

# “A LIBAMENT TO YOUR PALATE”: NARRATIVE FORM, HISTORY AND GENDER IN *ELIANA. A NEW ROMANCE*\*

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## ABSTRACT

*Eliana. A New Romance* (1661), attributed to Samuel Pordage, not only failed to appeal to its contemporary readership, but also remains one of the most neglected romances of the early Restoration period. In 2007, Amelia Zurcher rescued it from oblivion by exploring the notion of ‘interest’ in two stories within this “more rather than less conventional” romance. In order to introduce it further and, in the process, suggest some of its “less conventional” aspects, this essay will focus, among other issues, on the diegetic and readerly structures, the strategies to reinforce the reliability of both the intradiegetic narrators and the extradiegetic voice, the remarkable combination of fiction and ancient history, the male relationships in the homosocial-homosexual spectrum, and the extolling of friendship as the ideal prototype of love. This essay may ultimately show some of the ways in which young Pordage tried to modernise the art of fiction.

KEYWORDS: *Eliana*, Restoration fiction, narrative technique, historical novel, masculinity.

«UN APERITIVO PARA VUESTRO PALADAR»: FORMA NARRATIVA,  
HISTORIA Y GÉNERO EN *ELIANA. A NEW ROMANCE*

## RESUMEN

*Eliana. A New Romance* (1661), atribuido a Samuel Pordage, no atrajo la atención de los lectores en el momento de su publicación y sigue siendo uno de los romances de la Restauración menos estudiados. En 2007, Amelia Zurcher rescató la obra del olvido al analizar la noción de ‘interés’ en dos historias del romance, el cual describió como “mucho más convencional que menos.” A fin de ofrecer una introducción más completa y, de camino, sugerir algunos de los elementos “menos convencionales,” este artículo estudiará, entre otros aspectos, las estructuras diegéticas y de lectura, las técnicas narrativas más fidedignas y objetivas ideadas tanto para las voces intradiegéticas como para el narrador extradiegético, la extraordinaria combinación de ficción e historia antigua, la variedad de relaciones masculinas dentro del espectro homosocial-homosexual, y la defensa de la amistad como prototipo ideal de amor. Este artículo mostrará algunas estrategias empleadas por el joven Pordage en su intento de actualizar el género narrativo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Eliana*, ficción de la época de la Restauración inglesa, técnica narrativa, novela histórica, masculinidad.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the early Restoration period, the French heroic romances by La Calprenède and Scudéry continued to be translated and reissued, whereas *Eliana. A New Romance* and others originally written in English –usually by young men– failed to attract contemporary readership. In fact, they were left unfinished and –except for *Aretina*– never reissued, since authors would publish a portion of the romance to test reception.<sup>1</sup> *Eliana* was printed in folio size by T.R. [Thomas Roycroft] for Peter Dring (at the Sun in the Poultry next door to the Rose-Tavern) in London, in 1661. It comprised only the first part divided into six books and was described in the prefatory epistle “To the Reader” as: “[...] the first part of the whole Work, and indeed but a kind of introduction to the rest. This first appears as a Libament to your palate” (A3<sup>r</sup>). The author wished to remain anonymous, as he explained in the epistle, in order to freely overhear criticism, which reveals he was aware of a more than likely dubious reception.<sup>2</sup> He concealed his identity behind the pseudonym “an English Hand.” Later on, in the 1692 edition of *Athenae Oxonienses*, Anthony Wood attributed *Eliana* to Samuel Pordage, son of John Pordage (leader of the English Behmenists –after the German mystic Jakob Böhme– known as the Philadelphians later in the 1660s).<sup>3</sup> Pordage’s pseudonym is suggestive of a self-conscious attempt to naturalise the French heroic romance within the native tradition begun by Sidney. Other young writers such as Mackenzie, Bulteel, Crowne, and even Herbert, self-consciously tried to update the genre in different ways (and with different results) as it is evident in the prefaces of their respective romances. The author of *Eliana*,

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from *Eliana*, new romances by young authors first published in the 1660s include Mackenzie’s *Aretina* (Edinburgh 1660, London 1661), Bulteel’s *Birinthea* (1664), Crowne’s *Pandion and Amphigenia* (1665), and also Burton’s *Eriander* (1661), though he was older and the romance a panegyric text about the Stuarts. The only new successful romance in the 1660s was the first part of Ingelo’s religious allegory *Bentivolio and Urania* (1660), whose second part appeared in 1664, and the full, six-book work in 1669, with new editions in 1673 and 1682. The most acclaimed romances associated with the 1660s were sequels to the earlier instalments published in the 1650s: Herbert extended his *Cloria and Narcissus* (1653, 1654) to the six-book *The Princess Cloria* (1661), re-issued in 1665, while the sixth part of Boyle’s *Parthenissa* (1651-1656) appeared in 1669, and the whole romance in 1676 in folio size.

<sup>2</sup> The other anonymous romance published in the early Restoration years was (Herbert’s) *The Princess Cloria*, “written by a Person of Honour,” a *roman-à-clef* on the sensitive issue of recent English and European history.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Pordage (1633-1691?) was a pupil at the Merchant Taylor’s School and a member of Lincoln’s Inn. He became head steward to Philip Herbert, 5th Earl of Pembroke (Mary Sidney’s grandson). Besides his own publications (such as his edition of Seneca’s *Troades*, and the plays *Herod and Mariamne* and *The Siege of Babylon*), some of his father’s controversial works are believed to appear in his name around 1660. The *Dictionary of National Biography* also states that by 1660 he had married Dorcas Langhorne by whom he had two children (Lee 151-152).



however, drew particular attention to his nationality as the distinctive quality of both author and romance, leaving readers the task of identifying and judging his achievements and “failings” (A4<sup>r</sup>).

In the prefatory epistle, Samuel Pordage introduced the romance as “the fruits of some spare hours: and of those which might justly have been given to sleep” (A3<sup>r</sup>). He confessed he had written the romance (when he was recovering from a grave illness) to “*relaxare animum*, being tyred and wearied with more serious studies, or weighty affairs” (A3<sup>r</sup>), and advised reading it in the same manner, merely as an escapist book, not as one primarily concerned with the central matters associated with the romance, i.e. “the mutually constitutive relation between genre and political and ethical philosophy” (Zurcher 4). By foregrounding the romance’s entertaining nature, Pordage attenuated the “heroic” (aristocratic) component attached to the genre, thus, drawing closer to “the comedy of romance” (13), as Samuel Johnson described his contemporary fiction.<sup>4</sup> Pordage also warned that romances “are not always farc’d with *Love-stories* and toys, though those are intertexted for delight, and that things *Oeconomical, Ethetical, Physical, Metaphysical, Philosophical, Political, and Theological* as well as *Amatory*, may be, not unaptly, nor unfitly exhibited” (A3<sup>r</sup>); however, there is no episode about political rebellions, religious intrigues, deposed monarchs or exiles, which must have displeased readers at the onset of Charles II’s reign. In general, characters support the established laws and rulers,<sup>5</sup> justifying their few transgressions and violent actions as “obligations of love” (164), whereas depictions of villainy, wickedness, vice and depravity are limited to some secondary characters in pursuit of their self-satisfaction and interests. The author also claimed to be chiefly aiming at the critical judgement of “those fair and wise ones of the female sex,” but –strikingly enough– only the last story is told in the presence of ladies, and none participates in the *questioni d’amore* episodes at the end of the third and fourth books. Furthermore, Pordage’s thematic objective was not only to entertain his readers with the adventures of his characters, but also to explore intense amatory passions and frustrations to ultimately defend the supreme love of (same-sex) friendship as a model of perfect union between two people. These are some of the reasons that may explain why *Eliana* was rather unsuccessful (as copies were still available at the bookseller’s by 1666), even though John Bulteel echoed many ideas from the epistle in his preface to *Birinthea* (1664).

