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Du Bellay's Ambivalence Towards Rome in the Antiquitez

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Du Bellay's Ambivalence Towards Rome in the Antiquitez

Du Bellay's Romae descriptio illustrates the simple attitude which one often encounters in neo-Latin verse towards the fall and ruins of Rome. They bear witness to the destructive power of time and the slipperiness of fortune: "Disce hinc, humanis quae sit fiducia rebus."<sup>1</sup> Les Antiquitez de Rome, on the other hand, are much more complex because they express Du Bellay's ambivalence towards ancient Rome. A phrase from sonnet 8, "la Romaine hauteur,"<sup>2</sup> may stand as an emblem for this ambivalence, for Du Bellay admires the eminence (hauteur) of Roman civilization and deplores the arrogance (hauteur) which made it possible. His alternation between reverence and criticism is most apparent in the octet of sonnet 19, in which anaphora and antithesis present Rome as a Pandora's box of all good and evil, but his ambivalence takes many other forms. Besides juxtaposing celebrations of Roman achievement and critical reflections on Roman history, especially the civil war between Pompey and Caesar, Du Bellay treats both Rome's seven hills and the myth of the giants' attack on the gods in antithetical ways. More important than these aspects of ambivalence are the reverent and critical imitations of ancient models and especially the conflicting analyses of the causes of Rome's fall. Du Bellay's ambivalent use of his sources is characteristic of the

tension between Renaissance imitatio and aemulatio. His critical manipulation of sources depends on his understanding of the course of Roman history, although the shifting explanations of Rome's fall reveal his uncertainty about the historical forces at work and even about the possibility of historical explanation.

The first sonnets of the collection do not prepare the reader for what is to follow. The dedication to Henri II leads one to expect much more description of Rome's ruins than the sonnets contain, and the poet is apparently all admiration for Rome's grandeur. He closes with the wish that his poems may prove "un bienheureux presage" of Henri's reign. "Au Roy" does not hint at any criticism of ancient Rome, nor do sonnets 1 and 2, which in their final lines record the intention to celebrate in song two aspects of Rome's glory, the human accomplishments of her "Divins esprits" and the symbolic majesty of her seven hills.

Du Bellay strikes the first critical note in sonnet 3, a close reworking of a Latin epigram probably by Janus Vitalis. He introduces his concern with Roman arrogance into the imitation and extends the reflection on time's corrosive power. He maintains Vitalis' opposition of ancient and modern Rome, but insists upon the antiquity of what the tourist sees:

Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome  
 Et rien de Rome en Rome n'apperçois,  
 Ces vieux palais, ces vieux arcs que tu vois,  
 Et ces vieux murs, c'est ce que Rome on nomme.

Vitalis does not have even one adjective for old, much less a threefold repetition. Consequently the passage of time, the opposition between past and present, attracts more attention in Du Bellay. The repetition of vieux conveys the veneration due to age and the pathos of age.

Because of this tone of sad admiration, the next words produce a slight shock: "Voy quel orgueil, quelle ruine." The corresponding lines in Vitalis prepare the reader for ruine but not for orgueil: "Haec sunt Roma: viden' velut ipsa cadavera tantae / Urbis adhuc spirent imperiosa minas?" For Vitalis the ruins still have a frightening power, which Du Bellay acknowledges in Romae descriptio by borrowing his phrase.<sup>3</sup> In this sonnet, however, the ruins represent pride, which Du Bellay often sees as a cause of Rome's fall. Some of Vitalis' admiration for the ruins remains in Du Bellay's line, but is tempered by a moral judgment.

Does the orgueil lead to the ruine? The juxtaposition hints at a relationship, but Du Bellay does not elaborate. To explain the ruins he suggests insatiable desire for dominion:

Voy quel orgueil, quelle ruine: & comme  
 Celle qui mist le monde sous ses loix,  
 Pour donter tout, se donta quelquefois,  
 Et devint proye au temps, qui tout consomme.

