

Marvell's "Plume of aged Trees": On a Crux in *Bill-Borrow*

IAN PARKER

ABSTRACT. The article provides evidence that in Marvell's *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-Borrow*, the lines "Upon its crest this Mountain grave / A Plum of aged Trees does wave" in the *Miscellaneous Poems* of 1681 should read "Plume of aged Trees," as Marvell's 1726 editor Thomas Cooke proposed, not "Plump of aged Trees," as H. M. Margoliouth conjectured in his 1927 edition. The evidence relates to the meaning of the passage; "mechanical" and contextual considerations; Marvell's use elsewhere of significant terms in the stanza; and resonances of the passage with likely the single most important—but previously unidentified—source of stanzas V to X of the poem, Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. The article also notes other Marvell poems that draw on Fairfax's Tasso and some implications of the intertextual links.

In the *Miscellaneous Poems* of 1681, the fifth stanza (ll. 33-40) of Marvell's *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-Borrow* (UHGB) reads as follows:

Upon its crest this Mountain grave
A Plum of aged Trees does wave.
No hostile hand durst ere invade
With impious Steel the sacred Shade.
For something alwaies did appear
Of the *great Masters* terrour there:
And Men could hear his Armour still
Ratling through all the Grove and Hill.
(ll. 33-40)¹

In Bodleian MS. Eng.poet.d.49, "the Popple manuscript," presumably prepared at a later date for a projected expanded edition that never materialized, this stanza stands unamended. In his 1726 edition of Marvell, however, Thomas Cooke conjectured that "Plum" should instead be "plume," and amended the text accordingly. In his four-volume edition, *Complete Works of Andrew Marvell* (1872-75), Alexander B. Grosart retained "plum" in the text, but inserted a marginal note beside line 34: "=plume."

In 1927, however, in his authoritative and influential two-volume edition of Marvell's poems and letters, H. M. Margoliouth proposed an alternative. "Plum" should be "Plump," so that lines 33-34 would read "Upon its crest

Key words and phrases. Andrew Marvell; Bilbrough; Edward Fairfax; *Godfrey of Bulloigne*; Tasso; *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

this Mountain grave / A *Plump* of aged Trees does wave" (my emphasis). "Plump" conveys the sense of "a compact body of persons, animals, or things; a band, troop, company; a flock; a cluster, bunch, clump" (*OED*). Margoliouth supported his conjecture by reference to the archaic phrase "a plump of spears," meaning a close-knit group of soldiers, a phrase which resonates with the military imagery elsewhere in the poem.² Some subsequent editors have adopted Margoliouth's "plump," while others have used Cooke's "plume," but there has been limited discussion in these editions of the relative merits of the two alternatives.³ A partial exception is Nigel Smith, in his valuable modernized edition. He decided on "plump," and added a reference to "Cromwell's Plump," the Parliamentary command post at the Battle of Marston Moor, about ten kilometers northwest of Bilbrough. He also notes, however, that "'Plume' fits with the figurative likening of the hill to a helmet (*OED* n.12)"; quotes Pliny's description, in Holland's translation, of the ash—"A tall tree this is, and groweth round, bearing leaves set in the manner of feathers or wings"; and remarks that "A plumed helmet is likened to a hill with almond trees on the top in Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.32, and was copied by Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, II, IV.iii, ll.119-24."⁴

While both words, "Plump" and "Plume," are intelligible and each has its proponents, a number of considerations suggest that it is highly probable that Marvell himself intended "Plume" to describe the "aged Trees" on the crest of Bilbrough Hill. These considerations relate to the sense of the passage itself; "mechanical" and contextual aspects of the question; Marvell's use elsewhere of significant terms in the stanza; and resonances of the passage with what is likely the single most important—but previously unidentified—probable proximate source of stanzas V to X of the poem. This article outlines these considerations and indicates some possible implications for the reading of the poem and its relation to Marvell's other works.

To begin with an elementary but genuine consideration, the sense of the stanza varies significantly as the "aged trees" are a "Plume" or a "Plump." A "Plume" of "aged Trees" continues and reinforces the anthropomorphic image of the "perfect Hemisphere" of Bilbrough Hill established in the first three stanzas, which reflects the virtues of and is identified with its owner, Lord Thomas Fairfax: "humble" and "courteous," it "Nor for itself the height does gain, / But only strives to raise the Plain" (ll. 15-24). The "crest" here is both the peak of the Hill and that of the helmet on the head of a warrior-general who "all the field commands," and the "aged Trees" are the "Plume" or feathers on the crest of the helmet. The "Plume" would naturally "wave," as feathers on the crest of a helmet would wave, and as trees in a breeze would wave. The Hill's resistance to "hostile hand" and "impious Steel" is provided by the "*great Masters* terrour," manifested in the ever-present ("still") "Ratling" sound of his "Armour." Bilbrough Hill is similarly described in anthropomorphic terms in Marvell's Latin companion poem to *UHGB*,

