,
Un jour [. . . ] a Dovre sur la mer,
[. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ]
Si commençay de cuer a soupirer,
Combien certes que grant bien me faisoit
De voir France que mon cuer amer doit.

(ll. 1–7)

While gazing towards the country of France
One day . . . at Dover by the sea . . .
I thus began to sigh from the depths of my heart,
Even though it certainly did me much good
To look upon France, which my heart must love.68

The next poem in the Grenoble compilation, B115, has Charles praying for peace from war. In the very next work copied by Antonio, B120, Charles reflects on a happy and carefree youth that has been ripped away from him while he has been (as in the refrain) “[m]is pour meurir ou feurre de prison” (placed to ripen on prison straw).69 In the final stanza, Charles longs for peace so that he may be “au souleil de France / Bien nettié du moisy de Tristesse” (fully cleansed of Sadness’s mold / under France’s sunshine) (ll. 19–20). The ensuing B121 is entirely about Charles’s experience of war-time captivity in England; in B122 Charles counters French rumors that he has long since died; and a lengthy set in this section (B124, B125, B127–31, B135, B136) relates in poetic form a correspondence between Charles, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and Charles I, Duke of Bourbon, concerning ongoing negotiations for Charles’s release from English prison.

By doing this organizational work in a manuscript that is, as we just saw, deliberately crafting a Latinized, humanistic, and “Italianized” Charles, Antonio insists on the indelible significance of Charles’s nearly twenty-five years in England to the identity of the poet that Antonio wishes to promulgate to the Latin-speaking world. Put more plainly, Antonio underscores that Charles’s autobiographical narrative of English imprisonment and release is worth telling in Latin to the Italian humanist world.

68. Text from Poetry of Charles d’Orléans, ed. Fox and Arn, 258; translation my own.
69. Text from Poetry of Charles d’Orléans, ed. Fox and Arn, 268–70; translation my own.
to which Antonio himself belongs. For him, Charles’s English captivity is not a footnote to Charles’s life nor a stint of poetic juvenilia, as modern scholars have all too long viewed it. Instead, Charles’s English captivity represents for Antonio the formative experience of a cosmopolitan humanist poet and the formative experience of an Italian statesman.

**CONTEXTUALIZING ANTONIO’S FOCUS ON CHARLES’S ENGLISH CAPTIVITY**

As remarkable as the importance Antonio Astesano places on Charles’s time in England may seem, coming from the pen of an Italian humanist, it is not unique. We find a similar emphasis occurring independently in the work of René d’Anjou. Like Charles, René, Duke of Anjou and Count of Provence, was a prominent member of the French nobility and noted courtly poet, whose own work features in BnF fr. 25458.70 René also, like Charles, had strong ties to Italy directly as King René I of Naples from 1435 until his deposition in a coup in 1442 and indirectly through networks of artistic patronage and literary influence.71 René’s monumental *Livre du cuer d’amour espris* (*The Book of the Love-Smitten Heart*)—dated 1457, the same year we know Antonio was working on his Grenoble compilation—portrays René’s own heart as having leapt from his chest to become an allegorized knight, bearing a heart on his helmet, who departs on a fabulous Arthurian-style quest. At a certain point in the story, the Heart finds himself on the Island of the God of Love visiting what the text calls a “cymetiére” (cemetery) consisting of a vast funereal vault filled with the coats of arms of various classical, Biblical, and romance figures, both historical and literary, such as Julius Caesar, David, Aeneas, and Lancelot. The space also includes more recent French historical figures such as

---


Charles’s father, Louis, Duke of Orléans, and Charles himself, whose arms bear the following inscription:

prins fuz des Anglois et mené en servaige.
Et tant y demouray qu’en aprins le langaige
Par lequel fus acoint de dame belle et saige
Et d’elle si espris qu’a Amours fis hommaige,
Dont mains beaux dits dictié bien prisez davantaige.

(II. 1465–69)

I was taken by the English and led into bondage.
And I spent so long there that I learned the language,
By means of which I grew close to a beautiful and virtuous lady
And was so taken with her that I pledged fealty to Love,
About which I composed beautiful dits that were all the more praised.72

One would expect René, having himself participated in Charles’s coterie poetry album, to praise the duke for the might of his later French poetry composed in France.73 The causality of René’s verses, however, makes clear that René has an alternate characterization of Charles’s enduring poetic fame. Because Charles languished so long in English captivity, René relates, he learned English and became enamored of a lady, for whom he ended up writing the highly lauded poetry that grants him a claim to posterity in René’s work. For René d’Anjou, Charles’s acquisition of the English language and composition of poetry in England confirms Charles’s enduring legacy for French audiences. René’s choice to rank Charles among other French royal figures like John, Duke of Berry, and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, rather than among the poets found elsewhere in his funereal vault (including Ovid, Guillaume de Machaut, Boccaccio, and Petrarch), emphasizes that he, like Antonio, is reading Charles’s poetry as fundamentally integral to Charles’s role as a political personage on the European arena. Notably, Antonio includes only two other poets besides Charles into his selection of Charles’s verse in the Grenoble compilation, and one of them is none other than René d’Anjou.