Du Bellay mutes Vitalis' paradox:

Vicit ut haec mundum, visa est se vincere: vicit,  
 A se non victum ne quid in orbe foret.

Nunc victa in Roma Roma illa invicta sepulta est,

Atque eadem victrix victaque Roma fuit.

Vitalis cannot resist developing his play with vincere; he seems more concerned with point and paradox for their own sakes. Du Bellay's "Pour donter tout, se donta quelquefois" illustrates his persistent concern with Roman excess and never-resting extension of its power. This appears most forcefully in sonnet 23, in which Du Bellay describes Roman political energy searching for a rival. He is praising Scipio Nasica Corculum's argument for sparing Carthage -- otium will lead to degeneracy and civil war -- and shows Roman ambition conquering everything by conquering Rome.<sup>4</sup>

Du Bellay's paradox implies that Rome is responsible for its own fall; its pride and drive to dominion have caused its destruction. Line 8, which has no parallel in Vitalis, somewhat shakes this explanation. If time destroys everything, is it responsible for Rome's destruction? The et of "Et devint proye au temps, qui tout consomme" allows one to imagine time's consuming power at work after the civil war: two stages of decay, one political, one of Rome's buildings. The conclusion of the poem, however, causes more serious uncertainty about the explanation of Rome's fall -- an uncertainty not in Vitalis:

Rome de Rome est le seul monument,

Et Rome Rome a vaincu seulement.

Le Tybre seul, qui vers la mer s'enfuit,

Reste de Rome. O mondaine inconstance!  
 Ce qui est ferme, est par le temps destruit,  
 Et ce qui fuit, au temps fait resistance.

Atque eadem victrix victaque Roma fuit.  
 Albula Romani restat nunc nominis index:  
 Quin etiam rapidis fertur in aequora aquis.  
 Disce hinc quid possit Fortuna. Immota labascunt,  
 Et quae perpetuo sunt agitata manent.

Did time or Rome itself conquer and destroy Rome? Line 10 answers Rome and only Rome; the corresponding lines in Vitalis have no equivalent for seulement. Line 13 makes time the agent of the destruction; Vitalis has no personification and repetition of time, although he does place decaying and remaining in the power of fortune. Once again Vitalis seems more concerned with paradox for its own sake. Du Bellay uses the paradox of flux and stability to present the profounder paradox which he develops throughout the Antiquitez: Rome was and was not responsible for its downfall.<sup>5</sup>

Several sonnets present Rome as a victim of time, not only its buildings but also its political existence. Sonnet 7 says that time eventually destroys "Oeuvres & noms," a point which Du Bellay remembers in his claims for his own achievements in sonnet 32. Sonnet 8 suggests that time destroys republics. In sonnet 18 time has made itself master of "ces braves palais," and "le Ciel" opposes the growth of the Roman empire and puts Rome into the hands of the popes. Sonnet 16

compares the development of monarchy to natural processes with fixed limits; "un arrest fatal" decreed that monarchy end with the fall of Rome. Sonnet 30 also compares Rome's rise and fall to a natural process. Du Bellay uses gradatio to show Rome gently ripening for the barbarian harvest. Rome's fall appears natural, inevitable, and certainly beyond its control.

In sonnet 23 one catches a glimpse of human effort trying to anticipate an impersonal force of political history. Du Bellay's admiration for the wisdom of Scipio Nasica Corculum seems to imply that his advice to spare Carthage in order to prevent the subversive spread of leisure could have averted the civil wars. The individual appears to have the power to direct the destiny of the state. Nevertheless one sees the operation of an apparently inexorable political law:

Aussi void-on qu'en un peuple ocieux,  
Comme l'humeur en un corps vicieux,  
L'ambition facilement s'engendre.