Epigramma in Duos montes Amosclivium Et Bilboreum. The personification of Bilbrough Hill there is perhaps most striking in the likening of the Hill (ll. 7-8) to Hercules, where the comparison with “Atlantean” Almscliff reinforces the theme of Bilbrough’s—and Fairfax’s—humility: “Fulcit Atlanteo Rupes ea vertice coelos: / Collis at hic humeros subjicit Herculeos.”⁵ Yet in relation to the “Plume”-“Plump” issue, the most significant verse in *Epigramma* is line 4: “Cingit huic laetum Fraxinus alta Caput.,” where “Caput” has the sense of both “peak” or “summit” and of “head.”⁶ If the “peak” of the Hill is a “head”, then the association with “plumes” on the “crest” is a natural one.

In contrast, a “Plump” of “aged Trees” conveys the image of a body or clump of trees—or of soldiers, if Margoliouth’s identification of “plump” with “plump of spears” is given weight.⁷ If Marvell intended “Plump,” then “crest” would not have the dual significance that it has with “Plume” but would refer simply to the top of the Hill, thereby reducing the internal resonance and complexity of the image and of the stanza. Moreover, while it is easy to imagine trees, or their leaves and branches, or feathers, “waving” in the breeze, it is rather more difficult to imagine soldiers waving in the breeze, and so the referential focus of the passage becomes more diffuse and attenuated. In addition, insofar as the poem as a whole is concentrated on Lord Fairfax, the presence of a mass of soldiers on the peak of his Hill at this point constitutes somewhat of a digression or distraction, at the same time undercutting his individual achievement and working to dilute the importance of “the *great Masters* terrour.” Later in the poem, in Stanzas VIII and IX, the trees will be called upon to praise Fairfax, but in their capacity as witnesses and potential bearers of his “Trophees” (l. 72), not as a necessary element of military strength.

The conclusion that one could draw on the basis of these considerations related to the sense of the poem is reinforced by certain “mechanical” and contextual factors. First, in works of the period, “plum”—the fruit or the tree—is occasionally spelled “plume,” but, not surprisingly, never “plump.” Moreover, there are instances where “plume”—the feather—is spelled “plum,” but, again not surprisingly, none where “plump” is spelled “plum.”⁸ Hence, if the word “Plum” was used in the manuscript and translated correctly to print, then it almost certainly means “Plume” and not “Plump.” Another quite real possibility, however, is that “Plum” could have been set in type as a consequence of a lapse of attention or a misreading of the manuscript in the typesetting process, reinforced by the natural association of “trees” and “plum” in “plum trees.” If “plum” occurred in the 1681 Folio as the result of an error in the transmission from manuscript to print, then “plume,” the final “e” of which was smaller and could have been mistaken for a mere flourish, is more likely to have been misread by the compositor than “plump,” the final “p” of which would have been larger and would have extended below the line. In short, regardless of whether or not an error was made in the transmission process, these “mechanical” considerations would appear to suggest that “Plume” was more likely intended than “Plump.”

Several other general contextual factors also suggest that “Plume” is more likely than “Plump,” beginning with the fact that the latter is much rarer in works of the period.⁹ Not only is “Plump” relatively rare, but it is not found in association with other pivotal terms in Stanza V. In contrast, during 1473-1655, “plume” is found in close proximity to “crest” in 95 relevant instances, and near “wave” in 35 relevant instances.¹⁰ More directly, Marvell’s own choice of words in his works also provides evidence that “Plume” is more likely than “Plump.” Not including *UHGB*, Marvell uses “plume” or variants at no fewer than ten points, whereas there are no instances of “plump” in either his poetry or his prose works. Interestingly, particularly with a poet like Marvell who often reused the same image in different contexts, a number of the instances of “plume” occur in poems likely written during the period from mid-1650 to 1652 and are combined with other terms that occur in *UHGB*.¹¹ For instance, in *A Dialogue, Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* (ll. 13-20), Pleasure invites the Soul to “Lay aside that Warlike Crest,” and then tempts the Soul’s sense of touch with the chance to rest on “downy Pillows” with their “soft Plumes.” In *The Garden* (ll. 49-56), the poet’s Soul glides into the “boughs” of the trees, and “till prepar’d for longer flight, / Waves in its Plumes the various Light.” In the Woods section of *Upon Appleton House* (ll. 577-80), Marvell writes, identifying the leaves of the trees with plumes: “Out of these scatter’d *Sibyls* Leaves / Strange *Prophecies* my Phancy weaves: / And in one History consumes, / Like *Mexique Paintings*, all the *Plumes*.”¹² In *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel’s Return from Ireland* (ll. 97-98), Marvell exclaims, “What may not then our Isle presume / While Victory his [Cromwell’s] Crest does plume!” Noteworthy in these instances are the range and variety of Marvell’s uses of “Plume” and, in particular, the association of plumes with leaves, trees and boughs and with the “crest” or helmet and military prowess.

