

Homer's Odyssey and the Image of Penelope in Renaissance Art

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The epic heroine Penelope captured the Renaissance literary and artistic imagination, beginning with Petrarch and the recovery of Homer's poetry through its translation into Latin. Only a very small number of humanists in the 14th century were able to read Homer in the Greek original, and Petrarch's friend Leontius Pilatus produced for him long-awaited Latin translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the 1360s¹. Profoundly moved by his ability to finally comprehend the two epics (albeit in translation), Petrarch composed a remarkable letter addressed to Homer in which he compares himself to Penelope:

"Your Penelope cannot have waited longer nor with more eager expectation for her Ulysses than I did for you. At last, though, my hope was fading gradually away. Except for a few of the opening lines of certain books, from which there seemed to flash upon me the face of a friend whom I had been longing to behold, a momentary glimpse, dim through the distance, or, rather, the sight of his streaming hair, as he vanished from my view – except for this no hint of a Latin Homer had come to me, and I had no hope of being able ever to see you face to face"².

The themes of anticipation and fulfillment, and longing and return that are associated with the figure of Penelope coincide with the rediscovery of ancient texts. To encounter Homer for the first time in a language with which one was familiar was as much a personal as a literary experience³. As Nancy Struever observes, Petrarch's *Le Familiari*, a collection of letters addressed to contemporary friends and ancient authors, values friendship and intimate exchange because it leads to knowledge and affective reward⁴. Books on their own (*Le Familiari*, XII, 6) constituted surrogate friends with whom Petrarch could correspond, converse, exchange ideas, and share his affections. He goes on to say in his address to Homer that with the new Latin translation, "we are now beginning to enjoy not only the treasures of wisdom that are stored away in your divine poems but also the sweetness and charm of your speech"⁵. Recognizing the eloquent and affective power of Homer is fundamental to understanding the reception of epic poetry in the Renaissance and its impact on visual representations of mythic subject matter⁶. By concentrating on the portrayal of Penelope in Renaissance art in Italy and France from about 1435 to 1560, this essay will investigate the experiential texture of Homer's *Odyssey* in visual terms. Although paintings of Penelope

from this period are relatively scarce, and this essay does not claim to provide an exhaustive survey, Petrarch's emotional affinity with her, as expressed in his desire to understand Homer, opens up new avenues for interpreting one of the most compelling female characters of the *Odyssey*⁷.

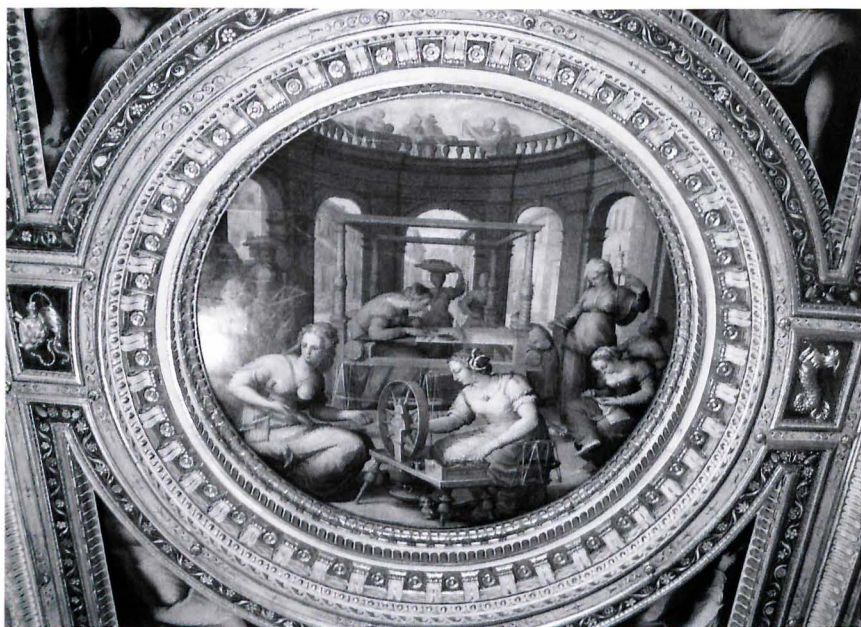
Traditionally, Penelope has stood as a paradigm of marital chastity and fidelity. Who would not be impressed by her waiting dutifully for her husband, the Greek hero Odysseus (Ulysses), to return home to Ithaca after battling the Trojans and enduring years of subsequent tribulations? During his absence, Penelope kept her arrogant suitors at bay by promising to marry the most prominent of the Achaeans after she finished "weaving a web", (actually a funerary shroud for her aged father-in-law, Laertes)⁸. With characteristic cunning, she secretly unraveled at night what she wove every day. When Ulysses finally returns home, after twenty years, he slaughters the suitors, reveals his true identity, and reunites with his wife. To a certain extent, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, an invaluable text for Renaissance humanists and artists, set the stage for representations of Penelope by praising a lost work of the famed painter Zeuxis of Heraclea from the 5th century B.C. According to Pliny, Zeuxis "also did a Penelope in which the picture seems to portray morality" (*fecit et Penelopen, in qua pinxisse mores videtur*)⁹. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) endorsed this image of Penelope's character in his *De mulieribus claris*, a highly popular series of biographies of famous women that enjoyed numerous publications, editions, and translations in Italian and French. Boccaccio commends the heroine as follows:

"Penelope, daughter of King Icarius, was the wife of Ulysses, a man of great activity: for married women she is the most sacred and lasting example of untarnished honor and undefiled purity" (*atque intemperate pudicitie matronis exemplum sanctissimum et eternum*)¹⁰.

A host of other texts, from Petrarch's *Trionfi* to Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, extol Penelope's feminine virtue by emphasizing her marital chastity¹¹. Due in part to these writings, historians of Renaissance art have focused almost exclusively on Penelope as exemplar – as a model of faithfulness and domesticity and an astute manager of her husband's estate.

The apartments of Eleanora of Toledo, wife of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, in the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, which celebrate exemplary women from Greek mythology, the Old Testament, and Roman and Florentine history, provide a relevant example. From 1561 to 1562, the Flemish artist known as Giovanni Stradano executed the decoration for the Sala di Penelope, with its central *tondo* on the ceiling showing Penelope at her loom (fig. 1). Instead of illustrating any one particular episode from the *Odyssey*, Stradano portrays Penelope's industry to underscore her virtue and fidelity. Rick A. Scorza sees Penelope in this work as representing fortitude and temperance for having resisted the suitors' incessant flattery and having endured her husband's absence¹². As the wife of the lord of Ithaca she provides a perfect model for Eleanora's nobility.

