



## **A Model of Creation? Scott, Sidney and Du Bartas**

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## A Model of Creation? Scott, Sidney and Du Bartas

Philip Sidney began translating Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas' poetry towards the end of his life, probably after writing *The Defence of Poesy* (c. 1580, printed 1595).<sup>1</sup> The Stationers' Register entry for his 'translation of Salust de Bartas', entered to William Ponsonby on 23 August 1588, is usually taken to refer to a project that Sidney was working on at a similar time to his translation of another French Protestant text, namely Phillip Du Plessis Mornay's *De la verité de la religion chrestienne* (1581).<sup>2</sup> Sidney was among the vanguard of those reading Du Bartas to promote cultural relations between England and Huguenot France in the early 1580s, and may well have met Du Bartas on the continent.<sup>3</sup> The strongest hint that he was acquainted with Du Bartas' verse at this time is his re-use of the image of the world as book from the French poet's first creation epic *La Sepmaine* (1578) in Sonnets 11 and 26 of *Astrophil and Stella* and in 'The Shepherd's Tale'.<sup>4</sup> Several contemporary references (including by Thomas Moffet, Fulke Greville and John Florio) indicate that it was probably *La Sepmaine*, Du Bartas' most celebrated work, that Sidney translated, rather than the first two Days of its sequel, *La Seconde Semaine* (1584), or the earlier poems collected in *La Muse Chrestienne* (1574).<sup>5</sup>

Translating *La Sepmaine* into English would have been a suitably large and prestigious task for Sidney to undertake: Du Bartas and Sidney were of comparable standing as their nation's leading courtier-poet, and a translation would have reciprocated Du Bartas' interest in the *Arcadia* (he is said to have learnt English in order to read it).<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Sidney knew of James VI's emerging friendship with Du Bartas and had read the Scottish King's translation of *L'Uranie* (printed in 1584).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, James may have encouraged Sidney's project, which would explain why no poet at the Scottish court produced a vernacular translation of the poem. Sidney's translation probably also put off other English translators and printers from publishing versions:

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A conversation with Gavin Alexander inspired this essay, and Michael Hetherington provided essential feedback on an earlier draft. Many thanks to both.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Poems of Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 339. Quotations from Sidney's poetry are from this edition, and line references are given in the body text.

<sup>2</sup> *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D.*, ed. E. Arber, 5 vols (London, 1875-94), II, 496. David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, revised edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 96. See also Anne Lake Prescott, *French Poets and the English Renaissance: Studies in Fame and Transformation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 178.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Sinfield, 'Sidney and Du Bartas', *Comparative Literature* 27 (1975): 8-20 (16-17); Albert W. Osborn, *Sir Philip Sidney en France* (Paris, 1932), 35-6.

<sup>4</sup> Ringler (ed.), *Poems*, 170 and 464, 177-8 and 469-70, and 246 and 495; Sinfield, 'Sidney and Du Bartas', 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> *Sidney: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Martin Garrett (London: Routledge, 1996), 104-5, 137 and 168.

<sup>6</sup> Warren Boutcher, "'A French Dexteritie, & An Italian Confidence': New Documents on John Florio, Learned Strangers and Protestant Humanist Study of Modern Languages in Renaissance England from c.1547 to c.1625", *Reformation* 2 (1997): 39-109 (96).

<sup>7</sup> James VI, *Essayes of a Prentise* (Edinburgh, 1584); H. R. Woudhuysen, 'Sidney, Sir Philip (1554-1586)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25522>, accessed Dec 2014].

no other complete vernacular translation in English or Scots is known to have been printed until 1605. When Josuah Sylvester's *Devine Weekes* did appear, the translator offered a full-page tribute to Sidney that stressed that he had 'muddled' through without daring to 'meddle' with his illustrious precursor.<sup>8</sup> Fulke Greville advocated printing the Du Bartas along with Sidney's other translations so that Sidney 'might have all those religious honors which ar wortheli dew to his life and death', but this never happened.<sup>9</sup>

Dating Sidney's translation to the 1580s, perhaps as late as 1585, provides our best hypothesis for why the *Defence* makes no mention of Du Bartas even though *La Sepmaine* was so relevant to the treatise's discussion of divine poetry. *La Sepmaine*, which expands upon the account of creation in Genesis 1:1-8 using classical and contemporary natural philosophy, merged the two highest forms of poetry as Sidney defined them, divine poems that 'imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God' (10), and philosophical verse concerning moral, natural or astronomical science (10-11).<sup>10</sup> S. K. Heninger Jr. finds that Du Bartas 'syncretizes in a typically Renaissance fashion. He uses poetry to conflate and equivocate in a way that must have won Sidney's whole-hearted approval'.<sup>11</sup> The key difference between their visions of what divine poetry can achieve is that Du Bartas' passion for biblical truth causes him to reject many more kinds of poetry than Sidney does. Whereas the *Defence* upholds the moral basis of fiction-making in principle to encourage piety and resist tyranny, the eponymous Christian muse in *L'Uranie* urges poets to write exclusively about biblical matters (here quoted in James VI's translation): 'Then consecrat that eloquence most rair, | To sing the lofty miracles and fair | Of holy Scripture'.<sup>12</sup> So direct is the challenge that Du Bartas' stance seems to represent to Sidney's much more inclusive view that Alan Sinfield concludes that Sidney must have been unaware of Du Bartas' views when writing the *Defence* because he surely would have engaged with them if he had.<sup>13</sup> Robert Stillman, on the other hand, stresses that Sidney's defence, strongly inflected by ideas derived from Phillip Melanchthon, is 'different in kind' from Du Bartas' because it examines poetry's impact in schoolrooms, universities, courts and societies at large.<sup>14</sup> Du Bartas (particularly in 'Le Premier Jour' of *La Sepmaine*, as quotations throughout this essay will show) suggests that human creativity can only prepare our minds to receive and fashion any inspiration

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<sup>8</sup> *Devine Weekes and Workes*, trans. by Josuah Sylvester (London, 1605), B2r.

