



## Oenone and Colin Clout

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## Oenone and Colin Clout

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When Colin Clout hung up his pipe and bade the stony-hearted Rosalind adieu at the end of Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, his poetic career was far from over. Spenser himself would go on to revive this character both in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. Elsewhere, perhaps more than any other Elizabethan literary character, Colin seems to have been favourably positioned for success as a crossover artist. The versatility of his bucolic persona is attested, for example, by the swain's numerous reappearances in *Englands Helicon*, a miscellany of 150 lyrics compiled by Nicholas Ling and first published in 1600. Within this pastoral-themed anthology, Colin is represented, as in Spenser's own *Calendar*, as a vital voice among an inscribed and interactive authorial community comprised of 'his familiar freendes and best acquayntance'.<sup>1</sup> The sixth poem in *Englands Helicon* reproduces the song Colin composed in praise of Eliza, as sung by Hobbinol in 'Aprill' of the *Calendar*; in Poem 13, 'Shepherd Tonie' addresses a poem directly 'To Colin Cloute'; Poem 27 is 'Colin Cloutes mournfull Dittie for the death of Astrophell'; and Poem 148, placed at the volume's close, is headed 'Colin the enamoured Shepheard, singeth this passion of love'.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Colin's other pieces in *Englands Helicon*, this final example is unique in that, though it written in the purported voice and register of the *Calendar*'s starring swain, it was not authored by Spenser himself. Rather, Colin's final song is attributed by Ling to George Peele. In fact, this poem had been excerpted from Peele's *Araygnement of Paris*, a dramatic work first performed at court by the

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<sup>1</sup> This reference to Colin's 'familiar freendes and best acquayntance' appears in E.K.'s 'September' gloss in *The Shepherd's Calendar*. I cite the *Calendar* from *Edmund Spenser: The Shorter Poems*, edited by Richard A. McCabe (New York, 1999), p. 127. All subsequent references are parenthetical. Throughout this article, I have regularized early modern u/v and i/j according to modern usage.

<sup>2</sup> I have consulted *Englands Helicon*, edited by Hugh MacDonald (Cambridge, MA, 1962).

Children of the Chapel Royal in the early 1580s and printed in 1584, sixteen years before the first appearance of *Englands Helicon*.

Colin Clout had a significant history of appropriation even before his reemergence in *The Araynement of Paris* and *Englands Helicon*. After all, his name and persona were not exactly original to Spenser. In the *Calender*'s opening gloss, E.K. pointedly observed that, though Colin was an appellation 'not greatly used', there were two important precursors for Spenser's pseudonymous adoption of it: the forename 'Colin' had been employed by 'the French Poete Marot...in a certein Æglogue', while the more precise combination 'Colin Cloute' was derived wholesale from 'a Poesie of M. Skeltons' written in English over fifty years earlier (p. 38). Despite this character's complicated literary heritage, however, it seems safe to assume that late Elizabethan audiences would have associated Colin Clout primarily with the pastoral poetry of the *Calender*'s so-called New Poet. When readers are rhetorically asked 'who knowes not *Colin Clout*?' in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, the implication is that they all know *Spenser*'s version of 'Poore *Colin Clout*'.<sup>3</sup>

Published under the playful *nom de plume* 'Immerito' in 1579, *The Shepheardes Calender* was still a new work, not even yet publicly acknowledged by its author, when Peele - perhaps partially inspired by Spenser's own earlier amalgamation of Marot's and Skelton's literary Colins - made the rather surprising decision to co-opt its central character, relocating him in the literary foothills of Mount Ida. In a move not entirely unlike the mysterious Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda's much more widely known resurrection of Don Quixote in *Segundo tomo del ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha*, Peele wrote what we might conceive of, in modern parlance, as a Spenserian spin-off: in *The Araynement of Paris* he reanimated a celebrated character closely associated with (if not technically created by) one of his own contemporaries. And that Peele had in mind the particular version of Colin Clout

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<sup>3</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by A. C. Hamilton (New York, 1977), VI.ix.16.

crafted by ‘that Gentleman who wrate the late shepherdes Calender’ is clear.<sup>4</sup> Not only does Peele’s dramatic portrayal of the Spenserian swain likewise represent him struggling in ‘the common Labyrinth of Love’ (*Calender*, p. 29), but *The Araynement of Paris* also tellingly surrounds Colin with his known associates Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot, who, as Joyce Green MacDonald writes, ‘apparently walk into Peele’s play directly from [the *Calender*], bearing the same names and the same concerns as Spenser’s shepherds’.<sup>5</sup>

In this essay, I suggest that Peele’s imaginative importation of this recognizable Elizabethan literary personality into a familiar Trojan landscape and narrative in *The Araynement of Paris* may offer fresh insight into the early reception of Spenser’s first published work. Whereas the general trend in our own time has been to accentuate the Virgilian - and, to a lesser extent, the Theocritean or continental Renaissance - models for the pastoralism of Spenser’s *Calender*, Peele’s onstage revivification of Colin directs our attention elsewhere. A careful consideration of *The Araynement of Paris* suggests that Elizabethan audiences may *also* have sensed pastoral patterns and precedents for Colin Clout in Ovid’s *Heroides*. Mindful of Katherine Little’s recent observation that ‘we cannot forget that Spenser stood in a different relation to pastoral than we do’, I therefore posit Peele’s play as a significant piece of contemporary commentary on the perceived literary genetics of Spenser’s *Calender*, particularly its plaintive eclogues.<sup>6</sup> In so doing, I argue that Peele’s interpretation of Colin underscores the intertextual relationships of Spenser’s shepherd to what is, perhaps, an unexpected pastoral precursor: namely, Ovid’s Oenone.

