

## Revising the siege of York: from royalist to Cromwellian in Payne Fisher's *Marston Moor*

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This is the first article dedicated to Payne (or Fitzpayne) Fisher (1615/6-1693), Cromwell's forgotten laureate, who had a successful career as a Latin poet during the short-lived English Commonwealth (1649-53) and Protectorate (1653-9). The article examines in detail the four surviving versions of Fisher's breakthrough success, the long Latin poem *Marston Moor*, first published in print in 1650, with a revised edition in 1656, but circulated in a much shorter manuscript form – of which two closely related examples are extant – from around 1648. Fisher fought at Marston Moor on the losing royalist side, and this remarkable poem evolves from a royalist elegy in its earliest versions, to a panegyric of Parliamentary military strength effective enough to secure Fisher a series of commissions throughout the 1650s. The article charts each stage of these revisions, and the poetic strategies of the work, with a particular focus upon Fisher's use of epic similes.

**Keywords:** Payne Fisher; Paganus Piscator; Neo-Latin poetry; Oliver Cromwell; Marston Moor; English civil war

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## **Revising the siege of York: from royalist to Cromwellian in Payne Fisher's *Marston Moor***

Payne (or Fitzpayne) Fisher's (1615/6-1693) first major publication, and breakthrough success, was the short Latin epic, *Marston Moor*, first published early in 1650.<sup>1</sup> Fisher has been almost completely neglected by literary history, but following the publication of *Marston Moor* he was quickly adopted as a semi-official poet of the Commonwealth, and then of the Protectorate.<sup>2</sup> He went on to produce a stream of published poetry throughout the 1650s and 1660s, much of it political panegyric of various kinds, and the great majority of it in Latin.<sup>3</sup> Where Fisher's work has attracted any comment, it has often been critical to the point of dismissal<sup>4</sup>; and the few brief discussions that do exist focus almost exclusively upon an English translation by Thomas Manley of Fisher's 1652 work, *Irenodia Gratulatoria*.<sup>5</sup> Aside from three pages in David Norbrook's *Writing the English Republic*, and Peter Wenham's summary from a historical perspective, *Marston Moor* has not received any critical attention.<sup>6</sup> The Latin of *Marston Moor*, though indebted to a wide (and rather unusual) range of classical Latin poets, including Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus, Valerius Flaccus and Claudian, as well as to a distinct tradition of British Latin poetry, is undoubtedly not Virgilian in style.<sup>7</sup> It is however engaging and highly readable Latin verse, marked by pacy narrative, a fondness for elaborate compound adjectives and pronounced alliteration, and a particular way with epic similes, including memorable comparisons of military drill moves to migrating cranes, the besieged people of York to an eagle's nestlings, and Cromwell to an armoured elephant.<sup>8</sup>

*Marston Moor* survives in four versions, allowing us to trace Fisher's development of a distinctively Cromwellian poem from a plainly royalist starting point – Fisher fought on the losing royalist side in the battle from which the poem takes its name. In this, he represents an unusually legible version of a process that many of his contemporaries must have undergone to varying degrees.<sup>9</sup> This article sets out the four extant versions of the poem, the chief differences between them, and an overview of the effect and significance of each stage of revision. In each of its versions, *Marston Moor* is a long and complicated poem, for which no English translation or even summary is available. To facilitate discussion, the article uses one of the most striking poetic features of the poem – its frequent use of epic similes – as a focus for the evolution of the poem's content and political perspective. Although this article is concerned primarily with *Marston Moor* as a demonstration of the creation and evolution of Latin political poetry in this period, I hope that it will also demonstrate that Fisher deserves more attention as a poet than he has so far received.<sup>10</sup>

