Structure and Theme in Campion's *Lords Maske*

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Thomas Campion's *The Lords Maske*, presented in 1613 on the marriage night of Frederic, Elector Palatine, and Princess Elizabeth, has received little attention from modern scholars beyond Allardyce Nicoll's examination of its staging and costumes.[1] Perhaps interest has been forestalled by Enid Welsford's judgment that the construction of the work is "confused and poor."[2] But in spite of its evident weaknesses, *The Lords Maske* is not as awkwardly organized as it initially seems, and much of the difficulty readers have had with it results from a confusing of literal and figurative levels of meaning. Closer examination reveals that Campion constructs the piece as a series of four visual panels, or scenes, each defining a particular feature of his art; taken as a whole, the masque can be seen as a formal celebration of the nature and function of poetry. In such a reading, the four central characters—Orpheus, Entheus, Prometheus, and Sybilla—are not simply quasi-mythological figures arbitrarily enlisted in a marriage hymn totally outside their individual frames of reference, but symbolic abstractions by means of which Campion explores the formal, inspirational, ornamental, and memorial features of verse.

The presiding figure of *The Lords Maske* is Orpheus, described by Campion as "attired after the old Greeke manner, his haire curled and long, a lawrell wreath on his head, and in his hand hee bare a siluer bird. . . ."[3] Most interpreters have regarded Orpheus solely as a musician,[4] despite the obvious problem that such a reading allows

[1]Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage* (London, 1937), pp. 72-75, 135-136. Nicoll's study is particularly useful for sorting out the action and scenes in the rather intricate third section of the masque.

[2]Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1927), p. 192. Cf. the judgment by Stephen Orgel that Campion's piece lacks Jonson's artistic integrity (*The Jonsonian Masque* [Cambridge, Mass., 1965], pp. 101-102).

[3]All citations from Campion's masque are taken from *The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Percival Vivian (Oxford, 1909, repr. 1967).

[4]See, for example, the introductory remarks made by I. A. Shapiro in his edition of the work for *A Book of Masques: In Honour of Allardyce Nicoll* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 98-99. The same assumption can be seen in Edward Lowbury, Timothy Salter, and Alison Young's *Thomas Campion: Poet, Composer, Physician* (New York, 1970), p. 99.

him no more dramatic or allegorical function in the masque than simply invoking the various songs. The laurel and the silver bird of Campion's description, however, function as emblems to define Orpheus as a poet-figure rather than as a musician. The distinction is essential to understanding the structural and thematic intentions of Campion's allegory.

Since the basic union of music and poetry is emphasized throughout Campion's work, it is not necessary to deny the musical attributes of the present Orpheus in order to define him as a poet. It is important, though, to recognize how his description points unmistakably to his poetic role. The laurel, although occasionally used in the emblem books for the goddess of music as well, is more conventionally the poetic crown;[5] that Campion intends such signification can perhaps be supported by the fact that his Entheus, defined as "Poeticke Furie," also wears a laurel wreath. The silver bird in Orpheus' hand is probably intended to represent the white swan which appears with the goddess of poetry in numerous emblems to signify, as Alciati explains, the wings of fancy.[6] Entheus too has a pair of wings growing out of his laurel crown. The combination of wings and laurel in each case suggests Campion intends the two as equivalent, though not identical, figures. His Orpheus, therefore, is quite unlike the harp-playing figure which Inigo Jones (Campion's designer) creates for D'Avenant's masque, *The Temple of Love*.[7]

Even more important than the emblem tradition is the development of the Orpheus myth in Renaissance rhetorical and poetic manuals. Virtually all the 16th- and 17th-century rhetoricians and literary theorists who trace the origins of poetry refer, either fleetingly or elaborately, to the figure of Orpheus and the Orphic hymn. Among the familiar English critics, Wilson, Webbe, Sidney, Puttenham,

[5]All of the Muses in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, for example, have wreaths of either laurel or other flowers. See Plates XXI-XXIII in George Richardson's English edition of Ripa, *A Collection of Emblematic Figures, Moral and Instructive* (London, 1777). In his gloss on the Muse Calliope, Ripa states: "she holds garlands of laurel, the symbols of poetry . . ." (p. 46). Furthermore, because the ever-green laurel often signifies, as in Ripa's gloss on the Muse Clio, the memorializing aspect of poetry, Campion's Sybilla could be seen as simply a further adumbration of this emblematic detail. See also Nicoll, p. 184.