Given the medieval didactic treatment of ancient texts that assigned moral allegories to mythic personalities and episodes, reading Penelope as a personification

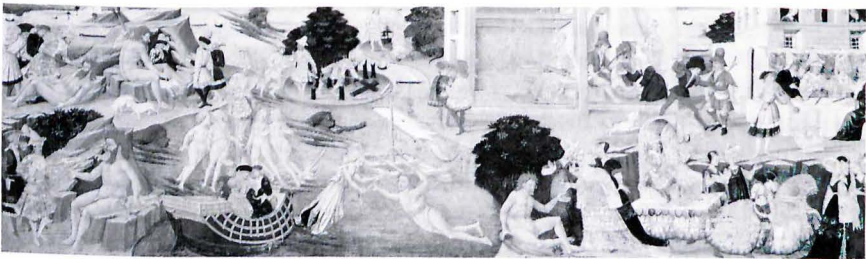


1. Giovanni Stradano, *Penelope at her Loom*, 1561-1562. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio.

of marital chastity is highly justifiable, but the *Odyssey* proved to be a versatile text that served a wide range of literary and artistic purposes, one that could both accept and resist overarching allegorical interpretations¹³. For example, Petrarch's letter to Homer exhibits a highly personal feeling of nostalgia: a longing for things past, for the recuperation of ancient wisdom that parallels Penelope's longing for Ulysses. Penelope herself is celebrated as intelligent (*nóos*) and thoughtful in the *Odyssey* (XIX, 349-352)¹⁴. Since antiquity her character represented wisdom and logic, frequently in association with her repeated weaving and unraveling, characteristics that were commented on and developed in the writings of Renaissance humanists. Ovid's *Heroides*, a series of heroic epistles written from the female perspective that offered Renaissance readers another means of indentifying with Penelope on a more personal and individual level, is also relevant. Renaissance lyrics in imitation of Ovid's elegiac love letter "Penelope Ulixi" ("Penelope to Ulysses") challenge the centrality of the male ethos to the epic by showcasing the passionate voice of the abandoned female, often within an anti-war context. An increasingly sensual response to Homeric personalities was further brought about by the modernization of the epic genre, demonstrated in such vernacular poems as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and its commentaries. This essay analyzes the intersection of image and text as it concerns select representations of Penelope in the hopes of providing a foil to standard allegorical interpretations and with the goal of defining Renaissance works of art as more affective, deliberative, and above all, sensitive to a variety of literary genres¹⁵.

PENELOPE BETWEEN HOMER'S *ODYSSEY* AND OVID'S *HEROIDES*

Some of the earliest images of Penelope in Renaissance painting appear on *cassone* panels. *Cassoni*, "large chests" designed in the context of a marriage to be paraded through the streets and placed within the bride's new home when she joined her husband, afforded viewers in many instances an intimate encounter with mythological subject matter. An early example, the front panel of a *cassone* painted by the Florentine artist Apollonio di Giovanni and datable to c. 1435-1445, highlights in a continuous narrative the adventures of Ulysses while Penelope works steadfastly at her loom (fig. 2)¹⁶. Another *cassone*, painted by the Sienese artist Guidoccio Cozzarelli and datable to 1480-1481, shows the moment of Ulysses's departure together with scenes of Penelope weaving and unraveling her web (fig. 3)¹⁷. Although the original patrons of these two *cassoni* are unknown, such images of ancient heroes and heroines have been interpreted as "charismatic stand-ins for the bodies of the bride and bridegroom [...] exhorting the married pair, especially the bride, to adhere to mostly unwritten codes of behavior that stressed wifely submission, patriarchal might, and familial dominance"¹⁸. Mythic imagery could also encourage learning associated with ancient fable. The humanist Ugolino Verino (1438-1516) labels Apollonio the "Tuscan Apelles" and celebrates his depictions of the adventures of the Greeks and Trojans. Verino claims that Apollonio did not just illustrate, but improved on the writings of Homer and Virgil: "Apollonio now painted burning Troy better for us," from the "wrath of iniquitous Juno" to the "unhappy Dido"¹⁹. This competition between painting and poetry is important, as Verino stresses the emotional dimension of Apollonio's art, how affect informs meaning. In his treatise *De pictura* (1435), Leon Battista Alberti also emphasizes that the primary value of painting, like poetry, lies in the emotions that it can provoke. Alberti advises painters on how to direct figures in a *historia* to convey and incite proper emotions. Alberti cites Homer and also commends Lucian's *ekphrasis* of Apelles's painting of Calumny as a worthy invention (*inventio*), by which he means the discovery of a theme or argument fundamental to the creation of a *historia*: "If this *historia* seizes the imagination when described in words, how much beauty and pleasure do you think it presented in the actual painting of that excellent artist?"²⁰. Alberti's appeal to poetics is not so much iconographic as hermeneutic, seeing it as a generative process of discovery that corroborates Boccaccio's late-fourteenth-century



2. Apollonio di Giovanni, *The Adventures of Ulysses*, c. 1435-1445. Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago.



3. Guidoccio Cozzarelli, *The Departure of Ulysses*, c. 1480-1481. Écouen, Musée National de la Renaissance.

definition of poetry as “a sort of fervid and exquisite invention (*invenire*), with fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which the mind has invented”²¹. In other words, viewers of the above two *cassone* could experience the mythological imagery for its rhetorical and emotional effectiveness. The images presume close acquaintance with the epic and provide a burgeoning community of readers of ancient texts (male and female) the opportunity to seek out the wisdom of poetic expression – to deliberate on themes concerning love and abandonment²².

Unlike Apollonio, Cozzarelli focuses on the departure of Ulysses as the couple tenderly embraces in the center of the composition, thereby giving the isolation of Penelope at her loom a psychological depth that rivals the *Odyssey*. The separation anxiety conveyed by Cozzarelli’s version of the protagonists dramatizes the emotional toll war has on lovers. At the time he executed his work several major wars had broken out in Italy, the Pazzi War (1478-1480) between Siena and Florence, and another, a consequence of shifting political allegiances during the Pazzi War, between Ferrara and Venice (1482-1484)²³. A number of Italian poets in this period invoked or employed the female voice of Penelope in their Latin and vernacular verses, in imitation of the anti-war rhetoric found in the first letter (*epistula*) of Ovid’s *Heroides*. Ovid’s Penelope pleads with her husband to return home immediately now that Troy has fallen – a return letter will not suffice. She waits passionately if not impatiently, lonely and fearful, weaving her web and exclaiming: “Love is a thing ever filled with anxious fear”²⁴.