### **The siege of York and the battle of Marston Moor**

The siege of York, its relief by Prince Rupert on behalf of the King, and the subsequent battle outside York on Marston Moor took place at the beginning of July 1644, the first battle of the Civil War in which the Scottish forces joined in to oppose the King. After a strong start for the royalist armies of the Marquis of Newcastle and Prince Rupert of the Rhine, events turned against them and the engagement ended as a major victory for Parliament. Sometimes called the 'Battle of the Five Armies', the military situation was complex. The allied armies of the Scots and Parliament comprised three distinct forces: the Army of the Eastern Association, led by the Earl of Manchester (with Oliver Cromwell as Lieutenant-General of the Horse); the Scots Army (Army of the Solemn League and Covenant), led by the Earl of Leven; and the Army of Ferdinando Lord Fairfax.<sup>11</sup> On the King's side, the Army of the Marquis of Newcastle had been defending York during the

siege; they were relieved by the Army of Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who arrived on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1644. The Battle of Marston Moor took place the following day, 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

In 1644, Payne Fisher, who had already served in England, Ulster, and the Netherlands, was a member of the army led by Prince Rupert to relieve York, and fought in the battle the following day.<sup>12</sup> After the royalist defeat, he was imprisoned in Newgate, where he probably wrote or revised a good deal of poetry, both in Latin and English. The early manuscript versions of the poem on the events at York are entitled *De obsidione Praelioque Ebroocensi / vulgo Marstonmoore appellato* ('On the siege and battle of York, commonly known as Marstonmoor') and devote a greater proportion of the poem to the siege than the much longer printed versions of 1650 and 1656. Despite the significant differences in length, the essential structure of the poem is retained across all four versions. Fisher tracks recorded historical events closely, and includes description of the fortifications and artillery, siege tactics, the relief of the city, the start of the battle on the following day, the scattering of Scottish troops on the battlefield and the decisive intervention of Cromwell, followed by the end of the battle and a summary of the losses. Marginal glosses in the printed poem of 1650 give English translations for technical military vocabulary, and English versions of personal names.<sup>13</sup> In the printed poems of 1650 and (even more so) 1656, a large number of individuals are picked out for praise, commemoration or direct address, most of whom can be identified from contemporary sources.<sup>14</sup> In a few instances, Fisher's poem may actually be responsible for certain beliefs about the battle which are now considered erroneous but which were widely reported.<sup>15</sup>

### **BL MSS Add 19863 and Harley 6932**

The poem survives in two octavo manuscript volumes, both compiled by Fisher himself, and each dedicated to a different person, probably as part of a search for patronage after Fisher's release from prison. Both are presentation copies in a neat and consistent script, with very few corrections, and both are now in the British Library, catalogued as Add MS 19863 and Harley MS 6932. Add MS 19863 bears the following title in Fisher's own hand: "FANCIES occasionally written on seuerall occurrences, and reuised heere, vidz from Julij the 22d, 1645, to Julij y<sup>e</sup> 28th, 1646:"; and opens (2<sup>v</sup>) with a brief dedicatory letter to an unidentified 'E. P.', dated 17 Feb. 1647, that is, 1648. Harley MS 6932 bears a very similar title: "Fancies on seuerall occasions written / and reuis'ed heere from / Julij: 6<sup>th</sup>: 1645: to Apr: 4: 1647." and also opens with a short dedicatory letter, this time dedicated to 'Mr Denzell Hollis' [Denzil Holles, first baron Holles, 1598-1680]. This dedicatory letter is not dated.

The poems are a mixture of Latin and English verse, and both volumes preserve several English poems relating to Fisher's military experience, including 'An abstract of York' which is a kind of summary of the Latin poem (not in any meaningful sense a translation), interestingly in blank verse.<sup>16</sup> Aside from the striking realism of the depiction of life as a soldier or prisoner – one poem is entitled 'On or miserable Wett march betweene Monymore and Montioy w<sup>th</sup> a commanded Party of the Scotch Regiment' – both collections offer a fairly typical range for the period, with a variety of English and Latin verse including elegies on contemporary figures, advice and consolation to friends, and the almost-compulsory Latin hexameter poem on the Gunpowder Plot.<sup>17</sup> The contents of the two volumes are similar, but not identical: the order of shared poems is different, and the 21 poems in Add MS 19863 include three not included in Harley MS 6932; conversely, the Harley manuscript's twenty entries include two not found in Add MS 19863. In the shared poems, there are some small but arguably significant differences between the volumes, including in *De obsidione*.