73. It may further seem strange to place Charles, very much alive in 1457, in a funereal vault, but René also includes his own self in the same locale (II. 1483–94).
Specifically, Antonio copies three of René’s works also found in BnF fr. 25458, albeit without attribution.74

Rethinking Antonio’s aims with the Grenoble compilation as particularly invested in the duke’s English captivity offers additional purchase on Antonio’s comparisons of Charles to classical figures in his prologue. As we recall, Antonio declares the “carmina captivi principis” (songs of the imprisoned prince) to supersede those of Ovid in exile upon the Black Sea. Earlier we had read Antonio’s comparison of Charles to Ovid in exile as a typical classicizing gambit fitting for an author in humanist circles. Now, however, we may also notice that Antonio’s comparison works to stress the duke’s captive status. Further, this lofty comparison of Charles to Ovid might now provocatively recall the French poet Eustache Deschamps’s famous address to Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the English poets extensively cited by Charles in his own English work. In the opening lines of his address, Deschamps compares Chaucer to a whole pantheon of figures from classical antiquity precisely because Chaucer translates poetry from French to English while in England:

O Socrates, plains de philosophie,
Seneque en meurs et Auglux en pratique,
Ovides grans en ta poeterie,
Bries en parler, saiges en retorique,
Aigles treshaulz, qui par ta theorique
Enlumines le regne d’Eneas,
L’Isle aux Geans, ceuls de Bruth, et qui as
Semé les fleurs et planté le rosier.
Aux ignorans de la langue pandras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.
(II. 1–10)

O Socrates, full of philosophy,
Seneca in probity and Aulus Gellius in practical wisdom,
Great Ovid in your poetry,
Concise in speech, wise in rhetoric,
High-flying eagle, who, by your theoretical understanding
Illuminate the kingdom of Aeneas,

74. On fol. 80’ of Grenoble, Antonio has the work listed as R5 in BnF fr. 25458; on 81’, R10; on 82’, R13; see n70 above. The other poet is Jean de Garencières, represented on fols. 76’–77’ by the work listed in BnF fr. 25458 as B137: see further Poetry of Charles d’Orléans, ed. Fox and Arn, 834.
The Island of the Giants, those of Brutus, and who has
Sown the flowers and planted the rosebush.
You will procure for those ignorant of the language,
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.\textsuperscript{75}

Strikingly, Deschamps’s address to Chaucer goes on to interweave nu-
merous citations from a particular work by Ovid: namely, none other than
one of his \textit{Black Sea Letters}, written while Ovid was in exile. Here Ovid
writes to a fellow poet Severus who is back in Rome. Ovid describes Se-
verus as reaping the full harvest of Helicon (ll. 11–12); as a result, Ovid feels
too bashful to send Severus any poetry, for it would be like sending honey
to Aristaeus, wine to Bacchus, or like adding leaves to a forest (ll. 9–13).
These images echo Deschamps’s subsequent declaration in his address
to Chaucer that he would send Chaucer some of his poems, but they
would be but weeds in Chaucer’s “verger” (orchard) (l. 17). Ovid then la-
ments that his writing prowess has become as blocked as a fountain
choked by mud (ll. 17–20). He therefore asks Severus, who drinks freely
of the “Aonius fons” (the Aonian spring [on Parnassus]) (l. 47), to send
him some of his work instead (ll. 49–50).\textsuperscript{76} Meanwhile, Deschamps de-
scribes himself as parched from thirst in France, for the fountain of Hel-
icon lies entirely in Chaucer’s domains (ll. 21–26). Deschamps thus uses
Ovidian exile as a trope through which to write to a multilingual poet in
England, whom he explicitly describes as a translator from French to En-
lish. Even if Antonio is not familiar with Deschamps’s address to Chaucer
directly, his deployment of references to Ovid’s banishment to the Black
Sea in order to praise a multilingual poet in England, translating poetry
from French to English, suggests a potential cross-European cultural cur-
rency by the 1450s to the image of Ovidian exile within Anglo-French lit-
erary relations and within questions of interlingual poetic translation.