Moreover, *Eliana* has never attracted scholarly attention. In 1814, John Colin Dunlop ascribed it to the French heroic romance fashion and mocked the euphuist, verbose affectation of its language (563). A century later, Charlotte Morgan aligned

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<sup>4</sup> A further step in this direction was taken by Bulteel in his claim that “I have endured my heroes with no greater strength and courage than may reside in generous persons; nor do I fill their veins with streams of blood greater, than those smal channels should contain” (*Birinthea* A5<sup>v</sup>), though his stories often attest to the opposite.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Lonoxia refuses to lead the rebellion against his tyrannical brother Marcipsius on the grounds that he is the lawful king, and Argelois and Dardanus support the Romans against the Armenian rebellion.



*Eliana* with John Crowne's *Pandion and Amphigenia* (1665) by stating: "But, alas, scarcely is there an incident or effective passage that cannot be traced to another source! The *Eliana* of John [sic] Pordage (1661), judging by the remarks of Dunlop, is a similar piece of fiction" (40). Arthur Jerrold Tiejé in *The Theory of Characterization in Prose Fiction Prior to 1740* (1916) and Ernest Baker in the third volume of *The History of the English Novel* (1929) completely ignored *Eliana*, while Paul Salzman (1985) mentioned it in a footnote in his discussion of English heroic romances (190, n. 16), but classified it as a 'Sidneian romance' (356). Even in the voluminous *The Novel. An Alternative History 1600-1800* (2013), Steven Moore excluded *Eliana*, whereas he discussed at length *The Princess Cloria*, *Parthenissa* and *Aretina*. Amelia Zurcher seems to be the sole scholar to have drawn attention to *Eliana* when, in 2007, she examined the notion of "interest" in the stories of Euripedes and Lonoxia, describing the romance as "one that at first glance might be expected to be more rather than less conventional" (126).

Although, in "To the Reader," Samuel Pordage—unlike Mackenzie in *Aretina* or Herbert in *The Princess Cloria*—did not explicitly declare his intention to refine the romance genre, the author's pseudonym and the merely entertaining nature of his subject matter may indicate he also participated in a self-conscious renovation of the genre in the early Restoration period. Thus, this article—possibly the first devoted to *Eliana*—aims to offer a wider perspective of its plot and stories and, in the process, to suggest some of its "less conventional" aspects. To this purpose, the discussion will focus on its narrative structure and technique, and on some issues and episodes which may reveal young Pordage's attempt to experiment with the romance genre, such as the ways in which he fictionalised history, reinforced verisimilitude and dealt with gender matters. Although *Eliana* apparently proved inconsequential to the development of the English novel, the romance may help to identify certain concerns which young writers tried to improve (besides earning money). Given *Eliana's* length and intricacy, the sections below are organised by narrative sequence rather than by a more systematic method of analysis.

## 2. THE DIEGETIC STRUCTURE AND HISTORY (BOOK 1)

The romance opening shows melancholic Argelois walking into a solitary grove to ruminate and grieve over his amorous conflict and burning passion for Princess Eliana, whose love he does not aspire to win because he ignores his "extraction and birth" (2) and also because she is betrothed to his dear friend Prince Dardanus.<sup>6</sup> His soliloquy is overheard by an old man, Euripedes, who approaches

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<sup>6</sup> This conflict is hinted at in the name 'Argelois' by combining Arg(-entum, silver) with an anagram of (H-)elios (Sun, god Sol Invictus), from which the name of the eponymous character apparently derives, although Eliana also evokes Ilion (Troy), especially for her relationship with Dardanus (and for Pordage's 1660 edition of Seneca's *Troades*).



him and interrupts his meditation. Euripedes warns him about the tyranny of love, which he had personally experienced from youth until he decided to quit society. By way of demonstration, he offers to give Argelois an account of his life, which the young man willingly accepts. This creates the two levels of diegesis characteristic of the French heroic romances: the diegetic present and the hypodiegetic past. The diegetic story is apparently unfinished and includes the characters' acts of narrating their respective "histories." It is told by an extradiegetic-heterodiegetic voice and is set in an unidentified place, possibly in the Roman province of Asia (near Pontus and not far from Cappadocia), covering a few days over a period of a couple of months around the year 37 AD (no reference is made to the death of Tiberius). The hypodiegetic level of the past is narrated by four characters in a series of finished "histories": Euripedes (Books 1-3), Lonoxia (Book 4), Epidaurus's "Historie of Dardanus" (Book 5), and Meador's "Historie of Araterus" (Book 6), all of which conclude in the present and altogether covering a time span from the end of the Asturian-Cantabrian Wars against Rome (26-19 BC) to the recent past (36-37 AD), i.e. the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. The stories of the older characters –Euripedes, Lonoxia, Araterus– are set in Portugal (Roman Lusitania, which also encompassed north-western Spain) or in territories historically associated with –or dominated by– Portugal (north and south African areas, and East India and Siam), perhaps in support of a royal wedding with Catherine of Braganza. It could also be regarded as a poor imitation of La Calprenède's *Cleopatra* (or *Hymen's Praeludia*), which dealt with earlier historical events (including the onset of the Cantabrian Wars) around the time when Euripedes and Lonoxia were little boys.

The threads of *Eliana's* complex plot, both at the diegetic and hypodiegetic levels, are intertwined with the opening and ending of "The Historie of Euripedes." Euripedes was born in Nicopolis (Cappadocia) and grew up in Cilicia. After the death of his parents, when he was seventeen, he resolved to travel and discover the world starting at the far end of Roman Empire. He sailed from Tarsus accompanied by his servant Meador and his cousin Araterus. They had passed the Pillars of Hercules, when a huge storm drove them to an island. The three men disembarked and found it was uninhabited, labyrinthic and mysteriously haunted. While they slept, their ship departed without them. Euripedes saw a floating boat-like chest which contained a baby-boy, who was still alive. The next day Euripedes was kidnapped by a pirate ship, while Araterus and Meador remained marooned on the Desolate Island. Soon afterwards, Bruadenor, Prince of the Veneti, who had lost three vessels in the storm, attacked the pirates and liberated Euripedes, taking him and the baby to Gaul. Pordage creates one of the most notable Chinese-box narrative structures in early Restoration romances as Bruadenor tells Euripedes an account of his life, which includes the story of his beloved Floria's life who, among other events, was taken to the Court of Augustus as hostage, in order to force her father to cooperate with Roman designs. Pordage's emphasis on the story of Bruadenor by adding a fourth diegetic level for Floria's vicissitudes may betray his initial clumsiness at story-telling compared with the more accomplished tales in his later books. However, it may also be indicative of a powerful introduction to a key location and set of characters which would play a significant role in future instalments considering, firstly, that



not only Euripedes but also Lonoxia and Araterus went to Gaul and met Bruadenor, and, secondly, that Britain would soon become a Roman colony under Emperor Claudius with Trebellius (Tribulus in *Eliana*) as its governor.