<sup>9</sup> Garrett (ed.), 105. Woudhuysen, 'Sidney, Sir Philip (1554–1586)'.

<sup>10</sup> Quotations from Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* are taken from *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Gavin Alexander (London: Penguin, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> S. K. Heninger Jr., 'Sidney and Milton: The Poet as Maker', in *Milton and the Line of Vision*, ed. Joseph Wittreich (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 57-95 (60).

<sup>12</sup> James VI, *Essayes*, F1r.

<sup>13</sup> Sinfield, 'Sidney and Du Bartas', 10-12 (12)

<sup>14</sup> Robert E. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 166.

that might come, but for Sidney poets need only look inside themselves to find sparks of divine insight: ‘Sidney conceives of the Idea as innate to that same erected wit as an impression remaining from his Maker inscribed within (hence, innate to) what the *Defence* calls (in good Philippist fashion) the mind’s own divine essence.’<sup>15</sup> Reading Du Bartas reminds us how bold Sidney’s *Defence* is as ‘the first early modern work to argue for the preeminence of fiction-making as an autonomous form of knowledge—a form of knowledge indispensable to the well-being of the public domain’.<sup>16</sup>

William Scott almost certainly had no more idea than we do today how Sidney’s translation might have married an optimistic view of the nature and limitations of divine poetry with Du Bartas’ more restricted sense of human creative powers, and *The Model of Poesy* does not necessarily provide an answer to the problem. Yet Scott *is* conscious that Sidney and Du Bartas seem to speak to each other about the purpose of Christian poetry. At one point in the *Model*, for example, Scott joins voice with Du Bartas to endorse Sidney’s argument that Christianity purifies poetry of its harmful elements:

But Christianity (saith that worthy knight [Sidney]) hath taken away all the hurtful belief and wrong opinion of the Deity among us, and why it should not in like sort take away all the wrong and harmful confession of the mouth (which confession is the unseparable companion of our belief) I (with divine Bartas) profess I see no reason. (42.17-22)<sup>17</sup>

Scott, Sidney and Du Bartas agree that Christianity cleanses the poet’s mind of the ‘superstitious conceits’ that led Plato to banish poets from his republic (42.15-17). Even though Du Bartas and Sidney were contemporaries (Du Bartas was Sidney’s senior by ten years, but lived four more years than Sidney did) and both were deceased when Scott was writing, the *Model* here, as arguably throughout, positions Sidney as a revered past model, and Du Bartas as a current poet with whom Scott is still speaking. Certainly the dozen direct references to Du Bartas and his translator Sylvester in the *Model* instate Du Bartas as a paragon of contemporary poetry. Scott celebrates *La Sepmaine*’s combination of divine and natural philosophical subject-matter:

In this kind last in time but first in worthiness is our incomparable Bartas, who hath opened as much natural science in one week, containing the story of the creation, as all the rabble of schoolmen and philosophers have done since Plato and Aristotle. Indeed methinks what [the Italian Protestant theologian] Jerome Zanchius, that sound deep divine

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>17</sup> *The Model of Poesy*, ed. Gavin Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Future page and line references to the *Model* are from this edition and given in the body text, and references to Alexander’s introduction and commentary are indicated by ‘Alexander’.

and refiner of true natural knowledge (drawing all to the touchstone of truth), in his most divinely philosophical writings hath discussed and concluded Bartas hath minced and sugared for the weakest and tenderest stomach, yet throughly to satisfice the strongest judgements. (20.12-21)

The *Model* is followed in MS Add. 81083 by Scott's translation from the first two Days of Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine*, which Scott quotes numerous times in the *Model* to illustrate the virtues of poetry. As a demonstration of poetic sweetness, for example, Scott inserts eight lines from his translation and Du Bartas' French about how the night refreshes the soul, commenting, 'Can anything be more clear, pure, full, fluent, soft, and sweet?' (55.37-6.16, cf. i.504-12).<sup>18</sup> A couplet from the end of the First Day serves as Scott's example of graceful use of caesuras (63.28-9, i.766-7), and so gives readers a criterion by which to judge the efficacy of his translation. Other passages, such as those about the suitability of hexameter for heroic verse (e.g. 75.17-76.2), *energeia* (67.6-11) and invocations (72.34-73.8), prime us to read the translation as an experiment in applying Scott's theoretical principles.

In addition to illustrating Scott's ideas, particularly in the latter sections of the *Model* within which examples from the translation are so interwoven, the Du Bartas translation also helps Scott to formulate them.<sup>19</sup> This essay argues that the translation is not just a practical demonstration of the principles described in the *Model* (though it is that), but provides the most immediate and enriching literary context for its arguments about the purpose of poetry. The Huguenot poet's prominence in the manuscript reflects Scott's 'pure kind of protestantism, most evident in his love of Du Bartas' (Alexander, xxix), and an ambition to accommodate him into the *Model's* poetic theory alongside ideas from Sidney and continental theorists. MS Add. 81083 in effect offers two visions of Protestant poetry in dialogue with each other, each of which adds meaning to the other --- nor that this essay seeks to impose one. Instead, the analysis that follows will concentrate on how the common fund of imagery shared by the translation and treatise helps us to read the two texts against each other, and so perceive more clearly what is distinctive about Scott's theoretical claims in the *Model*.