Fisher's own notes indicate that the date of composition and/or revision of the contents of the two volumes overlap closely, with the poems of Add MS 19863 ascribed to a period beginning fractionally later than that of Harley MS 6932 (July 22<sup>nd</sup> rather than July 6<sup>th</sup> 1645) but ending somewhat earlier (July 28<sup>th</sup> 1646 as opposed to April 4<sup>th</sup> 1647). Fisher's selection of material appears to have been influenced by their intended recipient. Although both volumes are broadly speaking royalist, with a focus upon military experience, Add MS 19863 opens with a striking poem, titled simply 'An Elegie &c' which relates the martyrdom by beheading ('Decollation') of a bishop: 'Thus hast thou left us onely to lay downe / And change thy Miter for a glorious Crowne.' (4<sup>v</sup>).<sup>18</sup> The reference must be to the execution of Archbishop Laud in 1645. This is a forceful opening to a carefully prepared collection, but the poem is not included in Harley MS 6932, probably because the dedicatee of that collection – Denzil Holles – was far from a Laudian.<sup>19</sup> The Harley MS begins instead with 'An Ejaculation, In sense of my present condition', a religious poem addressing directly to God: again, perhaps a calculated decision in light of Holles' well-known Protestant piety.<sup>20</sup>

### 'The Siege of York' in BL Add MS 19863 and Harley MS 6932

*De Obsidione Praelioque Ebroocensi* appears in very similar forms in the two BL manuscripts. It is a much shorter poem than *Marston Moor*, as it was published in 1650, running to only around 275 lines in the manuscript versions compared to the five books and 1,367 lines of the 1650 publication.<sup>21</sup> The two manuscript versions are close but not identical: a collation of the two records a substantive variant (that is, a change of word, not just of spelling or punctuation) on average every two to three lines. At two points, Harley MS 6932 has expanded upon Add MS 19863, adding a total of three lines; a few lines also appear at slightly different places in the two texts. Only one line which appears in Add MS 19863 does not appear in Harley MS 6932. The lines added to the Harley MS text are all found in the printed text of *Marston Moor* (1650), and where the manuscripts differ, the reading found in the Harley MS is more often that found in the printed text, or closer in meaning to the printed version (though many of these variant readings are revised again in 1650). Taken together, this suggests that the Harley MS presents a lightly revised version of Add MS 19863, rather than the other way around; and, at least, that it was a copy of the poem in the Harley MS form which Fisher used as he expanded his work for publication in 1650.

Most of the apparent revisions to the Add MS version found in the Harley MS are minor, and appear to represent matters of taste or judgement rather than significant changes of meaning. At Add MS 19863 10<sup>r</sup>, for instance, just fifteen lines into the poem, a simile describes the fear of the local people around York at the sight of the army surrounding the city:

Qualis Squamigeris vitrei sub marmore Ponti  
Gentibus horror adest, quoties populatur apricas  
Terribilis *Balaena* lacus: fugit omnis in Imum  
Turba vadum; gelidasque metu glomerantur in algas.  
Talis agit, sternitque vagos formido Colonos.

*The kind of horror which comes upon the scaly hosts [of fish]  
Beneath the marble of the glassy ocean, whenever a terrible Whale  
Plunders the sunny waters: the whole crowd flee  
To the deepest water; and huddle in fear amongst the icy seaweed.  
Such was the dread which drove and scattered the fleeing inhabitants.*

Aside from some minor differences in capitalisation, the only variant reading in Harley MS 6932 is to the penultimate line, which reads 'metu stipantur in algas' rather

than 'metu glomerantur in algas'. The diction of *stipantur* (which is also found in 1650) is less Virgilian than *glomerantur*, and in fact moves the line closer to its primary model in Statius' *Thebaid*.<sup>22</sup> In general, the 1650 text appears to be the most systematically unVirgilian of the extant versions.