The preceding considerations all suggest that Marvell intended “a Plume of aged Trees.” Yet perhaps the strongest evidence that Marvell intended “Plume” lies in the number of significant probable proximate appropriations in *UHGB* from Edward Fairfax’s *Godfrey of Bulloigne* (*GB*) (1600), a free but quite accurate and poetically effective translation of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata* (*GL*).¹³ There are several reasons why Marvell would have drawn on *GB* in a poem dedicated to his employer at Nun Appleton, the Lord General Thomas Fairfax. Most obviously, Lord Fairfax, himself a poet and translator with a love of Spenser and a pride in his heritage,¹⁴ would have both recognized the appropriations from his great-uncle Edward’s Spenser-influenced work and appreciated the implicit compliment to the line. Equally significantly, however, as was the case with Marvell’s numerous appropriations from Spenser, the poetry of *GL* and particularly of *GB* resonated deeply with Marvell: significant echoes of Fairfax’s Tasso occur not only in *UHGB* but also in a number of Marvell’s other poems.¹⁵

Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-Borrow is organized in bipartite fashion, with Stanzas I to IV focused on the Hill and Stanzas V to X focused on

the Grove.¹⁶ The last six lines of the poem, beginning with the admonition to the speaking trees to withhold their praise of Lord Fairfax, depict the interdependence of the features of Hill and Grove in a full portrait of Fairfax and restate the theme of Fairfax's combination of greatness and humility:

But Peace (if you his favour prize)
That Courage its own Praises flies.
Therefore to your obscurer Seats
From his own Brightness he retreats:
Nor he the Hills without the Groves,
Nor Height but with Retirement loves.
(ll. 75-80)

The Grove section of *UHGB* begins with the image of the "aged Trees" of the Grove on the "crest" of the Mountain, protected from the invasion of "hostile hand" and "impious Steel" by the "*great Masters* terrour" and by respect for "*Vera the Nymph*" [Fairfax's wife, Lady Vere], who "him inspir'd." It then moves to a description of Fairfax retiring to the Grove and engraving Vera's name in the "Bark" or "Rind" of the trees: "on these Okes [he] ingrav'd her Name; / Such Wounds alone these Woods became":

But ere he well the Barks could part
'Twas writ already in their Heart.

VII

For they ('tis credible) have sense,
As We, of Love and Reverence,
And underneath the Courser Rind
The *Genius* of the house do bind.
(ll. 47-52)

The section continues (ll. 53ff.) with a description of the sympathetic magic between the Trees and Fairfax that culminates in their speech (ll. 65-72) praising Fairfax's military triumphs and lamenting that their "Branches" and "Trunks" are inadequate to provide for all the "*Civic Garlands*" and "*Trophees*" he has earned.

Two elements in particular stand out in the Grove section: the strain of military imagery noted above, and the sense of uncanniness created by the images of the "sacred Shade"; "the *great Masters* terrour"; and the sentient, "breathing" and speaking Trees, who "underneath the Courser Rind / The *Genius* of the house do bind" and who discourse with the "flutt'ring Breez." The Grove section draws on a number of sources,¹⁷ but three direct poetic sources of the potential assault on the Grove appear to be of particular relevance in the present context: Lucan's *De Bello Civili* (*DBC*), in the original and in Thomas May's translation, *Lucans Pharsalia* (1631); Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *Divine Weekes*; and Tasso's *GL* and particularly Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso.

In Lucan's version of the sacred grove (*DBC* 3.388-452), fear of the consequences of impiously violating the terrifying grove prevents Caesar's men from cutting down the trees needed for the blockade of Massilia until Caesar himself cuts down a tree, inviting all of the punishment for his sacrilege on himself, and thereby overcoming their fear and enabling the felling of the trees of the grove. The threat of intrusion of "impious Steel" into Bilbrough's grove recalls the violation of the sacred Oak by Caesar's steel ("ferro") in the *DBC* passage; the "great Masters terror" in *UHGB* echoes the "horror" and "terror" of the grove in Lucan; while the phrase "impious steel" is found in May's translation of *DBC* 2.148-151.¹⁸ Lucan's grove is ominous and forbidding, but its trees are not personified in the way they are in *UHGB*.

Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *Divine Weekes* (*DW*) (1621), which draws on Lucan, contains two accounts of the pillaging of the forests, one related to the construction of the Tower of Babel (*DW* II.ii.2.145-70) and one to Solomon's construction of the Temple of Jerusalem (*DW* II.iv.2.1099-1128). Both are significant sources for some of Marvell's poems, including *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* and *Upon Appleton House*, but their principal focus is on the destruction of the forests and on the hubris of the Tower of Babel and even to some extent of Solomon's Temple, rather than on the groves themselves.¹⁹

Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*—particularly in Edward Fairfax's translation—appears to have been the single most important direct source of Marvell's Grove section. It too draws on Lucan, to a much greater extent than Du Bartas does, but Tasso's treatment is a much expanded and more elaborate version of Lucan.²⁰ The enchanted grove plays a pivotal role in Tasso's poem, as the source of the timber used to build the "engines" with which Godfrey and his Christian army assail the walls of Jerusalem and "liberate" the city. Enchanted in Canto 13 by the infernal magic of the sorcerer Ismeno, to prevent the Christian forces from building their towers and rams, the grove figures prominently in Cantos 3, 13, 14, and 18. It resists all of the initial attempts to break the enchantment, until it is revealed to Godfrey in Canto 14 that only Rinaldo can successfully overcome the spell and enable the extraction of timber from the grove. It thus provides the impetus for the rescue of Rinaldo in Cantos 15 and 16 from the thralls of Armida and her enchanted palace, his penance and purification in Canto 17, and his victory in Canto 18 over the evil forces in the grove—a necessary prerequisite of the Christians' victory in the twentieth and final Canto of the poem.

Tasso's grove makes its first appearance in Canto 3 (56, 74-76), where it is described as an "aged wood,"²¹ to which Godfrey sends his carpenters:

And now the axe rag'd in the forrest wilde,
The Eccho sighed in the groues vnseene,
The weeping Nymphes fled from their bowres exilde,
Downe fell the shadie tops of shaking treene,
.....

Thus fell the trees, with noice the desarts rore,
The beastes, their caues; the birds, their nests forlore.²²

Significantly, this passage immediately follows the funeral obsequies for the fallen Christian warrior Dudon, which include placing Dudon's trophies, the "ensignes and armes" he had won from "Pagan Lords," "among the boughs," and putting a memorial "distich" on the tree under which he is buried. At this point, prior to Ismeno's calling up the spirits from the underworld, the Christians can enter the grove and fell its trees with impunity. In Canto 13.1-11, however, even before Ismeno casts his spells, the grove is painted in much more sinister terms: even during the day, in Fairfax's translation, it is "Thicke with old trees whose horrid armes display / An ougly shade, like euerlasting night." With the setting of the sun, "Night, horror, darknes thicke, the place inuade, / Which vaile the mortall eies with blindnes deepe, / And with sad terrour make weake harts affraide"; "Vnited there the ghostes and goblins meet":

No twist, no twig, no bough nor branch therefore,
The Saracines cut from that sacred spring;
But yet the Christians spared nere the more,
The trees to earth with cutting steele to bring . . .

Then, however, Ismeno utters his "dreadfull charmes," culminating in his call to "great Dis":

Keepe you this forrest well, keepe euey tree,
Numbred I giue you them and truly tould;
As soules of men in bodies cloathed be,
So euerie plant a sprite shall hide and hould,
With trembling feare make all the Christians flee,
When they presume to cut these Cedars ould. . .²³

At this point, "Legions of deuills by thousands thither come . . . And vnder euerie branch and leafe they stand." Once Ismeno's spell has been cast, a succession of attempts to enter the grove and cut down its trees (*GB* 13.17-51) is thwarted, beginning with the repulse of the workmen, "When wonders new their fearfull harts affright" (17-23); continuing with the failure of the "Switzer" Alcasto (24-30); and culminating in the grove's defeat of the valiant Tancred, vanquished by the pleas of his beloved Clorinda's shade (31-49).

Marvell's description of both the Trees in Bilbrough's Grove—"For they ('tis credible) have sense, / As We, of Love and Reverence, / And underneath the Courser Rind / The Genius of the house do bind"—and the power of the "*great Masters* terrour" resonates with the multiple descriptions of the trees in Tasso's grove. The workmen say (13.23), reporting on their failure,

My Lord, not one of vs there is, I grant,
That dares cut downe one branch in yonder spring,
I thinke there dwels a sprite in euerie plant,
There keepes his court great Dis infernall king. . .

When Tancred cuts into the Cypress tree that holds Clorinda's shade, he hears a groan (*GB* 13. 41-43):

Enough enough the voice lamenting said,
Tancred thou hast me hurt, thou didst me driue
 Out of the bodie of a noble maid,
 Who with me liu'd, whom late I kept on liue,
 And now within this woefull Cipresse laid,
 My tender rinde thy weapon sharpe doth riue,
 Cruell, ist not enough thy foes to kill,
 But in their graues wilt thou torment them still?
 I was *Clorinda*, now imprison'd heere,
 (Yet not alone) within this plant I dwell,
 For euerie Pagan Lord and Christian peere,
 Before the cities walles last day that fell,
 (In bodies new or graues I wote not cleere)
 But here they are confin'd by magikes spell,
 So that each tree hath life, and sense each bou,
 A murdrer if thou cut one twist art thou.