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<sup>18</sup> Quotations from Scott's translation of Du Bartas are taken directly from MS Add. 81083 (with minor editorial amendments); line references use my own numbering. References to *La Sepmaine* take the form (Day.Lines, e.g. 'i.504' is line 504 of the First Day).

<sup>19</sup> Though it appears second in the manuscript, the translation was not necessarily transcribed after the *Model*: the translation is written more carefully to begin with, such as having more small capitals (Alexander, lxxv), and has more spacious lower margins, though the vertical ruling in most of the *Model* ceases towards the end and is not found in the translation (lxxiii).

My argument that the *Model* and the translation are placed together in productive apposition makes no claims about Scott's methods of composition or his intended interpretation, but it does assume that Scott meant the two texts to be paired with each other. Scott tells George Wyatt in the prefatory letter before the translation that he was working on both treatise and translation in the same summer, and the numerous quotations from the translation in the treatise are proof that he had been translating Du Bartas before or while writing the *Model* (Alexander, xxxvii and 248). Including both texts together in a manuscript given to Henry Lee strongly hints that Scott meant them to be read together, no doubt to advertise his intellectual and linguistic capacities to his dedicatee (see Alexander, xxi). More evidence that Lee and Wyatt were evidently (or potentially) keen readers of the *Semaines* are the references to both that Josuah Sylvester, who was also from Kent, inserts in his translation of *La Sepmaine* (1605).<sup>20</sup> It is very likely, I suggest, that Scott and Lee (and Wyatt) could have identified meaningful overlap and conflict in the treatise and translation's positions on the spiritual value of poetry and poetry-making. A wider readership than the manuscript possibly ever had could also have appreciated the theoretical significance of placing the two texts in dialogue because Du Bartas' *Semaines* were already known around the universities and Inns of Court in the 1590s, and Scott's numerous remarks on Du Bartas in the *Model* are broadly consistent with claims made in Simon Goulart's commentaries on the poems, which Scott had read.<sup>21</sup>

Though the discussion of poetic creation at the treatise's start does not make direct reference to Du Bartas (who is first mentioned on folio 19, over a third of the way into the treatise), Scott's imagery and language in this section have significant points of contact with the description of the world's creation in the First Day of the translation. In particular Scott uses imagery of making that is also found in Du Bartas: images of architecture, agriculture, gestation, web-spinning and other kinds of production are used to describe the creation of the world in *La Sepmaine*, and the creation of a poem in the *Model*. Alexander draws attention to these similarities: 'As a poem about making, *La sepmaine*'s first two days must consider the relations between form and matter. Those relations are also a theme of Scott's treatise [...] The second day of *La sepmaine* includes an extended set of variations on the theme of form and matter with, again, many points of verbal and imaginative contact with Scott's treatise' (lviii). As this statement implies, Scott may well have chosen to start his translation at the beginning of *La Sepmaine*

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<sup>20</sup> *The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Saluste, Sieur du Bartas*, trans. by Josuah Sylvester, ed. Susan Snyder, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), I.iii.649-50 and I.iv.599-600 (see notes on pp. 783 and 790).

<sup>21</sup> Peter Auger, 'The *Semaines*' Dissemination in England and Scotland until 1641', *Renaissance Studies* 26 (2012): 625-40 (e.g. 630). Goulart's effect on Scott is apparent from the translation's vocabulary and marginal notes.

because it resonates so loudly with the treatise. There is no pre-determined relationship, though, between these two texts that echo each other in shifting and surprising ways.

The commonplace imagery that Scott uses can reliably be found in Du Bartas: indeed, when Scott encourages poets to ‘take received stories or traditions for the ground of your simile, as that of the phoenix her contempt of the world, and the swan’s sweetly joyous embracing her death’ (41.12-13), Scott could have located references to both the phoenix and swan in Du Bartas’ Fifth Day (v.551 and 718).<sup>22</sup> Du Bartas is not necessarily the single source for many of the images common to Scott’s treatise and translation, which usually belong to a common pool of ideas also found in classical authors Scott is reading such as Aristotle, Ovid and Quintilian. Perhaps Scott knew that particular lines could be read against each other; perhaps he borrowed ideas from one work for the other; perhaps not. The two halves of the manuscript nonetheless place different emphases on these images in ways that are consistent with the view of divine poetry that each text promotes. The imagery and ideas used to convey *La Sepmaine*’s insistence on the divine poet’s fundamental inability to mimic divine creativity are in dynamic interplay with the more positive humanism of the *Model* that invites greater trust in logic and reason.

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Juxtaposing the Du Bartas translation with the treatise promotes an analogy between human and divine creation. In the *Model* Scott is drawn to the aspiration that poets can serve as accessories to God fulfilling a divine purpose: ‘I would to God this might be the scope and end of the ends of all both poetry and other faculties, to make men in love with, and so possessed of, piety and virtue. Then might our art justly be called a divine instrument’ (16.14-17). One way to assess how poets might be ‘agents and sons of God’ (16.19) is whether images used to describe the heavenly Maker creating the universe (as found in *La Sepmaine*) can also be used to describe a poet creating a poem (as they are in the *Model*). Are the elements of the analogy between human and divine making transferable? Can the Lord be said to have created the first poem, and poets said to be creating new natural worlds? How far is a Model of Poesy also a Model of Creation?