To return momentarily to *Englands Helicon*, recent scholarship on early modern printed miscellanies has tended to emphasize that the very form of the printed book lends

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<sup>4</sup> Spenser was thus referred to by George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589), sig. I2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Green MacDonald, ‘Intimate Histories: Desire, Genre, and the Trojan War in *The Araynement of Paris*’, in *Sexuality and Memory in Early Modern England: Erotics of Recollection*, edited by John S. Garrison and Kyle Pivetti (New York, 2016), pp. 17-29 (p. 27).

<sup>6</sup> Katherine Little, ‘The “Other” Past of Pastoral: Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and Spenser’s *Shepherdes Calender*’, *Exemplaria*, 21 (2009), 161-79 (p. 175).

itself to sequential design; ‘one page follows another, allowing formal and rhetorical links to synthesize each poem and provide a context in its relation to poems that precede and succeed it’.<sup>7</sup> Where ‘Colin the enamoured Sheeheard, singeth this passion of love’, this love complaint is directly succeeded in Ling’s anthology by a second piece also attributed to Peele: ‘Oenone’s complaint in blanke verse’, which likewise had its origins as an embedded song in *The Araynement of Paris*. And it is worth noting that Colin’s and Oenone’s complaints, the only two poems in Ling’s collection to have been derived from this play, are suggestively presented via ‘sequential design’ as companion pieces at the end of *Englands Helicon*. Though the precise links between the Spenserian swain and this mythological heroine may at first seem obscure, in pairing these pieces the miscellany was replicating a reflexive relationship that Peele had earlier established between these two characters, both of whom use their poetic prowess in intertextually provocative ways in *The Araynement of Paris*.

Short and masque-like, *The Araynement of Paris* was Peele’s first major dramatic work. This ‘deliberately outrageous rewriting of legendary history’ shares much with the author’s earlier narrative poem, *The Tale of Troy*.<sup>8</sup> Its scope and character aligned with epic tradition, the play’s primary action concerns the Judgement of Paris that precipitated the Trojan War. The main plot famously concludes with a twist - unsurprising, given the recurrence of this conceit elsewhere in the period - in which Paris’ decision to award the golden apple to Venus is reversed, and the flattering bauble is instead presented to Queen Elizabeth. It is *The Araynement of Paris*’s distinctly bucolic subplot that primarily interests me, however, for it is here, rather than in the play’s main action, that Peele locates Colin Clout.

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<sup>7</sup> Paul A. Marquis, ‘Printing History and Editorial Design in the Elizabethan Version of Tottel’s *Songes and Sonettes*’, in *Tottel’s ‘Songes and Sonettes’ in Context*, edited by Stephen Hamrick (Farnham, 2013), pp. 1-40 (p. 17).

<sup>8</sup> Peele’s play is thus characterized in *George Peele*, edited by David Bevington (Farnham, 2011), p. xvi.

Though Colin's role in Peele's play is limited, he is conspicuously positioned at its very heart. Act 3, scene 1 opens with the lovestruck swain delivering his only lines in the form of a song - the very song that would later reappear at the conclusion of *England's Helicon*. Echoing the Spenserian Colin's invocation at the start of 'Januarye' - 'Ye Gods of love, that pitie lovers payne, | (If any gods the paine of lovers pittie)' (ll. 13-14) - Peele's Colin likewise opens with an appeal for mercy addressed to Love:

O gentle love, ungentle for thy deede,  
 Thou makest my harte  
 A bloodie marke  
 With pearcyng shot to bleede.

Shoote softe, sweet love, for feare thou shoote amysse,  
 For feare too keene  
 Thy arrowes beene,  
 And hit the hearte, where my beloved is.

Too fair that fortune were, nor never I  
 Shalbe so blest  
 Among the rest  
 That love shall ceaze on her by simpathye.

Then since with love my prayers beare no boot,  
 This doth remayne  
 To cease my payne,  
 I take the wounde, and dye at Venus foote.<sup>9</sup>

The concluding sentiment of Colin's song, that he will 'take the wounde, and dye at Venus foote', is quickly literalized in Peele's play. We hear no more from him, and by Act 3, scene 5, Colin is already a corpse, presumably having been slain offstage by cruel Love.

What was it about his reading of *The Shepheardes Calender* that motivated Peele to re-envision its rustic characters living (and, in one case, dramatically dying) alongside Paris on the slopes of Mount Ida? In the text of Spenser's *Calender*, this legendary hero is invoked twice by Colin's pastoral brethren. Willye briefly alludes to the Judgement of Paris narrative - the tale that would form the main plot of Peele's play - when he refers in passing to 'The

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<sup>9</sup> George Peele, *The Araygnement of Paris*, in *The Life and Works of George Peele*, Vol. 3: *The Dramatic Works*, edited by R. Mark Benbow *et al.* (New Haven, CT, 1970), lines 537-52.

shepherd of *Ida*, that judged beauties Queene' ('August', l. 138). And Paris is also cited by Spenser's Thomalin as a negative *exemplum* of a shepherd who 'with lewde lust was overlayd' when he 'left hys flocke, to fetch a lasse [i.e. Helen], | whose love he bought to deare' ('Julye', ll. 151, 147-8). Arguably, this volatile shepherd-cum-prince is considered by the swains within Spenser's storyworld to be something of a rustic colleague, though certainly not one worthy of emulation. Despite their shared vocation and pastoral milieu, it is clear that Spenser's Colin little resembles this fickle Trojan exemplar.

