



The tale of Julia and Pruneo

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reis em papel.' ¹⁹ The first substantial book printed in South America, the *Doctrina Christiana, y catecismo para instruccion de los Indios*, 4°, Lima, 1584, bears below the imprint the notation: 'Esta tassado vn Real por cada pliego, en papel.' ²⁰ Sometimes, as in one of the examples above, the number of reales or maravedis was originally left blank, and one can only imagine the discussions with the tax collectors!

Although most of the Spanish examples of printed sheet numbers which have been observed are correct to the half-sheet, six of them, or one in five of those observed, give a total which is higher by a half-sheet to a sheet and a half than is actually contained in the books. Since only one instance has been noted in which the sheet number is less than the book

contains, and that by only one leaf, ²¹ it is obvious that the merchants' 'optimism,' if we may be euphemistic, has interfered with the accuracy of the count. The fact that the errors, if any, are always, or nearly always, to the advantage of the vendor may perhaps be accepted in lieu of documentation that at least in Spain the printed sheet numbers were placed on the titles as a convenience in calculating prices.

The employment of quire as well as sheet numbers in some of the earlier French books is less easy to explain. Perhaps their use arose through a confusion of purposes: a holdover, on the one hand, from the registers, as represented by the quire numbers, and, on the other, the newer idea of a device for the ready calculation of prices, as shown in the sheet numbers.

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¹⁹ The examples are taken from Vindel, *Manual*, VI, Nos. 1821, 1973, 1947, and the Harvard copy of Manuel do Valle de Moura, *De incantationibus seu ensalmis*, 2° (Evora, 1620). In the last example the figure '3291' is inserted in ink.

²⁰ Copy at Harvard.

²¹ Alonso de Ledesma, *Romancero y monstruo imaginado*, 8°, Barcelona, 1616, which is marked '24' and is said (Vindel, *Manual*, V, No. 1400) to contain 193 leaves or twenty-four sheets and one leaf. However, no proper collation of this book has been found.

The Tale of Julia and Prunco

THE manuscript that now bears the number MS Typ 24 in the collection of the Department of Graphic Arts of the Harvard College Library has been described in some detail in a catalogue of E. P. Goldschmidt & Company; ¹ and in part by James Wardrop in a recent is-

sue of this BULLETIN. ² Mr Wardrop identifies the writer and decorator of the manuscript as the Veronese antiquary Felice Feliciano, and reproduces (Plate I) Feliciano's elaborate title-pages for two of the *novelle* (the first is reproduced also as Plate XII in the

¹ Catalogue 50, *Sources of English Literature before 1640* (London, 1939), lot 310.

² 'Six Italian Manuscripts in the Department of Graphic Arts,' HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, VII (1953), 221-222.

Goldschmidt catalogue). Feliciano, primarily an archaeologist and especially an epigraphist, was also the author of sonnets and of a *novella* entitled *Iusta victoria*, a calligrapher, a printer, and (according to Sabbadino degli Arienti) an alchemist. He was a friend of Mantegna and of Giovanni Bellini. Born in 1432 or 1433, he was active as late as 1476; the date of his death is not known.³

The manuscript, bearing no scribal date or mark of ownership, contains the following ten items, of which only items 3 and 7 give names of authors:⁴

1. The well-known anonymous *novella* commonly called *Ippolito e Leonora* (often unjustifiably attributed to Leon Battista Alberti).

2. A sonnet beginning 'Chi uol bella uictoria e star sicuro.'⁵

3. Leonardo Bruni's well-known

* See Alessandro Mortata, *Catalogo dei manoscritti italiani che . . . si conservano nella Biblioteca Bodleiana a Oxford* (Oxford, 1864), cols. 14-18 and 74 (Mortata describes two manuscripts written by Feliciano, one containing chiefly letters of his own, the other a copy of *La bella mano* of Giusto de' Conti); Giovanni Papanti, *Catalogo dei novellieri italiani in prosa* (Leighorn, 1871), I, 14, and II, v-vi ('Prefazione'), vii-xxiv ('Novelle aggiunte,' text of *Iusta victoria*, Feliciano's *novella*); R. Schöne, 'Felice Feliciani Veronensis opusculum ineditum,' *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, I (1872), 255-269; Curzio Mazzi, 'Sonetti di Felice Feliciano,' *Bibliofilia*, III (1901-1902), 55-68; Letterio di Francia, *Novellistica* (Milan, 1924-25), I, 331-334 (di Francia summarizes and discusses Feliciano's *novella*); Giuseppe Fiocco, 'Felice Feliciano amico degli artisti,' *Archivio Veneto-Tridentino*, IX (1926), 188-201; Victor Scholderer, 'A Note on Felix Antiquarius,' *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1933), pp. 34-35; and Vittorio Rossi, *Il quattrocento* (Milan, 1945), pp. 178 and 212, n. 12.