[6]See Alciati's "Insignia Poetarum" in *Andreae Alciati Emblematum Flumen abundans* (Holbein Society Facsimile of the 1551 Lyons edition, London, 1871), p. 197. Ripa also comments on the significance of this detail: "The wings signify the velocity of poetic intellect, which brings fame with it, and continues for ages like the verdure of the laurel and the ivy" (*A Collection of Emblematic Figures*, p. 46). See Nicoll, *Stuart Masques*, pp. 184-185, esp. the reproduction of Ripa's Entheus, on which Campion's figure seems clearly based.

[7]See Nicoll's reproduction of Jones's design in *Stuart Masques*, p. 184.

Bacon, Jonson, and Reynolds all have something to say about the myth, and most assume, with Webbe, that Orpheus was "the first that was first worthelye memorable in the excellent gyft of Poetrye."[8] The most convenient application of the myth to literary theory occurs in Chapters III and IV of Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*.[9] In these chapters Puttenham surveys the origins of human society and knowledge by recounting the myths of several "first-poets"—Amphion, Orpheus, Linus, Musaeus, Hesiodus. All are subsumed, however, in function if not in name, in the synecdochic figure of Orpheus: "And *Orpheus* assembled the wilde beasts to come in heards to harken to his musicke, and by that meanes made them tame, implying thereby, how by his discreete and wholesome lesons vttered in harmonie and with melodious instruments he brought the rude and sauage people to a more ciuill and orderly life. . . . "[10] The power by which Orpheus charms nature into this "ciuill and orderly life" flows as a leitmotif throughout Puttenham's two chapters and is defined as both an organizing and a creative force: poetry not only called the scattered people together in assemblies, but actually created and synthesized the various realms of human knowledge. The creative order thus effected by poetry becomes, for Puttenham, a major, if not the major, function of art. As Annabel M. Patterson has recently suggested, Puttenham's conception of this ordering power of poetry underlies his view of decorum, which is not merely the "organic unity [of a poem] which gives aesthetic pleasure, but . . . a part of the total mysterious pattern of the universe which rational creatures [and especially poets] can observe and imitate."[11] As Puttenham's historical summary indicates, such "observing" and "imitating" are specifically Orphic functions. The decorum of poetry dilates from a "lovely conformity" of parts within the whole, or of language to subject, to a quasi-magical power derived from Orpheus by which the poet recreates in his poem a sense of universal order and stability.[12]

[8]William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie*, cited from Gregory G. Smith's *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (Oxford, 1904), I, 234.

[9]Puttenham's "history" of the early functions of poetry can be compared to similar histories in Sidney's *Apologie* and in Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*. Like Puttenham, Sidney especially emphasizes the Orphic foundation of the various branches of learning in poetry. See Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, I, 151 et passim.

[10]Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, 6.

[11]*Hermogenes and the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1970), p. 100.

[12]For a fuller discussion of Renaissance views on Orpheus and some implications of the myth for 16th- and 17th-century poetic theory, see my "Epideictic Rhetoric and the Renaissance Lyric," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 3 (1973): 203-231, and a forthcoming monograph, *The Poetics of Orpheus* (Seventeenth Century News Editions and Studies).