On his return to Godfrey after his failure to overcome Ismeno's enchantment of the grove, Tancred says (*GB* 13.49):

What would you more? each tree through all that wood
 Hath sense, hath life, hath speech, like humaine kind,
 I heard their words, as in that groue I stood,
 That mournfull voice still, still I beare in minde:
 And (as they were of flesh) the purple blood,
 At euerie blow streames from the wounded rind,
 No, no, not I, nor any else (I trow)
 Hath powre to cut one leafe, one branch, one brow.²⁴

These passages describing the enchanted grove before Rinaldo breaks Ismeno's spell (*GB*, 18.1-39) appear to have furnished Marvell with much of the framework and imagery for Billbrough's Grove.

GB is also an important source of Lord Fairfax's engraving of Vera's name in the "Barks" of the Trees in the Grove, in a particular respect. *UHGB* is one of three poems in which Marvell uses the device, the others being the companion-poems *Hortus* and *The Garden*. *GB* has three passages involving writing on trees. The first, the epitaph for Dudon (*GL* 3.73), has already been mentioned. A second occurs in the account of Tancred's unsuccessful quest to end the enchantment of the grove (*GB* 13.38-40), where he finds a message written on a "Cipresse" asking him to spare the "soules" in the "woods":

This found he grauen in the tender rinde,
 And while he mused on this vncouth writ,
 Him thought he heard the softly whistling winde,
 His blastes amid the leaues and branches knit,

And frame a sound like speech of humane kinde. . .

The sound of the wind is echoed in *UHGB* (ll. 53-56), where “sometimes a flutt’ring Breez / Discourses with the breathing Trees; / Which in their modest Whispers name / Those Acts [of Lord Fairfax] that swell’d the Cheek of Fame.”

While these two passages differ from the conventional “lovers carving” motif, *GB* (7.19-20) also contains a pastoral episode in which the temporary shepherdess Erminia, despairing at her failure to find her beloved Tancred, carves her sad tale in the “barke” or “tender rind” of the trees. Interestingly, the episode also contains a passage (*GB* 7.5) in which Erminia awakens to the music of nature:

The birds awakte her with their morning song,
 Their warbling musicke pearst her tender eare,
 The murmuring brookes and whistling windes among
 The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare. . .

The passage is echoed in the *UHGB* lines “Men could hear his Armour still / Ratling through all the Grove and Hill” (ll. 39-40), and provides a natural context for the lines that adds a dimension to their interpretation. The “writing on trees” motif, with its classical and Petrarchan roots, was virtually a commonplace by the time Marvell wrote, and it would clearly be inaccurate to describe *GB* as the sole source of the image as used in *UHGB*, *Hortus* and *The Garden*. Yet Marvell’s treatment of the convention does appear to reflect the influence of *GB* in at least one significant respect. If trees, like those in *GB*, are sentient “soules,” then wounding them is an act of cruelty, and in all three poems Marvell constructs the situation to mitigate, if not wholly to excuse, the cruelty. In *UHGB*, Fairfax engraves Vera’s name on the “Okes” of the Grove, but her name is “writ already in their Heart.” In *The Garden* (ll. 17-24), as in *Hortus* (ll. 25-31), the speaker will not, like “Fond Lovers, cruel as their Flame,” cut his “Mistress name” in the Trees: rather, “Fair Trees! Where s’eer your barkes I wound, / No Name shall but your own be found.”

The pervasive influence of *Gerusalemme Liberata*—and of Edward Fairfax’s *Godfrey of Bulloigne*—in Marvell’s production of *UHGB* is of considerable relevance to the “Plume”-“Plump” question. As might be expected in a poem centered on a military expedition to liberate Jerusalem, the conventional trappings of martial poetry figure largely in both Tasso’s poem and its English translation. While *GB* contains no instances of “plump,” it has 18 instances of “crest,” 23 instances of “helmet,” and 15 instances of “plume” and variants. Of particular significance is the fact that “plume” and “crest” are found in close association at five points in the poem.²⁵ Of these instances, the most important in the present context occurs at the commencement of the final battle of the poem, which culminates in the Christian victory (*GB* 20.28-30):

It was a great, a strange, and wondrous fight,

When front to front those noble armies met,

 Loose in the winde waued their ensignes light,
 Trembled the plumes that on their crests were set;

 Of drie topt Oakes, they seemd two forrests thicke:
 So did each hoste with speares and pikes abound,

 Horrour it selfe in that faire sight seem'd faire...²⁶

This passage combines, in close proximity to each other, many of the elements of *UHGB*: the “plumes” and “crests,” the “waving,” the “wind,” the “forrests” (groves) of “Oakes,” the “Horrour” (“terroure”), and the “pikes” that figure in the Trees’ description (ll. 65-68) of Lord Fairfax’s past exploits:

Much other Groves, say they, then these
 And other Hills him once did please.
 Through Groves of Pikes he thunder’d then,
 And Mountains rais’d of dying Men.

The abundance of intratextual links in this relatively brief passage, in a work that appears to have provided much of the framework and the imagery for the Grove section of *UHGB*, suggests both that the passage is an important proximate source of Marvell’s poem and that Marvell intended a “Plume of aged Trees,” and not a “Plump.” The evidence derived from Marvell’s use of Edward Fairfax’s translation of Tasso thus reinforces the conclusion drawn on the basis of the other considerations discussed above.