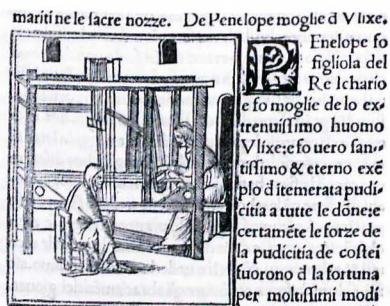
The commentaries on the *Heroides* by Antonius Volscus and Ubertinus Clericus, published together in 1481, praise the eloquence, inventiveness, and complexity of the text, as it creates and perpetuates new myths based on a highly personal, feminine point of view²⁵. Clericus especially admires the “lowly” (*humilis*) nature of the elegiac verse as highly effective in conveying familiar ideas and sentiments²⁶. Two Italian poets, Niccolò da Correggio (1450-1508) and Antonio Tebaldeo (1463-1537), both associated with the Este court of Ferrara, followed Ovid’s lead by adopting a feminine eloquence to praise love and condemn war in their verses²⁷. Niccolò’s “Como Penelopé scrisse al suo Ulisse”, consisting of 100 lines and composed in 1482 at the height of Ferrara’s war with Venice, takes the form of a personal letter. It denounces the fury of war (“El bellico furore è tanto inico”; line 67) and expresses the beloved’s desire for her absent lover’s embrace (“venghi, che per ristor possa abbracciarti”; line 84)²⁸. Niccolò’s friend and fellow poet Antonio Tebaldeo also wrote against the war in

the same period, and even uses Niccolò as a poetic character in his Latin verses. In paired epistles that imitate *Heroides* 16-21, Tebaldeo has Niccolò and his poetic lady Beatrice exchange letters declaring their longing for one another and expressing the pain of abandonment in time of war²⁹. The character Niccolò praises Beatrice's letter that implores him to return from battle, professing he is a "captor" of her eloquence, which rivals that of Penelope³⁰.

Niccolò and Tebaldeo offer new ways of looking at Homer through the filter of Ovid, infusing epic personalities with highly dramatic and emotional sentiments and giving voice and power to the abandoned female figure³¹. Correspondingly, the imagery of Cozzarelli's *cassone* focuses on the nature of love and the human condition, appealing to the viewer's sentiments. Bride and groom can identify with the epic characters in personal, political, and rhetorical terms, and not solely see them as exemplars of socially prescribed codes of behavior regarding husbands and wives (or in Penelope's case, a presumed widow)³². Apollonio, on the other hand, lets viewers of his *cassone* judge Penelope's resiliency and fidelity in light of her husband's infidelities with women who either aid or attempt to curtail his journey home through their seductive charms: Circe, the Sirens, Leucothea (labeled "Inaco" on the panel), and Nausicaa. Nudity, both male and female, abounds in sections, whereas Penelope, regally dressed, remains fixed at her loom while her suitors wait outside the palace in vain. Constancy is juxtaposed to errant behavior, and Apollonio's visual strategies are both ironic and challenging to male authority³³. These two *cassoni* provide a visual complement to the subjective experience found in Petrarch's letter to Homer, which identifies and "domesticates" ancient literature, personalizing it and assimilating it into his own time and cultural context³⁴.

PENELOPE'S WEB

Many Renaissance depictions of Penelope, such as the examples discussed above, connect her inextricably to her loom, which takes on a role beyond a mere attribute. The first Italian vernacular translation of Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*



4. Penelope, in Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*, V. Bagli (trans.), Venice, 1506.

(Venice, 1506) includes a woodcut illustration of Penelope at her loom (fig. 4)³⁵. Boccaccio stresses that it was with "divine inspiration" (*divino profecto illustrate lumine*) and "feminine cunning" (*femineo astu*) that Penelope deceived her suitors by secretly unraveling her web³⁶. The loom is the instrument with which she weaves her wiles while performing her domestic duty. Homer labels the loom Penelope's divinely inspired stratagem: "I weave my own wiles",

she exclaims (*Odyssey*, XIX, 137). In terms of intelligence (*nóos*), Penelope equals Ulysses, the master of disguise and verbal trickery whose stories serve as a model of the poet's own craft. While Athena helps Ulysses "weave" wiles throughout the epic, she equally protects Penelope who, through her literal weaving, enjoys the "masculine" ability to fabricate stratagems³⁷.

Perhaps the most immediate association with Penelope's loom comes in the form of another literary genre popular in the Renaissance: the adage. Erasmus compiled and first published his book of adages in Paris in 1500, with the first Italian edition, much expanded, appearing in Venice in 1508. As Erasmus explains, the adage *Penelopes telam retexere* (To unravel Penelope's web) means "to take up a useless task, and then undo what has been done"³⁸. While acknowledging the cleverness of Penelope's ruse and powers of deception, Erasmus defines the adage as an emblem of faulty dialectic. Erasmus led the charge against dialectic, especially as it evolved within medieval scholasticism, seeing it as rigorous and repellent, a circular form of logic and argumentation based on refutations and contradictory assertions that destroy any wisdom gained. Variations of this adage appear in Mario Equicola's treatise on love, *Libro de natura de amore* (1525), and in Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani* (1505; French translation 1545)³⁹.

The adage lends an added rhetorical dimension to images of Penelope at her loom. Consider Domenico Beccafumi's painting *Penelope* (c. 1514) (fig. 5). Despite the lack of documentary information, it has been argued that the vertical panel was "undoubtedly one of a trio of panel paintings of virtuous women, of the type that enjoyed popularity in Siena at the end of the fifteenth century and the first two decades of the sixteenth century"⁴⁰. Such decorative programs were designed for domestic interiors and nuptial chambers and have accordingly been seen as promoting humanist learning as well as personal and civic values revolving around chastity and marital fidelity. A strong case can also be made for interpreting Beccafumi's painting as an independent work whose meaning transgresses conventional moral associations. Penelope stares at and embraces her loom, resting



5. Domenico Beccafumi, *Penelope*, c. 1514. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



6. Bernardo Pinturicchio, *Penelope with the Suitors*, c. 1509. London, National Gallery.

her scissors, the instrument used to cut and undo her work, on its side. She appears poised and stoic, and the attention she gives her loom calls to mind both her deceptive nature and the twisted logic of the adage as discussed by Erasmus. More proverbial than allegorical, Beccafumi's painting may have been designed to prompt viewers, male and female, to avoid dialectical proofs while encouraging new opportunities for intelligent discovery in familial or social discourse.

The loom itself could also stand as a physical and ornamental object in painted images. Bernardo Pinturicchio's fresco *Penelope with the Suitors* (c. 1509) is a case in point (fig. 6). The fresco was originally one of eight subjects commissioned by Pandolfo Petrucci for the "camera bella" of the Palazzo del Magnifico in Siena, as part of a suite of rooms designed for the marriage of his son Borghese to Vittoria Piccolomini⁴¹. Here, the great floor loom serves as a defensive structure, a protective barrier between Penelope and her suitors, who are denied access to her body by the imposing construction. With its horizontal and vertical wood beams and tightly stretched threads, the loom mediates Penelope's interactions with the men in the room. What is more, her domestic performance opposes the masculine pastime of hunting, exemplified by the suitor holding the falcon. In Ovid's *Heroides*, Penelope states that she is a "wife without power", and that she, her son, and her father-in-law are "unwarlike"⁴², yet her feminine arts trump conventional weapons. The loom not only encloses Penelope and

creates a protective arena, but Ulysses's bow and quiver are suspended on the loom's crossbeam just behind her head⁴³. One of Penelope's tests to prove her husband's identity was to devise the contest of the bow (*Odyssey*, Book XXI), which only Ulysses could bend. By juxtaposing loom and bow in the painting, Pinturicchio structures a relationship between Penelope's stratagems and Ulysses's strength to foreshadow the elimination of their enemies⁴⁴. Penelope's craftiness can also be judged in relation to the lures and temptations of the Sirens and Circe, shown in the background. Circe and Penelope are both expert weavers and the two distract men with their beauty, voice, and feminine arts⁴⁵.