At Bruadenor's palace in Vindana, Euripedes saw the portrait of the Asturian Princess Amenia and fell in love with her. His ardent passion increased when the picture was taken to his chamber and became his erotic fetish:

I made it my daily exercise whilst I was there, sometimes silently to behold it, sometimes passionately to basiate those Rubrick corals which gave so many bewitching attractions, and gave me singular delight in those cold exosculation: sometimes as if I had been infatuated, I made very foolish and impertinent speeches to those surded ears, with as much care as if before the substance of that shadow. It shames me since to remember my follies, and it would shame me more to relate them. (27)

As soon as Bruadernor and Floria were married, Euripedes left the baby –Marinus– in Gaul and hastened to the land of the Asturians, Spanish Lusitania, where he engaged in the rebellion against the Romans to prove his valour and gain Amenia (betrothed to the Cantabrian Prince Mandone), thus combining love and war, as in the French heroic romances.

Pordage chose to narrate the Roman campaign from the Asturian side, from Euripedes's point of view, but accurately unfolding the plot in accordance with the events reported by Florus, Cassius Dio and Orosius. Although the resistance leaders were not identified by these writers, Pordage derived the names of King Lilibilis and Mandone from the Iberian chiefs Indibilis (Incibilis or Iudibilis) and Mandonius, who had helped Scipio fight the Carthaginians and later rebelled against Rome. Rather than fictionalising the historical texts, Pordage supplemented them with an imaginary story on the Lusitanian side, but refrained from speculating about what might be happening in the Roman army. By so doing, he not only imitated, but revised La Calprenède's method, as outlined by the translator Robert Lovelace in his epistle "To the Reader" prefacing the first part of *Hymen's Praeludia, or [...] Cleopatra* (1652): "here is History enamel'd with Fiction, and Truth drest like a May-Lady, who through the gay disguise of her flowry ornaments, does often show her own simplicity. If thou beest an Historian, thou wilt trace his ingenius Pen through Tacitus, Florus, Suetonius, and others [...]" (A3<sup>v</sup>).<sup>7</sup>

However, Pordage's most likely source was some Renaissance annals of Roman or Spanish history rather than the ancient originals, because the different

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<sup>7</sup> Scudéry's romances were even more loosely based on history, as the stationer Humphrey Moseley observed in his prefatory note to the reader in *Artamenes, or The Grand Cyrus* (1653): "Perhaps you would know what Cyrus this is, whether the first Great Cyrus who founded the Persian Empire (whose life you have in Herodotus, Solinus, & Justin) or that other second Cyrus, whose Institution and Expedition is so well writ by Xenophon: Be pleas'd to know, 'Tis neither of them, and yet both; for our Author hath drain'd all the Excellencies of both those Two to fill and accomplish this his Grand Cyrus" (B<sup>v</sup>).

spellings of certain names and the exhaustive references to events, people and locations are scattered in several classic texts. Although the narration of the Cantabrian Wars matches the more detailed accounts by Florus and Orosius, they conclude at the fall of Lancia. However, in *Eliana* (as in Dio's *Roman History*) the conflict continues with a new rebellion in Asturias: "the approach of our enemies towards Asturica, having taken Lancia" (92). A place called "Segisama" by Florus and Orosius (not recorded by Dio) reads "Sigisama," while the Roman legate "Furnius" (in Florus and Dio) is spelt "Firmius," as in Orosius and some Renaissance texts.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Pordage mentions Juliobriga (an important city to which none of the three classic authors referred in this episode), Flaviobriga and "the Amaene City Hispalis" (142).

In *Eliana*, the historical Roman background provides the structural framework on which the different fictional stories are fleshed out, except for "The Historie of Araterus" (in the sixth and last book). However, Pordage is not consistent in the ways in which he *embellishes* the classical records of history in his romance: he experiments with a wide range of possibilities to fictionalise the factual events in which his characters become accidentally involved. For example, the historical background of Mauritania Tingitana in Lonoxia's story loosely follows the Roman sources. In the "Historie of Dardanus," the main character actively participates in some events recorded by Roman historians: the episode of Rome under Sejanus and Caligula, while Tiberius is living in Capri (Suetonius and Tacitus), Vitellius's campaign against Armenia (Tacitus's *Annals* 6.XXXII & ff.), and Tribulus's pacification of the Cietae in Cappadocia (Tacitus's *Annals* 6.XLI). Araterus's voyage to Sornalea (from the local word "Sornau," Siam) is partly based on the Portuguese discovery of the maritime route to India and modern descriptions of the world (such as Peter Heylen's *Cosmographie*). On the contrary, the royal court and family of King Palemon of Pontus are completely imaginary.

It can be argued that *Eliana* stands out not only as a departure from the fashionable *roman-à-clef*—since historical characters and geographical settings are no longer coded (as in Herbert's *The Princess Cloria*)—but also as a worthy precursor of the historical novel in English, together with Boyle's *Parthenissa*, which owes more to the models of La Calprenède and Scudéry. Therefore, according to McKeon, "its truth is that not of strict historicity, but of a historical fruit which stands revealed once we have stripped away the mediating chaff of 'romance'" (60). Pordage thus improves the technique of "giv[ing] a more true resemblance to things" (Scudéry, *Ibrahim* A3<sup>v</sup>), especially in the episodes of the Cantabrian Wars and in the "Historie of Dardanus." In *Eliana*, unlike in *Parthenissa* and its French models, none of the main characters is historical, but fictional. They collaborate in the factual events as

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<sup>8</sup> For example, in his *Generall Historie of Spaine* (1612), Mayerne spelt these names "Sigisama" and "Firmius" and gave an account of the different stages of the war (116-118), while simultaneously referring to other events, such as the birth of Christ (117-118) and a legend by Plinius about a Nereid seen in Lisbon (the setting of Lonoxia's story). Mayerne also mentioned the two Iberian chiefs during the Punic Wars.



recorded by classic writers, but their agency does not determine the course of history.<sup>9</sup> Instead, as far as history is concerned, Pordage aimed to accomplish the effect of “verisimilitude” –rather than “the claim to historicity” (McKeon 53)<sup>10</sup>– either by contriving a possible sequence of events on the side which the classic authors did not even care to write about (in “Euripedes”), or by granting an identity to unnamed partakers in the Roman side (mostly in “Dardanus”). Yet, *Eliana* represents a rudimentary antecedent of Scott’s mature historical novel: the protagonists’ roles and psychology, as well as descriptions of places and landscape, conform to romance conventions.<sup>11</sup> The middle- and lower-class characters –except the heroes’ servants– remain unnamed under general labels (captain, pirate, traitor, maid, man, surgeon, etc.). Their speeches usually go unquoted, and their actions are reduced to the ancillary roles of saving the heroes, accompanying their masters and mistresses, executing their orders and –of course– diverting the plot.

### 3. THE READERLY STRUCTURE (BOOK 1)

Euripedes had already delivered approximately 21 000 words of his account when he was interrupted by the arrival of another old man, Lonoxia, who had been searching for him because it was dinner time. This interruption implies a third structure, this time at the level of narration, to propose a reasonable duration of reading, either private or communal.<sup>12</sup> Readers’ objections to the excessive length of romance episodes and stories evidently pressed on writers and editors alike the need to adjust length as much as possible to pleasurable reading intervals, as many prefatory epistles suggest. When Percy Herbert expanded *Narcissus and Cloria* (1653) into *The Princess Cloria* (1661), he claimed in the epistle “To the Reader” to have overcome that obstacle:

[many and divers stories are] not brought in (as I may say) by head and shoulders, as is frequently used now adayes: and as they are all digested into determinable Periods within themselves, so are they of no more length, then is convenient for

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<sup>9</sup> The exception occurs in “The Historie of Dardanus” when Caligula attributes to the hero the fall and death of Sejanus as a result of his visit to Tiberius in Capri to inform him about the prevalent corruption in Rome: “Caligula embracing him, you need not fear Sejanus now (said he) he hath expiated the fault he hath committed against you with his life” (212).