In Peele's derivative *Araynement of Paris*, as in Spenser's earlier poetry, Colin is presented as a piteously abandoned lover rather than a romantic oath breaker. Though Spenser's unaffected Rosalind, 'the roote of all [Colin's] ruthfull woe' ('June', l. 116), has been renamed Thestylis in Peele's play, the basic plot of Colin's unrequited love seems to have been transposed wholesale from Spenser's earlier work. Given how little Peele's Colin speaks, the subplot of *The Araynement of Paris* actually depends upon the audience's familiarity with the contextual narrative of his romantic misfortune as previously sketched in Spenser's *Calender*: that is, Menalcas 'by trecheree' and 'villanee' stole away the heart of Colin's beloved Rosalind, a 'faithlesse' and hard-hearted woman who has come to 'scorne' and ridicule her erstwhile lover's affections and 'rurall musik' alike ('June', ll. 102-4, 115; 'Januarye', l. 64). We might say, then, that Peele conceived *Ida* as a fitting backdrop for Colin not because of the swain's resemblance to the faithless shepherd Paris, but rather because of Colin's similarity to the Trojan prince's quondam paramour Oenone, whom (as recounted in Ovid's *Heroides* 5) he rejected in favour of the 'Graia iuvenca' ('Greek cow'), Helen.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I cite Ovid's Latin text and its English translation from *Heroides, Amores*, edited by Grant Showerman, revised by G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA, 2002), here line 118 of *Heroides* 5. Subsequent references are parenthetical. I have cross-checked this modern edition against an early modern text, Thomas Vautrollier's *Heroidum Epistolae* (London, 1583). When quoting Latin sources, I have regularized capitalization and substituted roman font for italic.

When Spenser's commentator E.K. 'devided' the twelve eclogues of the *Calender* 'into three formes or ranckes' (p. 32) - that is, the plaintive, the recreative, and the moral - he made it clear that Colin's was the primary plaintive voice of this fundamentally dialogic collection: the moments where we hear Colin's unmediated songs are all categorized under this rubric. Peele's subsequent decision to reposition Spenser's alter ego on the legendary slopes of Mount Ida thus reveals much about how a near-contemporary writer perceived the literary lineage of the *Calender*'s plaintive mode. Notably, it is neither the shepherd-lovers of Virgil, Theocritus, Mantuan, or Marot that Peele's play posits as the grieving Colin's most significant generic precursors, but rather the mournful literary personae of Ovid's *Heroides*.

A number of contemporary scholars, including both M. L. Stapleton and Syrithe Pugh, have argued that Ovid's first-person complaints of the *Tristia* deserve particular consideration as models for Spenser's first-person poetry of the *Calender*.<sup>11</sup> Given that the rhetorical and generic correspondences between the complaints of the *Tristia* and *Heroides* have been well established in classical scholarship, it is somewhat surprising to note how very limited explorations of the possible linkages between the *Heroides* and Spenser's *Calender* have been to date.<sup>12</sup> As John Kerrigan notes, many of the extended, formal laments placed in the mouths of male characters throughout Spenser's *œuvre* - including those of Arthur, Timias, and Scudamour in *The Faerie Queene* or Alcyon in *Daphnaïda* - have loose connections with the ubiquitous, Ovid-infused female-voiced complaints of the era.<sup>13</sup> So too do the plaintive compositions of Spenser's poetic alter ego Colin. And it would seem that this point is effusively made in *The Araygnement of Paris*'s subplot, where Peele's version of

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<sup>11</sup> M. L. Stapleton, *Spenser's Ovidian Poetics* (Newark, NJ, 2009), pp. 41-73; Syrithe Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid* (Farnham, 2005), pp. 12-41.

<sup>12</sup> See Patricia Rosenmeyer, 'Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*: Voices from Exile', *Ramus*, 26 (1997), 29-56. cursory explorations of the *Calender*'s Heroidean intertexts have centered on the moment in 'September' when Hobbinol paraphrases a line from *Heroides* 4 (Phaedra's letter). See Stapleton, pp. 86-7, and James Harner, 'Spenser's "goodly thought": *Heroides* 15 and *The Teares of the Muses*', *Renaissance Studies*, 22 (2008), 324-37 (p. 327).

<sup>13</sup> John Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe: Shakespeare and 'Female Complaint'* (Oxford, 1991), p. 53.

Colin serves as an explicit (if gender-reversed) foil for the nymph Oenone, whose abandonment by Paris is best known through its portrayal in Ovid's *Heroides* 5.