The more substantial of the two passages which appears only in the Harley MS occurs at a significant point, as the narrative of the poem shifts from the siege and relief of York to the build-up to the battle the following day. Fisher signals this transition with the dawn – described in conventionally epic terms – followed by a concise description of the beauty of the battle-lines, and then the introduction first of the Earl of Manchester (Lord General of the Army of the Eastern Association) and then of Cromwell (Lieutenant-General of the Horse). In this extract, the main text is from Add MS 19863, with variant readings in Harley MS 6932 on the right:

Primus honoratis *Ductor Mancest're* cateruis  
 (Digne Comes, comesque Tuis: moderamine miro  
 Vtque Hostes armis Meritis sic vincis Amicos;)  
 Anteuolas acies *m*: validoque hortamine pulsans  
 Pectora moliris primae fundamina pugnae.  
 Tùm formidando *Coromell*<sup>23</sup> cui fulgur in ore  
 Et *Bellum Ciuile* sedet sub fronte minaci  
 Proximus ingreditur; Thorace et Casside tectus:  
 Ferrea Compago laterum; totosque per artus  
 Ferrea clauigeris surgebat lamina nodis.<sup>24</sup>

*You, the Earl of Manchester, first among the honoured companies  
 (A worthy Earl, and comrade to your men<sup>25</sup>: with wonderful control  
 You defeat the Enemy with weapons just as you win over your friends by your good deeds)  
 Flew before the battle-line; and striking the breasts [of the men]  
 With powerful [swift] encouragement you laid the foundations for the battle.  
 Then Cromwell on whose dreadful face rests the lightning bolt  
 And Civil War sits upon his threatening brow  
 Comes next; protected by a breast-plate and helmet:  
 An iron structure on his sides; and over all his limbs  
 Rose iron scales with clubbed knots.*

In the Add MS version Manchester is addressed directly (*antevolas* and *moliris* are both second person singular verbs) and allotted three lines. But the real set piece here is for Cromwell, described in the third person over five lines, and strikingly characterised by phrase *cui fulgur in ore* ('lightning upon his face', or possibly, 'in his mouth/speech') and the *Bellum Ciuile* ('Civil War') resting upon his forehead. The notorious 'ironsides' armour is sketched in a vivid pair of lines (*ferrea . . . nodis*) which combine an allusion to Statius' description of the House of Mars (*Thebaid* 7.43) with a passage in Claudian (*In Rufinum*, 380-86) on the awe inspired by troops in full armour. In the Harley MS, the addition of two parenthetical lines of direct address in praise of Manchester balances out the passage, stressing Manchester's honour and dignity alongside the fear inspired by Cromwell. Cromwell in both versions is a vividly – almost mythologically – described but essentially negative figure, in contrast to Manchester: this contrasts with the very substantial revisions to this passage in the 1650 text (discussed below). The first appearance of Cromwell in the poem is a site of significant revision in all four extant versions.

The overall impression of both manuscript versions of the poem is however strongly royalist: this brief introduction of Manchester and Cromwell is followed by a much longer sixteen-line description of the courage and inspirational leadership of Prince Rupert, and the perfect unity of the royalist horses with their riders (Add MS 19863 12<sup>v</sup>).

The careful structure of the poem sets the joy of the relief of the city (lines 97-121, 11v-12r) and the exhilaration and excitement in the build-up to the battle (lines 122-169, 12r-13r) against the misery of the besieged inhabitants of York (1-96, 10r-11v) and the mounting disaster for the royalists of the battle as it proceeds (170-276, 13r-15r). The epic similes, a striking feature of the poem at every stage of its revision, emphasise in the manuscript versions the aesthetics of battle, the courage of those defending York, and the suffering of the besieged, compared for instance to an eagle's nestlings threatened by a climbing snake (Add MS 19863, 11v, p. 29 in 1650).<sup>26</sup>

But the most fascinating stage in the development of this impressive poem is Fisher's recasting sometime between 1648 and 1650 of an unambiguously royalist work into a poem deemed to have celebrated the Parliamentary victory so effectively that its publication secured Fisher employment as an official poet of the new regime.<sup>27</sup>