<sup>10</sup> See also Zurcher’s discussion of verisimilitude in Wroth’s *Urania* and Barclays’ *Argenis*, two *romans-à-clef*, which *Eliana* is not (101-103).

<sup>11</sup> Descriptions of real settings and landscapes are generally avoided unless required to follow the course of the events, as occurs in Pierre d’Ortigue de Vaumorière’s *The Grand Scipio* (translated in 1660), when Aspar describes the port of Carthage to his audience in that city: “and it suffices only to know the Scituation of Carthage to conceive the pitifull estate whereunto we were reduced, I beleeve, you know, My Lords, that our City is built upon a Cape, and consequently is advanced something into the Sea [...]” (22).

<sup>12</sup> See Loveman, 139-155.





any moderate Communication, either of Recreation or Discourse; when as in other Romances they are oftentimes continued for five or six hours together without intermission, which to my apprehension appears ridiculous, in that people would be altogether tired, either with hearing or making such relations; and indeed almost impossible to be performed by any of what profession whatsoever. (A2<sup>r</sup>)

Similarly, the printer of the anonymous short romance *The Pleasant and Delightful History of Floridon and Lucina* (1663) announced in the prologue that it will take “but one houre (of the time which thou sets apart for thy Recreation) to peruse it” (A3<sup>r</sup>).

For *Eliana*, besides suggestions of recesses characteristic of the French heroic romances,<sup>13</sup> Pordage’s solution was to incorporate pauses for the refreshment, meals and rest of his narrators as part of the story in the present. Since *Floridon and Lucina*’s length amounts to approximately 11 000 words, the silent reading of the portion of Euripedes’s story in the first book would take around two hours (longer if read aloud). In the second book, his account continues for about 24 000 more words (2.5 hours), from the evening until supper, and concludes in the third book in around 30 000 more words (3 hours) late into the night. In the fourth book, characters have dinner between Lonoxia’s story and the closing *questioni d’amore* episode. In the sixth book, a refreshment is served in the middle of Meador’s “Historie of Araterus.” This is the only story in the romance for which characters gather to listen to, as if suggesting a communal reading, in the presence of both men and women. However, since *Eliana* was conceived as mere entertainment –unconcerned with “serious studies, or weighty affairs” (A3r)– Pordage might have intended the romance for private reading, for “an innocent recreation” (A3r), and perhaps for a similar therapeutic purpose as writing it while recovering from a severe illness had been for him.

#### 4. THE “GROTT”, HOMOSOCIAL SPACE/S AND *QUESTIONI D’AMORE* (BOOKS 2-4)

Argelois is invited for dinner at Euripedes and Lonoxia’s lodging in a stunning (quasi-utopian) cave, where they live with some servants. As Euripedes explains, he had already decided to abandon society when he again met Lonoxia by chance, and “understanding each others fortunes, being tyed with a mutual Love and friendship, we resolved to spend the remainder of our dayes together” (113). The relationship between these “venerable” and “generous” (177) old men is not an isolated instance of same-sex intimate unions in *Eliana*, as will be shown below. However, they live beyond the social realm.

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<sup>13</sup> For example: “Euripedes here made some pause, as being unwilling to begin his more unfortunate adventures, but seeing they attended him with the like taciturnity, he proceeded thus” (97).



In the second book, Pordage transfers the acts of narration from the secluded grove in a natural setting to a more recondite space artificially crafted by man, like fiction itself. The cave or “grott” is concealed from the sight of passers-by, a fact that metaphorically may bring to mind the author’s insistence on hiding his identity. The description of the cave entrance, the bell to open it and sliding stone-gate are reminiscent of a human mouth –the author’s mouth. In fact, the cave tunnels the rock “where that little rivulet which ran through the grove had its Original” (35), as if impregnating the entire fictional space at the diegetic level. Moreover, all the forthcoming stories will be delivered inside (while the larger part of the love debate between Argelois and Euripedes occurs in the grove when the former returns to his lodgings at Tribulus’s castle, at the end of the fourth book).

In the second book, Euripedes continues his account of the Cantabrian Wars. In the next, he narrates his first encounter with Lonoxia (a pirate captain at that time), and the death of Amenia –his then wife– who embodied the virtuous, obedient, wholly passive type of romance female protagonists. Amenia’s death, while revamping the narrative action, signals Euripedes’ transformation from the romantic, idealised hero into a victim of the immoral and criminal plots of women and relatives alike, when he returns to the unheroic, Roman-civilised societies of Thessalonica, Pontus and Cilicia. His realistic pilgrimage through a series of dreadful love-affairs with inconstant, ambitious, greedy women shows him the bitter face of erotic desire. Among them, Euripedes tells Argelois of his acquaintance with the mother of his friend Prince Dardanus, Agavve, who had chosen to marry King Palemon of Pontus and had later forced Euripedes to kill the king’s eldest son, Palemedon, to ease her son Dardanus’s way to the crown. The night before the day of the crime, Euripedes had dreamt of a man who had foretold that Palemedon would live and would reappear after thirty years (110). Finally, Euripedes did not murder the child, but made him disappear. From different stories, it is suggested that Palemedon survived as Argelois, especially when Epidaurus compares him with Dardanus: “the parity of their years, their consimilitude of their featur” (207).

Argelois stayed overnight at the cave. In the morning Lonoxia told him his own life story, which occupies the fourth book. If Euripedes was driven by an overpowering proclivity to love women, leading him from full satisfaction into complete abhorrence, Lonoxia moved from one misfortune into another, doomed to failure from his early years, and often plunging into melancholic resignation. Lonoxia, loved by his mother but very much hated by his two brothers, was the youngest son of King Marcipsius, a fictional version of Bocchus II of Mauritania.<sup>14</sup> Lonoxia was punished with exile when he accidentally killed his middle brother, who constantly harassed him.<sup>15</sup> He left Africa and sailed to “Spain” (121), disembarking at Olissipo (Lisbon). During an excursion outside the city, he discovered an island in

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<sup>14</sup> Cassius Dio mentions Bogud and Bocchus of Mauritania just after the fall of Lancia (LIII, 26, 2).