Sonnet 21 refers to the same political law. Rome was able to resist Pyrrhus and Hannibal, and in fact the entire world: "Mais defaillant l'object de sa vertu, / Son pouvoir s'est de luymesme abbatu." These lines contain no indication that Rome could do anything to resist the law. The absolute participial construction places the strength of the rival outside of Rome's control. Sonnet 10 takes the same position as sonnet 21. Du Bellay is comparing Rome's warriors to the terrigenae who sprang up from the serpent's teeth which Jason sowed in Colchis.



Rome had more brave soldiers, but they met the same fate as the terrigenae, the self-slaughter of civil war:

Mais qui finablement, ne se trouvant au monde  
 Hercule qui dontast semence tant feconde,  
 D'une horrible fureur l'un contre l'autre armez,  
 Se moissonnarent tous par un soudain orage,  
 Renouvelant entre eulx la fraternelle rage  
 Qui aveugla jadis les fiers soldatz semez.

Du Bellay modifies the myth of Jason and the serpent's teeth so that it coincides with Scipio's lesson. The terrigenae do not begin to fight among themselves until Jason throws something -- a stone in some versions, a helmet in others -- into their midst. Du Bellay makes the massacre spring up because no power strong enough to tame Rome exists. Once again he uses an absolute participial construction to suggest that Rome has no control over the existence of a rival which would avert its energies from civil war.

Opposed to these expressions of Roman impotence in the face of time and history is a pair of poems in which Roman pride and audacity provoke the gods, who destroy it. Like sonnet 23 these poems resort to moral explanations of history to place the responsibility for Rome's fall on Rome itself. Du Bellay scrambles temporal sequence in sonnet 4; Rome acquires its seven hills after it has subdued the globe, as a check to its expansion:

Juppiter ayant peur, si plus elle croissoit,  
 Que l'orgueil des Geans se relevast encore,  
 L'accabla sous ces monts, ces sept monts qui sont oré  
 Tumbeaux de la grandeur qui le ciel menassoit.

Du Bellay's Latin version of this aetiological story -- why does Rome have seven hills? -- does not refer to "l'orgueil des Geans";<sup>6</sup> he omits Juppiter's reason for burying Rome under its hills. In this sonnet, however, Du Bellay insists on Rome's responsibility for the punishment it receives. In sonnet 12 Du Bellay reverses himself. The "orgueilleuse face" of the hills is compared to the mountains which the giants piled up to attack the gods. Instead of being the punishment for Roman pride the hills provoke Juppiter to destroy Rome.

Tel encor' on a veu par dessus les humains  
 Le front audacieux des sept costaux Romains  
 Lever contre le ciel son orgueilleuse face:  
  
 Et telz ores on void ces champs deshonnorez  
 Regretter leur ruine, & les Dieux asseurez  
 Ne craindre plus là hault si effroyable audace.

The different treatment of the hills, however, emphasizes the common element of these sonnets: Rome's pride is responsible for its ruin.

Sonnet 11 treats a similar theme, although Du Bellay shifts the accent to human pride in Rome's audacity:

Mars vergongneux d'avoir donné tant d'heur

A ses nepveux, que l'impuissance humaine

Enorgueillie en l'audace Romaine

Sembloit fouler la celeste grandeur,

Refroidissant ceste premiere ardeur,

Dont le Romain avoit l'ame si pleine,

Souffla son feu, & d'une ardente haleine

Vint eschauffer la Gottique froideur.

Once again Roman audacity threatens the gods, who take measures to restrain it. This time, however, one is not sure that Rome is responsible for its audacity. Rome is just exploiting the good fortune which Mars granted. Mars evidently made a mistake and did not foresee the consequences of his gift -- a subtle way of admiring what Roman audacity was able to accomplish -- and this mistake leaves Rome some margin of independence and responsibility for its rise and fall. Nevertheless a sense of constraint emerges from the lines; one cannot help feeling Roman impuissance in confrontation with a powerful and capricious god.