⁴ In quotations from the manuscript the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation of the original are retained; but words are separated and apostrophes are introduced according to the usual modern practice.

⁵ This sonnet is by Alberti and is pub-

novella of Seleucus, Antiochus, and Stratonice.

4-6. A group of three anonymous *novelle*, all of them evidently by the same Venetian author, and all of them tales of love and death. The titles of the three *novelle* are:

(4) Iulia vnica figliola de misier giouanne de castelli da l'amore di uno giouane presa, e dal padre cautelosamente maritata, se uccidete con la medesima spada de l'amato giouane, il quale saputa la morte dela sua amante, cautamente la note aperta la sua sepoltura, sopra del morto corpo con la propria mano si uccidete.

(5) Hieronymo di bracchi pado-ano Amando vna giouane e con-stricto dal padre di tor per moglie nega al padre non uolere maritarsi. Et languendo per amore nelle sue brace gli conciede morte che la desiderata giouane si aduedesse l'ultimo giorno et a questo modo li giouaneti innamorati per amote finirono la loro vita.

(6) Antonia di Cresenzo da montagnana attentendo di parlare ad un giouane da lei amata e di la sua morte cagione e gramissimamente rimessa con poca pacientia langue disperata.

7-8. Two Italian eclogues entitled: ⁶

(7) Leonis baptiste Alberti, patricij florentinj Egloga nomine Tyrsis.

lished in his *Opere volgari*, ed. Anicio Bonucci (Florence, 1843-49), III, 295. On Alberti's Italian verse see Girolamo Mancini, *Vita di Leon Battista Alberti*, 2nd ed. (Florence, 1911), pp. 78-83.

⁶ The first of these two eclogues has not previously been recorded, as far as I am aware; it may well be by Alberti. The second is by Alberti and is published in his *Opere volgari*, V, 359-361.

(8) Egloga Corymbus.

9. An anonymous ten-line stanza, beginning 'Ridi: s'io piango: Ridi falsa, bene.'

10. An anonymous eclogue, entitled thus:

Egloga nella quale Tyrinto e grisaldo pastori e madriali con sue rime isdruzule dimostrano l'eta presente esser gionta in summa inopia et miseria, e piu non si extimar uirtute, et come la corte di sancta chiesia e piena di uicij e scelleragine.⁷

The Goldschmidt catalogue, after noting that the hero of item 4 is named Pruneo, makes this statement:

The names of the two lovers, the conclusion with Pruneo breaking into Giulia's tomb and committing suicide over her corpse, and other details are clearly somewhat reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet*, but other essential traits, such as the drug inducing deathlike sleep, are missing. Nevertheless the novella is of interest as one of the antecedent links between Xenophon of Ephesus, Masuccio, Luigi da Porto and Shakespeare.

Wardrop, following this statement, refers to the *novella*, in passing, as 'a version of the story which inspired Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.'

The story, localized in Venice, is, in summary, as follows:

Julia, the beautiful daughter of the old and wealthy Giovanni di Castelli

⁷ There is on deposit in the Department of Graphic Arts at Harvard another manuscript, almost entirely in Feliciano's hand, containing two of the *novelle* of MS Typ 24, Bruni's and the *Ippolito e Leonora*, together with two other *novelle* (*Decameron* IV 1 and the *Grasso legnaiolo*), some fifty sonnets by Feliciano, several other poems, and some miscellaneous prose pieces, among them letters by Feliciano. This manuscript is described, and in part published, by Mazzi, *Bibliofilia*, III, 55-68.