Sidney’s *Defence* had already addressed these cosmological and theological issues in his description of the poet as maker:

Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man’s wit with the efficacy of nature, but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who, having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works

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<sup>22</sup> All quotations and references from Du Bartas’ poetry in French are from *The Works of Guillaume de Salluste, Sieur Du Bartas*, ed. Urban Tigner Holmes *et al*, vol. 2 (Chapel Hill, 1938).

of that second nature [i.e. an image of nature]; which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry, when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings --- with no small arguments to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it. (*Defence*, 9-10)

As Heninger Jr. puts it, the metaphor sets a standard for the aspiring divine poet to use ‘the nonmaterial medium of words’ such that he or she ‘avoids the flaws of the physical creation and approximates the perfection of God’s poem’.<sup>23</sup> Stillman draws attention to the analogue between Sidney’s maker and the divine Maker too, and highlights Melanchthon’s inspiring presence ‘as it came to Sidney because of its carefully delimited optimism about human agency—its assertiveness about the strength of reason and the cooperative power of the will—and, most significantly, because of his celebration of that agency’s scope in securing freedom from the sovereignty of sin’.<sup>24</sup> To achieve this, the poet must have an Idea or fore-conceit that informs the different elements of the poem but also exists in an unchanging realm beyond the individual lives, objects and examples represented in the poem. Sidney contends that a poet with a strong fore-conceit can shape diverse material (or ‘matter’) into poetry: ‘the poet, only, only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter but maketh matter for a conceit’ (30). Michael Mack, in an interpretation that stresses that both Sidney and Du Bartas wrote within a rich tradition of understanding creation as a twofold process in which God created and, separately, fashioned the world, finds Sidney championing how ‘the human “maker” exercises a regenerative creativity that is the image and likeness of divine creativity’.<sup>25</sup> In this reading the poet’s consciousness aspires to mimic both created nature (mere matter) and creating nature, and so harmonize with divine creativity (though Stillman strongly contests the notion that Sidney means to argue that the poet can be a creator of Ideas).

In Scott’s translation too the First Day of Creation is, in a sense, the First Day of Poetry, but mortals do not have access to those first words:

Euen thus the Almightye wyse, before he went about  
To bewtifie this wordle, did from his mouth cast out  
I wote not what sweete worde (i.220-22)

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<sup>23</sup> Heninger Jr, ‘Sidney and Milton’, 65.

<sup>24</sup> Stillman, *Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, xi (see also ix).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Mack, *Sidney’s Poetics: Imitating Creation* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 189.



Poets must rely on God to receive any hints of divine creative power that can beautify their poems. The Bible and the Book of Nature are the only two books worth consulting, and the best poetry is that which copies out text from either book well. From this Bartasian perspective, humans are uncreative and only contribute to fashioning divinely-given seeds of inspiration. The rest of verse composition is vanity. Scott emphasizes Du Bartas' fidelity to natural and biblical truth whilst leaving space to admire the poet's talents: 'Bartas his *Judith* is a worthy pattern of a religiously trained and virtuously living woman' (19.40-1, '*Judith*' is unitalicized in the manuscript so could refer both to the poem and its eponymous heroine), and Du Bartas in *La Sepmaine* 'opened as much natural science in one week' (20.14) as any writer had ever done.

Even poets who only re-write created nature need to employ striking visual imagery in order to imprint their conceits upon the reader's mind. Scott's first citation of Sidney in the *Model* alludes to the familiar claim that 'the poem is a speaking or wordish picture' (6.6), and the treatise is replete with images that convey Scott's ideas about the function of poetry. Scott has a well-articulated sense, sharpened by his reading of the Italian painter and theorist Gian Paolo Lomazzo (see Alexander, 1), of how images populate the viewer's mental landscape and lead him or her towards truth. While the *Defence's* language offers few images of making aside from painting, Scott invites his reader to compare poetry with many other forms of creation, often through momentary comparisons that inform the diction of individual clauses and periods. It is these images used to describe human making that are reliably also found in association with divine making in the Du Bartas translation. For instance, here is Scott elaborating on poetic inspiration in a linked sequence of images of conception, midwifery and tailoring that initially recalls Ovid's *Fasti* (Alexander, 98 and 113) for the 'divine seed' image:

I ask, then, is this instinct, fury, influence, or what else you list to call it, is this, I say, divine seed infused and conceived in the mind of man in despite of nature and reason, as you would say by rape? Surely they will confess no. Is it there shaped and fed without the strength and vigour of our reasonable nature? Nothing less. Is this birth prodigiously born, the limbs and joints set and disposed, without the industrious midwifery of reason? That were reasonless. Lastly, hath this issue his apparel fashioned and fitted by any other measure and rule than which reason and art tells becomes and agrees with his stature and quality? (7.32-41)

Scott begins by acknowledging the range of terms that one might use ('influence, or what else you list to call it'), and then considers different stages in the growth of a child, each of which requires nurturing by nature and reason. The technique lends variety and vividness to his prose:

as Scott applies each of the images of conception, pregnancy, birth and dressing the child, the visual component is infused into his language, e.g.: ‘apparel’ is ‘fashioned’ and ‘fitted’ by a ‘measure and rule’ that matches ‘his stature and quality’. Scott’s prose here and in many other places follows a visual logic that simultaneously makes his argument more lucid, and his diction more concrete. It also encourages Philippist optimism that humans are just as able to use their nature and reason to create good poetry as they are to bring up well-dressed children.