<sup>15</sup> See Zurcher (168-170) for Oedipal overtones in “The Historie of Lonoxia.”





the Tagus, whose “fair groves and delicate gardens” (121) recall Strabo’s description of such an island “with fine groves and vines” (III.3.1).<sup>16</sup> He noticed it was inhabited only by women and was attracted to a young lady (Princess Atalanta) he saw at a window of the house. Lonoxia also discovered that his brother Marcipsius had employed two men (one of them usually disguised as a woman) to murder him. He cross-dressed in his pursuer’s clothes and was admitted to the island community under his new identity as Sabane. Eventually he was told that Atalanta was pregnant and had been abandoned by his eldest brother Marcipsius.<sup>17</sup> He felt he could no longer regard Atalanta as the object of his love and disclosed his true identity, but decided to stay near her –retaining his homogender identity as Sabane– and love her as a sister. After the birth of the baby, Lonoxia carried him to North Africa hidden in a chest which the huge storm cast into the ocean (and Euripedes rescued at Desolate Island). When he returned to Olissipo, Atalanta was dying. Since her pregnancy had been kept secret, she was given an impressive funeral, first with a procession down the Tagus and later in Olissipo up to “a temple consecrated to the Superbious Juno” (158), ironically the Roman goddess of marriage. On his trip back to Africa, Lonoxia was captured by pirates and eventually became their chief. Having been so ill-treated by goddess Fortuna, he was now satisfied to be the agent of mischief to others. As pirate captain, he met Euripedes and Amenia on their way to Cilicia. He learnt that Atalanta’s baby –Marinus– lived in Gaul and brought him with him. Years later, opponents to the tyrannical rule of Mascipsius asked Lonoxia to become their new king and general, which he declined on the grounds that his brother was the lawful king. Marinus, on the contrary, accepted only to be eventually killed by his own father. Lonoxia returned to his former pirate’s community. More than twenty years later, he met Euripedes again and went with him into a retired life together.

When Lonoxia concludes his narration, Argelois explains the nature of fortune through an ekphrastic description of the goddess Fortuna. He starts by asserting that she has been “depicted [...] in the form of a woman, ’cause that sex is most mutable” (166) but concludes by defending her mutability and inconstancy in terms of divine providence. After a break for dinner, the three characters resume the *questioni d’amore* matter from the previous night,<sup>18</sup> interrupted when Argelois was arguing that “for Love without virtue is Lust and Lust concatenated to virtue is Love”

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<sup>16</sup> In the description of Lusitania and the Tagus, Strabo also mentions the coast of “Maurusia” (III.3.3), a name similar to “Maurishia,” a character in “The Historie of Araterus.”

<sup>17</sup> Marcipsius illustrates the prototype of wicked character. He plays a secondary role, causing distress and grief to others as he pursues his ambition and self-interests. For example, he abandoned pregnant Atalanta for another woman because “this beauty hath a crown to give as well as pleasure” (148).

<sup>18</sup> Although the question of love is a recurrent theme throughout *Eliana*, considerable debate takes place at the end of Books 3 and 4. In any case, unlike in Elizabethan fiction (Thomas Lodge, for example), early Restoration romances do not contain the conventional sections in which men and women discuss this matter. For instance, in Mackenzie’s *Aretina*, the eponymous character, Agapeta, Philarites and Megistus engage in such a conversation. However, only Megistus was eventually able to deliver his speech (as the author’s spokesperson) because the debate was suddenly interrupted. In

(113), thus agreeing with the Stoic view that “all passions and affections [...] are to be regulated, according to the precepts of virtue” (114). At the end of the fourth book, probably the most substantial part of the romance, Euripedes vehemently contends Argelois’s opinions by putting forward the Aristotelian conception of both love and man, and examining “the effects of this passion [Aristotelian desire], which plainly exhibit the evils of it, and out of which as from the fountains head, all other evill passions have sprung” (168). Eventually, with a smile, Euripedes tacitly agrees to Argelois’s proposal of a kind of love similar to friendship:

one in which desire is not the proposed end, and doth not altogether partake of that brutality of lust but is of a purer nature, not desiring the use of the object, but to become one with it, to be incorporated with it, and not to take any thing from it, but to immerge it self in it, and very like the true love of friendship, wherein is exercised all virtue, and where love is of a more celestial nature, though that be not without desire, of the good and of the welfare and continual presence of the object. (172)<sup>19</sup>

The lives of Euripedes and Lonoxia are determined by designs imposed upon them by external powers: the former, by his uncontrollable inclination for love which always proves tyrannical, and the latter, by hostile goddess Fortuna. Dardanus’s life is also determined by his parents’ decision to marry him to Eliana. In the end, the three of them choose to reject their respective deterministic life-patterns and, in their transgression, they rank love (i.e. lust plus virtue) below the more ideal love of (same-sex, brotherly) friendship: Lonoxia (dissembled as Sabane) and Atalanta’s sisterhood, Lonoxia and Euripedes’s homosocial cohabitation, and Argelois and Dardanus’s friendship. This theme is further developed in the next section about the fifth book, in which –as the narrator explains– “The moderation which he [Argelois] confest (to Euripedes) ought to be in Lovers, was not to be found in him, he knew what ought to be, but had no power to practise” (175a).<sup>20</sup>

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*Eliana*, it is reduced to Argelois’s speech in Book 3 and to his dialogue with Euripedes in Book 4 (outside the cave, in the pleasant grove).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Montaigne, 205. For further reading about the ideas of love in *Eliana*, see Zurcher (125-127).

<sup>20</sup> Page numbers 175 and 176 occur twice.



## 5. GENDERED PORTRAITS AND MALE FRIENDSHIP VS. SODOMY (BOOK 5)

The fifth book is different from the rest. The first half narrates the events in the diegetic present, focussing on the younger characters who are staying at the castle of the Roman captain Tribulus,<sup>21</sup> while the second half is devoted to Epidarus's narration of the history of his master Dardanus.

When Argelois returns to the castle from the old men's cave, the narrator describes his appearance as "effeminate," while hinting at his courage: "His complexion was more than ordinary fair for a man, yet those that saw him could not by it judge him effeminate, if they did, the world could have justified the contrary by his prodigious valour" (176a). The beauty of Eliana, from her pace to her voice, is also accomplished in one of the finest –albeit conventional– English Renaissance portraits or blazons of romance heroines (176a-176b), conveyed through Argelois's point of view: "his eyes fix't intently on that amazing beauty they avidously devour'd her perfections, being allmost starv'd by that small absence. I lack the pen of Thalia, to give you here a discription of that matchlesse Eliana. Supply my defects with your thoughts, [...]" (176a).

Panthea, Dardanus's stepsister (and possibly Argelois's sister), arrives at Tribulus's castle after recovering from an illness, perhaps caused by her unrequited love for Argelois. In turn, she rejects Arizobanes who, in utmost despair, tries to kill himself while writing a letter to Panthea with his own blood. King Palemon's pressure on Dardanus to marry Eliana intensifies Argelois's inner conflict between his ardent love for her and his equally strong affection for Dardanus, who learns of his emotional suffering when he overhears his soliloquy in the grove. As it becomes evident that Argelois is going to put an end to his torment by killing himself, Dardanus leaves his hiding place to prevent the suicide. Significantly, the perplexed narrator renders the scene objectively, with explicit homoerotic undertones, lurking, as Alan Bray has shown, under the aura of platonic male friendship (so idealised in the Renaissance):

I know not how many changes in his countenance were seen in a moment, & whil'st Dardanus powered out kisses upon his cheeks, and kept his neck prisoner with his arms, he made a shift to draw his ponyard. [...] it stroak into his left arme quite through the flesh, the blood sprinkling in the face, and upon the cloathes of his friend Dardanus. [...] At last Dardanus seeing he could not bring him to leave his design against himself, with any remonstrance or striving, suddenly left him and

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<sup>21</sup> Tribulus is based on historical Trebellius, who was commissioned by Vitellius to suppress the rebellion of the Cietae ("Clites," 217), an event recorded by Tacitus (*Annals*, 6.XLI) and mentioned in Renaissance compilations of Roman history. Trebellius was also mentioned by Josephus, an author Pordage had possibly read for his tragedy *Herod and Mariamne*, partially inspired by the Jewish historian. Whether or not this Trebellius was the same one appointed by Claudius as Governor of Britain is still open to debate.



pulling forth his owne ponyard, and making bare his breast, ah Argelois? (said he lifting up his arme) Thou shalt see I cannot live without thee! Argelois flinging by his ponyard, flung himself upon the arme of Dardanus, and hinderd him from emitting that soule that was truly conjoynd with Argelois. (188)<sup>22</sup>

Dardanus resolves to break off his engagement with Eliana when he learns that it was the cause of Argelois's melancholy and of his attempt to kill himself. Dardanus tells Argelois he does not love Eliana passionately and fears he will fall for another and subsequently abandon her. Indeed, this is what happens when he meets Philadelphia –Arizobanes's sister– on his way to Byzantium to inform his parents about his decision to break off his engagement with Eliana. Though she was called Philadelphia because she was born in that city, the name's etymological meaning (brotherly or sisterly love) ironically suggests Dardanus's unconsciously displacement of his affection for Argelois onto her.