Du Bellay's indecision about Rome's responsibility for its actions appears most forcefully in the sonnets on the civil wars. Sonnet 24 imitates the second half of Horace's epode 7. Horace is not puzzled for an explanation of the civil war. He presents himself as a public orator reproving fratricidal strife. He directs his questions to an audience which he imagines as capable of replying -- questions

designed to dissuade Romans from civil war. After asking towards what ruin they are hurling themselves and if they intend to destroy Rome to please the Parthians, Horace asks what compels them to their destruction:

neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus  
 umquam nisi in dispar feris.  
 furorne caecus an rapit vis acrior  
 an culpa? responsum date.  
 tacent et albus ora pallor inficit  
 mentesque percussae stupent.  
 sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt  
 scelusque fraternae necis,  
 ut inmerentis fluxit in terram Remi  
 sacer nepotibus cruor.

Horace poses three alternatives: "l'aveugle fureur," as Du Bellay translates the first, a fiercer force, or a transgression. After pausing for the guilty silence of the people, Horace answers his own question. If "vis acrior" is a periphrasis for fate, Horace opts for a combination of his final two alternatives. He does not conceive "acerba fata" as a force independent of the scelus, an overriding plan which had predetermined the fratricide. Instead this bitter fate is a consequence of the scelus. A bitter fate is driving on the Romans from the time when (ut) Romulus killed Remus. Porphyrio's paraphrase catches the relationship of fata and scelus; fate is the instrument, and the crime is the cause: "fato agimur ad hoc bellum supplicium pendentes ob caedem Romuli in fratrem admissam."<sup>7</sup>

Du Bellay transfers "furor caecus" to his opening line, devotes a quatrain to animal concord, and inserts a question, possibly inspired by Allecto's visit to Turnus in the Aeneid,<sup>8</sup> asking what Fury was goading them on to civil war. He preserves the Horatian structure of questioning, but is meditating to himself on the cause of the civil war rather than pretending to address an assembly in the present. Significantly, Du Bellay has no answer for his question:

Estoit-ce point (Romains) vostre cruel destin,  
 Ou quelque vieil peché qui d'un discord mutin  
 Exerçoit contre vous sa vengeance eternelle?  
  
 Ne permettant des Dieux le juste jugement,  
 Voz murs ensanglantez par la main fraternelle  
 Se pouvoir assurer d'un ferme fondement.

Not only does Du Bellay leave the question open and avoid the confidence of Horace's "sic est," but by omitting Horace's response he isolates the two causes which Horace combines. For Du Bellay "vostre cruel destin" -- Horace's "acerba fata" -- and "quelque vieil peché" are irreconcilable alternatives. Consequently he is suspended between attributing to Rome all and no responsibility for its civil wars.

Besides being ambivalent about the cause of the civil wars, Du Bellay is ambivalent about their importance for Roman history. This appears most forcefully in the juxtaposition of sonnets 30 and 31.<sup>9</sup> Sonnet 30 compares the growth of the Roman empire to the natural cycle which begins with the seed and ends with grain ready for harvest; the

barbarian sack of Rome becomes the reaper cutting and gathering the grain: "Ainsi de peu à peu creut l'empire Romain, / Tant qu'il fut despouillé par la Barbare main." Nothing could be gentler, or more natural, or more inevitable. No mention of the civil war. Sonnet 31, on the other hand, extends a Renaissance historical view, beginning with Petrarch and Leonardo Bruni,<sup>10</sup> that the end of the Roman republic in the civil wars marks the beginning of the fall of Rome:

De ce qu'on ne void plus qu'une vague campagne,  
 Ou tout l'orgueil du monde on a veu quelquefois,  
 Tu n'en es pas coupable, ô quiconques tu sois  
 Que le Tygre & le Nil, Gange & Euphrate baigne:  
  
 Coupables n'en sont pas l'Afrique ny l'Espagne,  
 Ny ce peuple qui tient les rivages Anglois,  
 Ny ce brave soldat qui bois le Rhin Gaulois,  
 Ny cest autre guerrier, nourrisson d'Alemagne.  
  
 Tu en es seule cause, ô civile fureur . . .