These images broaden the intellectual and imaginative scope of the *Model* further still when compared with similar images at the beginning of *La Sepmaine* that describe the world’s creation, especially those found in the storehouse of metaphors of ‘Le Premier Jour’ that assist poet and reader in seeking (and of course failing) to re-create the mind of the Creator. Towards the beginning of the First Day, Du Bartas compares the world’s creation to the gestation of a foetus:

This was not then the worlde, but that first matter mett,  
 As twer the orchard-nurserye, confus’dly sett  
 With plants of this fayre ALL; an Embrion that should  
 In sixe dayes formed bee, and brought to perfect mould;  
 I saye this sottish lumpe, disordrouslye confus’d,  
 Was like the flesh, within the mothers wombe infus’d  
 All without forme, till in tyme, by degrees it growes  
 Proportioned to fingers, forehead, eyes, mouth, nose,  
 Here waxeth longe, here rounde, and here doth largely spredd;  
 By litle thus and litle man is fashioned (i.264-73)

Du Bartas and Scott both place an emphasis on diffuse matter being given ‘forme’ (the same word is used in the French at i.262 and 267). ‘All’, which Scott places in small capitals (‘Tout’ in the French) and is a key term in Du Bartas’ cosmogony, refers to a universe created from ‘Nothing’ that is a manifestation of the divine *logos*.<sup>26</sup> The translation has parallels with the passage from the *Model* both in how the image is developed as the embryo takes shape, and in the shared words ‘infused’ and ‘fashioned’. Scott has already used similar language to introduce God the Father: ‘from before all tymes, without Mother or seede, | The father of this Whole, he did begett and breede’ the Son (i.72-3).

Since embryos are like both the creation of the world and the creation of a poem, does the translation then justify claiming that the Lord’s and the poet’s acts of making are similar?

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<sup>26</sup> See Heninger Jr, ‘Sidney and Milton’, 61.

Absolutely not. Here as elsewhere *La Sepmaine*'s image makes much weaker claims about the poet's capacities than the *Model* does, which is not surprising given that the treatise blends an inclusive mix of sources including Catholic writers like Scaliger and Lomazzo alongside the Calvinist Du Bartas. In *La Sepmaine*'s reading human nature and reason are needed to cultivate divine seeds of thought, but those seeds are God-given and only need mortal agency to assist in the fashioning. Scott's use of the passive voice reduces human involvement even in that secondary process, e.g.: 'By litle thus and litle man is fashioned' ('Et de soy peu à peu fait naistre un petit monde', i.268). Parallel passages like these raise a set of possible interpretative implications, such as how *La Sepmaine* tempers the strength of the analogy in the *Model*, or, more positively, how the Du Bartas passage can be read as a description of how writing poetry is a gradual process that needs to allow time for each of the components to form. The similarity highlights what is distinct about each text's use of the metaphor.

In the same way, Scott's translation gives a different reading of the architectural image found in the title-word 'Model' and used on several other occasions in the treatise (for the meanings of 'Model' as a plan, small reproduction and exemplary object, see Alexander, 85). Scott activates and extends the similes of poet as architect and poetry as a building the first time he refers to the treatise's title in main text. His *Model* is the blueprint for a poetry-palace:

in our 'Model of Poesy' we must proceed (if we will proceed orderly) first to lay the foundation [... then] show, by division, how all several kinds of poetry as the divers rooms and offices are built thereon [...]; how the particulars are sundered by their special differences and properties, that as walls keep them from confounding one in another; and lastly what dressing and furniture best suits every subdivided part and member (5.23-31)

The same terms are used when Scott makes a transition from discussing kinds of poetry to principles of composition: the author, also using a tree metaphor, announces that he has finished leading the reader 'into all the several rooms of poetry and pointed you to the least twig and scion of this fair plant' (29.31-2). Shortly afterwards, he develops the conceit to make the point that a poet must be guided by a desire to teach, move and delight (30.27-8):

as they that would build an house must first know to what end the house is, namely to keep from cold and storm, so as to this end they must have such stuff as will hold out wind and weather; next, for the apt disposing and stowage of household stuff and such things as are to be kept dry and warm it must be built in such a form as is capable of those implements and necessaries; then it must be distinguished into divers rooms and offices for the better ordering and performing of sundry kinds of businesses; lastly, to the end it

may please the eye as well of the owner as of the guest and passenger, it must be beautiful and uniform (30.15-25)

Scott applies the metaphor three times here: as a house is built to keep out the harsh weather, so the poem must be made of suitably resilient material; as the house must 'be built in such a form' as can store all the owner's goods, so the poem must follow an appropriate scheme; and as the house should be attractive to both its architect and viewer, so the poem must be beautiful and delighting. The passage is an attractive example of Scott's visual logic as well as his systematic method of proceeding through points. By thinking in metaphor, Scott opens up new distinctions, especially through his repeated use of constructions with 'and' ('cold and storm', 'ordering and performing', 'beautiful and uniform'), and does so in a way that helps his speaking pictures imprint themselves on the reader's mind. The passage refreshes the old observation that good poetry is a well-ordered vision that the poet crafts in order to carry out a moral function. Scott takes these lessons to heart in his prose, for the metaphor is itself capacious enough to contain all the points he needs to make, is well-ordered to make the description easy to follow, and is attractive and memorable.