### **From manuscript to print: *De Obsidione* becomes *Marston Moor***

The 1650 publication, a finely-produced quarto volume printed to a high standard, is titled *Marston-Moor: sive de Obsidione Praelioque Eboracensi CARMEN Cum Quibusdam Miscellaneis Operâ Studiôque PAGANI PISCATORIS Elucubratis*, ('*Marston-Moor: or on the Siege and Battle of York. Poem with certain miscellaneous works of Payne Fisher composed with great care and effort*'). It was printed by Thomas Newcomb in London in 1650, and the Thomason tract copy is dated April 11<sup>th</sup>, fixing its publication date as the early part of that year; according to Fisher's own note of thanks (a4<sup>v</sup>) Edward Benlowes funded its publication.<sup>28</sup> (*Mercurius Politicus*, Marchamont Nedham's Commonwealth newsheet, was also printed by Thomas Newcomb from January 1651.) The majority of the volume is taken up with dedicatory poems to *Marston Moor*, and the poem itself.<sup>29</sup> A second title page towards the end of the volume (L1<sup>v</sup>) announces a separate unpaginated section containing a selection of shorter Latin poems addressed to eminent men of the day, as well as a French ode in memory of Fisher's own brother by Pierre de Cardonnel.<sup>30</sup> Only the pages on which the text of *Marston Moor* appears are paginated (1-70).

Covering seventy quarto pages and running to 1,367 lines in five 'metra' (short books), the 1650 *Marston Moor* is roughly four times as long as the manuscript poems discussed above.<sup>31</sup> Despite the very substantial expansion, it is recognisably based upon the earlier work, and almost every line found in the manuscript poem is found (albeit often in a revised form) in *Marston Moor*.<sup>32</sup> In a few cases, Fisher has made systematic changes of vocabulary in the printed poem: for instance, the word *scloppus* ('shot') does not appear in the BL manuscript sources, though it is a fairly common word both in 'Marston Moor' and Fisher's later Latin poetry.<sup>33</sup> The poem is structured as follows:

**Metrum I** (pages 1-16, 292 lines) invokes the Muses, and has a long mythological set piece describing Mars gathering the forces of the underworld to bring war to England; then describes the make-up of the armies and their drawing-up outside York, as well as the geographical setting. The majority of this book, and the whole of the first ten pages, is not found in the manuscript sources. **Metrum II** (pages 17-32, 385 lines) covers the siege with a particular emphasis upon the tactical skill of Manchester and the courage of Sir Thomas Glenham defending York, before a set-piece description of starvation and plague in the city (which does not appear in the manuscript versions). **Metrum III** (pages 33-44, 214 lines) begins with the arrival of Prince Rupert to relieve York. Manchester retreats from the city and the people are able to leave; but the peaceful interval does not last long and the book ends with the description of enemy troops again sighted outside the city, and praise of both Manchester and Prince Rupert. **Metrum IV** [also titled 'Metrum III'] (pages 45-55, 207 lines) begins with the start of the battle. Prince Rupert rallies his troops and to start with all goes well for the royalists. A sudden storm frightens and

scatters the Scots, and General Alexander Leslie attempts to shame his men into standing firm, without success. Cromwell steps in and, in a much shorter but more effective speech, brings the troops to order, brings in cavalry reinforcements and deploys Manchester's cavalry on the left-hand side of the line. Prince Rupert responds by reinforcing his own lines. **Metrum V** [titled 'Metrum IV'] (pages 56-70, 269 lines) At this point the momentum of the battle turns clearly against the royalists. The poem names and celebrates a long list of royalists who fell in the battle or fought with distinction, and ends with a description of the chaos of the end of the battle and the extent of the losses.<sup>34</sup> An enigmatic final eulogy for an unnamed general is probably meant for Manchester but also resonates, perhaps intentionally, with the earlier praise of Prince Rupert.

The most extensive expansions are found at the following points (page references to the 1650 edition):