and his wife, is seen, as she sits at her window, by a worthy young man, Pruneo degli Astolfi, whose home, it is said, is close to a Franciscan convent. They fall in love, and find opportunity to spend many nights together, undiscovered. They exchange vows which they appear to regard as marital. Julia's father is anxious to see her married, for her protection in case of his death, and without her knowledge enters into negotiations with one Dario Contarini, a worthy young man of higher station than Julia's, who is nevertheless persuaded by the promise of a large dowry and the assurance that he will be made the heir to the father's wealth. He comes to the house for the betrothal, together with members of both families. Julia is brought, unforewarned, into the room in which they are gathered: she is extremely distressed, but unable to resist. Dario's relatives, having seen Julia, approve the betrothal. Julia and Pruneo meet on the following night and reaffirm their mutual fidelity. When they part, Julia, already secretly determined to die, asks Pruneo to leave with her the sword that has guarded them from peril. Pruneo gives it to her; and after returning to her room she plunges it into her heart. On the following morning her body is discovered by her father and by the servants of the house. Extreme parental grief and lamentation by the servants ensue. On the same morning, Pruneo, walking alone in the cloister of the Franciscan convent, as he was wont to do in times of trouble, learns of Julia's death by overhearing monks talking to each other about it, and, on questioning them, is told that her body is already in the convent church

awaiting the last rites. On the following night, when the fifth hour has passed, he goes to the convent cemetery with two sworn friends; persuades them to help him lift the cover of the marble tomb; enters it; and, embracing Julia's body, stabs himself with a sharp knife, and dies. The *novella* closes with an apostrophe praising Julia as a glorious example of constancy, inveighing against feminine inconstancy, and commending as salutary the consideration of the piteous case of Julia and Pruneo.

The story, which runs to a length of about six thousand words, is very poorly constructed; the narration, broken by numerous apostrophes, is clumsy; the style is very poor indeed; the language, an incorrect Italian with a strong Venetian coloring, is unpleasant; and the text is disfigured by scribal carelessness. The *novella* is scarcely worth publication as a whole, but the account of the death of Pruneo (f. 35, recto and verso) is printed herewith:

Le parole presente di prunco in tanto terror misero li duj compagni che prestì cominzaron. ad exprimentare di leuare il graue coperchio e da prunco aiutati con certe stanghe che li presso trouarono poco meno a resentirlo, et a poco a poco quando con stanghe quando con le loro cinture tanto feceno che quello mosseno del proprio logo, e tanto lo dilongo dale commissure del sepulchro che prunco ui potia intrare, E quale non temerario per la sua giouaneza se dimostro quale la ragione uolia ma disambandonato tutto dentro se ui gitoe, e preso il morto corpo sopra di quello strangossato rimase per longo spacio, ma la uolenta cazata da mortal solitudine non gli concesse tempo al tropo poter dimorare ma riuolgiendo el cuore anchor doue la lena

ala gramissima lingua la quale in questa forma parloe.

Oime Julia Oime Julia io dela tua morte cagione a te son uenuto a cio che 'l non da me conosciuto homicidio non rimanga impunito, Sempre in cognitione tal cosa al mondo e oculta, et io con la mia morte la faro palese, hora la fede da noi afirmada con tanta affectione con il titolo dela nostra morte ei rendera contenti Vedi o Julia l'anima mia desiderosa di confirmare le mie parole cerchando la tua negli noui seculj sollicita a te di uenire.

Ma a cio che di memoria non rimanga offuscata tal beniuolentia quanto hora di altri che tuo mai non mi ha possuto far la fortuna confirmarolo con il spargimento del mio sangue il quale gli dei prego che se alchuna sacra Vntione in te e manchata quello in cambio di cio affermi esserti ualeuolle e dite queste parole uno pongiente cortello si cazoe nel pecto Julia abrazando morta insieme rimase gli morti corpi.

Two well-known *novelle* of the fifteenth century figure in the ancestry of the Romeo and Juliet story: the anonymous *novella* of *Ippolito e Leonora*, and Masuccio da Salerno's tale of Mariotto and Ganozza.⁸ With the first of these two *novelle* that of Julia and Prunco has nothing significant in common. Comparison of Masuccio's *novella*⁹ and that of Julia and Pruneo shows both likenesses and differences.

The likenesses are these: there is a secret love affair; the heroine's father insists upon her marriage to a man other than the hero; the heroine is buried; and the hero hears that the heroine is dead, desires to enter her

⁸ See Olin H. Moore, *The Legend of Romeo and Juliet* (Columbus, 1950), pp. 29-42.

⁹ Masuccio Salernitano, *Il Novellino*, ed. Alfredo Mauro (Bari, 1940), pp. 270-277.

tomb and die therein, and with difficulty raises the cover of the tomb.