The barbarians of sonnet 30 have nothing to do with the devastation of Rome; almost every foreign people is named or referred to by a river in order to be exonerated of responsibility for Rome's fall. Civil war is the only cause. Four centuries, from Actium to Alaric, count for nothing -- just as in sonnet 22, in which Rome, after the civil wars, "Devint soudainement du monde le butin" (my emphasis).

At first glance sonnet 31 apparently puts the responsibility for Rome's fall onto Rome itself; at least the internal cause of civil

war is responsible. But if one asks what is the cause of the civil war or who is responsible for it, the answer is not so apparent.

Tu en es seule cause, ô civile fureur,  
 Qui semant par les champs l'Emathienne horreur,  
 Armas le propre gendre encontre son beaupere:  
 Afin qu'estant venue à son degré plus hault,  
 La Romaine grandeur, trop longuement prospere,  
 Se vist ruer à bas d'un plus horrible sault.

In the last three lines one detects some "vis acrior" directing Rome's destiny. "Trop longuement prospere" suggests some power assigning terms to Rome's grandeur. The lines also recall two of Lucan's causes for the civil war:<sup>11</sup>

invida fatorum series summisque negatum  
 stare diu nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus  
 nec se Roma ferens.

.....

in se magna ruunt. (1.70-2, 81)

Lucan, like Horace, does not hesitate to combine fate with other causes, in this case the political law that nothing can long remain "à son degré plus hault." This maxim appears to be an extension of fate. The borrowings from Lucan shake one's faith in Roman responsibility for the civil war and its attendant destruction; impersonal forces are leading Romans to civil war.

Du Bellay's uncertainty about Roman responsibility for the collapse of the city prevents him from feeling unambiguously about Roman accomplishments or from adopting a consistent stance of praise or blame towards Rome. When he sees Roman arrogance leading to destruction, he censures the arrogance, although he feels occasionally uneasy because he is not convinced that Rome is responsible for its arrogance. Sometimes he feels great admiration for what the arrogance has achieved and uses orgueil as a term of approbation, as in his address to Rome's "Palles Esprits," "Qui jouissant de la clarté du jour / Fistes sortir cest orgueilleux sejour" (sonnet 15) or in sonnet 21, "De ce qu'on ne void plus qu'une vague campagne, / Ou tout l'orgueil du monde on a veu quelquefois." When Du Bellay sees Rome as a victim of some greater power -- time, a law of politics, or destiny -- he feels the pathos of its fall and admiration for what it was able to accomplish while it flourished. Du Bellay's ambivalence towards Rome stems from his inability to accept historical explanations that satisfy two of his major sources in the Antiquitez, Horace and Lucan. Both Roman poets feel no contradiction in combining fate with moral and political causes; for them fate does not deprive men of the responsibility for their actions. Du Bellay, however, as sonnet 24 shows, considers fate and moral explanations mutually exclusive.

An ambivalent impulse both to admire and to criticize characterizes the tension between imitation and emulation in the Renaissance.<sup>12</sup> Writers on imitation offer differing advice; some advocate reproducing the excellencies of the model, some transforming



it, and some competing with it. Competition can become ferocious, and emulation then resembles gladiatorial warfare, as in the conclusion of Celio Calcagnini's important treatise of 1532:

At quorum adulta est aetas, et firmiores lacerti, ii iam prodeant ex umbra, iam prosiliant in campum, iam cum ipso lanista contendant, a quo olim solebant dictata accipere, suasque cum eo vires expendant nec cedant, sed contra potius adsurgant, periculum facturi, an ipsi quoque possint ordinem ducere, et suo Marte de gradu adversarium deicere.<sup>13</sup>

Against the violence of emulation one can place the reverence of imitation, as in the letter from G. B. Giraldi Cinzio to which Calcagnini is replying:

Quamobrem, Coeli optime, cum ea me semper tenuerit cupido, ut quantum humana opera fieri potest, Tullio quandoque simillimus efficiar (satis enim mihi lucrifecisse arbitror, si huius vestigiis aliquando inhaerere mihi fas fuerit, quem numquam mirari desino). . .