- i) Pages 1-11. The manuscript poems have only a four-line introduction before moving directly into a description of the siege; line 5 onwards of the earlier poem corresponds to page 11 of *Marston Moor*, which adds an opening invocation (pages 1-2), and a lengthy scene describing the pre-war British peace under James (2-3), the mustering of all the forces of the underworld under the command of Mars, and a council scene in which Mars rallies his troops (3-7).<sup>35</sup> The final part of the added section gives an account of events in the months before the battle (8-9), the wide range of nations represented among the forces fighting at York (9-10) and finally the beauty of the armies as they draw up outside the city (10-11).
- ii) Pages 14-18 of *Marston Moor* (end of Metrum 1 and beginning of Metrum 2), describing the enthusiasm of the troops outside the city, the destruction of local woodland for timber, and Manchester's care in his assessment of the city's defences.
- iii) Pages 21-23 of *Marston Moor*, describing the Irish, Scottish and 'Pict' (that is, Highlander) troops, as well as Manchester's tactics.
- iv) Pages 23-4 speech and associated simile of Manchester.
- v) Pages 24-9 substantial expansion of the siege with mention of named individuals.
- vi) Pages 29-31 substantial expansion largely in praise of Sir Thomas Glenham, fighting in defence of York.
- vii) Pages 31-2 Starvation and plague in the city.
- viii) Pages 34-39 Substantial expansion of passage describing the joyful celebrations in York.
- ix) Pages 49-52 Substantial expansion of the passage describing the confusion among the Scottish forces, the speech and associated simile of Leslie.
- x) Pages 52-3 Addition of a speech by Cromwell
- xi) Pages 64-7 substantial expansion describing the horror on the battlefield of the royalist defeat, with comparisons to the slaughter of Pentheus and Actaeon.
- xii) Pages 66-70 addition of passage describing the aftermath of the battle, praise for an unnamed general (Manchester?)

Both in these long added passages and in the shorter additions and expansions throughout the poem, certain patterns can be discerned: the substantial expansions of the beginning and end of the poem align the work with set-pieces of the epic and epyllion tradition, including a full invocation and council scene before the battle.<sup>36</sup> *Marston Moor* includes several passages evoking the beauty of the armies before the battle: these are either added or much expanded from the manuscript material. The manuscript poems include no direct speeches: these are all additions. The 1650 version includes much more

detail of individual valour, including naming and sometimes directly addressing a large number of men. Finally, the horror of dead and wounded men and horses at the end of the battle is described at much greater length in the printed poem. Although epic similes are already a feature of the manuscript poems, *Marston Moor* adds many further examples, preserving rather than diluting this feature of the poem's style. All of these alterations, combined with the much increased length, bring the poem more closely into line with classical models, including Statius' *Thebaid* and (especially) Claudian's many brief epic accounts of military achievement.

The expansion is politically balanced but not exactly even-handed: the longer poem names a host of courageous royalist soldiers, and reserves the most memorable eulogy for Sir Thomas Glenham, compared to the steersman of the ship of state (29-31).<sup>37</sup> On the Parliamentary side, however, the expansions are focused strongly upon Manchester, stressing his courage and capability. The emphasis upon Manchester is partly at the expense of the Scots, whose near-disastrous confusion is described at much greater length than in the manuscript poems, and whose commander Sir Alexander Leslie, the First Earl of Leven is given a substantial but markedly ineffective speech, followed by a simile emphasising his failure (50-2).<sup>38</sup> The speech is followed immediately, in a pointed contrast, by a much briefer but effective speech by Cromwell, and his decisive action (52-3). In the manuscript poems, this is Cromwell's second named appearance – following the memorable vignette of Cromwell, clad in iron and with lightning in his face, discussed above. That earlier passage is one of a handful of passages removed (rather than simply expanded) in 1650; in the 1650 edition Manchester is introduced alone, and the reader is made to wait until the fourth metrum (of five) for Cromwell to appear.<sup>39</sup>

The 1650 publication offers a much expanded sense of the personality, abilities and intelligence of Manchester (and, to a lesser extent, Cromwell) than the manuscript poems on which it is based. This feature, especially combined with the closing eulogy (69-70), which also suggests Manchester though it does not name him, balances and to some extent actually reverses the emphasis in the manuscript poems upon the courage and wisdom of Prince Rupert. On the other hand, the naming of many fallen royalists emphasises the personal losses of the battle, and the expansion of the scenes inside York, both during and after the end of the siege create variety and add pathos.<sup>40</sup>