Moreover, the image lights up intertextual relations in Scott's thought. Linking this passage with comparable images in Aristotle (e.g. *Physics* II.iii, and see Alexander 146) thickens the association between literature and logic. Sidney briefly uses the image in the *Defence* too when discussing the power of visualization: 'of a gorgeous palace an architector, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were by rote, all he had heard [...] the same man, as soon as he might see [...] the house well in model, should straightways grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them' (16). Looking across at an equivalent image in Du Bartas that describes God as an architect offers a different view. The following passage, which contains the translation's sole use of the verb 'to modell', argues that God did not create the world using 'some Imaginarye plott of worke forethought' but that poets must rely on earlier designs:

This admirable worke-man did not tye his thought	The wordle made with
To some Imaginarye plott of worke forethought,	out patterne.
Founde out with much a doe, nor farther did he chuse	
Anye more auncient wordle, which he had neede to vse,	
To modell out this one, as does the maister wrighte	
Of some great buildinge, who before his hand be pight	

Vnto his charge, makes choyse of some greate frame and fayre,  
Whose costlye matter, cuninge worke ar equall rare (i.184-92, see also 193-219)

The passage goes on to describe how the master-wright ‘after twentye patterns makes his one buildinge’ (i.197) in order to replicate the created thing. ‘Frame’, ‘pattern’ and ‘matter’ are other terms denoting pseudo-creative activities in this passage that are also used in the *Model*. The translation tells us that mortal poets cannot create all from nothing but must hitch their thoughts to fore-conceits and earlier images; our autonomy is limited to our power to choose which ‘frame’ we follow. Scott’s very reliance on the image places himself and his treatise within an established tradition: his *Model* is a small-scale likeness that follows twenty previous patterns (Aristotle, Scaliger (who writes about following Homer and Virgil’s precedents) and Du Bartas among them) to make one treatise that at best will prove a model that future designers and poets imitate. This image shows the author of the *Model* contemplating a more pessimistic view about our likeness to the Creator and ability to hold a divine essence within us than the treatise raises, and playing down our capacity to fashion the Ideas we receive. In the translation the absolute limitations of Scott’s poetic vision are apparent exactly where that vision is most expansive, most varied and most penetrating. The treatise is just as reliant on imagery, pre-conceived patterns and frames that shape the imagination and guide thought, but the author explores their more positive implications.

A third example: plants, fruits and trees. We have already seen Scott use this topos to describe the unformed world as an ‘orchard-nursery’ (i.265), and his completed intention to lead the reader among the ‘least twig and scion of this fair plant’ (29.32). The same well-worn image is used to describe his treatise in the dedicatory letter to Henry Lee: the *Model* is ‘the first fruits of my study’, which ‘were hastened to ripeness rather by some unseasonable force than of their natural growth’ (3.33, 37-38). Among numerous other allusions in the translation and treatise, the closest correspondence between both is in the descriptions of land cultivation. The treatise examines how the tilling of the poet’s soul is a necessary preparation for creative activity:

there must be an inbred fertileness of the ground before tillage can promise any fruit, and the first is of more simple necessity (saith he [Quintilian]) than the latter, for all the seed and husbandry bestowed on beachy mould is lost, whereas good soil, even unmanured, will bring forth some fruit, wholesome and meetly well relished. (9.11-15)

Scott is following a section in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* closely here (2.19.2-3, quoted by Alexander, 100):

sicut terrae nullam fertilitatem habenti nihil optimus agricola profuerit: e terra uberi utile aliquid etiam nullo colente nascetur: at in solo fecundo plus cultor quam ipsa per se bonitas soli efficiet.

Similarly, an infertile soil will not be improved even by the best farmer, and good land will yield a useful crop even if no one tills it, but on any fertile ground the farmer will do more than the goodness of the soil can do by itself.<sup>27</sup>

Scott supplies the word ‘tillage’ here, as he does in a couplet from Du Bartas that implores God to grant the poet the mental conditions for creating good poetry:

Ridde thou my rugged Lande, with bryars all bedight,  
Shrubbe vp these per'lous balkes, that marre my tillage quight (ii.42-3)

Defriche ma carriere en cent pars buissonnee  
De dangereux haliers, luy sur ceste journee (ii.37-8)

The final phrase ‘that marre my tillage quight’ is original to Scott, and he arrives at it by foregrounding the topographical resonance of the French ‘carriere’, a word which means both ‘quarry’ and ‘course, career’. Scott offers ‘rugged Lande’ while retaining the metaphorical allusion to the poet’s profession. The third half-line follows Du Bartas in imploring God to ‘shrub up’ the thickets (‘haliers’/ ‘balkes’), and Scott then expands the passage’s sense with a final sub-clause explaining that the un-gardened soul cannot be cultivated. The poet’s mind is working in harmony once again with the treatise writer’s in its language and imagery. The translator’s doubt about his ability to create the conditions for cultivating seeds is more fundamental than Quintilian’s caution that good soil is needed before good seeds can grow and Scott’s worry in the preface that he did not leave enough time to let his fruits ripen. It reduces the poet’s suitability as a host for inspiration, in doing so ruling out poets as agents in creation.

These different uses of the same image serve to collate insights from diverse sources. Quintilian’s presence opens up the rhetorical significance of the analogy, while Scott and Du Bartas open up an array of biblical parallels about spiritual discipline, such as Isaiah comparing the Lord’s people to a vineyard in which ‘briers and thorns grow up’ (Isaiah 5:6), Paul on the land ‘which beareth thorns and briars’ (Hebrews 6:8) and the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9). Other passages multiply the echoes, especially in the passage where Du Bartas reflects on the night-time’s effect on the soul, which is also quoted in the *Model* (‘The night should moderate the drought and heate of daye, | Should moysten our parch’d ayre, and fatt our tilled

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<sup>27</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education: Books 1-2*, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell. Loeb Classical Library. (London, 2001), 400-1.

claye' (i.504-5, cf. *Model* 56.8-9)), and Scott's translated quotation from Pierre Matthieu's *Vastbi* (45.8-25) which compares a sorrowful woman to a wilted flower. 'Tilled claye' also offers echoes of the Genesis account of Adam's creation and Sidney's defence ('clayey lodgings').<sup>28</sup> The web of associations offers different readings depending on which past authors a reader hears in the image. And the image's implied comments on originality and creative practice have a slightly different resonance in an original treatise than they do in a translated text.