By the time we meet Peele's version of Colin in Act 3 of *The Araygnement of Paris*, his romantic plight has already been analogically coloured and foreshadowed by the earlier appearance of Oenone in Act 1. In the play's fifth scene, Oenone and her 'hartes contentment' Paris are seen idly wandering though Ida (l. 242). The seemingly happy couple while away this scene beneath a shady tree as bucolic lovers are wont (singing, storytelling, piping), and their apparent romantic concord seems complemented by the natural harmony of the landscape. Though he will quickly prove fickle, Paris, at this early moment in the play, is still quite taken by the 'sweete alluring face', 'speciall grace', and 'pleasaunt witte' of his female companion, who has a ready repertoire 'of pretie tales in stoore' with which to entertain him (ll. 236-41). The ostensible unity of the lovers in this scene is repeatedly and ironically undercut for any audience versed in mythological lore, however. As Paris readies his pipes in anticipation, Oenone mentions a litany of possibilities of which they might sing. Her catalogue - more than a dozen tales, which she describes in a lengthy monologue - sounds distinctly like a précis of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. And, much like Arachne's infamous tapestry from Book 6 of that work, the repertoire of Peele's Oenone consists of mythological episodes involving power, rape, insurgence, divine misbehaviour, and ambivalent acts of so-called justice. Dismissing this list of cautionary tales about the dangers of romance and the terrifying whimsicality of the gods, however, Oenone settles on an equally ironic choice: a roundelay or 'pretie sonnet' as she calls it, entitled 'Cupids curse', which has the ominous-sounding refrain 'They that do chaunge olde love for new, pray gods they chaunge for worse' (ll. 282-3). As the nymph naively remarks, it is an apt selection, for 'The note is fine and quicke withall, the dittie will agree, | Paris, with that same vowe of thine upon our Poplar tree' (ll. 284-5). As the two lovers conclude their singing in this scene, Oenone admonishes

her ‘Swete sheepeherd’ to ‘be cunning in this songe, | And kepe [his] love, and love [his] choice’ (ll. 314-15). Though he reassuringly replies that his ‘vowe is made and witnessed, the Poplar will not starte, | Nor shall the nympe Oenones love from forth [his] breathing hart’ (ll. 316-17), this is the last time that we will see the pair together in the play.

The repeated references of both Oenone and Paris to the poplar tree - both in Act 1, scene 5, and when Oenone re-emerges to lament her offstage abandonment in Act 3 - serve to establish Ovid’s *Heroides* as Peele’s primary source for this strand of the play’s subplot. In *Heroides* 5, the most explicitly pastoral of Ovid’s epistles, we learn that Paris, like Gallus in Virgil’s *Eclogue* 10, is in the habit of carving his beloved’s name into tree trunks.<sup>14</sup> As the Ovidian nymph bitterly remarks,

incisae servant a te mea nomina fagi  
 et legor Oenone falce notata tua;  
 et quantum trunci, tantum mea nomina crescunt.  
 (23-5)

(The beeches still conserve my name carved on them by you, and I am read there Oenone, characted by your blade; and the more the trunks, the greater grows my name.)

Moreover, Ovid’s Oenone also reminds her former lover of a particular poplar tree that contains an effusive, living inscription of romantic devotion in its rough bark - a hyperbolic lovers’ promise that the waters of the River Xanthus would flow backwards before Paris would ever abandon his beloved (‘Cum Paris Oenone poterit spirare relicta, | ad fontem Xanthi versa recurret aqua’, 29-30).

Act 1, scene 5 of Peele’s play seems to dramatize Oenone’s retrospective account, relayed early in *Heroides* 5, of what things were like between Paris and herself before his amatory betrayal:

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<sup>14</sup> On Ovid’s use of the pastoral mode in *Heroides* 5, see Sara H. Lindheim, ‘*Omnia Vincit Amor*: Or, Why Oenone Should Have Known It Would Never Work out (*Eclogue* 10 and *Heroides* 5)’, *Materiali e discussioni per l’analisi dei testi classici*, 44 (2000), 83-101, and Megan O. Drinkwater, ‘Irreconcilable Differences: Pastoral, Elegy, and Epic in Ovid’s *Heroides* 5’, *Classical World*, 108 (2015), 385-402.

Saepe greges inter requievimus arbore tecti  
 mixtaque cum foliis praebuit herba torum.  
 (13-14)

(Oft among our flocks have we reposed beneath the sheltering trees, where mingled grass and leaves afforded us a couch.)

However, when Oenone reappears shortly after the delivery of Colin's song in Act 3 of *The Araynement of Paris*, her position has changed. Announcing herself, much like the sad swain, now 'Beguilde, disdayned, and out of love' (l. 579), Oenone accusatorily sports a tell-tale garland of poplar on her head as she delivers resentful complaints about the injustice of Paris' 'trothles doble deede' (l. 595). This includes the song later destined to be reprinted alongside Colin's complaint at the end of *Englands Helicon*:

Melpomene, the Muse of tragicke songes,  
 With moorenfull tunes in stole of dismall hue,  
 Assist a sillie Nympe to wayle her woe,  
 And leave thy lustie companie behinde.

Thou luckles wreath, becomes not me to weare  
 The Poplar tree for triumphe of my love.  
 Then as my joye my pride of love is lefte,  
 Be thou uncloathed of thy lovelie greene,

And in thy leaves my fortune written bee,  
 And them some gentle winde let blowe abroad,  
 That all the worlde may see how false of love,  
 False Paris hath to his Oenone bene.