In an ambiguous fashion perhaps learnt from the vogue for Lucan in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Fisher's revisions to *Marston Moor* are calibrated to emphasise the dominant power, military effectiveness and real courage and intelligence of the Parliamentary forces under Manchester, but also to elicit an emotional reaction which remains primarily royalist in its sympathies: this is achieved both by the length and pathos of the description of the siege and by the focus upon the royalist losses on the battlefield.<sup>41</sup> Both emotional and aesthetic effect in the poem is focused, as in the earlier version, through the many epic similes. These are found at similarly frequent intervals in the earlier manuscript poems, and Fisher retained all the similes in the early poem as he expanded it, but he also added many, often creating a series of linked similes at moments of particular emphasis.<sup>42</sup>

The first example of such a series of linked similes is found on pages 10-11 of *Marston-Moor*, and in fact marks the transition from added material to the reworking of the earlier manuscript poem. Describing in vivid and evocative terms the aesthetic pleasure of an army in formation, it makes a striking contrast with the extended condemnation of the horrors and destruction of civil war in the preceding pages. Like the oscillation between admiration for Parliamentary effectiveness and sympathy for the royalists, this tension provides both variety and a kind of emotional realism to the poem.



The first and most developed of the sequence of similes compares the drilling of the Allied armies to migrating cranes:

Pulchra tamen Belli series; nec rectius umquam  
 Ordine progressus tantis *Exercitus* Armis.  
 Festinat<sup>43</sup> tam *lenta Cohors*; juvat indè *morari*  
 Et *differe gradum*: nunc in vestigia Prima  
 Ulteriora trahunt, eadem mox *Cornua* mutant  
*Frontis*, & alterno miscent *Curvamina* Motu.  
 Quale recessuris inituri Praelia Ventis,  
 Concordi clangore *Grues*, Glacialia linunt  
 Frigora, faecundo mutant *Strymona Nilo*.  
 Dumque vagos Casus, primaeque exordia Brumae  
 Garriculae narrant, & mutua Murmura miscent:  
 Ordine quàm recto tranant vaga Sydera! gyro  
 Multiplicique novas fingunt per *Inane* figuras!  
 Inque *Voluminibus* Coeli pinxisse putares  
*Fabellam* totam; tam pulchris ducitur alis  
 Tale meat, variisque micat mirabile Telis  
*Agmen*, vulnifico stans formidabile Ferro.  
 (Fisher 1650: 10-11).

*But the battle-line is beautiful; and never has an Army  
 Set out in order more correctly or with such splendid weapons.  
 So smoothly do the ranks march, then halt,  
 And counter-march: and now they change  
 Direction, and soon the horns change places  
 With the front, and the flanks mix in turn.  
 Just as cranes, on the point of entering battle  
 With the winds that are themselves about to recede,  
 With a unified clamour depart from the freezing regions  
 Exchanging *Strymona*<sup>44</sup> for the fertile Nile.  
 Chatteringly they relate their experience of wandering,  
 And the beginnings of the first frost, and mingle their murmuring:  
 In strict order they sail across the wandering stars! And wheeling  
 In many directions they paint new shapes across the void.  
 You would have thought that the whole Story was drawn  
 On the pages of heaven: letters are traced  
 With such beautiful wings, and the Air inscribed with the marks of their feathers.  
 In such a way did the battle-line proceed, wonderful as it flickers  
 With weapons of all kinds, but dreadful too as it stands in wounding iron.*

The armies as they draw up outside York are like migrating cranes: domestic and companionable as they exchange news and gossip, but beautiful to watch as they move in formation. This fine simile conveys both the experience of the soldiers themselves, and that of those watching from a distance. Migrating cranes feature frequently in classical Latin poetry, including Virgil, Statius and Lucan. The closest parallels here, however, are to Lucan, 5.711-16 and Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico*, 474-8: in both those instances the cranes appear in similes associated with the preparation for war. In Lucan the dispersal of the cranes by the storm, and the disruption of the 'letters' they apparently trace in the air, echoes the failure of Caesar's efforts to cross the Adriatic; whereas Fisher's lines stress the beauty of the spectacle, but also the effective communication of the cranes/soldiers and even the 'legibility' of the sight. The discipline of the armies in this passage hints at their ultimate victory, and the contrast with Lucan contributes to the effect.<sup>45</sup>