Masuccio's story, however, differs from that of Julia and Pruneo in these respects: it is localized in Siena; there is no indication of the circumstances of the enamorment; there is no mention of the heroine's mother or of servants; the hero and heroine are secretly married by an Augustinian friar; the hero, having wounded a man fatally, flees from the city; the father's determination that the heroine shall marry, though stated, is not developed at all; the heroine, instead of preparing to die, plans to avoid the proposed marriage by a simulated death, and on her initiative the friar gives her a sleeping potion that will produce the semblance of death; the friar, with the help of a companion, takes her from her tomb, and she goes to join the hero; the hero, misinformed of the death of the heroine, returns, hides in the church at vesper time, tries through the night to open the tomb, and toward morning, just as he succeeds, is discovered by the sacristan; he is eventually executed; the heroine eventually enters a convent; and there is no final apostrophe.

In view of these many differences, the likenesses do not suffice to indicate the existence of a direct relationship between the two *novelle*. There is indeed no reason to suppose that either of the two authors would have had occasion to know the other.

The story of Romeo and Juliet reaches what is virtually its final plot in the *novella*, written about 1520 by Luigi da Porto, a gentleman-soldier of Vicenza, which, as published about 1530, bears the title *Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti*,

con la lor pietosa morte, intervenuta già nella città di Verona nel tempo del Signor Bartolommeo della Scala.²⁰

This *novella* is based largely upon Masuccio's story, from which, however, it differs in many respects, among them these:

1. It is localized in Verona.
2. The names of the heroine and the hero are Giulietta and Romeo.
3. The circumstances of the enamorment are given: the initial meeting at a carnival party is followed by exchanges of glances in church and from and to windows.
4. The friar, Lorenzo, is a Franciscan.
5. The father's plan for the marriage of Giulietta to a Count of Lodrone, who is referred to as a *gran gentiluomo*, is much developed; at one point it is said that the Count desires to have Giulietta seen by members of his family.
6. The mother and servants figure in the story.
7. Giulietta, faced with the menace of the proposed marriage, desires to die; consults Friar Lorenzo; asks him for poison, saying that she will stab herself with a knife if he does not give it to her; and the friar then proposes the potion plan.
8. She is buried in the family vault in the Franciscan cemetery.
9. Romeo enters the vault at about the fourth hour of the night.
10. He drinks his poison; Giulietta wakes; Friar Lorenzo with the aid of a companion opens the vault; Giulietta asks him either to close the tomb or to give her a knife with which she

²⁰ Republished by Cino Chiarini in his *Romeo e Giulietta* (Florence, 1906), pp. 1-42; see Moore, *The Legend of Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 43-60.

may stab herself; Romeo dies; and Giulietta, 'diliborando di più non vivere, raccolto a sè il fiato, ed alquanto tenutolo, e poscia con un gran grido fuori mandandolo, sopra il morto corpo si rese.' The bodies are reburied together in 'un bel monumento.'

11. The *novella* closes with an apostrophe praising Giulietta and inveighing against feminine inconstancy.

In each of these eleven respects there is a likeness between the *novella* of Julia and Prunco and da Porto's story (there is, however, no instance of close verbal similarity):

1. The localization is in northeastern Italy in each case.

2. The names of the heroine and the hero are Julia and Prunco in the first case, Giulietta and Romeo in the second.

3. The circumstances of the enamourment are given in each case. They are limited to window-glances in the first case; window-glances are mentioned incidentally in the second case.

4. The monks are Franciscan in each case.

5. The motif of the proposed marriage of the heroine to a man other than the hero is much developed in each case. In each case the proposed husband is of higher rank than the heroine, and is represented as a very desirable match. In the first case relatives of the proposed husband see and approve the heroine, and in the second case the proposed husband desires that she be seen by some relatives of his.

6. The mother and servants figure in each case — slightly in the first case, actively in the second.

7. The heroine desires to die. In the first case she secures the hero's sword as her instrument; in the second case she says that if Friar Lorenzo will not give her a poison she will stab herself with a knife.

8. Burial is in a Franciscan cemetery in each case.

9. The hero goes to the cemetery 'quando l'ora già quinta de la notte passata era' in the first case, and 'che forse verso le quattr' ore potea essere' in the second.

10. The hero dies in the tomb in each case.

11. Each *novella* closes with an invective against feminine inconstancy.

Some of the likenesses are slight, and could easily be coincidental. Others, however, are striking: particularly the likeness in the names of heroine and hero, the development of the motif of the proposed marriage, the fact that the hero dies in the tomb, and the fact that each *novella* closes with an invective against feminine inconstancy. Moreover, the combination of all the likenesses is certainly impressive. Under all these circumstances, it seems to me highly probable that da Porto knew and used either the existing *novella* of Julia and Prunco (written also by a northeastern Italian author) or a lost version very closely related to it.

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