The presentation of Eliana in the fifth book is uncommon. On the one hand, the reader knows about her from Argelois's soliloquies and his conversations with Euripedes and Lonoxia, but her appearance in the story is delayed until the beginning of the fifth book (the last third of the romance). On the other hand, in the stories of the older characters, the female protagonists are more conventionally introduced by the male characters initially falling for a framed image of them –a painting (Euripedes's Amenia) or at a window (Lonoxia's Atalanta)– and meeting the real women some time later. Instead, the heroine of the new generation is directly described by the narrator as soon as Argelois fixes his loving eyes on her.

“The Historie of Dardanus,” in addition to outlining his biography, also defines his personal qualities. Compared with the description of Eliana's body, portrayed as a passive object through Argelois's infatuated male gaze, Epidaurus constructs an equally idealised image of his master but as a man of action. He embeds his features in the different episodes he performs in his true-to-history narration of events. For example, as well as Dardanus's royal birth in Pontus, Epidaurus tells of his exquisite education in Athens, where he met and befriended Argelois. In Rome, he gained real-world experience and exhibited his physical strength and skills at the Roman “Martian” Field (208). His abhorrence of sodomy becomes evident when he escapes “paedicator” (209) Caligula's attempt to seduce and rape him. His brave adherence to truth and justice is manifested when he reproves Sejanus for his moral perversion and crimes,<sup>23</sup> and when he goes to Capri (“Capra,” 211, the residence of

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<sup>22</sup> In *Poems upon Several Occasions* (1660), also published by Peter Dring, Samuel Pordage included a sequence of five valedictory, emotional poems (D4<sup>v</sup>-D5<sup>v</sup>) about the departure of a friend who sailed from England to a remote part, possibly on a business (or diplomatic) trip. In “Poema Valedictorium Perdilecto intimoque Suo amico transfreturo,” Pordage referred to him as “dear C” (alternating with “my C” in the series) and wishes that “May the twins / Be never seen apart!” in “Vota Auspicata” (ll. 13-14).

<sup>23</sup> Dardanus said to Sejanus: “Go base stuprator [...] the life of Drusus and the whordome thou hast committed with his wife, should in justice have long since finished thy dayes” (210).



the depraved and cruel Tiberius) to boldly and honestly complain about Sejanus and Caligula's governance, despite the risks involved.<sup>24</sup> Dardanus's valour and military dexterity are mentioned when he again meets Argelois and joins him in Vitellius's campaign against Artabanes (in Armenia), and befriends the Roman captain Tribulus with whom he suppresses the Cietae rebellion. Dardanus's commitment to the protection of ladies encourages him to travel again to Rome to mitigate Tribulus's concerns for Eliana's safety. This time he disguises himself as Argelois's wife to avoid Caligula's order to arrest him (to no avail).<sup>25</sup> Another feature portrayed is his wit, which emerges when Caligula again tries to seduce and rape disguised Dardanus, resulting in one of the most comic episodes in which Dardanus pretends to mistake Caligula's language of love: "We women do not understand your mysterious kind of speaking, and had I known that they had spoke in Rome by metaphors I would have brought one of those priests who use to interpret our Hierogliphiks" (219).

The story of Dardanus –in which he insists he is neither "effeminate" nor a "spado" (209)– is placed just after the narrator has described Argelois's fair, effeminate appearance (176a), and the signs of their strong mutual affection (when Argelois returns from Euripedes's cave), in order to remove any trace of lustful sodomy between the heroes.<sup>26</sup> In *Eliana*, sodomy –"the common crimes and abominable actions not fitting to be named done upon men by the beastly buggerers of that City" (208-209)– typifies not only the pure lust of sex between males (lacking virtue and affection), but also epitomises the spread of vice and political corruption in Tiberius's Rome, controlled by "paedo" (210) Caligula and his "pandar" (209) Sejanus, while the equally depraved emperor neglects his duties by taking refuge in Capri.<sup>27</sup> Instead, like the relationship between Euripedes and Lonoxia, their love to each other as friends "is the promoter of virtue, not the companion of vice," as Arthur Keith has argued in this analysis of Cicero's *De Amicitia* (57), while many heterosexual love relationships in *Eliana* are tainted by the foregrounding of ambition and other kinds of self-interest over virtue and affection. However, unlike Euripedes and Lonoxia's misanthropic union, the heroes' friendship is an intrinsic part both of themselves and their social dimension.

Dardanus's engagement to Eliana does not raise rivalry between the two men but is an obstacle to their reciprocal life-sustaining friendship. Argelois prefers to dispose of his life than to hurt or kill Dardanus: "'tis Dardanus to whom I ow more

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<sup>24</sup> As Epidaurus remarks: "the Emperour had put to death some of the chiefest men in Rome for speaking against his favourites" (211).

<sup>25</sup> Dardanus fails to fulfil his purpose of protecting Eliana because she and Tribulus's wife have left the city for an unknown place. Instead, Caligula seems to recognise him and orders him seized.

<sup>26</sup> "They embraced each other as if their absence had been for years and not dayes, and were along time e're they could expresse their joy by word. I may safe say that they were the mirror of friendship, and that they were another Pylades and Oristes, or as fast friends as Theseus and Pirithous" (177).

<sup>27</sup> See Bray (3).



lives than one, and 'tis a great comfort to me [...] that 'tis for thy sake I endure this torment [...] borne with patience as the most glorious tryall of my friendship” (186). In a similar manner, Dardanus readily chooses to remove that obstacle between them: “you [Argelois] utterly mistake your selfe if you thinke you could have slain your selfe, and not have deprived me of my life at the same time. [...] I may leave Eliana without detriment to my selfe, since I enjoy her in Argelois” (189). This climactic moment shows the limitless nature of the heroes’ mutual love and the indivisible union of their souls, which evinces the influence of Montaigne’s views on friendship and critique of Cicero on this matter: “All things being by effect common betweene them; wils, thoughts, judgements, goods, wives, children, honour, and life; and their mutual agreement, being no other than one soule in two bodies, according to the fit definition of Aristotle, they can neither lend or give ought to each other” (205).<sup>28</sup>

The highly dramatic episode of Argelois’s attempt to commit suicide and the dialogue with Dardanus demonstrates Pordage’s skills for scenic rendering of the characters’ psychology. In other romances, such as *Birinthea*, authors tend to suppress the exhibition of intense feelings (which Bulteel’s female characters dislike); instead, fevers and sickness are often somatised symptoms of the characters’ repressed sentimental passions and torments. Decorum of speech and polite restraint also moderate Euripedes and Lonoxia’s expression when addressing their stories to Argelois, a complete stranger to them. Instead, in the case of the young heroes, the extradiegetic voice, by acting more as a figural than teller narrator, focalises what the characters see, hear and tell, thus rendering the events, soliloquies and dialogues in a more scenic, unmediated way.