This article has devoted a considerable amount of space to the consideration of a single word in Marvell’s poem. It is a fair question whether a single word—indeed, a single letter—is important enough to warrant that degree of attention. If the foregoing analysis is correct, however, then a number of reasonably far-reaching conclusions would appear to follow. Most basically, a number of considerations suggest that Marvell intended “a Plume of aged Trees” on the crest of Bilbrough Hill, and not a “Plump” of Trees. Further, in outlining those considerations, evidence has been provided indicating that Edward Fairfax’s translation of Tasso, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, is with high probability a major direct source, likely the most important single source, of the Grove section of *UHGB*. Some examples of the role of *GB* in a number of other poems likely written by Marvell during the 1650-1652 period, much of which was spent in the employ of Lord Thomas Fairfax as tutor to Mary Fairfax, have been noted. These examples help to demonstrate that many of the resonances and interconnections among Marvell’s poems of the period stem in part from their common origins in Fairfax’s Tasso.

Similarly, the discussion should have indicated that *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in the original and in Fairfax’s translation, is an important source of a significant strain in Marvell’s work, whether we describe it as anthropomorphism, personification, hermeticism, pantheism, magical whimsy, or

love of nature, each of which terms captures certain aspects of the strain. A number of his poems, including *Upon Appleton House*, *Hortus* and *The Garden*, *The Mower against Gardens*, and *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, as well as *UHGB* and *Epigramma*, are populated by humanized trees, flowers, bees, and even estate houses. The principal classical source is Ovid, and one can find instances in both early modern pastoral and the poetry of Marvell's contemporaries, but *GL* and *GB*—in the instances noted above and in other instances appropriated by Marvell—appear to have provided him with some of the most thoroughgoing examples.

If Marvell intended “Plume,” then—as was suggested earlier in discussing the sense of the poem—the focus of *Bill-Borrow* is more concentrated on Lord Fairfax than if he meant “Plump.” In this case, *Bill-Borrow* would more clearly exemplify another important strain in Marvell's works, that of the single or solitary individual. This recurrent figure assumes many forms: the heroic actor, like Cromwell in *An Horatian Ode* and *The First Anniversary* or the Poet in *Tom May's Death*; the stoic or defiant suffering hero, *The unfortunate Lover*, Archibald Douglas in *The last Instructions to a Painter*, or James Mitchell in *Scaevola Scoto-Britannicus*; and the solitary individual in retirement, as in *Upon Appleton House*, *Hortus* and *The Garden*. In this context, *Bill-Borrow* is of particular interest in that Fairfax here is defined in terms of both action and retirement: “Nor he the Hills without the Groves, / Nor Height but with Retirement loves.”²⁷

The discussion should also have shed light on Marvell's creative or poetic productive process. To take just one example, both Lucan's and Tasso's groves are places of evil, and in both, the cutting down of the trees is necessary to achieve the military objectives of Caesar and of the Christian forces, respectively. The Grove on Bilbrough Hill is a place for retirement identified with Lord Fairfax; hence it must be a locus of virtue. Marvell uses the imagery of Lucan and Tasso, including the uncanny aspects, but suppresses all of the evil associations of their groves. Ismeno's infernal spells become the virtuous “*great Masters* terrour,” which frightens away the evil “hostile hand” that would invade the “sacred Shade” with “impious Steel.” Marvell thus manages to invert the associations of his sources as he appropriates their imagery.

If the foregoing analysis is correct, and “*Plume*” is in all probability the correct reading, one final pair of questions remains: where did Margoliouth's “*Plump*” come from, and what accounts for its diffusion in other editions of Marvell's works? One real possibility is that Francis Drake, when he wrote *Eboracum*, had read the 1681 *Miscellaneous Poems*, and been struck by its description of the “*Plum* of aged Trees.”²⁸ Sensing that “*Plum*” was incorrect, but not appreciating the poetic point of “*Plume*” and hence the likelihood that “*Plum*” was a misprint for “*Plume*,” he assumed that Marvell had meant to describe a “*Plump*” of trees, a not uncommon description of groves of trees in botanical and agricultural works. Subsequently, in preparing his edition of Marvell, Margoliouth was similarly troubled by “*Plum*.”

In reading Drake, he was drawn by the aural coincidence of the 1681 Folio's "Plum" and Drake's "Plump," and associated it with the "plump of spears" he mentioned in his notes, despite the extreme rarity of the expression prior to its resuscitation by Sir Walter Scott in 1786 and its drawbacks relative to "*Plume*" as discussed above. Margoliouth's authority gave "Plump" more weight in the mind of some subsequent editors than it otherwise might have had. The above sketch is conjectural, but it would account for the origin and continuation of "Plump of aged Trees."