Homer equates weaving with intellectual as well as poetic activity and antiquity strongly associated weaving with the creation of music, poetry, and art⁴⁶. The portrayal of the loom was also a demonstration of artistic virtuosity. Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines*, a third-century text which describes ancient paintings the author claims to have seen in a gallery in Naples, praises an "excellent painting" of Penelope's magnificent loom, "complete in all its parts – and it is stretched tight with the warp, and lint gathers under the threads, and the shuttle all but sings"⁴⁷. The popularity of the *Imagines* in Renaissance Italy need not be rehearsed here, save for the number of paintings its *ekphrasis* inspired as artists sought to compete with Philostratus in producing emotional as well as physical sensations in audiences through vivid description. It is likely that Pinturicchio, who drew parallels between painting and poetry in legal proceedings in Siena in 1507, wished to call attention to his own eloquent artifice by depicting such an imposing loom in his fresco⁴⁸.

PENELOPE AS OBJECT OF DESIRE AT FONTAINEBLEAU

Images of Penelope associated with the court of Fontainebleau in the 16th century emerge out of the burgeoning interest in Homer and the modernization of the epic genre in French literary culture. French commentators on Homer, as Philip Ford has demonstrated, tended to seek out hidden truths in the epics, emphasizing allusions to Christianity and promoting moral or ethical interpretations as they relate to human psychology. In his *De transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum, libri tres* (1535), for instance, Guillaume Budé interprets the etymology of the name Odysseus to mean "traveler-philosopher"⁴⁹, seeing the hero as concerned with salvation, desiring also the happiness of returning to his homeland. As royal poet and interpreter (*poète et interprète royal*), Jean Dorat's (1508–1588) views on mythology circulated widely in court circles⁵⁰. Dorat reads Odysseus figuratively, as a man who is "desirous of true wisdom and happiness [*sapientiae ac felicitates*] (for one is Penelope, the other Ithaca)"⁵¹. The ancient notion of nostalgia is likewise in operation here. Douglas Frame argues that the myth of return is deeply embedded in the *Odyssey* and that there is a fundamental connection between the words for "mind" and "returning home", whereby Ulysses's intelligence (*nóos*) is etymologically linked to and defined by his destiny, his return home (*nóstos*)⁵². In other words, Ulysses's homesickness (nostalgia) and his

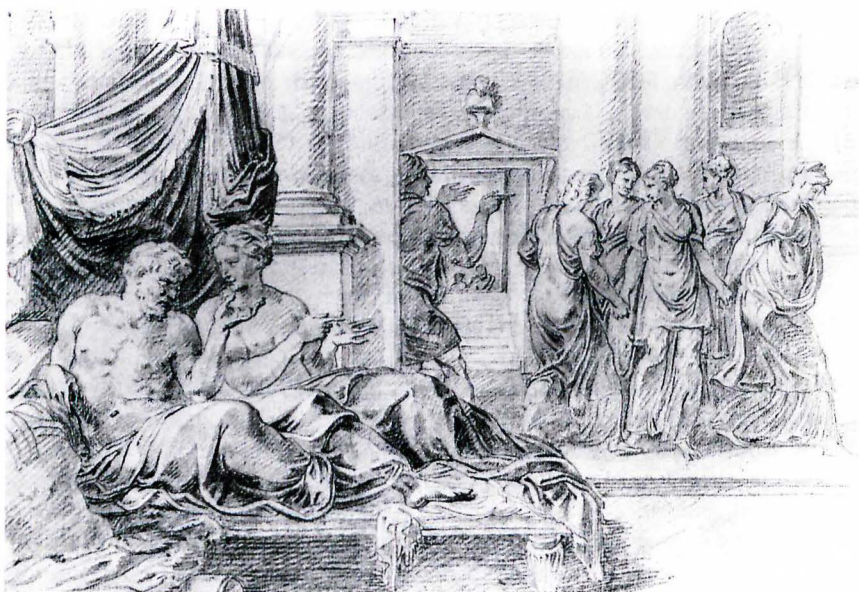
desire for Penelope and Ithaca, coupled by his subsequent homecoming, is a process akin to a return to consciousness. I would argue that in certain cases these ancient and allegorical themes are married to more subjective, elegiac sentiments with regard to the portrayal of Penelope in sixteenth-century France.

The infusion of the elegiac with the heroic is most compellingly displayed in Francesco Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope* (c. 1560), now in the Toledo Museum of Art (fig. 7)⁵³. The canvas shows an episode from Book XXIII of the *Odyssey*, after Ulysses and Penelope reunite and enjoy their marital bed. Homer writes:

"When Penelope and Odysseus had enjoyed their lovemaking, they took their pleasure in talking, each one telling his story, She, shining among women, told of all she had endured in the palace, as she watched the suitors, a ravaging company, who on her account were slaughtering many oxen and fat sheep, and much wine was being drawn from the wine jars. But shining Odysseus told of all the cares he inflicted on other men, and told too of all that in his misery he toiled through. She listened to him with delight, not did any sleep fall upon her eyes until he had told everything" (XXIII, 300-309).



7. Francesco Primaticcio, *Ulysses and Penelope*, c. 1560. Toledo, Toledo Museum of Art.



8. Theodor van Thulden (after Francesco Primaticcio), *Ulysses and Penelope Recount Their Adventures*, c. 1631. Vienna, Albertina.

This endearing episode is a rare subject in the history of art, and the painting differs significantly from the text. In the first place, it portrays Penelope, not Ulysses, in the act of narration, enumerating with her fingers the suitors she deceived. She occupies the central axis of the composition and is afforded a privileged status. Primaticcio shows Ulysses as spellbound by the beauty and virtue of his wife, thereby reversing Homer's description of the scene as well as the male protagonist's symbolic centrality. Ulysses interrupts Penelope's speech as he turns her head and lovingly cradles her chin in a gesture of compassion and affection, a fresh invention that has no place in the poem.

