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## Andrew Marvell and John Barclay's *Satyricon*

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An unidentified Latin verse quotation in *Mr. Smirke* proves to derive from John Barclay's *Satyricon* (1607). This discovery resolves what had seemed a textual crux in the standard edition of *Mr. Smirke*. It also invites review of how Marvell deploys this material for his present purpose, what confessional considerations arise from the Catholic Barclay's contribution, and whether Barclay's example as a Menippean satirist informs Marvell's successes in this kind.



Read by “the king down to the tradesman,” Marvell’s prose satires enjoyed unusual success for such animadversions.<sup>1</sup> With those works finding new life in a modern critical edition,<sup>2</sup> his choices have come further into view, whether in transposing *The Rehearsal* or also animadverting anticlerically in *Mr. Smirke*, or offering *Annotations*, an *Essay*, an *Account*, or *Remarks*. Whatever the differences in genre between these tracts, they share a satirical mode and there is some consensus this is Varronian satire, or Menippean as Varro himself styled it.<sup>3</sup> Varro was, in Quintilian’s phrase, “the most learn’d of the Romans”<sup>4</sup> and, not least in Marvell’s vernacular handling, Varronian satire invites a display of wide reading, however lightly that may be worn. (As has been observed of such satire, these “send-ups of a constricting and exclusive erudition paradoxically require a learned reader to savour them fully.”<sup>5</sup>) In polemic Marvell parades his literary authority; readers may expect every sophistication in this kind, especially his insistent reference to a bewildering array of literature classical and modern. The challenge to his editors is plain, as where the recent edition of *Mr. Smirke* finds the following lines “unidentifiable”:

*Huic mites nimium Flammas, huic lenta putassem,  
Flumina, fumiferi potasset nubila Peti.*<sup>6</sup>

Nor are these verses Marvell’s own.<sup>7</sup> For they prove to have another source, and that of peculiar interest: they derive from the neo-Latin author John Barclay’s *Euphormionis Lusinini Satyricon*.

Barclay’s *Satyricon* was an innovative Latin fiction and a prime example “amongst the Moderns” of Varronian satire. It enjoyed “huge influence” in its time, when it was republished in many editions and translations.<sup>8</sup> What may seem a recondite source

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 2 vols. (London, 1724–5), 1:260. For such praise for Marvell from no less than the Earl of Rochester, Jonathan Swift, and Charles II, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, “Adversarial Marvell,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Andrew Marvell*, ed. Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 181, 182, 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, [hereafter PWAM] ed. Martin Dzelzainis, Annabel Patterson, Nicholas von Maltzahn, and Neil Keeble, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> For Marvell as Menippean satirist, see Helmut Castrop, *Die Varronische Satire in England 1660–1690* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1983), 186–201; and Alex Garganigo, “*The Rehearsal Transpros’d* and *The Rehearsal Transpros’d: The Second Part*,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis and Edward Holberton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 517–37.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted by John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. IV, ed. A.B. Chambers, William Frost, and Vinton Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 46.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Lake Prescott, “Menippean Donne,” in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, M. Thomas Hester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 159.

<sup>6</sup> Imagining the severest punishment: “I would have thought fire too mild and drowning too slow; he should have inhaled the clouds of a smoking fart.” *Mr. Smirke; or, the Divine in Mode* (1676), 17; cf. PWAM, 2:60.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Nicholas von Maltzahn and Rory Tanner, “Marvell’s ‘Maniban’ in Manuscript,” *Review of English Studies* 63 (2012): 774.