Pordage’s emphasis on verisimilitude is intensified by the contrast with the sixth and closing book (and the unfinished romance as it stands). It contains the rather more fantastic, conventional story of Araterus, the only one told in the presence of ladies who, therefore, missed the gallery of women featured negatively –from the adulterous and plotting Asturian Queen Clothude to murderous Agavve, whose crimes are judged as being less wicked than the pregnancy of unmarried Atalanta, who dies in childbirth.

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<sup>28</sup> Friendship is a major theme in *Eliana* and therefore deserves a deeper analysis than what can be offered here. Here is a brief sketch of its complexity: Argelois (and Dardanus) was educated in Athens by a disciple of “Cratippus” (167), a peripatetic (Aristotelian) philosopher, friend of Cicero’s, and tutor of his son in Athens. Cicero developed the etymological connection between love (*amore*) and friendship (*amicitia*), and mentioned the intimate relationship between Pylades and Orestes. Moreover, while Argelois defended ideal love philosophically and morally, Dardanus fell in love with a woman whose name, Philadelphia, denotes the realisation of that ideal. Both Aristotle’s and Cicero’s ideas on friendship were updated by Montaigne in the Renaissance (see, for example, Goodrich, Edyvane, and Bizer), and his influence is notable in *Eliana*. Moreover, it is open to speculation whether or not Pordage had truly planned subsequent instalments of the romance, and whether or not he intended to explore the politics and ethics of friendship in a hypothetical arrival of Tribulus (Trebellius) in Britain accompanied by Argelois and Dardanus, and their respective wives Eliana and Philadelphia, to set in motion the Romanisation of the island, a moment in history which could potentially mirror the anxieties and expectancies at the onset of the Restoration.





## 6. A CODA FOR THE MARVELLOUS (BOOK 6)

In the sixth book, Euripedes's servant Meador narrates the highly-entertaining story of Araterus and his own, beginning with their confinement in the Desolate Island, where Araterus discovered druid Baercellizeg's tomb and prophetic inscription about him (only disclosed in this section rather than the opening pages, as was the convention from Sidney's *Arcadia* to Boyle's *Parthenissa*), which reveals another step towards achieving "true resemblance" in the rest of the romance. Three hundred years before, the druid had foreseen that Araterus would be the only person to find his tomb, thereby predicting his destiny. Araterus and Meador were dying of starvation when a ship rescued them and took them to Gaul. They met Bruadenor, who acquainted them with Euripedes's plans. They left to search for him in Cantabria, where they came across furious Mandone and killed him. On learning that Euripedes had gone to his native country, they resolved to return to Cilicia; but the voyage home became an odyssey. Their vessel had already passed through the Pillars of Hercules when –as if by supernatural force– a storm drove them back to the Atlantic and eventually further to southern Africa, where they discovered that "the torrid Zone, contrary to the opinion of Poets was inhabited" (237). The explicitly racist portrait of the African tribe illustrates another instance of the prevalent aversion to black people in mid-seventeenth-century England.<sup>29</sup> However, their adventure in southern Africa results in one of the most comic episodes. Just after Araterus had killed the tribe's deity –the monstrous serpent Arqcebusqez– the cunning sorcerer declared them the tribe's new gods, but kept them tied up in the temple so that they could not enjoy the libations they were offered (239). This caused Meador to utter the only criticism in *Eliana* against religion at the service of politics: "What a sad thing is it that Religion should be made the decoy of Politicians! see but with what awe this impostor governs the whole kingdom, under the specious name of Religion, [...]" (240).

Araterus and Meador eventually reached the Kingdom of Sornalea, apparently located in East India and Siam.<sup>30</sup> In this imaginary, oriental country beyond the realm of the Roman Empire and adjacent territories, Araterus fulfilled his destiny by marrying bold and resolute Queen Amarilis. But this only after Meador had exaggerated Araterus's noble birth and the Council of the Kingdom had elected him for his virtue and courage in the war against the Prince of Sinana

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<sup>29</sup> "[...] their Children were born with the same nigerous hew, their hair crisped and short, seem'd just like wool, their noses flat, and something deformed, their stature mean, but their envie and malice implacable. These people which at first sight seem'd like so many Daemons affrighted those in the ship, who naming the place the land of Devils, would rather have endured the miserie of starving, than to expose themselves to the mercy of such Creatures" (237).

<sup>30</sup> In *Ibrahim*, Scudéry criticised the practice of setting stories in imaginary countries as contrary to "true resemblance," since these "Kingdomes are not in the Vniversall Mapp, or, to say better, in the being of things" (A2). Sornalea is not depicted on any map; however, its name derives from the Sornau, the local word for Siam, as recorded by the first Portuguese explorers.



(China), whose colossal army, equipped with cannons and “hellish powder” (244), offer a more realistic, updated depiction of the conventional giants and monstrous creatures in former romances.<sup>31</sup> As part of the prophecy, Araterus would never abandon Sornalea, “where thou shalt lead thy life in pleasure & end thy days in peace” (229), thus sharing with Euripedes and Lonoxia a similar state of blessing and happiness, as long as they remain segregated from (western) society and civilisation.

The story of Araterus combines the individual heroic quest and the deterministic compliance of the druid’s prophecy. It also blends travelogue (through Europe, Africa and Eastern Asia, as in the Portuguese discovery of the maritime route to India) with adventure, from the haunted Desolate Island of loneliness and starvation to an equally isolated, remote realm of the quasi-utopian Sornalea. Mere chance –but also the hero’s appearance, courage, virtue and wit– yields his successful progress towards fulfilling his destiny. To the original male audience, the story showed how to ascend the political ladder by self-restraint, control over speech and the persuasive, seductive power of silence in a man of action. Women could think of a fascinating kingdom ruled by queens –“hav[ing] not had but two Kings this three hundred yeares” (243)– who may refuse a state-marriage with a displeasing suitor, even at the cost of war, although, in the end, it is the husband who is expected to take control of state affairs: “[After] Araterus had sufficiently tasted the pleasures of his bride, he betook him to graver and weightier affairs; as in setting the Kingdome, making of Lawes, ordaining of Councils, rewarding his friends” (286).

## 7. MORE RELIABLE NARRATORS

For Gerd Bayer, Restoration fiction “present[s] narrating in a nascent stage” (154). He argues that it took some time for writers to come to terms with a separate and distinct narrative voice, which characterises the mature realist novel of the eighteenth century (150-155). *Eliana* is just a tesserae in that formation inasmuch as the narrators’ degree of reliability is noticeably reinforced in different ways.<sup>32</sup>

For example, memory may hinder the credibility of Euripedes’s autodiegesis, which occupies half of *Eliana*, but he fittingly tells at least what he can remember (39) because “I had since my retirement collected them into a book which thus imprints them in my mind” (9). Seeing all the events in retrospect, Euripedes can complete an episode with information he discovered afterwards, thus anticipating

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<sup>31</sup> Among other oriental wonders, the sailing carriage, which so fascinated seventeenth-century Europe, is also mentioned (253).