If we regard Campion's Orpheus, then, as a poet-figure representing the ordering, shaping, formal principle of the art, his role in the masque takes on far more significance. The initial action of the piece involves Orpheus' invocation of Mania, the Goddess of Madness, who appears "confused and strange," "as one amazed." The staging of this scene, later heightened by Mania's exit and return with an anti-masque rout of twelve "Franticks" dancing in a "madde measure," emphasizes by inversion the nature of Orpheus himself. Contrary to Mania, he enters the stage with "seuerall wild beasts" "tamely placed"[13] about him (the scene is almost a literal gloss on Puttenham's description of Orpheus quoted above). As he begins to speak, the "madde measure" of the lunatics' music changes to a "very solemne ayre." The visual and musical order forces Mania and her rout offstage, leaving Entheus—who has been held captive by her—behind; through the dance and the song, Campion illustrates the truth of Orpheus' own assertion that

> *Ioue* into our musick will inspire
> The power of passion, that their thoughts shall bend
> To any forme or motion we intend.
>
> (p. 90, 11. 23-25)[14]

The speech not only refers to the traditional civilizing power of poetry, but helps to establish Orpheus as the more abstract poetic principle of formal order.

After Orpheus' "soft and calme" music has driven mania and her Franticks offstage, he and Entheus have a brief scene together. Orpheus addresses Entheus in Platonic fashion by calling him "celestiall," "excelling," and "sacred,"[15] and enlists his aid "to create/ Inuentions rare, this night to celebrate" (p. 91, 11. 24-25). In response, and as "*Ioue* enspires," Entheus begins to construct a masque within the masque by invoking Prometheus and his "glorious lights."

[13]Shapiro notes that the Quarto's reading "placed" must be wrong here, for the adjective "tamely" makes little sense if the beasts are static; accordingly, he emends "placed" to "paced" (*A Book of Masques*, p. 120).

[14]Since Vivian's text does not number the lines of the *Maske* consecutively, I have included page referents and paginal line numbers. It might be noted at this point that Campion unfortunately did not print the music with the masque. Although nine pieces can, with varying degrees of certainty, be assigned to it, the gaps in our knowledge of the scores preclude any definitive correlation of poetry, music, and scene. See the introductory commentary and the bibliographical notes to the *Maske* in Walter R. Davis' edition, *The Works of Thomas Campion* (Garden City, N. Y., 1967).

[15]Ripa's conception of Entheus is similarly influenced by Platonic views of the poet as divinely inspired, which further suggests that Campion is using Ripa's emblem as the basis for his own figure.

Before Prometheus can appear, however, Entheus asks Orpheus to "giue a call/ With thy charm'd musicke, and discouer [i.e., disclose] all" (p. 91, 11. 37-38). This plea for "disclosure" is important in suggesting the need for Entheus and Orpheus to work together and in further defining, therefore, both of them. Although Entheus provides the poetic inspiration for the masque, it is Orpheus who must shape that vision in order to "disclose" it.

The most literally fantastic, as well as the most confusing, part of the *Maske* now occurs. In Campion's description, the present setting is as follows: ". . . in clowdes of seuerall colours (the vpper part of them being fierie, and the middle heightned with siluer) appeared eight Starres of extraordinarie bignesse, which so were placed, as that they seemed to be fixed betweene the Firmament and the Earth; in the front of the Scene stood *Prometheus*, attyred as one of the ancient Heroes" (p. 92, 11. 21-26). Entheus asks Prometheus to help "solempnize/ These royall Nuptials," to "fill the lookers eyes/ With admiration of thy fire and light," and to "let wonders flow" (p. 92, 11. 29-32). Prometheus responds:

> *Entheus* and *Orpheus*, names both deare to me,
> In equall ballance I your Third will be
> In this nights honour.
>
> (p. 92, 11. 33-35)

He promises, once more with Orpheus' help ("*Orpheus*, apply thy musick, for it well/ Helps to induce a Courtly miracle"), to provide "natiue beauties," "humane figures" for a "chorall dance." As Orpheus invokes another song,