Primaticcio originally depicted the scene alongside 59 others from the *Odyssey* (c. 1541-1560), in a series of frescoes in the Galerie d'Ulysse (now destroyed) at the royal court of Fontainebleau, but the imagery of his Toledo canvas departs from the lost fresco depicting the same episode⁵⁴. It is helpful to compare the Toledo picture to a later drawing recording the 48 mural at Fontainebleau by the Flemish artist Theodor van Thulden (1606-1669) recording the 48th mural in the Fontainebleau cycle (he later engraved the entire cycle in 1633, which was published as a moralized album) (fig. 8). The lost mural showed Ulysses motioning towards Penelope as if he were speaking, not holding her chin, and appears to have been exceptionally attentive to the text; maidens dance in celebration of the couple's reunion, as the *Odyssey* relates (XXIII, 298).

In a previous study, I interpreted Ulysses's gesture in the Toledo canvas as denoting reversal and recognition, or *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis*, which, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*, are "the most powerful elements of attraction in Tragedy"⁵⁵.

The *Odyssey*, and in particular the episodes involving Ulysses and Penelope, has been long appreciated for employing a complex combination of disguise, deception, and discovery. Furthermore, Ulysses's "chin-chuck" was a codified gesture, a formal sign of entreaty or erotic solicitation in ancient Greece because the chin was considered sacred – an extension of the immortal part of the soul⁵⁶. In the 46th mural of the Galerie d'Ulysse, which shows the earlier episode of the couple's reunion, Penelope caresses the chin of Ulysses. By contrast, Ulysses's gesture in the Toledo canvas reverses the narrative action of the *Odyssey* and shifts the focus of the scene to Penelope.

Several episodes in the *Odyssey* in which Ulysses is impressed with his wife's wisdom and wit beyond his expectations spring to mind. In Book XIX, when Ulysses first returns home disguised as a beggar, he encounters Penelope, who relates how she tricked her suitors with her loom and her tales. Although Ulysses at first intends to encourage Penelope into believing that her spouse is still alive, he unexpectedly discovers that the wife he left behind served as a surrogate king, stating: "Lady... your fame goes up into the wide heaven, as of some king who, as a blameless man and god-fearing, upholds the way of good government" (*Odyssey*, XIX, 107-111). This is the moment Primaticcio captures in the couple's bedtime recollections: Ulysses's recognition of Penelope's kingly nature, or perhaps the apotheosis of Penelope – as the master of strategy⁵⁷. Despite the absence of the loom, Primaticcio nevertheless allows his audience to read into the figure of Penelope a series of metaphors or categories of performance by carefully applying rosy tints to her hands and fingers, still sore from working the loom, thereby referring to her weaving and her artful deception of the suitors.

Primaticcio offers a unique meditation on the form and character of epic pictorial language, a revision of the heroic energy found in his earlier frescoes at Fontainebleau. Through the use of gesture and gaze, the artist converts epic energy into lyric sentiment, amplifying the warm emotional response of the lovers to one another with a naturalness and force equal to Homer's diction. Primaticcio's figures also combine the new stylistic advancements found in the work of Michelangelo, Parmigianino, and Rosso Fiorentino. It is significant that these narrative and stylistic choices coincide with the modernization of the epic genre in French and Italian literary theory and practice of the period. Two treatises help us appreciate Primaticcio's endeavor: Joachim Du Bellay's *La Deffence, et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549), a polemic written in an effort to demonstrate that French could rival ancient Greek and Latin in poetic excellence; and Giovanbattista Giraldis Cinzio's *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi* (1554), the express aim of which was to define the romance as a distinct modern genre. In questioning whether the heroic spirit of antiquity could be revived in contemporary French writing, Du Bellay naturally considers Homer and Virgil as models, but he also cites Ariosto, whose romance epic *Orlando Furioso* (final edition 1532; French translation 1543) served as a vernacular example of what could be achieved in French literature⁵⁸. Ariosto's poem is important for studying Primaticcio's canvas, especially for the way the text revises the continuity and

generic unity of the epic with abrupt transitions and lengthy digressions involving love and private passions. Giraldi Cinzio argued that Ariosto's digressions often comprise the most marvelous events and display the author's expressive energies outside the formal confines of epic narrative sequence revolving around a single action or hero⁵⁹. He commends the *Odyssey* in light of Ariosto's poem because the ancient text introduces episodes of love that ornament the tragedy⁶⁰.

Primaticcio's Toledo canvas also finds a literary equivalent in the tender passions expressed in Ovid's *Heroides* and its Renaissance imitators. The *Heroides*, as Paul White establishes, was immensely popular in Renaissance France, with partial or entire translations published by Octavien de Saint-Gelais, Joachim Du Bellay, and Charles Fontaine in the first half of the 16th century⁶¹. In their commentaries, Du Bellay and Fontaine argued over whether French translators should preserve the genius of Ovid's text or attempt to imitate the eloquence of his style in modern French. Regardless of the debate, it was the impact of Ovid on literary practice and the refashioning of Homeric myth that is instructive here. With the publication in 1549 of his *Recueil de poésie*, dedicated to Marguerite de France, sister of King Henri II, Du Bellay employs the figure of Penelope as a symbol of France awaiting the felicitous return of Cardinal Jean Du Bellay (1492-1560), his cousin, who was in Rome from July 1547 until September 1549. In Ode VII of the collection, "L'avant retour en France de Monseigneur Reverendiss. Cardinal Du Bellay", Joachim compares Penelope, "Sa chaste epouze", to France, longing for the cardinal and filled with happiness at his arrival⁶². Like Petrarch before him, Du Bellay uses an analogy with Penelope to express feelings of longing and return. Turning to Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope* in Toledo, even though the original context of the work is unclear, the artist's portrayal of the highly personal *affetti* (the passions and affectations expressed by the figures) could have evoked or recalled similar feelings of nostalgia in the viewer. The silent admiration of the protagonists in the canvas is an expansion on "the emotional effect on those who have returned home, and the sympathy which unites them"⁶³. By isolating the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope, and the re-consummation of their marriage after twenty years, the artist expands the human spirit of his epic personalities.

The foregoing analysis of Primaticcio's Toledo canvas, read in conjunction with the contemporary updating of ancient literary genres, does not exclude the Christian moral and ethical interpretations of Budé and Dorat regarding Homer's epic. By obtaining his object of desire, Ulysses achieves what the suitors of Penelope could not: wisdom and happiness⁶⁴. The seventeenth-century moral assigned to van Thulden's engraving after the Fontainebleau fresco complements this reading by emphasizing the tranquility of the scene⁶⁵. At Fontainebleau, the figure Penelope can be read as a personification of sacred love⁶⁶. Yet Primaticcio's Toledo canvas cannot be explained exclusively by means of a standard allegorical index. Identifying with Penelope in art and literature goes to the heart of what Homer stood for in the Renaissance imagination: the power of eloquence associated with ancient myth and literary genres, an eloquence that leads to poetic fervor and ethical inquiry.