<sup>8</sup> Dryden, *Works*, 4:48; John Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusinini Satyricon*, trans. David A. Fleming (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1973), 355–7; Stefan Tilg, “Long Prose Fiction,” in *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, ed. Victoria Moul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 322.

to us was to Marvell's contemporaries familiar enough; it would have been stranger had Marvell not known it. It was recommended reading already in his Cambridge of the 1630s.<sup>9</sup> Had he needed now to consult it anew, a copy of the book was to hand in the Earl of Anglesey's library (of which he had use).<sup>10</sup> Son of the Scottish legal theorist William Barclay, John Barclay (1582–1621) was a Catholic raised in France but friendly to James I, whose patronage he sought during a decade's stay in England (ca. 1606–1615), notably by defending the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance.<sup>11</sup> British concerns are much reflected in the second part of his *Satyricon* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. Paris, 1607), from which Marvell's passage derives; here the travails of Barclay's Euphormio take him to "Scolimorrhodia" (Gr. thistle and rose), governed by the praiseworthy "Tessaranactus" (the fourfold king).<sup>12</sup>

The Catholic Barclay was hostile to papal pretensions in secular matters and resentful of Jesuits in particular. But he also viewed Puritans darkly. Where Marvell draws on Barclay, it is a Puritan, "Catharinus," who has horribly taken to his pipe at the end of the Sabbath meal (in contempt of James I's strictures against the evil weed). The prose narration then yields to a longer verse execration of tobacco – "*Planta nocens, ô lethifero planta horrida fumo...*" (O harmful plant, O frightful plant with deadly smoke). That malediction concludes that whoever introduced tobacco deserves, like a parricide, a worse fate than burning or drowning. Instead, the condign punishment is to have to smoke something even more horrible than tobacco:

*Huic mites nimium Flammas, huic lenta putassent  
Flumina, fumiferi potasset nubila Peti.*<sup>13</sup>

(They would have thought fire too mild and drowning too slow; he should have inhaled the clouds of a smoking fart.)<sup>14</sup>

We may note that Marvell in quoting Barclay has shifted his vantage to the first-person singular ("*putassem*") to nest the verses in *Mr. Smirke*. (Nor does his, or

<sup>9</sup> As a model for "complex styles" in Richard Holdsworth's "Directions," for example. See Thomas Healey, *Richard Crashaw* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 51. Crashaw, Marvell's older contemporary at Cambridge, translates into English a more exalted passage from Barclay's *Satyricon*: Richard Crashaw, *Poems*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.]), 392–3.

<sup>10</sup> *Bibliotheca Angleseiana* (1686), 50 (in the Amsterdam 1628 edition); Annabel Patterson and Martin Dzelzainis, "Marvell and the Earl of Anglesey," *Historical Journal* 44 (2001): 703–26.

<sup>11</sup> Nicola Royan, "Barclay, John (1582–1621), writer," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Barclay, *Satyricon*, trans. Fleming, ix–xiv; and for Barclay in a much wider polemical context, Matthew Thomas Growhoski, "The Secret History of a 'Secret War': John Barclay, his *Satyricon*, and the Politicization of Literary Scholarship in Early Modern Europe, 1582–1621" (Princeton University diss., 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Barclay, *Satyricon*, trans. Fleming, 371–3.

<sup>13</sup> John Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusini Satyricon* (Amsterdam, 1628), 200; Barclay, *Satyricon*, trans. Fleming, 346–7.

<sup>14</sup> My translation.

likelier his printer's, punctuation much help the sense there.) Patterson struggles with the last line, proposing the text itself faulty where it has "*Peti*" and wishing it might instead read "*Pestis*."<sup>15</sup> But that would then require "*fumiferi*" (smoke-producing) to read in the feminine "*fumiferae*." Marvell was more than Latinist enough to have arrived at some such correction were it needed. Instead, in Barclay it proves the smoke that appals (and not the plague), as recourse to his *Satyricon* confirms, where editions agree on "*Peti*." It has been observed that Barclay's Latin "is sometimes recherché to the point of obscurity."<sup>16</sup> Here the unwelcome "*Peti*" seems a coinage from the French "*pet*"—also a masculine noun—yielding the infernal punishment of having to inhale clouds from a smoking fart.<sup>17</sup>