Antonio’s emphasis on classical antiquity is also shadowily reminis-
cent of a short Latin poem about Chaucer’s contemporary John Gower,
whom Charles also cites in his poetry. Gower famously wrote his major

\textsuperscript{75} Text from Butterfield, \textit{Familiar}, 144–46; translation my own.
\textsuperscript{76} Text and translation from Ovid, \textit{Tristia, Ex Ponto}, ed. G. P. Gould, trans. Ar-
the Ovidian echoes in Deschamps’s address to Chaucer, see further my \textit{Continental
England: Form, Translation, and Chaucer in the Hundred Years’ War} (Columbus: Ohio
State University Press, 2022), 96–110.
life’s works in three languages: French, Latin, and English. Appended to a variety of manuscripts of Gower’s works, Eneidos, Bucolis praises Gower in the following terms:

Eneidos, Bucolis, que Georgica metra perhennis
    Virgilio laudis serta dedere scolis;
Hiis tribus ille libris prefertur honore poetis,
    Romaque precipuis laudibus instat eis.
Gower, sicque tuis tribus est dotata libellis
    Anglia, morigeris quo tua scripta seris.
Illeque Latinis tantum sua metra loqueulis
    Scripsit, ut Italicis sint recolenda notis;
Te tua set trinis tria scribere carmina linguis
    Constat, ut inde viris sit scola lata magis:
Gallica lingua prius, Latina secunda, set ortus
    Lingua tui pocius Anglica complet opus.

The meters of the Aeneid, Bucolics, and Georgics, woven together
    By Virgil, have given matter of perennial praise to the schools.
On account of these three books he is preferred in honor over all poets,
    And Rome bestows upon them its chief praises.
Thus, too, O Gower, with your three little books is England endowed,
    Where you accommodate your writings to serious things.
He wrote his poems only in the Latin tongue,
    So that they might be appreciated by the famous Italian worthies.
But it is clear that you wrote your three poems in three languages,
    So that broader schooling might be given to men.
First the French tongue, Latin second, then at last English,
    The speech of your birth, completes the work.77

Here Gower’s poetry surpasses that of Virgil because, where Virgil wrote three great works in Latin for Italians only, Gower wrote three great works in three different languages that can be read by anyone in possession of those languages. This moment intriguingly resonates with Antonio’s claim that Charles’s literary production in England surpasses that of Ovid in exile on the Black Sea. To be clear, I am not suggesting that Antonio has necessarily read Deschamps’s Ballade to Chaucer nor Eneidos, Bucolis, as

Antonio’s invocation of classical figures from antiquity undoubtedly fits with his own Italian humanist context. But I am suggesting that we might also look to England, with its own rich literary history of multilingualism and translation activity, as a space that can offer inspiration to Continental poets invested in thinking through multilingualism and translation in their own work.

I would like to end this talk by briefly discussing one final moment in the history of Charles d’Orléans’s reception that continues to highlight how, on the one hand, Charles’s later audiences understood his English captivity to be the most salient feature of his poetry and, on the other, how England’s cultural ties to Continental Europe continue to merit reevaluation. London, British Library, MS Royal 16.F.II presents yet another visually stunning collection of Charles’s French poetry with elaborate full-page miniatures and sumptuous decoration.78 This beautiful manuscript was begun in the early 1480s for King Edward IV of England and completed in the 1490s for King Henry VII of England.79 Although made for English Tudor audiences, this manuscript, like many of the numerous other French texts in the Tudor royal libraries, was produced in northern France and Flanders.80 Gathering 164 French poems by Charles in 136 folios, the Royal manuscript, like the Grenoble compilation, also demonstrates some reliance in its textual organization on BnF fr. 25458, whether directly or through intermediary copies. Although the vast majority of the compilation does not bear a discernible relationship to the order of BnF fr. 25458, the bulk of its final folios (fols. 111v–31v) present Charles’s first forty-nine chansons in the same order as in his autograph manuscript.

78. This manuscript is available fully digitized at https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_16_F_II.
Despite having been commissioned by and produced for an explicitly English audience this time, the choices of Royal 16.F.II reveal another reception project oddly congruent in its emphases with that of Antonio. While vastly reorganized, the Royal manuscript also, like Grenoble MS 873, sources almost all of its works from the section of Charles’s French poetry that we know to have been copied ca. 1440 in England (i.e., written during Charles’s captivity): namely, the entry into Love’s service, the first love affair, the retirement from Love’s service, and the political ballades on his longing to return to France. This choice is especially noteworthy given the 1480s–1490s date of the Royal compilation, decades removed from Charles’s own manuscripts.