Notes

1. See Ph. FORD, "Homer in the French Renaissance", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59, 2006, p. 1-28, esp. p. 1-2; and G. TANTURLI, "La cultura fiorentina volgare del Quattrocento davanti ai nuovi testi greci", *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 2, 1988, p. 217-243.
2. F. PETRARCA, *Le Familiari*, V. ROSSI (ed.), (Edizione nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca; 13), Florence, 1942, p. 254 (XXIV, 12): "Unus vir nostro te latinum seculo reuehit; non hercle auidius neque diutius Ulixem tuum sua Penelope expectavit quam te ego. Iamque michi sensim spes abibat; preter enim aliquot tuorum principia librorum, in quibus velut exoptati amici supercilium procul ambiguum et raptim vibrans seu fluctuantis come apicem intuebar, latini nichil obtigerat, nichil denique sperabatur ubi te cominus contemplarer". J. HARVEY ROBINSON (trans. and ed.), *Petrarch: The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters*, New York, 1898, p. 253-254.
3. On the sensual appeal of books both as texts and as physical objects in the Renaissance, see A. GRAFTON, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient books and Renaissance Readers*, Ann Arbor, 1997, p. 11-52.
4. N. STRUEVER, *Theory as Practice: Ethical Inquiry in the Renaissance*, Chicago / London, 1992, p. 14-23.
5. F. PETRARCA, *Le Familiari...*, *op. cit.*, p. 254: "et iam cepit, ut non modo diuinorum fructu operum eximio, sed tuarum quoque confabulationum illecebris perfruamur". Translation by J. HARVEY ROBINSON, *Petrarch...*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
6. For a comprehensive list of publications of Homer's epics and their commentaries in the Renaissance, see Ph. FORD, "Homer...", *op. cit.*, p. 3-8. The editio princeps of the Greek works of Homer appeared in Florence in 1488, with a Latin translation of the *Iliad* first published in 1474, and that of the *Odyssey* in 1510.
7. For an insightful historical and iconographic study of representations of the *Odyssey* in Italy, see J. MIZIOLEK, "The 'Odyssey' Cassone Panels from the Lanckoroński Collection: On the Origins of Depicting Homer's Epic in the Art of the Italian Renaissance", *Artibus et historiae*, 53, 2006, p. 57-88; and for an overview of the myth of Ulysses and Penelope in Italy, see M. LORANDI, *Il mito di Ulisse nella pittura a fresco del Cinquecento italiano*, Milan, 1995, p. 399-413.
8. *The Odyssey of Homer*, R. LATIMORE (trans.), New York, 1965, II, 94-95. All translations are from this edition.
9. PLINY THE ELDER, *Natural History*, H. RACKMAN (trans.), Cambridge, 1952; XXXV, xxxvi, 63.
10. G. BOCCACCIO, *Famous Women*, V. BROWN (ed. and trans.), Cambridge, 2001, p. 158-159.
11. Ariosto judges Penelope's chastity as important as Ulysses's character; see L. ARIOSTO, *Orlando Furioso*, C. SEGRE (ed.), Milan, 1976, XIII, ix, 7-8: "Sol perché casta visse, / Penelope non fu minor d'Ulisse". See also H. P. FOLEY, "Penelope as Moral Agent", in *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's Odyssey*, B. COHEN (ed.), Oxford, 1995, p. 93-115.
12. These observations are made by R. A. SCORZA, "A 'modello' by Stradanus for the 'Sala di Penelope' in the Palazzo Vecchio", *Burlington Magazine*, 126, 1984, p. 433-437. See also M. LORANDI, *Il mito di Ulisse...*, *op. cit.*, p. 408-410.
13. According to G. TESKEY, *Allegory and Violence*, Ithaca / London, 1996, the revival of mythic personalities in art frequently elicited continual allegorical interpretation as its primary aesthetic effect. His insistence on allegory as a prevailing interpretive key tends to deny the poetic and affective dimensions of Renaissance art. For a critique of Teskey's thesis, see S. CAMPBELL, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (with an appendix by C. BROWN), New Haven / London, 2006.
14. Penelope, like Ulysses, is characterized as "polutropos" (very intelligent; wily) in the *Odyssey*; see P. MARQUARDT, "Penelope 'Polutropos'", *The American Journal of Philology*, 106, 1985, p. 32-48.
15. On the emergence of an "affective beholder" in the Renaissance, see E. CROPPER, "The Place of Beauty in the High Renaissance and its Displacement in the History of Art", in *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance*, A. VOS (ed.), Binghamton, 1995, p. 159-205, with further bibliography.

16. On this *cassone*, see C. LLOYD, *Italian Paintings before 1600 in the Art Institute of Chicago*, Chicago, 1993, p. 6-9; E. CALLMANN, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, Oxford, 1974, p. 16-19; p. 53. Apollonio's Chicago *cassone* is one of several versions to survive showing Ulysses and Penelope in similar narrative scenes. For an assessment of the versions in The Frick Art Museum, Pittsburg, and the Royal Wawel Castle, Krakow, see J. MIZIOLEK, "The 'Odyssey' Cassone Panels...", *op. cit.*
17. On this *cassone*, see *Les Cassoni peints du Musée National de la Renaissance*, Paris, 2004, p. 36-41. See also the *cassone* *The Return of Ulysses* by an unidentified Tuscan artist in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
18. A. RANDOLPH, "Unpacking Cassoni: Marriage, Ritual, Memory", in *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, Pittsburgh, 2008, p. 23. C. L. BASKINS, *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender in Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, 1998, has reframed important issues regarding the making and reception of *cassoni* in the Renaissance.
19. The epigram "De Apollonio Pictore insigni" is included in Verino's collection of poems entitled *Flametta*, the original text of which is reprinted, translated, and discussed by E. GOMBRICH, "A Florentine *cassone* workshop seen through the eyes of a humanist poet", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18, 1955, p. 16-34; and see C. L. BASKINS, *Cassone Painting...*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
20. L. B. ALBERTI, *On Painting and Sculpture: The Latin Texts of "De Pictura" and "De Statua"*, C. GRAYSON (trans. and ed.), London, 1972, p. 96-97, "Quae plane historia etiam si dum recitatur animos tenet, quantum censes eam gratiae et amoenitatis ex ipsa pictura eximii pictoris exhibuisse?". A. GRAFTON, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 133, notes that Alberti "saw myth and history as equally appropriate subjects for a painted *historia*; indeed [...] his exemplary *historia* came from the realm of myth. No one had more strongly underlined the supremacy of emotion – and, more generally, effective expression – in defining either oratory or painting". See further A. GRAFTON, "Historia and Istoria: Alberti's Terminology in Context", *I Tatti Studies*, 8, 1999, p. 37-68; and C. DEMPSEY, "Response: Historia and Anachronism in Renaissance Art", *The Art Bulletin*, 87, 2005, p. 416-421, who notes Alberti's debt to Byzantine rhetoric for his usage of the term *historia*.
21. G. BOCCACCIO, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*, V. ROMANO (ed.), Bari, 1951, vol. 2, p. 699. Translation by C. OSGOOD, *Boccaccio on Poetry: Being the Preface and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books of Boccaccio's "Genealogia deorum gentilium"*, Indianapolis / New York, 1956, p. 39.
22. C. L. BASKINS, *Cassone Painting...*, *op. cit.*, p. 63, demonstrates that "the patrician women recipients of historiated *cassoni* were, in fact, likely to be literate and conversant with the classics, even if they read them in vernacular versions rather than Latin texts or heard about them in domestic readings and conversations".
23. On the political situation in northern Italy in this period, see M. MALLETT, "The Northern Italian States", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, C. ALLMAND (ed.), Cambridge, 2005, vol. 7, p. 547-570; and for the Venetian-Ferrarese war, see C. ROSENBERG, *The Este Monuments and Urban Development in Renaissance Ferrara*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 123-128; and M. MALLETT, "Venice and the War of Ferrara, 1482-1484", in D. S. CHAMBERS (et alii) (ed.), *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice: Essays in Honor of John Hale*, London, 1993, p. 56-72.
24. OVID, *Heroides*, G. SHOWERMAN (trans.), G. GOOLD (rev. by), Cambridge, 1977, I, 12: "res est solliciti plena timoris amor".
25. The relevant excerpt from the commentaries is cited in P. WHITE, *Renaissance Postscripts: Responding to Ovid's Heroides in Sixteenth-Century France*, Columbus, 2009, p. 71. On Penelope's letter in the *Heroides*, see D. F. KENNEDY, "The epistolary mode and the first of Ovid's *Heroides*", *Classical Quarterly*, 34, 1984, p. 413-422.
26. See P. WHITE, *Renaissance Postscripts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
27. The relevant poems are briefly discussed by P. PHILLIPPY, "'Altera Dido': the model of Ovid's *Heroides* in the poems of Gaspara Stampa and Veronica Franco", *Italica*, 69, 1992, p. 1-18.

