

Giambattista Marino



The Plagiarism of Giambattista Marino

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(Abstract)

François Rabelais



The discovery of the literary plagiarism committed by the Marino against Rabelais

TWO BOOKS - TWO AUTHORS

1) L'Isle sonante (The sounding isle).

François Rabelais (1494-1553) is considered an original and innovative writer (complicated syntax structures, new words invention, archaisms use).

He wrote under the pseudonym/anagram of **Alcofribas Nasier**, **Les Horribles et espoventables facts et prouesses du très renommé Pantagruel, roi des Dipsodes, fils du grant géant Gargantua** (The horrible and dreadful facts and feats of well-known Pantagruel, king of the Dipsodi, son of great giant Gargantua) published in 1532.

In 1534 this work was followed by the **Vie très horrible du grand Gargantua** (The terrible life of the big Gargantua), in 1546 **Le tiers livre des faicts et dits héroïques de Pantagruel** (The third book of the facts and heroic sayings of Pantagruel) and 1548-52 the **Quart livre de Pantagruel** (The fourth book of Pantagruel).

In 1562-64 l'isle sonante (the sounding isle) was published posthumous and is considered the fifth book of the Pantagruel story. the sounding isle The attribution of Isle Sonante to Rabelais is not completely certain. The manuscript of Rabelais might have been completely revised and extended by another unknown writer. As we pointed out in **The double chess plagiarism** volume, the supposed author copied badly and largely the **Hypnerotomachia Poliphili** (1) and other books.

2) The **Adonis** is the most important and famous work of the neapolitan poet Giambattista Marino (1569-1625).

It was completed and printed in Paris in 1623 (Marino had been invited at the court of France by Maria de' Medici, widow of Enrico IV), with a sumptuous dedication to Luigi XIII.

The poem is composed by twenty cantos, in octaves and tells about a mythology episode: Venus falls in love with Adonis exciting Mars' anger and revenge.

THE CHESS GAMES OF THE TWO BOOKS

In the XXIV and XXV chapters of the **Isle Sonante**, three chess games are described with living pieces.

In the Adonis the canto XV describes Venus and Mercury starting a chess game and Adonis going on with it. (2)

Giambattista Marino is known to have written "The Adonis drawing inspiration from Ovid and Apuleius writings." However he borrowed and worked out just a few starting-points with delicate fancy, extraordinary creativity, plenty of images that do not change the overall view concerning his poetry.

But analyzing the **chess side** in the Adonis and comparing to a very well-known French writer's work, we can enlighten (clarify) the opinions of experts and literary critics again.

The chronology of the events, the situations, the images and the moods (described in narrative style by Rabelais and in poetic style by Marino) are practically the same in the two works above mentioned. And if we consider how often they are recurrent, we can really doubt about the original creativity of Marino and talk about plagiarism.

(MEMO):

We will abbreviate the title of the works in the following way: **IS** for the Isle Sonante and **AD** for the Adonis.

This is the pieces formation (array) on the field:

The IS on the left and the AD on the right.

For further clearness in the light of the translation, we thought we would better use the modern chess terminology, even though the beautiful prose of Rabelais and the brilliant similes of Marino could be altered.

Where we think it necessary we will insert some square brackets with a comment or an explanation.

The guardian of the Castle of the Hyp and the Elephant of the Ad (Marino describes it as loaded of a rock or rook) are the Tower. The archer or the Sagittarius becomes the Bishop, the Knight term remains unchanged; the nymphs are the Pawns.

Even the pieces colour have been adapted. The White takes the place of the golden one, the silver is replaced by the Black. Marino associates the black to the dark term, sometimes he uses "nigro".

In the Marino's poem Venus moves the White pieces. Mercury firstly moves the Black pieces and secondly he gave them to the shepherd Adonis.

Purposely we are going to leave out the first analogies (1) which can be considered marginal coincidences.

In fact our study is meant to analyze the chronology of the themes that are in both works.

We will realize that the similarities are so much amazing and impressive that any accidental coincidence is excluded.

We start making out the perfect chronological concordance of the themes (in narrative style in the IS and in poetic style in the AD).

Particularly the similarities are the following:

1) THE BLACK KING CASTLING

The White has just captured the first opposing pawn. At a certain (given) moment of the game the Black king castles because he isn't made safe.

The castling is a particular move that allows the King to move from the first position (from the centre of his formation (array)) and to go to right (or to left) beside a strong piece (the Tower) that protects him.

It has been pointed out that both two authors adopted the castling with the King placed in the square h1: a very typical move in 1600 (see **Chess history of the Sicily 1500/1600** by C.Coco).

IS

Then the Black King changed the position ... and took the place of the right Tower that he considered well-fortified and defended post.

AD

141

... the Black King goes from the centre to the end of the chessboard and changes the place/there his pieces protect and defend him inside an impregnable fortress. [the castling].

2) THE SILVER KNIGHT INCURSION [Black Knight]

2a) The two Knights either the White or the Black placed on the left of their formations (squares b1/b8), have gone out.

Naturally we are not surprised to read the description of the pieces movement in literary works drawing inspiration from chess starting-points. But here and afterwards what we consider as remarkable fact is the same chronology and the same description of the events.