<sup>32</sup> For the narratological concepts in this section, see Susan Lanser, *The Narrative Act*. The notion of reliability was established by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. He argued that all first-person (homodiegetic) narrators are unreliable, but this axiomatic statement must be cautiously considered in early Restoration fiction, since characters –either as protagonists or witnesses of the stories– conveyed more credibility about past events than the heterodiegetic, authorial voices, mostly not wholly omniscient, but conceived as “outside the diegetic realm” (Bayer 150).

the plot and subduing the intrigue. Lonoxia's autodiegesis is given credibility by means of the most incredible event in the romance: the survival of Marinus on the stormy ocean. After Lonoxia's first encounter with Euripedes, he goes to Gaul to raise Marinus, the living proof of the authenticity of the first half of his history. Epidaurus is not only a privileged witness of Dardanus's life, but is also endowed with a sharper perception as it was he who first noticed Caligula's lustful attraction towards his master.

The presence (or proximity) of another character involved in the events also increases the tellers' degree of honesty, credibility and reliability. At one point, Euripedes fears that "Lonoxia would accuse me of infidelitie, being well acquainted with my relation, if I should omit any thing" (39).<sup>33</sup> As with the claim to the historicity of the fictional events, their reliability is underlined by the contrast with Meador's story in the sixth book, since he is inclined to exaggerate –and possibly to fantasise– while nobody in the room can authenticate his version. Even so, he brings with him a letter from Araterus and produces transcriptions of Maurishia's and Peomontile's speeches, respectively dismissing and defending Araterus as the right candidate to marry Queen Amarilis.

The narrator of the diegetic present –largely in the first half of the fifth book– is granted limited privileges, which suggests the influence of the emerging scientific discourse. His perspective is consistently external and does not explore the characters' minds (except for Panthea's jealousy), yet he perceptively describes actions, gestures, moods and appearances. He focuses permanently on Argelois, reporting only his actions, his soliloquies, his dialogues, and the stories he hears from other characters. Moreover, he is thoroughly ignorant about the past. For example, we learn a little about Argelois's life in the story of his friend (and possible stepbrother) Dardanus narrated by Epidaurus, yet next to nothing about Eliana.<sup>34</sup> He does not even indicate the geographical location of Tribulus's castle, around which action, at the diegetic level, takes place, and cannot recount events happening elsewhere in the present, such as the Arizobanes episode reported by Epidaurus (194-202). Although he occasionally gives his opinion, his competence does not lay in his knowledge but in his sharp perception and scenic rendering of events.

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<sup>33</sup> When Lonoxia tells Argelois his story, Euripedes withdraws "in the mean time betaking him to some Philosophical contemplations, in which he daily spent some hours" (116), and Argelois goes to another room in the cave when Epidaurus narrates the life of Dardanus to the old men.

<sup>34</sup> Argelois promises Euripedes to tell him his life, but Pordage chose to postpone it for a future instalment. About Eliana, readers only learn that she is a "Princesse and daughter to the Kings [Palemon's] ancient friend and ally [...] left destitute of a crown through the usurpation of the Romans" (220), has temporarily lived in Rome under the protection of Tribulus, and is betrothed to Dardanus.



## 8. LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Notwithstanding the plurality of voices, their language and style do not differ substantially. Arguably, Euripedes's tone sounds more assertive, Lonoxia's rather melancholic, while servants Epidaurus and Meador's stories flow more easily and are more livelier (in fact, all the characters gather at the cave to listen to the latter's adventures with Araterus). However, it is highly likely that the language of *Eliana* is fairly responsible for the scant scholarly interest in the romance after John C. Dunlop's harsh criticism of the lexical affectation of its early pages:

The *Eliana* [...] is as remarkable for its affectation, though of a different species, as the novels of the school of Euphuus. In *Eliana*, when a person dies, he is said to depart into the subterranean walks of the Stygian grove –to see is always called to invisage, to raise is to suscite, and a ladder of ropes is termed a funal ladder. Flora “spreads her fragrant mantle on the superficies of the earth, and bespangles the verdant grass with her beauteous adornments;” and a lover “enters a grove free from the frequentations of any besides the ranging beasts and pleasing birds, whose dulcet notes exulscerate him out of his melancholy contemplations” (563).

To a large extent, the language of *Eliana* fits the “fourth style” of the five types proposed by Mackenzie in “An Apologie for Romances,” an introductory essay to *Aretina*: “The fourth style is where the cadence is sweet, and the epithets well adapted, without any other varnish whatsoever: and this is that style which is used at Court, and is patterned to us by eloquent Scuderie” (10). Surely, it is not this style Dunlop mocked, but the apparent combination of two other styles already ridiculed by Mackenzie in 1660: one is “the university style” of authors “who embroider their discourse with Latin and Greek termes. But this is as ridiculous, as if one who desires to make his face seem pleasant, should enamble it with red, blew, green, and other colours” (9), and the other, the *précieuse* style of “a ridiculous caball of Ladies at Paris, who terme themselves the precious, and who paraphrase every thing they speak of, terming a mirrour, the conselour of beauty, and a chair, the commoditie of conversation, &c. And thus they have progressed from painting of faces to paint expressions” (10). Pordage must have been aware of this innovative style and introduced it in his prose, especially in the opening pages –probably the ones Dunlop read. Although claims of euphuistic affectation in Pordage's prose are not applicable to the rest of the romance, the profusion of new, unsuccessful words often hampers pleasurable reading.

New words in *Eliana* usually derive from the Latin or French, but also stem from derivational additions and inflectional alternatives to recently introduced neologisms. A good number of them were also being employed by other writers, or registered in seventeenth-century dictionaries before and after 1660, such as Henry Cockeram's *The English Dictionary* (1623), Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (1660) or Elisha Coles's *An English Dictionary* (1677), though nowadays they are considered rare or obsolete by the *OED*. Many others –like ‘agnizement’, ‘debrachiated’, ‘illecebraces’ and ‘mestitude’– seem to be unsuccessful coinages in *Eliana* and an inconvenience at (communal) readings, while simultaneously reverberating with



French echoes of modernity to early Restoration ears. In general, however, Pordage's prose differs from both Mackenzie's own digressive style of "Barrasters" in *Aretina*, and the cultivated rhetorical eloquence of Herbert's *The Princess of Cloria*. While exhibiting the verbose affectation of heroic romances, Pordage comes closer to the language characteristic of the emerging novel (for example, in the tales of Walter Charleton), which –in turn– must have displeased those readers who could afford a folio romance and found it offered neither the style nor the political or allegorical stories expected in such books.

## 9. CONCLUSION

While *Eliana* did not primarily aim to explore the multiple tensions of its age, young Samuel Pordage's updating of the form of the romance should not be ignored, even though –unlike Mackenzie, Herbert, Bulteel and Crowne– he made no mention about it in the prefatory epistle, concentrating instead on modulating the critical judgement of his readers. This essay has shown that, apart from extolling love as friendship, he experimented with different ways of combining history and fiction, and strove to grant his stories more objectivity by setting them against a true historical background and by reinforcing his narrators' reliability and, in general, their mimetic authority. After the present analysis, I cannot help but wonder whether *Eliana* is unfinished or, following the model established by Sidney, whether the first part contains all that the author wanted to say, even if the history of Argelais remains untold and the identity of the eponymous Eliana a mystery.

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