Some writers advocate both imitation and emulation; admiration and competition often go hand in hand. Margaret W. Ferguson has convincingly shown in Du Bellay's own Deffence a "vacillation between sacramental reverence and violence."<sup>14</sup> One sees a shift from imitation early in the Deffence to emulation (Du Bellay does not

use the term) at the conclusion. How did the Romans enrich their language?

Immitant les meilleurs aucteurs Grecz, se transformant en eux, les devorant, & apres les avoir bien digerez, les convertissant en sang & nourriture, se proposant, chacun selon son naturel & l'argument qu'il vouloit elire, le meilleur aucteur, dont ilz observoient diligemment toutes les plus rares & exquises vertuz, & icelles comme grephes, ainsi que j'ay dict devant, entoint & apliquoient à leur Langue.<sup>15</sup>

The change in metaphor, from digestion to grafting reveals two aspects of imitation: saturation in the work of an author until it has been unconsciously assimilated and the conscious transfer of stylistic felicities into the imitator's own work. Both aspects presuppose reverence for the model. Du Bellay does not use the common metaphors of emulation -- wrestling or striving with the model or surpassing the model's footsteps. His conclusion illustrates the violence of the struggle rather than the competitive side of emulation.

La donq', Francoys, marchez couraigeusement vers cete superbe cité Romaine: & des serves depouilles d'elle (comme vous avez fait plus d'une fois) ornez vos temples & autels. . . . Pillez moy sans conscience les sacrez thesors de ce temple Delphique, ainsi que vous avez fait autrefois . . .<sup>16</sup>

All reverence for the model disappears in the sacking and plundering of ancient texts.

The Antiquitez contain examples of the reverent imitation of a model, for instance, the beautiful transfer of the oak simile from Lucan's Pompey to Rome itself in sonnet 28. Du Bellay modifies Lucan; the sonnet is not a "traduction littérale."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless the changes which he introduces do not engage in emulative criticism. Besides the application of the comparison to Rome instead of Pompey, the most important change is probably the addition of the agent in line 11: "Du devot populaire estre seul reveré" / "sola tamen colitur" (l.143). Lucan's simile follows lines which sketch Pompey as declining into old age, inactivity, and as resting on his laurels. The comparison appears to hint that the Roman people are somewhat foolishly deceived in the "magni nominis umbra." Du Bellay's "Du devot populaire" prevents the reader from feeling that a live dog is better than a dead lion; one senses the piety which the oak deserves. Lucan has no equivalent for Du Bellay's third line, "Lever encor' au ciel sa vieille teste morte." Du Bellay omits that the oak can cast a shadow only with its trunk because it has no leaves; instead he writes: "Et sans feuille umbrageux, de son poix se supporte / Sur son tronc nouailleux en cent lieux esbranché." Both changes impress the reader with the oak's struggle to endure. All these changes, however, remain within the realm of a transformative imitation and do not shade into emulation.

One finds correction and implicit criticism, important aspects of emulation, in sonnet 32, which alludes to Virgil, whom Du Bellay praises in sonnet 25 and whose poetry has left its mark on

almost every page of his Latin poems. There is no reason to doubt Du Bellay's sincere admiration for Virgil, even though he does not resist the opportunity to indicate Virgil's presumption, the same vice which Du Bellay sometimes sees as responsible for Rome's fall. Rome teaches Du Bellay the lesson of transience, which qualifies his claim for the Antiquitez when he writes this version of Horace's famous "exegi monumentum."