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Scott's translation reflects on the moral agenda of the *Model* in a wide range of other complementary passages with varying kinds of intertextual connections. This diversity is typified in the dense cluster of ideas and images re-used from the proem to 'The Second Day', described in a marginal annotation as a 'preamble agaynst prophane and heathnish Poesye'. Scott probably has the passage in mind when citing Du Bartas' instruction to 'waste not your precious time and gifts in wanton argument' (71.37), and perhaps also earlier when mentioning how Du Bartas condemns 'heathenish rags' (43.6-7). A few lines later in the *Model*, Scott quotes the four-line conclusion of Du Bartas' 'worthy reproof of heathenish-conceited and loose poets' (72.1-2) approvingly in French and English as a 'resolution becoming a modest, virtuous mind' (72.11): 'I constantly decree | The small skill and small gifts that heaven affordeth me | To turn to God's high honour' (72.7-9, cf. ii.27-9). Three images from this same passage turn up elsewhere in the *Model*. Lucrece, to whom Du Bartas refers (ii.2) in order to criticize poets who would make Faustina the Younger (wife of Marcus Aurelius, accused of adultery by several Roman historians) appear as chaste as her, also turns up in a sentence about portraits in the *Model*: 'And for art, it is as well showed in drawing the true picture of Lucretia, if it be truly drawn, as in imitating the conceit of her virtue and passion' (12.24-6). Poison is a second image from the passage used unambiguously to criticize profane verse in the translation: 'in the hony-baytes of their best furnisht writts, | They hyde a murdringe poyson, which yonge hungry writts | Doe greedily suck in' (ii.15-17). In the *Model* Scott is apparently thinking of enchantresses like Homer's Circe or Spenser's Acrasia (Alexander, 149) who 'under these flowers of poetry hide snaky wantonness and villainy bring poison in a golden goblet' (32.11-12). By contrast, the third common image, of creatures that spin webs, only has strong moral weighting in the translation. Du Bartas compares spiders to poets who are recklessly original:

Let them (fyne-fingred spiders) vaynely twist and spin,  
With curious arte, a net, nothinge to catch therein;

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<sup>28</sup> Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's 'The Defence'*, 12 and 327 n. 49.

And weaue with toyle a webbe, to gayne the slydinge wynde,  
Of wote not what fonde prayse, that leaues them still behynde (ii.7-10)

Et tendans un filé pour y prendre le vent  
D'un los, je ne sçay quel, qui les va decevant,  
Se font imitateurs de l'araigne qui file  
D'un art laborieux une toile inutile. (ii.7-10)

Scott's translation embeds arachnids further into the lines with the initial reference to 'fyne-fingred spiders' and then elaborates on the web image to comment on the pagan poet's pursuit of fame. By contrast poets are described as being like silkworms in the *Model*:

The other [kind of poet], that feign, by following their own conceits, how things may or should be, which make new or perfecter works than corrupted nature bringeth forth, who, with the silkworm, spin their web out of their bowels, may by a more peculiar privilege challenge the title and honour of *poets* or makers. (12.15-20)

Though poets who 'feign' and 'spin their web out of their bowels' are described in wholly positive terms here, the translation confirms that the negative connotations of poetic web-spinning were available to Scott, and raises the question of whether an underlying irony might be in play here, one that exposes doubts about the poet's capacities. Noticing the similar imagery does not force a modern reader (any more than it would have forced Lee) to decide whether Scott thinks that poets are more like spiders or silkworms; however, it draws attention to the precision of Scott's handling of the image in both texts, and the particular associations it acquires in each case.

There are many more moments where both texts draw on the same imagery, sometimes with specific correspondences, sometimes using similar terms or pieces of information, sometimes sharing broadly congruent ideas. The image of matter being like wax is another concise example of the same commonplace idea being applied to poets in the *Model* (11.6-8; Alexander 103-4, citing Aristotle's *De anima* as well as 'The Second Day') and the Creator in the translation (ii.200-2). There are incidental connections with no interpretative significance, such as the crystal glasses which characterize the orator's and poet's clarity of vision (40.29) in the *Model* and in which wine is made (ii.63) in the translation. The repeated phrase 'art and industry' gains prominence as one of the necessary ingredients of creation according to Scott once the reference to God employing 'tyme, arte, industrye' (i.432) is noticed along with Scott's acknowledgement that the *Aeneid* grew to perfection 'by the sustenance of art and industry' (10.5). One very specific correspondence between treatise and translation that offers a stronger suggestion of a causal



relation between the composition of both occurs when Scott writes about how ‘our apprehension of any real thing in our mind is the *idea* or image of the thing’ and that poets therefore must ‘always apprehend the thing as it is in his proper being and nature’s’ (33.37-8). Scott chides Spenser for referring to “‘the tomb Mausolus made’” (34.13-14) in *The Ruines of Time* when it was actually ‘Scopas and others (as Pliny reporteth)’ (34.15-16) who constructed it. This observation recalls a passage in Scott’s *First Day* which builds on the French to stress the correct identity of the tomb’s builder:

In vayne the EPHESIAN Temple CTESIPHON had fram’d,  
 SCOPAS MAVSOLVS tombe, GNIDOS the phare soe fam’d, (i.453-4)