(ll. 610-21)

Notably, Oenone turns out to be, like Spenser's Colin Clout, an author of implicit intertextual renown. In our last glimpse of Peele's nymph, she announces that she is off to compose what sounds suspiciously like Ovid's *Heroides* 5: she 'will goe sit and pyne under the Poplar tree, | And write [her] answer to' Paris' broken vow, 'that everie eie may see' (ll. 666-7).

That the scorned shepherd Colin is intended to serve as a reflexive form of commentary on the lovesick Oenone and vice versa in *The Araynement of Paris* seems clear. Peele is particularly attuned to the cross-gender implications of aligning Colin with Ovid's

authorial heroine, for he plays upon and partially reverses what Joseph Farrell has called the characteristic ‘dichotomy between male deceit and female self-revelation’ found throughout the *Heroides*.<sup>15</sup> When Peele’s Oenone bitterly describes ‘sheepeherds’ as being uniformly ‘full of wiles’ and accuses them of ‘whet[ting]’ their ‘wits on bookes’ to ‘wrap poore maydes with pypes and songes, and sweete alluring lookes’ (ll. 591-2), for instance, she is quickly corrected by Diggon and Thenot for her alleged misandry: ‘Poore Colin’ they remind her, is just as ‘ill’ and ‘true in trust’ as the nymph herself (l. 597). Furthermore, a sense of *déjà vu* pervades the play’s structurally bifurcated pastoral subplot. The overt doubling of Colin’s and Oenone’s amatory rejections and songs of complaint in back-to-back scenes - and the presence of the commiserating shepherds Thenot, Diggon, and Hobbinol, who comment upon the circumstances of both plainants - has lead previous scholars to note that Peele’s Colin and Oenone ‘share a vocabulary and a range of feeling’, and that ‘the sequential juxtaposition of these two literary figures onstage serves to emphasize their shared experience’.<sup>16</sup> I want to push such observations about this affective alchemy one step further, however. This protracted cross-gendered parallelism in Peele’s dramatic piece does more than simply encourage audiences to reconsider Colin in relation to the legendary Oenone. It also highlights a pre-existing latticework of allusive connections between this literary swain’s plaintive mode and the rhetoric of Ovidian amatory complaint that Peele may well have sensed informing Spenser’s earlier *Calender*.

As Stapleton demonstrates in *Spenser’s Ovidian Poetics*, Spenser drew widely from the *Heroides* throughout his literary career.<sup>18</sup> I here add to Stapleton’s work on Spenser’s Heroidean intertexts by suggesting that Spenser’s representation of Colin’s plaintive mode in the *Calender*, though surely also indebted to ‘the pensive, elegiac Colin of Marot’s plaintive

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph Farrell, ‘Reading and Writing the *Heroides*’, *HSCP*, 98 (1998), 307–38 (p. 323).

<sup>16</sup> MacDonald, p. 26; Diana E. Henderson, *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender, and Performance* (Urbana, IL, 1995), p. 93.

<sup>18</sup> Stapleton, pp. 74-103.

pastorals', shares something with the first-person complaints of the *Heroides* more generally.<sup>19</sup> A generic connection between Colin and the lamenting heroines of classical tradition is suggested in Spenser's *Calender* when the quiescent shepherd finally breaks his long months of silence in the 'November' eclogue. By this point, Colin's 'Muse' has 'to long slomb[ered] in sorrowing | Lulled a sleepe through loves misgovernance', yet the mournful swain's interest is nonetheless piqued when Thenot suggests that he compose something 'of sorrowe and deathes dreeriment' ('November', ll. 3-4, 36). For the first time since 'Januarye', Colin sings one of his own songs - which, as E.K. observes, is 'farre' superior to 'all other the Eglogues of this booke' - and the mythological resonances of Colin's chosen subject are significant. His song commemorates a 'mayden of greate bloud, whom he calleth Dido'. Colin's use of a famously abandoned legendary heroine to figure for this 'secrete', 'unknowne' aristocratic woman says much about the nature of his own plaintive mode (p. 138).

To Spenser and his contemporaries, the Carthaginian Queen's tale of heartbreak and suicide was known not only through Virgil's seminal account in *Aeneid* 4, but equally through *Heroides* 7, an extended complaint in the voice of Dido herself. When Spenser's swain finally sings in 'November', then, it is highly significant that he apostrophizes a Virgilian-Ovidian hybrid best remembered for her first-person lamentations. Colin's plaintive eulogy in 'November' is perceptibly haunted by the memory of *Heroides* 7 as well as derivative love complaints in the Ovidian vein. This includes, most notably, those authored by the often-invoked English Tityrus of Spenser's *Calender*, Geoffrey Chaucer (who sympathetically narrated Dido's demise in both *The House of Fame* and *The Legend of Good Women*). Significantly, it is Colin's poetic commemoration of Dido's tragic death in

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<sup>19</sup> This phrasing derives from McCabe's introduction to *The Shorter Poems*, p. xiv. Colin's most obvious structural models for 'November' and 'December' are Marot's *Eglogue sur le trépas de ma Dame Loyse de Savoye* (to which E.K. draws our attention in the Argument to 'November') and *Eglogue au Roy soubz les noms de Pan et Robin*, respectively.