Just as the first two sonnets lead the reader to expect celebration and description of the ruins of Rome, the final sonnet proceeds as if they had been described: "Les monuments que je vous ay fait dire." Likewise one has no hint of all the critical reflection upon Roman history -- until the last line, which ends with a translation of Virgil's well-known "gens togata": "L'antique honneur du peuple à longue robe." I agree with Screech's observation that this line would have evoked the whole context of Virgil's phrase for the cultivated reader.<sup>18</sup> A primary function of allusion is to place two passages into relation. Allusions often work like Dante's citations of the first line of a psalm:

"In exitu Israël de Aegypto"

cantavan tutti insieme ad una voce

con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto. (Purg. 2.46-8)

One reads an allusion and recalls the context. In this case Jupiter's confident assertion of Rome's eternal dominion: "his [the Romans] ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono: / imperium sine fine dedi" (Aen. 1.278-9). Of course, as Du Bellay does not tire of saying, Roman rule

did come to an end; Virgil stands corrected, especially in "L'antique honneur," which indicates the discontinuity between past and present. Virgil, in placing his prophecy into Jupiter's mouth, was not prudent enough to remember time's power, which Du Bellay has just taken into consideration regarding the work of his luth: "Car si le temps ta gloire ne desrobbe. . . ." Virgil's claim for Rome resembles the pride of the giants by trying to arrogate eternity for mortals. In Du Bellay the rebuke of presumption remains silent, but he had a precedent for much sterner criticism in Augustine, who is quoted in the popular Virgilian commentary of the Parisian scholar and publisher, Josse Bade:

Verum certiora de praeteritis quam de futuris, inducunt  
 poetae vaticinia. Nam mentitus est Iuppiter, dicens, Imperium  
 sine fine dedi. De qua re divus Augustinus, de verbis domini,  
 ser. xxix ita loquitur. Habent mutationes regna. Veniet ille  
 de quo dictum est, Et regni eius non erit finis. Qui hoc regnis  
 terrenis promiserunt: non veritate ducti sed adulatione mentiti  
 sunt. Poeta illorum quidem, induxit Iovem, & ait de Romanis.  
 His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono Imperium sine fine  
 dedi. Non plane ita respondet veritas. Regnum hoc quod sine  
 fine dedisti, in terra est, an in coelo? Utique in terra. Et  
 si esset in coelo, coelum & terra transient. Transient quae  
 fecit ipse deus, quanto citius quod condidit Romulus? <sup>19</sup>

Du Bellay does not accuse Virgil of lying and flattery. He does not trample upon his fallen master or move in for the kill like Calcagnini's gladiatorial emulator. Nevertheless antique undercuts Virgil's

declaration of endless empire for the "gens togata." Virgil wrote as if "sous le ciel fust quelque eternité," and his presumption is exposed. The last line of the Antiquitez is therefore an appropriately ambivalent conclusion to the whole collection: Du Bellay sings the honor of Rome while recalling the arrogance which may have been responsible for its fall.

## NOTES

1. Poésies françaises et latines de Joachim Du Bellay, ed. E. Courbet (Paris: Garnier, 1918), vol. 1, p. 435. Cf., for example, Landino's "De Roma fere diruta": "Et cunctis rebus instant sua fata creatis, / et, quod Roma doces, omnia tempus edit" (Christophori Landini Carmina Omnia, ed. Alexander Perosa [Florence: Olschki, 1939], p. 81). For the relations of the Antiquitez to neo-Latin poetry see Françoise Joukovsky, La gloire dans la poésie française et néolatine du XVIIe siècle (des rhétoriciens à Agrippa D'Aubigné) (Geneva: Groz, 1969), pp. 228-43. Walther Rehm, Europäische Romdichtung, 2nd ed. (Munich: Huebner, 1960), surveys poetic treatments of Rome from antiquity to the twentieth century and includes a chapter on the Antiquitez.
  
2. I cite from Henri Chamard's edition of Du Bellay's Oeuvres poétiques, vol. 2 (1908; rpt. Paris: Didier, 1970). I have profited from M. A. Screech's notes in Les Regrets et autres oeuvres poétiques, ed. J. Joliffe (Geneva: Groz, 1966). The notes incorporate much of the important material in V.-L. Saulnier, "Commentaires sur les Antiquitez de Rome," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 12 (1950) 114-43.
  