Le temple ephesien, le Mausole, le Phare,  
 Eussent esté bastis par les excellens doigts  
 De Ctisiphon, de Scope, et du maistre Cnidois (i.448-50)

There are various, equally plausible possibilities for causation behind this correlation: reading about Scopas in Du Bartas, Scott recalled the error in Spenser; reading or writing about *Ruines* was still in Scott’s head when he came to translate this passage; reading Simon Goulart’s commentary on this section of Du Bartas’ poem encouraged Scott to make the connection clearer. Or the causal link could be weaker if Scott was actually thinking of Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights*, which could also have encouraged the juxtaposition of ‘Scopas’ and ‘Mausolus’ in the translation (Alexander, 154). The commonplace nature of so much of Du Bartas’ material makes it impossible in most cases to specify a chain of relations, just as a reference to Zeuxis several lines earlier in the translation (i.449) happens to have parallels in the *Model* too (18.2 and 45.38). Nonetheless our appreciation of this and many other passages in the *Model* is challenged and deepened by remembering *La Sepmaine* because the author of the *Model* is closely attuned to the translator of Du Bartas, whether or not either is also attuned to the mind of the Creator.

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While Scott did not necessarily know that Sidney took a close interest in Du Bartas’ poetry (though other translators, including Sylvester and the anonymous translator of the *First Day* in 1595, did), he looks up to both Sidney and Du Bartas as leading poets of the previous decade.<sup>29</sup> The *Model* is valuable for being the most sustained attempt that survives to assimilate Du Bartas’ insights into Elizabethan poetic theory. Seeing how Du Bartas’ poetry coheres with contemporary theoretical ideas constitutes a substantial addition to our understanding of Du Bartas’ English popularity in the 1590s, and can help us comprehend his later influence on

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<sup>29</sup> See *The First Day of the Worldes Creation* (1595), A2r.

seventeenth-century poets like Anne Bradstreet, John Milton and Lucy Hutchinson. The translation is in effect a statement that mortal creation is incommensurable with divine creation, and is a model for how English poets can proceed given that insight into their deficiencies. One reading of the common imagery in the treatise and translation is that it creates syllogisms that deny the analogy between human and divine making: poetics is like an architectural plan, the universe was not built from a plan, therefore writing poetry is dissimilar to creating the universe. In any case, the manuscript offers two readings of poetry's significance and in the process demonstrates the variety and flexibility of its author's thought.

While Scott's manuscript is no replacement for the missing Sidney translation, it provides an outline for reading Du Bartas within Sidneian poetics. We can briefly see how much Scott adds to Sidney's reading of Du Bartas by looking at how Sidney plays with Du Bartas' imagery in *Astrophil and Stella*:

For like a child that some faire booke doth find,  
 With guiled leaves or colourd Velume playes,  
 Or at the most on some fine picture staves,  
 But never heeds the fruit of writer's mind (*Astrophil and Stella*, 11.5-8)

Mais tous tels que l'enfant qui se paist dans l'eschole,  
 Pour l'estude des arts, d'un estude frivole,  
 Nostre œil admire tant ses marges peinturez,  
 Son cuir fleurdelizé, et ses bords sur-dorez (i.155-8)

In Sidney's sonnet this image illustrates how Astrophil only saw his own reflection in Stella's eyes and 'seekst not to get into her hart' (l. 14). The allusion retains the Platonic admonition, found in the Du Bartas passage, to look beyond attractive surfaces into the real content of the world, and is worth quoting just to raise the possibility that the vellum and golden leaves of Scott's translation are recalling Astrophil:

But we like trewand boyes, within the schoole, in steade    Mans negligence  
 Of studye of the Artes, doe vayner studyes reade;  
 Our childe eyes the velom wondrously beholde  
 Florish'd with flowredeluce, and leaues gaye trim'd with golde (i.160-4)

The closest Scott comes to recycling the image in the *Model* is when he forbids poets from using ink-horn terms 'only for the fresh glistening shows of scarfs and plumes which dazzle our eyes and betray our strength' (48.24-5). Where Sidney's borrowing is an isolated allusion (though Sonnet 26.1-11 has separate correspondence to iv.405-28), Scott's images, we have seen, exist

within an intricate matrix of other imagery in MS Add. 81083 that supplies Calvinist glosses and reflections on the theological limits of poetry, and in this case can make us think about how being distracted by over-elaborate diction is like being diverted by an attractive book binding rather than scrutinizing the basic meaning of the text, which in turn is like being lost among Platonic shadows: lost among mere metaphors for the real thing.

This essay has made the case for how Du Bartas' *Sepmaine*, specifically the two sections that Scott translated, contributes to a reading of Scott's poetics. The manuscript circumstances of the *Model* direct our attention to key questions about poetry's end and compass in the treatise. Du Bartas is a definite source for the *Model* in the many places where Scott names him and quotes the translation for examples of poetic excellence. The translation also contains a network of images, principles and assumptions that illuminate Scott's poetic theory and help us identify its possible limits: the translation offers a larger interpretative framework for understanding the theological and cosmological resonance of divine poetry, challenges the treatise's optimism, and provides a model for what poetry conscious of those principles might look like. This essay leaves it for future readers to judge whether Du Bartas and Scott speak in unison, as the translator intimates through invocations at the start of each Day (i.13-16 and ii.31-5, 45-8), and whether the admiring references and quotations in the *Model* imply a common sense of poetry's significance. Either way, the translation is an essential counterpart to the *Model*, both as our sole example of Scott's poetic practice and as a theoretical text in dialogue with Scott's theory of Protestant poetry that makes us ask how far the author of the *Model* believes that poets can or should create new worlds.