Furthermore, the manuscript’s decoration program resonates with choices made by Antonio in his Grenoble compilation. Beyond intricate initials and line fillers, the Royal manuscript contains three full-page miniatures. The first of these (fol. 1r) decorates the opening work in the compilation: that is, the narrative poem on entering Love’s service that also opens BnF fr. 25458 and the Grenoble compilation. The second famous full-page miniature (fol. 73r) illustrates the opening lines of the poem *Des nouvelles d’Albion* (Concerning News from Albion). In the final years of his captivity, Charles was permitted to travel to the Continent in order to work with his political allies to raise the enormous ransom he needed to win back his freedom. He stayed in Calais from June to October 1439. Pierre Champion argues that Charles composed *Des nouvelles d’Albion* upon his return to England from this latter overseas trip, as in this poem Charles is relating to his main ally, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, that he has successfully returned to England and is progressing steadily in his negotiations.81 In this illustration accompanying *Des nouvelles d’Albion*, the artist of the Royal manuscript has depicted Charles sitting by the window in the Tower of London on the Thames, with the London Bridge in the background and ships sailing off into the margins of the image. This evocative image of Charles, leaning over the window sill against a backdrop of the Thames, the waterway that would eventually carry him across the English Channel to France, is an apt illustration for a poem describing Charles’s literally suspended state of anticipation as he waits in England for news of his release after his recent trip to Calais.

The third full-page miniature (fol. 89r) illustrates the poem *France, jadis on te souloit nommer* (*France, You Once Were Called*) in which Charles critiques France for falling into a damnable state of moral decay and corruption. In the final lines of this poem, Charles explains the circumstances in which he wrote these verses:

Car prisonnier les fis, je le confesse,
Priant a Dieu, qu’avant qu’aye vieillesse
Le temps de paix partout puis avenir

(ll. 85–87)

I wrote them while in prison, I confess,
Praying to God that, before I am an old man,
Peace on earth might come to pass.

Here again the artist decorating the manuscript has chosen to place a full-page illustration to mark out a work dealing with the Hundred Years War and, still more significantly, with the ache and hurt of Charles’s longtime English captivity. Notably, this same work is also visually foregrounded with extensive marginal decoration in Grenoble MS 873 on fol. 97v.

In this Tudor manuscript ultimately destined for English audiences, the visual emphasis on texts specifically thematizing Charles’s English captivity and France’s wartime state of moral decay accrues an obvious pro-nationalist aim. Nevertheless, pro-nationalist as they may be here, the engagements of the Royal manuscript with Charles’s English captivity also resonate substantially with the similar engagements of Charles’s autograph manuscript and with Antonio’s Grenoble compilation. Even as it thematizes England for an English audience, Royal 16.F.II also reveals itself as participating in an established Continental reception of Charles’s work that is deeply invested in Charles’s English captivity, fittingly for a manuscript that, though destined for the English royal library, was produced in northeastern French-speaking Continental Europe. The Royal manuscript reminds us that even expressions of partisan Englishness on behalf of English audiences—expressions that we automatically associate with our pervasive sense of English insularity, particularly for this period—can also be understood as echoing, or perhaps even playing out, Continental European perspectives on England. In turn, this kind of

82. Text from *Poetry of Charles d’Orléans*, ed. Arn and Fox, 252–58; translation my own.
enlarged understanding of what England signifies, to whom England signifies, and for whom England signifies can productively transform our sense of what nationalism, partisanship, and, by extension, canonicity might look like.

I have arrived at this conclusion—at this questioning of whether and how Charles d’Orléans’s own contemporaries understood him as a “French” poet—by looking closely at the bibliographical features of manuscripts. As you may have noticed, despite taking poets as my subject, I have offered you hardly any literary analysis throughout this talk. Instead, I have attempted to probe the issues of nationalism, canon, and literary reception surrounding Charles d’Orléans by thinking exclusively about the visual and organizational choices made by manuscript compilers of his work. In so doing, I have aimed to offer you a case study in critical bibliography as I understand it: namely, as the analysis of bibliographical features for the purpose of disrupting the methodological categories by which our scholarship operates. Critical bibliography sees in every book a Pandora’s box that can explode our understandings of books themselves, of the hybrid cultural currents from which they emerge, and of the ways in which we categorize books, authors, and literary traditions in the first place. How to open that Pandora’s box a crack is what, I hope, I have been able to show for you today. Thank you.