‘November’ that seems to lead him back to a renewed poetic consideration of his own plight in ‘December’. Ultimately inspired to compose again after months of poetic dormancy, Colin quickly follows his song about Dido’s tragedy with a second plaintive composition inspired by his own romantic misfortune. The contiguity of ‘November’ and ‘December’ thus establishes a sense of thematic and generic continuity between the *Calender*’s final two eclogues and their respective subjects - a synergy that invites us to look further back into literary history, seeking networks of intertextual meaning beyond these two eclogues’ more immediate models in the work of Marot.

Peele’s *Araynement of Paris* both remarks and expands upon these Spenserian parallels between Dido - an emblematic figure within the tradition of first-person complaint - and Colin. The most explicit expression of affinity between these characters is to be found in Peele’s invocation of a famous Virgilian description from *Aeneid* 4 to characterize the swain. In Act 3, scene 2 of *The Araynement of Paris*, Hobbinol observes that Colin, whom he compares to a ‘stricken deere’, is wandering through Ida’s forests ‘Seek[ing] ... Dictamum for his wounde’ (ll. 565-6). His classical allusion here is obvious, for it refers to one of Virgil’s best-known and often imitated epic similes - one that, fortuitously, also involves a shepherd:

Est mollis flamma medullas  
interea et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.  
uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur  
urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,  
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit  
pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum  
nescius: illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat  
Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo.<sup>20</sup>

(All the while the flame devours her tender heartstrings, and deep in her breast lives the silent wound. Unhappy Dido burns, and through the city wanders in frenzy - even as a hind, smitten by an arrow, which, all unwary, amid the Cretan woods, a shepherd hunting with darts has pierced from afar, leaving in her the winged steel, unknowing: she in flight ranges the Dictaeon woods and glades, but fast to her side clings the deadly shaft.)

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<sup>20</sup> *Aeneid*, 4.66-73. I quote Virgil’s Latin text and its English translation from *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, edited by H. R. Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

This broadly conceived, allusive connection that Peele posits between Colin and the *infelix* Queen of Carthage is further enriched and complicated by the fact that, in *The Araynement of Paris*, Oenone draws on Colin's Spenserian eulogy for Dido in her aforementioned song in Act 3, scene 4. Whereas Spenser's Colin began his commemoration of the heroine in 'November' by invoking the muse of tragedy - 'Up then *Melpomene* thou mournfulst Muse of nyne, | Such cause of mourning never hadst afore: | Up grieslie ghostes and up my ruefull ryme' ('November', ll. 53-5) - Peele's Oenone directly echoes this literary precedent, beginning her own lament: 'Melpomene, the muse of tragicke songes, | With moornefull tunes in stole of dismall hue, | Assist a sillie Nympe to wayle her woe' (ll. 610-12). We might say, then, that Peele's play is exploiting a generalized association between the *Calender's* most plaintive shepherd and the anguished voices of Ovid's legendary women, linking Colin and Oenone alike with the paradigmatic abandoned lover of classical tradition, Dido.

Beyond this, Peele's more explicit pairing of Colin with Dido's Heroidean colleague Oenone in *The Araynement of Paris* points our attention back to a nexus of more particularized thematic connections between *Heroides* 5 and Colin's lament in the *Calender's* final eclogue. In Oenone's Ovidian letter to Paris, the pastoral heroine had used similes of decay and seasonal change drawn from the natural world to characterize the hero's amatory inconstancy:

Tu levior foliis, tum cum sine pondere suci  
 mobilibus ventis arida facta volant;  
 et minus est in te quam summa pondus arista,  
 quae levis assiduis solibus usta riget.  
 (109-12)

(You are lighter than leaves what time their juice has failed, and dry they flutter in the shifting breeze; you have less weight than the tip of the spear of grain, burnt light and crisp by ever-shining suns.)

This imagery found in *Heroides* 5 broadly resonates with Colin's lamentation in 'December', wherein the 'bare and barren' earth is likewise employed to reflect the speaker's own 'weedy crop of care' (ll. 105, 122). The Spenserian shepherd's references to 'The eare that budded faire', which now 'is burnt and blasted', the 'withered' and 'dried up' vegetation, and the 'chaffe' that is 'blowne away of the wavering wynd' - none of which have direct precedent in Marot - seem to have particular analogues in the imagery of Oenone's letter (ll. 99, 110-11, 125-6).<sup>21</sup>

This felicitous congruence of the natural imagery in *Heroides* 5 and 'December' is not the only way in which the *Calender's* final eclogue is reminiscent of Oenone's Ovidian epistle, however. Steven F. Walker has observed that 'the *topos* of a cure for love through poetry and the counter-*topos* of the impossibility of finding any cure for love set up the two thematic poles which maintain the figure of Colin in an ambiguous state of what seems to be arrested development' throughout Spenser's work.<sup>22</sup> Admittedly, the trope of a love-wound and the related supposition that poetry might provide love's cure are widespread in pastoral. As Paul Alpers has put it: 'The great pastoral poets are directly concerned with the extent to which song that gives present pleasure can comfort, and if not transform and celebrate, then accept and reconcile men to the stresses and realities of his situation.'<sup>23</sup> But I would also note that this second of Walker's 'thematic poles', the 'counter-*topos* of the impossibility of finding any cure for love', intertextually aligns Colin with another specific Ovidian precedent in *Heroides* 5.