> the Starres mooued in an exceeding strange and delightfull maner. . . . about the end of this Song, the Starres suddainely vanished, as if they had been drowned amongst the Cloudes, and the eight Maskers appeared in their habits. . . . Vpon their new transformation, the whole Scoene being Cloudes dispersed, and there appeared an Element of artificiall fires, with seuerall circles of lights, in continuall motion, representing the house of *Prometheus*, who then thus applies his speech to the Maskers.
>
> (pp. 93-94, 11. 33-34, 1-14)

These new "fires" are then transformed into sixteen pages who also come forth to dance, As they return to the scene of Prometheus' house, a wood appears with "foure Noble women-statues of siluer." Another song changes these to "fowre new transformed Ladies," who are immediately replaced by four more statues. While four of the eight

maskers court the four metamorphosed women, the newest statues are also transformed into ladies:

> Powerfull *Ioue*, that hast giuen fower,
> Raise this number but once more,
> That complete, their numerous feet
> May aptly in iust measures meet.
>
> (p. 96, 11. 29-32)

Entheus announces that "The number's now complete" and the metamorphosed masque-ensemble begins its "first new entring dance."

This entire section is extremely complicated and elaborate, but its function within the masque as a whole is even more problematical. Some indication of Campion's intentions can be gathered from his descriptions, especially from his glowing praise of Inigo Jones. At one point Campion says of the scene:

> I suppose fewe haue euer seene more neate artifice, then Master *Innigoe Iones* shewed in contriuing their [the stars'] Motion, who in all the rest of the workmanship which belong'd to the whole inuention shewed extraordinarie industrie and skill, which if it be not as liuely exprest in writing as it appeared in view, robbe not him of his due, but lay the blame on my want of right apprehending his instructions for the ador[n]ing of his Arte.
>
> (p. 93, 11. 34-40)

Campion's further descriptions of the scenes and figures continue to emphasize their "richest shew," "full of ornament." Such descriptions imply that he conceives of Jones's devices as *ornamentation* for his masque, heightening the effect and adding to the aesthetic beauty of the work. In the same way, Prometheus' masque-dancers provide the visual ornamentation for the internal masque, an ornamentation which the structure of the work suggests is necessary in order to celebrate the nuptial rites properly. It is for this reason that Campion moves directly to the masque's first marriage song after the final transformations are completed and for this reason that he gives Prometheus "an equall Third" with Orpheus and Entheus. If Entheus represents the inspiration of poetry, and Orpheus the ordering, shaping, formal principle of poetry, then Prometheus represents the ornamentation by which that poetry is rendered aesthetically attractive and moving.

Although there may appear to be some risk in presuming that ornamentation is of equal weight with poetic form and inspiration,

Campion may be thinking along fairly traditional lines here. We remember that Puttenham, for instance, devotes an entire book of his *Arte* to ornament, meaning rhetorical figuration and including personification, which might be closest to Prometheus' actual function here. It is possible, however, that Campion is being even more precise. By focusing on the intricately revolving and compounding "numbers," by emphasizing the "iust measures" of the dance-steps, and by repeatedly pointing to the need to "complete" the numbers, Campion reminds us that a poem is, by definition, "written in number" and that the poet's skill in numbers is no minor one. As he argues in the *Obseruations in the Art of English Poesy*, the ornamental "numeration of the sillables" is not simply a matter of accent and meter, but a sensitivity to the "value" of sound-patterns, to "waite and due proportion."[16] Campion's view of such "proportion" is strikingly similar to Puttenham's conception of decorum noted earlier: "The world is made by Simmetry and proportion, and is in that respect compared to Musick, and Musick to Poetry . . ." (p. 35). The "numerical" ornamentation of the poem is thus a further dilation of the poet's Orphic function: "And what were the songs of *Linus, Orpheus, Amphion, Olympus* . . . but Naturall and Morall Philosophie, *sweetened with the pleasuance of Numbers* [my emphasis], that Rudenesse and Barbarisme might the better taste and digest the lessons of ciuilitie?"[17]