Had Marvell kept a commonplace book—his detractors claimed this was all the learning he had—such a passage might have been entered under the heading of Tobacco. But the context in *Mr. Smirke* suggests him preoccupied instead with trials by ordeal, a lasting concern for Marvell. Here he comes to the defence of Bishop Croft, at first imagined as subject to one violent martyrdom or another, and then as a witch subject to burning, with Marvell mordant on Croft's plight when subject to High Church persecution: "it comes to the same thing almost to be Innocent or Guilty: for if a man swim he is Guilty, and to be Burnt; if he sink, he is Drowned, and Innocent."<sup>18</sup> Really the worse frenzy here is that of the animadverter (the unnamed Francis Turner), whom Marvell so lengthily reproves. Marvell then returns to the "severer Torment" that he imagines Turner designing for Croft, but which can be turned to jest with Barclay's help. For "if our Church be bewitched, and [Croft] has done it"—there may be something here of the parricide touched on in Barclay's imprecation—the fate ordained must be summoned for him: "... *fumiferi potasset nubila Peti*." Troping on the punishments of burning and drowning, Marvell, scanting the fate of convicted witches, instead mocks Turner's punitive inclinations.

In remembering Barclay's lines, was Marvell drawing on them only for a stroke of wit? The context in the *Satyricon* bears noting. For if the hypocrisy of his Puritans is associated with the stench of Catharinus's tobacco, Barclay also condemns contentiousness generally and specifically priestcraft. His protagonist Euphormio observes that religion too often serves only vanity and partisanship, that godly ceremonies may be driven by worldly ends.<sup>19</sup> Lamenting how rarely we are guided

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<sup>15</sup> PWAM, 2:60n.

<sup>16</sup> Tilg, "Long Prose Fiction," 326.

<sup>17</sup> My thanks to Dr. Gary Vos for guidance on this point (personal communication).

<sup>18</sup> PWAM, 2:63.

<sup>19</sup> Barclay, *Satyricon*, trans. Fleming, 346–9.

“by the decision of a mature mind” (“*maturae mensae consilio*”), Barclay in his broader complaint begins to resemble his contemporary Donne in “Satyre III.” Where John Milton dismissed Barclay as “a fugitive Papist traducing the Iland whence he sprung,”<sup>20</sup> Marvell, in keeping with his own father’s Jacobean churchmanship, may have recalled more than just Barclay’s scorn for tobacco, hearkening also to a more ecumenical impulse. In thus deploying what had been an anti-Puritan passage by a Roman Catholic writer, Marvell derides the High Churchmen too zealous against “Fanaticks,” but also intimates a wider middle ground peopled by those suspicious of clerical overreach on either side. Elsewhere, he seems less than impressed when Barclay, in his hugely successful romance *Argenis*, anagrammatizes “*Caluinus*” as “*Usinulca*”: “That was a good Hobgoblin name to have frightened Children with.”<sup>21</sup> Whether his source was Catholic, or Puritan, or High Church, Marvell disliked any such overplaying of a clerical hand.

Where Marvell quotes Barclay’s *Satyricon*, “the founding work” of the “more dynamic, narrative and episodic” strain of Menippean satire,<sup>22</sup> he is also acknowledging a rich inheritance. It has been observed that Marvell incorporates patches of verse chiefly in the early and late stages of *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, thus laying down the generic marker of prosimetrum (though with Marvell himself not walking this stage as poet).<sup>23</sup> But the extraordinary success of Marvell’s animadversions follows from their unusually three-dimensional aspect, conspicuous in his satiric persona, as well as in the vivid antagonists he projects (especially Mr. Bayes). Moreover, that depth implies a narrative hinterland, a much fuller sense than usual in animadversion of a story-world behind the two parts of *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* and then *Mr. Smirke*. Barclay’s Menippean example also might embolden Marvell in his distinctive displays of eclectic erudition. The verses “*Huic mites nimium Flammas...*” prove a welcome reminder that the lastingly popular *Satyricon* likely contributed more than a jest when Marvell, as “new unlicensed Practitioner,” left his “modest retiredness” to turn his hand to prose satire.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *The Reason of Church-governement* (1641), in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953–82), 1:796.

<sup>21</sup> PWAM, 1:70–1.

<sup>22</sup> Tilg, “Longer Prose Fiction,” 323.

<sup>23</sup> Castrop, *Varronische Satire*, 188–9; PWAM, 1:43–54, 201–3.

<sup>24</sup> PWAM, 1:235, 246.

## Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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