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<sup>21</sup> In comparing Spenser's 'December' with Marot's *Eglogue au Roy*, I have consulted the texts available in Owen J. Reamer, 'Spenser's Debt to Marot - Re-examined', *TSSL*, 10 (1969), 504-27. Similar images were also employed by Colin in his first complaint of the *Calender*, where he laments that his 'lustfull leafe is drye and sere', his 'timely buds ... wasted', and the 'blossome' of his 'youth' now 'With breathed sighes ... blowne away, and blasted' ('Januarye', ll. 37-40).

<sup>22</sup> Steven F. Walker, "'Poetry is/is not a cure for love": The Conflict of Theocritean and Petrarchan *Topoi* in the *Shepherd's Calender*', *SP*, 76 (1979), 353-65 (p. 354).

<sup>23</sup> Paul Alpers, 'The Eclogue Tradition and the Nature of Pastoral', *College English*, 34 (1972), 353-71 (p. 353).

Mingling grief with recrimination, Ovid's Oenone memorably closes her epistle to Paris by bewailing her inability to heal her own lovesickness. Though well-versed in herbal lore, she recognises that her healing skills are ironically ineffectual. Only Paris himself, the object of her unrequited desire, has the power to heal her:

Quaecumque herba potens ad opem radixque medendi  
 utilis in toto nascitur orbe, mea est.  
 Me miseram, quod amor non est medicabilis herbis!  
 Deficior prudens artis ab arte mea.  
 Ipse repertor opis vaccas pavisse Pheraeas  
 fertur et a nostro saucius igne fuit.  
 Quod nec graminibus tellus fecunda creandis creatis  
 nec deus, auxilium tu mihi ferre potes.<sup>24</sup>

(Whatever herb potent for aid, whatever root that is used for healing grows in all the world, is mine. Alas, wretched me, that love may not be healed by herbs! Skilled in an art, I am left helpless by the very art I know. Apollo himself, the inventor of medical art, is said to have taken the Pherean cows to graze, and he was wounded by the same fire. The aid that neither earth, fruitful in the bringing forth of herbs, nor a god himself, can give, you [Paris] have the power to bestow on me.)

Given the extensive intertextual congress between the *Calender* and *Troilus and Criseyde* - Spenser's work is bookended by explicit references to the latter, beginning with the Pandaran echo of 'Uncouthe unkiste' (p. 25) and ending with a Chaucerian-Ovidian 'go little book' poem (p. 156) - it is worth noting that Chaucer, identified by Colin himself as 'the sovereign head | Of shepherds all, that bene with love ytake' ('June', ll. 83-4), had earlier made much of this same passage. An often-remarked and memorable connection between Oenone and the *topos* of love's herbal incurability appears in Book 1 of *Troilus and Criseyde*.<sup>25</sup> What might be

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<sup>24</sup> *Heroides* 5, 147-54. It has often been remarked that the sentiments of this passage bear a striking similarity to Apollo's declaration in *Metamorphoses* 1.521-2: 'Ei mihi, quod nullis amor est sanabilis herbis | nec prosunt domino, quae prosunt omnibus, artes!' ('Alas! No herb can cure that love; nor can arts that heal all others heal their lord!'). What used to be lines 151-2 of *Heroides* 5 are now considered to be spurious, included only as a footnote in Showerman's text; I here restore them since they are included in Vautrollier's 1583 edition of the *Heroides* (with minor variations in wording). The reference is to Apollo's brief career as a cowherd, which he undertook for love of King Admetus' daughter.

<sup>25</sup> See Jamie C. Fumo, "'Little Troilus': *Heroides* 5 and Its Ovidian Contexts in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*", *SP*, 100 (2003), 278-314; Suzanne Hagedorn, *Abandoned Women: Rewriting the Classics in Dante, Boccaccio, and Chaucer* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2004), pp. 131-6; and Elizabeth Allen,

best described as a miniaturization of *Heroides* 5 is interpolated into this Chaucerian romance when Pandarus paraphrases for Troilus - and, in the process, modifies as well as truncates - the Ovidian epistle that 'Oënone | Wrot in a compleynte of hir hevynesse' to his own elder brother Paris:

'Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne',  
 Quod she, 'and couthe in every wightes care  
 Remedye and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,  
 Yet to hymself his konnyng was ful bare,  
 For love hadde hym so bounden in a snare,  
 Al for the doughter of the kyng Amete,  
 That al his craft ne koude his sorwes bete.'<sup>26</sup>

Eliminating all of the other content of Oenone's letter, Pandarus' 'provocative misquotation' of *Heroides* 5 reduces it, in fact, to this single Ovidian image of medically incurable love.<sup>27</sup>

Grievously 'wounded with [Love's] deadly darte' ('April', l. 22), Colin, who 'of Tityrus his songs did lere' ('December' l. 4), ultimately arrives at much the same conclusion in his final song of the *Calender*. Similarly musing on 'The power of herbs, both which can hurt and ease' ('December', l. 88), Spenser's Colin laments,

But ah unwise and witless *Colin cloute*,  
 That kydst the hidden kinds of many a weed:  
 Yet kydst not ene to cure thy sore hart roote,  
 Whose ranckling wound as yet does rifelye bleede.  
 ('December', ll. 91-4)

E.K.'s commentary for these lines points readers to Virgil, and the description of Circe's use of a potion to turn men into animals in *Aeneid* 7, but this feels like an instance of the commentator's characteristic misdirection.<sup>28</sup> Oenone's Heroidean and/or Chaucerian missives suggest themselves as more likely and direct precedents for this topos (which, again, is not

'Flowing Backward to the Source: Criseyde's Promises and the Ethics of Allusion', *Speculum*, 88 (2013), 681-720.