But Campion's *Maske* is still not "complete," for the marriage songs serve only as a prelude to a new scene depicting "an Obeliske, all of siluer, and in it lights of seuerall colours; on the side of this Obeliske, standing on Pedestals, were the statues of Bridegroome and Bride, all of gold in gratious postures. This Obeliske was of that height, that the toppe thereof touched the highest cloudes, and yet *Sybilla* did draw it forth with a thread of gold" (p. 98, 11. 3-8). Entheus explains the allegory:

> Make cleare the passage to *Sibillas* sight,
> Who with her Trophee comes, to crowne this night;
> And, as her selfe with Musicke shall be led,
> So shall shee pull on with a golden thread
> A high vast *Obeliske*, dedicate to fame,
> Which immortalitie it selfe did frame.
>
> (p. 98, 11. 12-17)

[16]Citations from the *Obseruations* are also taken from Vivian's text, p. 35.

[17]Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman*; cited from J. E. Springarn's *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (Bloomington, 1963), I, 117.

The conferral of immortality through fame is the major subject of this final scene of the masque. As Sybilla finishes her long and formal (spoken in Latin) prophesy, the masquers dance the triumph of the wedded pair. The masque ends with an interlocked encomium and prayer by all four major figures—Sybilla, Prometheus, Entheus, and Orpheus (the reversed order presumably for closural effect)—a final song forestalling the approach of day, and the last dance of the masquers and probably the audience.

This concluding section of the *Maske* raises additional thematic questions. Does Campion intend the figure of Sybilla to represent a fourth principle of poetry, a memorializing power, of equal importance to the other three? Again examination of the poetic applications of the Orpheus myth strengthens this possible reading. In the *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, one of the major mythographic sourcebooks for the Renaissance, Boccaccio glosses the version of the myth concerning the continued singing of Orpheus' severed head at Lesbos:

> I understand by the serpent who wished to devour the head of Orpheus and was turned into stone an allegory of time. The serpent, or time, as the rest of the legend demonstrates, tried to eat the head, that is, the name and fame of Orpheus or those works performed by his genius, since men of genius thrive by the head. . . . Nothing stands in the way of time, and to be sure the serpent could not have gone hungry save to this extent, that a famous man lives [on] by his lyre, that is, his genius, as reported by an older poet.[18]

The idea that the poet insures the lasting fame of his subjects, as well as himself, by memorializing them in song is commonplace in Elizabethan and seventeenth-century poetry. We have frequently taken such hyperbolic assurances as a fanciful wish or a jilted lover's *consolatio*. But in so far as the poet recognizes himself as an Orpheus figure, he could find philosophic grounds in the myth for the eternalizing power of his craft. The figure of Sybilla, therefore, is not merely tacked onto the end of the masque in order to bring Campion back to the literal marriage, but represents, with Entheus and Prometheus, a further allegorical expansion of the Orphic nature of poetry.

On its literal level, *The Lords Maske* is clearly a celebration of the marriage of Count Palatine and Lady Elizabeth. On this level there

[18]See John B. Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 141.

are undeniable confusions and some irrelevancies because Campion has not focused on the occasion itself. In this sense, his masque is open to Stephen Orgel's charge that it lacks integrity. But this very weakness should alert us that Campion's interest lies elsewhere. By directing attention throughout to the allegorical level, Campion is able to define and celebrate poetry itself. At that level, he abstracts from the synecdochic figure of the Orphic poet four separate characters representing form, inspiration, ornament, and fame. By providing each with an individual scene in which its particular powers are displayed, Campion is able to add symbolic richness to the art giving rise to his masque. At the conclusion, after the audience has been familiarized with each, Campion brings them together again in the final choric and poetic celebration. Not merely a wedding entertainment, *The Lords Maske* is a serious statement on the nature of poetry and a clear indication that the Orpheus myth, in at least some Renaissance literature, can be seen as "poetry thinking about itself."[19]

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[19]Elizabeth Sewell, *The Orphic Voice* (New Haven, 1960), p. 60.