IS

the two Knights, both the White and black on the left move forward.

AD
141

The two Knights positioned at the left end/ move to the attack simultaneously and fast eliminating the opponents on the chessboard.

2b) Pawns eliminated (or pawns massacre made) by the White Knight:

IS

... the White Knight accurately captures the pawns.

Ad
142

While Venus [who moves the White pieces] is busy attacking and capturing the pawns,

2c) The different strategy of the combative Knight who throws the pawns away in order to reach the highest objective and to menace the enemy King. While the White Knight wastes his time with sterile attacks, the Black Knight is free and aims against the opponent King. Such a similar themes are recurrent in these two works.

IS

But the Black Knight looks for the most important target: he disguises his real plan, in fact every time he could capture a silver nymph, he used to leave her and go past, by doing likewise he could introduce himself into the enemy field where there was the King.

Ad
142

.... Mercury [he moves the Black pieces at the beginning of the game] is involved in more and more difficult challenges/laying furtive and insidious traps./he moves his Knight among the pawns./.../ he gets out of the attack with subtle deceit/trying to damage the enemy King stealthily.

2d) The Black Knight's menace to King:

IS

the Black Knight made so many attempts that he could steal into the enemy place where King resided.

Ad
143

the Black Knight comes by the short castling of the white, there he menaces both /the King massacre and the Tower.

2e) The White King draws in one side:

IS

so the White King retired to the left;

Ad
143

Venus is grieved and weeps/as she doesn't know where to intervene;/ she can't save this piece or the other one at the same time/ she puts her King's life before everything/ she draws her King aside and she leaves him undefended.

2f) The sacrifice of the Tower: the withdrawal of the King is not painless, a price must be paid and a piece must be given. Then the Tower sacrifices himself;

IS

they lost...their right Tower [h1] irreparably ... and the Black Knight captured the White Tower ...

Ad
144

... the Tower is captured.

2g) Now the Black Knight is striving hard to retire: the Knight war strategy hasn't been carried out completely, a piece has been gained, that's true but now he must retire. But he is surrounded by the enemy pieces that prevent him from running away.

IS

... the White pieces decide to revenge themselves and the Black Knight is surrounded by them in each side so he cannot escape and save himself from the capture; he strives hard to escape; his mates resort to several stratagems in order to save him,

**Ad
144**

... but the Knight who has captured the Tower, doesn't go unpunished. He attempts an escape but he is stopped by the pawns surrounding him.

2h) The Black Knight is captured by the White Queen:

IS

... but at last the White Queen captures him.

**Ad
144**

... the Knight is captured by the White Queen.

3) THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO QUEENS.

3a) The climax of the game is the struggle between the two Queens:

IS

the White Queen ... performs great exploits: she captures the Bishop with an advance and captures the Black Tower with an outflanking.

**Ad
158**

... the White Queen takes part to the struggle and during her incursions she captures a Bishop and a Tower.

3b) The opponent Queen answers back with her counteroffensive:

IS

after watching the opponent's exploits, the Black King moves forward and struggles with the same courage: and captures the last White Tower and some pawn too.

**Ad
160**

by emulating his antagonist the Black pieces player moves his Queen/... captures Tower and Knight, pawns and Bishops.

3c) Inevitably there is the struggle between the two Queens:

IS

the two Queens have been fighting for a long time, they try to catch each other....

**Ad
141**

the two Queens face each other with the same strength and arms.

3d) One of the two Queen must be inevitably defeated. But they both die.

IS

... the White Queen captured the Black one but immediately afterwards she was hit by the Black Bishop.

Ad

161

... the White Queen shoots her arrow/ and hit the opponent Queen from the rear. But as the Black Queen dies, suddenly the opponent is hit by the Bishop's arrow.

4) THE FORCES COUNT ON THE FIELD

After the two Queens' death it is necessary to count how many forces are left on the field. After so many moves and captures, is it possible to expect a difference between the two formations on the field ? And in fact ...

IS

the White King has only three pawns, a Bishop and a Tower left; the Black King has only three pawns and his Knight;

Ad

162

... Venus is with three pawns, a Bishop and a Tower; Adonis has the same pieces [in the meanwhile Mercury, the Black pieces player has been replaced by him] but the Tower/ that previously/ was captured by a Bishop.

5) THE WIDOWED KINGS

After the struggle and the two Queens' death, the Kings become widower and grieve. This theme is as unusual and original in the IS as in the AD and grows stronger our hypothesis about the plagiarism.

IS

The two Kings looked sad to have lost their beloved Queens;

**Ad
164**

... the Kings stay alone and without Queens by/wrapped in mourning dress./ But even by bad fortune they are painful and weary;

6) THE NEW NUPTIALS OF THE TWO KINGS

6a) The forces on the field aren't enough to win the battle. Then every King thinks to get marriage. In the Chess game each pawns, even though is initially the weakest of the formation, can aspire to the majesty. In fact if he reaches the eighth rank, he can be transformed into Queen.

IS

... and the Kings really meant to elect their future Queens, ...from the group of their nymphs [pawns], and to promote them to the majesty and the marriage [to promote them as Queens].

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