<sup>26</sup> I cite *Troilus and Criseyde* from *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, edited by Larry D. Benson (Boston, MA, 1987), 1.654-5 and 1.659-65.

<sup>27</sup> Fumo, p. 281.

<sup>28</sup> The Yale editors comment that E.K.'s glosses tend to 'raise unhelpful assistance to a new power'. *The Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, edited by William Oram, Einar Bjorvand, and Ronald Bond (New Haven, CT, 1989), p. 6. See also Penny McCarthy, 'E.K. Was Only the Postman', *N&Q*, 47 (2000), 28-31.

found in Marot's corresponding eclogue). What we have here arguably functions as something of a 'window' allusion: Colin may be quoting not only Ovid's Oenone but also Chaucer's Pandarus (mis)quoting Oenone.

That Peele was attuned to this subtle network of preexisting, multivalent connections between Oenone and Colin in the *Calender* is suggested by his play. After all, *The Araynement of Paris* makes much of the imagery of pastoral lore and herbal medicine in characterizing both Colin's and Oenone's lovesick plights, and the play's dialogue underscores the common inability of either character to use medicinal knowledge to ease their own suffering. Speaking of his friend Colin, Diggon, for instance, confirms that 'love is voide of phisicke cleane' and 'gives us bane to bring us lowe, | and let us medicine lacke' (ll. 555-6). And when Hobbinol sees how wracked Oenone is by grief following her abandonment, he too notes the medical incurability of her situation in terms that seem inspired by *Heroides* 5: 'he must heale alone that gave the wound. | There grows no herbe of such effect upon Dame Natures ground' (ll. 601-2).

What, then, does this constellation of the Spenserian Colin and the Ovidian Oenone in *The Araynement of Paris* mean? Peele's deeply intertextual and semantically rich play represents a dynamic fusion of literary models. His mingling of diverse pastoral sources, both classical and vernacular, highlights the striking parallels between the abandonment and resulting *taedium vitae* of the similarly authorial characters Colin and Oenone. And his interweaving of these pastoral precedents and analogues into a complex bucolic subplot suggests much about how Peele himself perceived the literary heritage of Spenser's *Calender*. In simultaneously drawing our attention to and greatly expanding upon Colin's previous Ovidian resonances, *The Araynement of Paris* presents a reading of Spenser's plaintive poetry that emphasizes its subtle yet tangible Heroidean lineage. Arguably, Peele's Ovid-infused reinterpretation of Colin shares much with Pugh's much more recent argument

that ‘a persistent pattern’ of Ovidianism can be sensed in the poem that ‘distan[ces] the *Calender* from its supposed [Virgilian] model’.<sup>29</sup> And it is worth noting that Peele’s recognition of *Heroides* 5 as a source and analogue for Colin’s love complaints was not idiosyncratic. Michael Drayton, too, appears to have remarked this general resemblance of Colin’s plaintive mode to Oenone’s: in his 1593 *Idea the Shepherds Garland*, a pastoral collection directly modelled on Spenser’s *Calender*, Drayton’s poetic persona Rowland compares his own lovesick state with that of this same legendary heroine. In Drayton’s ninth eclogue, as Rowland ‘bemoanes his wofull plight’, he pointedly notes that ‘*Oenon* never upon *Ids* hill, | so oft hath cald’ the name of her erstwhile lover ‘As hath poore *Rowland*’, and he further expands upon this gender-reversed comparison: ‘Yet [as] that false shepheard *Oenon* fled from thee, | I follow her that ever flies from me.’<sup>30</sup>

I want, by way of conclusion, briefly to return to my point of departure: *Englands Helicon*. This late Elizabethan poetic miscellany presents an interpretation of the plaintive shepherd Colin - and, by extension, of Spenser’s *Calender* as a whole - that is in keeping with the genetic and generic arguments underlying Peele’s *Araynement of Paris*. As I remarked at the outset of this piece, Colin is a central and recurring character in Ling’s pastoral anthology; he is frequently quoted and addressed by other inscribed poets and shown responding in turn. Prominently positioned at the end of *Englands Helicon*, however, it is Peele’s version of ‘Colin the enamoured Shepheard’ that represents the last word of this ostensibly Spenserian swain. Ling’s paired presentation of Colin’s and Oenone’s love complaints replicates a sense of affective coherence between these two authorial characters that - though it was greatly elaborated in *The Araynement of Paris* - has, perhaps, earlier roots in Spenser’s own work. And, taken together, this insistent pairing of the similarly woebegone and conspicuously writerly Colin and Oenone that we find both in Ling’s

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<sup>29</sup> Pugh (n. 11), p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Drayton, *Idea the Shepherds Garland* (London, 1593), sigs K1<sup>v</sup>, K2<sup>v</sup>.

miscellany and Peele's play serves to underscore the point that when Spenser's Elizabethan contemporaries read the plaintive eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender*, their sense of the work's primary literary models, generic resonances, and intertextual relationships may well have been at variance with the prevailing interpretations of our own time.

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