NOTES

¹ Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous Poems* (London, 1681), ll. 33-40. With the present exception, all quotations from Marvell's poetry are from H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, 3rd ed., rev. Pierre Legouis and E. E. Duncan-Jones, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), unless otherwise noted.

² These military images include the "Ratling" "Armour" of ll. 39-40, as well as the "Groves of Pikes," "Mountains . . . of dying Men," and "Trophees" of ll. 67-72. Margoliouth also quoted the following passage from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736): "The town standeth upon a rising ground, or small hill to look at, yet, a plump of trees upon it may be seen at forty miles distance; and, one way, if I am rightly informed, was before the old trees was cut down, the *land-mark* for the entry of ships into the *Humber*." Cited in Margoliouth, *Poems*, 278n29 as Drake's *York*, 1736.

³ Among editions which annotate the passage even minimally, "Plump" appears in those of Hugh Macdonald (1952), George de F. Lord (1968), Elizabeth Story Donno (1972), and Nigel Smith (2007), while "Plume" appears in Robert Wilcher (1986) and David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham (2000). Frank Kermodé used "plump" in his 1967 Signet edition, but shifted to "plume" in the 1990 Oxford University Press edition he co-edited with Keith Walker. An extended discussion is contained in Michael Craze, *The Life and Lyrics of Andrew Marvell* (London: Macmillan, 1979), who opts for "plump" (149).

⁴ Nigel Smith, ed., *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* (Harlow: Longman, 2007), 207. Smith's supporting evidence for "plume" here would appear to be stronger than that for "plump," and the deciding factors leading to his choice of the latter word are not made explicit. Smith's arguments for "plume" parallel those raised earlier by Wilcher (1986) and Ormerod and Wortham (2000), augmented by the reference in A. C. Hamilton's edition of *The Faerie Queene* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 1.32.5-9n.

⁵ In the translation of W. A. McQueen and K. A. Rockwell, "That cliff [Almscliff] supports the heavens on its Atlantean peak: / This hill [Bilbrough] submits its Herculean shoulders," *The Latin Poetry of Andrew Marvell* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964).

⁶ In McQueen and Rockwell's translation, "The tall ash tree circles the pleasant summit of the other [Bilbrough]," while Estelle Haan's translation, quoted in Smith (2007), 202, reads: "[The] lofty ash surrounds the latter's [Bilbrough's] glad head." See also the suggestive remarks in Smith, *Poems*, 201n6.

⁷ It should be noted that Margoliouth's identification of "plump" with "plump of spears" is at best only implicit in the poem; that the expression "plump of spears" is extremely rare, EEBO recording only three instances prior to 1750, Hall's *Chronicles* (1548), Grafton's excerpt from Hall (1569), and *Floddan* (1600); and that as generally used prior to 1655, "plump" refers to a clump, undifferentiated mass, or mob.

⁸ For works published during the 1473-1655 period, the majority of instances in EEBO of "plume" NEAR "tree" refer to the fruit or tree, not to feathers. While OED contains no instances of "plum" being used as a spelling for "plume," there are instances in EEBO. Patrick Gordon's *The famous historie of the renowned and valiant Prince Robert surnamed the Bruce . . .* (1615), Viiiir, for example, describes how "the wortheis warlick bold and braue / Came all in shining *Steill*, their glistring crest / Adorn'd with plums." Similarly, H. C.'s translation of Fernão Mendes Pinto's *The voyages and adventures of Fernand Mendez Pinto . . .* (London, 1653), 227, describes "the Kings second guard" as having "on their heads Helmets wrought with gold and silver, wherein stuck gallant plums of several colours."

⁹ For the 1473-1655 period, EEBO has 2606 instances of "Plume" and variants in 1142 records, virtually all of which refer to "plumes"="feathers"; for "Plump," there are 725 instances in 438 records, but only 59 of these records have "plump" in the sense of "clump" or "mass."

¹⁰ These numbers are lower than those produced by a basic EEBO search, since some of the instances (for instance, where “plume” is associated with “wave”=undulating water) have been excluded.

¹¹ Notwithstanding hypotheses regarding the possibility that certain Marvell poems, including *The Garden*, *The Mower against Gardens*, and *A Dialogue, Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure*, may have been initially composed in the late 1660s, scholarly works such as those by Susan A. Clarke and by Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, as well as research by the author as part of a larger study in progress, suggest quite strongly that these poems were composed by Marvell during the 1650-1652 period. Even if these poems were not written then, however, they still provide evidence of Marvell’s fondness for the “Plume” image.

¹² This version of the image is repeated, in a quite different context, in *The last Instructions to a Painter* (ll. 13-14): “[I]f to match our Crimes thy skill presumes, / As th’*Indians*, draw our luxury in Plumes.”