3. "Moenia, quae vastis passim convulsa ruinis / Antiquas spirant imperiosa minas," Courbet, vol. 1, p. 432. Chamard quotes Vitalis' epigram in the notes to Antiquitez 3.

4. For the historical background see the penetrating essay by Matthias Gelzer, "Nasicas Widerspruch gegen die Zerstörung Carthagos," Kleine Schriften, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1963), pp. 39-72.
5. Cf. the discussions of the causes of Rome's fall by Gilbert Gadoffre, "Histoire et Destin dans les Antiquités de Rome," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur 85 (1975) 289-304, and Ingrid G. Daemmrich, "The Function of the Ruins Motif in Du Bellay's Les Antiquitez de Rome," Neophilologus 59 (1975) 14-21.
6. For the importance of the myth of the giants in the Antiquitez see John C. Lapp, "Mythological Imagery in Du Bellay," Studies in Philology 61 (1964) 117-27, and especially F. Joukovsky-Micha, "La guerre des dieux et des géants chez les poètes français du XVIe siècle (1500-1585)," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 29 (1967) 55-92. -- See Chamard, p. 7, for Du Bellay's Latin epigram.
7. Pomponi Porfyrionis Commentum in Horatium Flaccum, ed. Alfred Holder (1894; rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), p. 199.
8. As far as I know, no one has pointed to the similarity between Allecto's visit and Du Bellay's second quatrain. One of the first things the reader of the Aeneid learns about Allecto is that she can stir up civil war. Juno addresses her with the tu-anaphora so common in ancient hymns: "tu potes unanimes armare in proelia



fratres . . ." (7.335). After Turnus rejects her advice when she is disguised as Calybe, Allecto becomes enraged (445), is called Erinys (447), and rouses Turnus to war by planting a torch within his breast: "sic effata facem iuveni coniecit et atro / lumine fumantis fixit sub pectore taedas" (456-7). The result is battle madness: "saevit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli, / ira super" (461-2). Allecto's torch is not the same thing as the tongs in sonnet 24: "Quelle ardente Erinnys de ses rouges tenailles / Vous pinsetoit les coeurs de rage envenimez." Nevertheless Allecto and Du Bellay's Erinnys perform the same action and get the same result.

9. Cf. Walter Pabst, "Ehrfurcht und Grauen vor Rom: Zur Stilisierung des caput mundi in Les antiquitez de Rome," Romanistisches Jahrbuch 24 (1973) 81.
10. Theodor E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" Speculum 17 (1942) 226-42; Hans Baron, "Das Erwachen des historischen Denkens im Humanismus des Quattrocento," Historische Zeitschrift 147 (1932) 5-20, and The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 47-61.
11. Frank McMinn Chambers, "Lucan and the Antiquitez de Rome," PMLA 60 (1945) 944-5.

12. For a fuller discussion of topics touched on in this paragraph and the next see my "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," forthcoming in Renaissance Quarterly.
  
13. "Super imitatione commentatio," Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 1 (Bari: Laterza, 1969), p. 219. The following quotation from Giraldi's "Super imitatione epistola" is from p. 203.
  
14. "The Exile's Defense: Du Bellay's La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise," PMLA 93 (1978) 277. I am heavily indebted to Ferguson's essay.
  
15. La Deffence et illustration de la langue francoyse, ed. Henri Chamard (1948; rpt. Paris: Didier, 1970), pp. 42-3. Du Bellay returns to transformation when mentioning the difficulties of imitation, p. 46.
  
16. Deffence, pp. 195-7.
  
17. Joseph Vianey calls the sonnet a translation when he identifies the source, "Les Antiquitez de Rome: leurs sources latines et italiennes," Bulletin italien 1 (1901) 188.
  
18. Joliffe and Screech, Les Regrets, p. 306.
  
19. P. Virgilii Maronis Opera (1544; rpt. New York and London: Garland, 1976), vol. 1, fol. 172<sup>v</sup>.