28. N. DA CORREGGIO, *Opere*, A. TISSONI BENVENUTI (ed.), Bari, 1969, p. 308-310. Niccolò fought in the battle of Ferrara and was imprisoned at Argenta in November 1482. He composed a series of poems in which he expresses nostalgia for sweeter, gentler times.
29. S. PASQUAZI (ed.), *Poeti estensi del Rinascimento*, Florence, 1966, p. 42-45.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 44, lines 25-28: Dat calamum tibi doctus Amor, tibi verba ministrant, / Scribentemque regit sedulous ille manum. / Talia Penelope si scripta dedisset Ulixi, / Liquisset celery Dorica castra fuga.
31. K. MCKINLEY, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine: Metamorphoses Commentaries 1100-1618*, Leiden, 2001, p. 64, argues that, with regard to the reception of the *Heroides* in the Renaissance, "rhetoric offered a means to project an alternative view of the feminine: one linking feminine speech with acts of deliberation, judgment, and fine discrimination".
32. On the humanist promotion of female oratory in the context of art and politics, see V. COX, "Gender and Eloquence in Ercole de' Roberti's *Portia and Brutus*", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 62 (2009), p. 61-101.
33. Pietro Bembo congratulates Penelope in his *Rime* for her *pudicizia* (chasteness) while criticizing Ulysses for wandering from woman to woman during his voyage home; see stanzas XXXVII and XXXVIII in *Prose e Rime di Pietro Bembo*, C. DIONISOTTI (ed.), Turin, 1966.
34. See R. COLIE, *The Resources of Kind. Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, 1973, p. 13, observes that Petrarch, in his letters, was "obsessed with domesticating ancient literature" for educational purposes.
35. G. BOCCACCIO, *L'opera de miser Giovanni Boccaccio de mulieribus claris*, V. BAGLI (trans.), Venice, 1506.
36. G. BOCCACCIO, *Famous Women...*, *op. cit.*, p. 160-161.
37. J. MCINTOSH SNYDER, "The Web of Song: Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets", *The Classical Journal*, 76, 1981, p. 193-196.
38. ERASMUS, *Adages*, M. MANN PHILLIPS (trans.), in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Toronto, 1982, vol. 31, p. 352-353 (I, iv, 42).
39. For example, in his discussion of *voluptas*, Equicola argues that numerous writers on the subject mistakenly pull words and ideas out of context from ancient authorities. In order to find the proper definition of *voluptas*, Equicola alerts his readers that he will unravel and reweave his argument in the manner of Penelope: "se retexerò la tela ià facta come fece Penelope". In this way, he can fabricate a new definition of *voluptas* – a new web of discourse that he claims will rival the fabrications of Arachne or Minerva; M. EQUICOLA, *La redazione manoscritta del "Libro de natura de amore" di Mario Equicola*, L. RICCI (ed.), Rome, 1999, p. 511. And see P. BEMBO, *Gli Asolani*, G. DILEMMI (ed.), Florence, 1991, p. 138.
40. N. EDWARDS, entry in *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, A. BAYER (ed.), New York, 2008, p. 311-312. See also, P. DUBUS, *Domenico Beccafumi*, Paris, 1999, p. 30-32.
41. On the decoration as a whole, see P. JACKSON, entry in *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City*, London, 2007, p. 270-274; and V. TÁTRAJ, "Gli affreschi del Palazzo Petrucci a Siena. Una precisazione iconografica e un'ipotesi sul programma", *Acta historiae atrium*, 24, 1978, p. 177-183.
42. OVID, *Heroides*, *op. cit.*, I, 97: Tres sumus inbelles numero, sine viribus uxor.
43. The bird perched on the loom may represent Athena in her transformed state, keeping a watchful eye on Penelope, according to the *Odyssey* (XXIII, 239-240). This is suggested by P. ROVIK, "The Odyssey Fresco by Pinturicchio", *Australian Art Journal*, 7, (1988), p. 68.
44. The bow is an important motif in the decoration. Luca Signorelli's companion fresco, *The Triumph of Chastity; Love Disarmed and Bound*, depicts an episode from Petrarch's *Trionfi* and shows Penelope and Lucretia breaking Cupid's bow and pulling out his wings. See P. JACKSON, *Renaissance Siena...*, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
45. The similarities between Circe and Penelope in the *Odyssey* have been acknowledged since antiquity, as testified by Horace (*Odes*, I, xvii, 17-20).
46. J. MCINTOSH SNYDER, "The Web of Song...", *op. cit.* Furthermore, Boccaccio observes the etymological link between *textile* and *text*; see G. BOCCACCIO, *Genealogie...*, *op. cit.*, p. 699. R. A. SCORZA, "A 'modello'...", *op. cit.*

p. 434, notes that the Sala dei Mesi in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara (painted c. 1470) shows male poets and female weavers on either side of Minerva's ceremonial float in the March fresco.