¹³ The criteria used in determining whether a potential appropriation is “probable” include the following: the greater the distinctiveness of individual resemblances, the closer the resemblances, and the higher the frequency of apparent appropriations by Marvell from a particular passage in *GB*, the higher the probability that an actual appropriation is involved. In some of the instances noted below, it is probable that *GB* was both a proximate source and a mediated or mediating source. In the remainder of this note, the term “probable” has usually been omitted to save space, but readers should treat it as understood.

¹⁴ Lord Fairfax’s epigrams, in particular, have genuine poetic merit. His fondness for Spenser is noted in Smith, 224n288, and the extended “nunnery” passage (ll. 81-288) of *Upon Appleton House* is an imaginative account of the historical origins of Nun Appleton as a Fairfacian property.

¹⁵ These poems include the *Horatian Ode*, *Tom May’s Death*, *Upon Appleton House*, *The Gallery*, *Hortus* and *The Garden*, some of the “Mower” poems, *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure*, and *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*. Full documentation of these appropriations is part of a larger study in progress, but some instances are included below.

¹⁶ While some commentators describe the organization of the poem in terms of a 4-4-2 division of the ten stanzas, as described in Smith, 204-5, Stanza IX is the speech of the Trees in the Grove and Stanza X is the speaker’s address to the Trees. Hence for present purposes, notwithstanding the numerological possibilities of the poem, the division indicated above in the text is more useful.

¹⁷ Smith, *Poems*, 201-9, contains an excellent survey of potential and probable sources and parallels, including some significant ones such as Ovid, Sarbiewski, and Denham that are not discussed below.

¹⁸ In his translation, May was partial to both words: “impious” occurs 29 times and “steel” 12 times in May’s *Lucan*, although neither word occurs in his translation of Lucan’s grove passage.

¹⁹ See Ian Parker, “Marvell’s ‘A Dialogue between the Soul and Body’: Probable Sources and Implications,” *Notes & Queries* 55.3 (2008): 291-299, esp. 296ff.

²⁰ The influence of *DBC* 3.388-452 on Tasso is most apparent in *GL* 3.74-76; 13.1-11; and 18.41-46.

²¹ The grove and its trees are described as “aged” at six points in *GB*, including *GB* 18.19, which refers to “aged trees,” as echoed in *UHGB*.

²² Fairfax’s “the axe rag’d” is his free translation of Tasso’s “pungenti ferri,” “stinging steel.”

²³ The pair of lines beginning “As soules of men” have resonances in Marvell’s *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* (*DSB*), and provide further support for the conjecture in Smith, *Poems*, 62, 64n, based on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* I.ii.291-93, that a pun on “pine”

is involved in the Soul's complaint (ll. 21-22), "What Magick could me thus confine / Within anothers Grief to pine?" See also *GB* 13.17-51, particularly the passages quoted immediately below in the text. *GB* 18.41-46, with its description of the "cunning architect" who designs the Christians' "engins huge" with their "ashes wilde and squared Pines," is also reflected in the Body's concluding complaint in *DSB* (ll. 41-44): "What but a Soul could have the wit / To build me up for Sin so fit? / So Architects do square and hew, / Green Trees that in the Forest grew."

²⁴ It is significant both in evaluating the importance of *GL* and *GB* as probable sources of *UHGB* and in tracing the bases of the intertextual links among Marvell's poems that the descriptions of the grove in *GB* 13 are immediately followed at two points (*GL* 13.13-14 and 52-64) by extended descriptions of the scorching weather that besets the Christian forces. These passages provide much of the detailed imagery in *Damon the Mower*, and are directly and indirectly reflected in *Hortus* (ll. 50-54) and *The Garden* (ll. 65-68), where Marvell's emphasis on the mildness of the weather is couched in terms of an exclusion of the searing heat.

²⁵ See *GB* 1.35, 3.7, 3.21, 20.28, and 20.52; in addition, *GB* 20.143 links "plume" and "helmet."

²⁶ The above passage, together with others in *GB*, also has resonances in Marvell's *A Dialogue, Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure (RSCP)*, as in lines 5-6: "See where an Army, strong as fair, / With silken Banners spreads the air." Smith, *Poems*, 33-38, following a suggestion by Leishman based on some resemblances between *RSCP* and Milton's *Paradise Lost (PL)*, has suggested a date of "After August 1667" for *RSCP*. In the above passage (*GB* 20.28-30) and others, however, the resonances between *RSCP* and *GB* are stronger than those with *PL*, for the instances noted by Leishman and for other *RSCP* passages. Hence, even apart from other considerations, it is not unlikely that such resemblances between *RSCP* and *PL* stem from appropriations by both Marvell and Milton from *GL* and *GB* and certain other sources, rather than providing evidence for a later date of composition of *RSCP*.

²⁷ In *An Horatian Ode*, ll. 1-12, 29-32, Cromwell is associated with retirement, but he leaves "the inglorious Arts of Peace" to urge "his active Star."

²⁸ See n2 above. Margoliouth suggests as much in his notes (278n29), when he says of the quoted passage from Drake, "Drake's statement may have its source in this poem [*UHGB*] of Marvell's."