47. PHILOSTRATUS THE ELDER, *Imagines*, A. FAIRBANKS (trans.), Cambridge, 1931, II, 28.

48. In 1507, the artist sought exemptions from paying taxes in Siena, claiming that the Romans believed painting to be "similar to the liberal arts, and concurrent with poetry"; cited in F. AMES-LEWIS, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, New Haven / London, 2000, p. 166.

49. Ph. FORD, "Classical myth and its interpretation in Sixteenth-Century France", in *The Classical Heritage in France*, Leiden, 2002, p. 338-339: "ego vero ab etymologia nominis coniecturam faciens, viatoris nomen esse philosophi censeo, de salute sua bene in via sociorumque merentis". See further, Ph. FORD, "Homer...", *op. cit.*, p. 8-13; and the chapter "How Guillaume Budé Read His Homer" in A. GRAFTON, *Commerce...*, *op. cit.*, p. 135-183.

50. Ph. FORD, "Classical Myth...", *op. cit.*, p. 337-347; *id.*, "Homer...", *op. cit.*, p. 14-18; and *id.*, "Jean Dorat and the Reception of Homer in Renaissance France", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 2 (1995), p. 265-274.

51. Ph. FORD, "Classical Myth...", *op. cit.*, p. 338; and *id.*, "Homer...", *op. cit.*, p. 17.

52. D. FRAME, *The Myth of return in early Greek epic*, New Haven / London, 1978, p. IX-XII; p. 73-80.

53. See G. FIORENZA, "Penelope's Web: Francesco Primaticcio's Epic Revision at Fontainebleau", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59, 2006, p. 795-827; and D. CORDELLIER, entry in *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau*, Paris, 2004, p. 336-337, which reviews the major assessments of the work. For a recent analysis of Penelope at Fontainebleau, see L. CAPODIECI, "Circé, Calypso, et Pénélope. Allégorèse homérique et parabole platonicienne dans la galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau", in *Le noyau et l'écorce. Les arts de l'allégorie XV^e-XVII^e siècles*, C. NATIVEL (ed.), Rome / Paris, 2009, p. 209-231.

54. On the Galerie d'Ulysse, see L. DIMIER, *Le Primatice, peintre, sculpteur et architecte des rois de France*, Paris, 1900, p. 91-108; p. 289-300;

S. BÉGUIN, J. GUILLAUME, A. ROY, *La Galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau*, Paris, 1985; C. MIGNOT, "Fontainebleau revisité: la galerie d'Ulysse", *Revue de l'art*, 82, 1988, p. 9-18; H. ZERNER, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism*, D. DUSINBERRE, S. WILSON, and H. ZERNER (trans.), Paris, 2003, p. 112-114; and D. CORDELLIER, *Primatice...*, *op. cit.*, p. 292-357. The decoration of the vaults and lateral walls of the gallery date roughly from 1541 to 1560 (with later modifications), and came primarily under the patronage of King Francis I († 1547) and his successor Henri II († 1559). Tragically, the entire gallery was demolished in 1739 after years of neglect and decay.

55. G. FIORENZA, "Penelope's Web...", *op. cit.*; and ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*, I. BYWATER (trans.), New York, 1954, 1450a. See further, T. CAVE, *Recognitions. A Study in Poetics*, Oxford, 1988; and N. RICHARDSON, "Recognition Scenes in the Odyssey and Ancient Literary Criticism", *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*, 4, 1983, p. 219-235.

56. On the gesture, see L. STEINBERG, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, Chicago / London, 1996, p. 3-11; p. 110-118. The gesture also calls to mind the first book of Homer's *Iliad*, when Thetis visits Zeus and cups his chin "in supplication" before she makes her appeal on behalf of Achilles. See Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Jupiter and Thetis* of 1811, now in the Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

57. Recognition comes not through external or physical signs, such as the various episodes involving Ulysses's scar or the hero's description of his marital bed, but through memory. For Aristotle, recognition by memory in the Homeric epic is especially dramatic because the "great surprise" often produces a more intense emotional impact: pity, fear, wonder. See ARISTOTLE, *Poetics...*, *op. cit.*, 1455a; N. RICHARDSON, "Recognition Scenes...", *op. cit.*, p. 223. For an outline of Aristotle's taxonomy of recognitions, see T. CAVE, *Recognitions...*, *op. cit.*, p. 37-40.

58. J. DU BELLAY, *Œuvres complètes*, F. GOYET, O. MILLET (ed.), Paris, 2003, p. 56-59; *Poetry & Language in Sixteenth-Century France: Du Bellay, Ronsard, Scévole, L. WILLETT* (trans.), Toronto, 2003, vol. 1, p. 72-74. For Du Bellay's

project in relation to the development of the epic genre in France, see further, J. BRAYBROOK, "The Epic in Sixteenth-Century France", in *The Classical Heritage...*, *op. cit.*, p. 351-391; and D. MASKELL, *The Historical Epic in France 1500-1700*, London, 1973.

59. G. B. GIRALDI CINZIO, *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*, in *Scritti Critici*, C. GUERRIERI CROCETTI (ed.), Milan, 1973, p. 68-69. On the critical reception of the romance as a genre in the 16th century, see D. JAVITCH, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of "Orlando Furioso"*, Princeton, 1991; and M. BOUCHARD, "Utilité et diversité du 'romanzo': Giralaldi Cinzio et le context français", *Renaissance and Reformation*, 27, 2003, p. 65-75. See further, B. WEINBERG, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vol., Chicago, 1963.

60. G. B. GIRALDI CINZIO, *Discorso...*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

61. P. WHITE, *Renaissance Postscripts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 144-186. Octavien de Saint-Gelais translated the whole of the *Heroides*, which enjoyed at least nineteen editions published

between 1500 and 1550; Charles Fontaine retranslated the first ten epistles in 1551; and Joachim du Bellay published a version of Dido's letter to Aeneas (*Heroides*, VII) in 1552.

62. For Du Bellay's allegory of a French homecoming, see G. DEMERSON, *La mythologie classique dans l'œuvre lyrique de la "Pléiade"*, Geneva, 1972, p. 155-156.

63. N. RICHARDSON, "Recognition Scenes...", *op. cit.*, p. 225.

64. Plutarch went so far as to align Penelope metaphorically with Lady Philosophy. Following the allegorical reading of the *Odyssey* by Bion, Plutarch argues that the suitors, unable to win the hand of Penelope, represent stand-ins for students unsuccessful in their study and pursuit of philosophy; see W. E. HELLEMAN, "Penelope as Lady Philosophy", *Phoenix* 49 (1995), p. 283-302.

65. S. BÉGUIN (et alii), *La Galerie...*, *op. cit.*, p. 114: "Qu'il y a plaisir à s'entretenir de la tempeste quand on se void dans le calme".

66. See L. CAPODIECI, "Circé, Calypso, et Pénélope...", *op. cit.*, p. 222-227.