Opening the second metrum, Manchester, dug in around the city, is compared to a hunting dog sniffing out hares (17-18), in a simile which stresses his patience and determination ('doggedness') as well as his tactical skill. In fact Manchester is consistently associated in the 1650 text both with similes of hunting, and with images stressing his patience and cunning (he barely features at all in more plainly royalist manuscript poems). Whereas on page 21 the Scottish troops attack bravely but (it is hinted) without much thought for overall strategy, Manchester holds his men back, waiting for his moment, and even feigns retreat to draw out the enemy:

Nec levior *Ductoris* erat vigilantia, multa  
 Dum virtute suà miscet Stratagemata, fraudes  
 Et versipellis vario sub Imagine versat.  
 Et nunc ut parvo graviora in damna periclo,  
 Eliceret, dabat interdum simultantia Terga  
 Obliquansque suas ficta in simulachra Cohortes,  
 Saepe lacessitos spe *sublactaverat*<sup>46</sup> Hostes.  
 Nulla vacant Incoepa dolis; versatilis arte  
 Nunc premit instantes turmas, nunc Castra relinquit  
 Callidus, ut totos invitet Prodigus Hostes.  
 Non aliter quàm qui *Thamesis* per flumina sparsâ  
 Evocat è vitreis Piscem Penetralibus escâ,  
 Jam rapit; inde vagum sollers exporrigit hamum;  
 Donec inescatum liquido sub Marmore cernens  
 Pisciculum, virgam retrahit, sinuatâque volvit  
 Serica, captivo ducens ad littora lino.  
 (Fisher 1650: 21-22)

*No lighter was the General's vigilance, as he combined  
 Courage with many stratagems, and cunningly pondered  
 Deceptions in various guises.  
 And then, in order to incite the enemy to more serious losses  
 With only a small danger to himself, he would feign retreat  
 And steered his men to the side in pretence,  
 And often in this way he duped the enemy forces, who were led on by hope.  
 Nothing he undertook was without guile; crafty in his skill  
 At one moment he urges on the squadrons in their attack, the next  
 He abandons the camp, a generous invitation to all the enemy.  
 Just like a man who, scattering food on the surface of the river Thames,  
 Summons up a fish up from the glassy depths –  
 Then pounces upon it; then skilfully lets his hook wander out;  
 Until, catching sight of a little fish who has taken the bait  
 Beneath the liquid marble, draws back his rod, and twisting the silk,  
 Draws it back to shore on a captive line.*

The allusive fabric here is dense and deserves further comment; but the most significant parallel, which extends throughout the lines given above, is to a passage of Silius Italicus describing the tactical skill of Hannibal, a famously courageous and brilliant commander, albeit an enemy of Rome.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere Manchester is compared to a brave bull, the leader of his herd, whose boldness inspires the rest of the animals (24). Cromwell, on the other hand, is characterised in the text of 1650 not so much by his cunning as by his sheer force on the battlefield; unlike the descriptions of Manchester, this passage goes back to the manuscript versions of the poem, and suggests an additional link between Hannibal and Cromwell<sup>48</sup>:

Turriger innumeris *Elephas* sic cinctus ab Armis  
 Erigitur, spumisque Irae furialibus undans  
 Ferrea nodoso regerit venabula dorso

Torvus, & Obstantes Bellantum proterit hastas.

Like an tower-bearing *Elephant*, girded with innumerable weapons,  
He draws himself up, seething with foaming fury,  
Throws off the iron hunting spears from his knotty back  
And ferociously tramples the spears of warriors in his way.<sup>49</sup>  
(Fisher 1650: 53)

In contrast, the Scottish troops, scattered in confusion by a storm on the battlefield, are compared briefly to wild hares, running in fear at the sight of hunting dogs (49). That comparison dates back to the manuscript poems (though they are female deer, not hares in the MS sources); but 1650 adds the whole episode of Leslie's ineffective speech followed, in a memorable passage, by a simile in which his futile attempts to bring his troops back under control are compared to a shepherd who roams the countryside, desperately attempting to round up lost bees:<sup>50</sup>

Sic ubi Ruricolus *Pastor*, revocare fugaces  
*Tinnitu* meditatur *apes*, quae sponte relictos  
Destituere *favos*, nunc fervens lignea pulsat  
Vascula, susceptumque manu contundit *ahenum*,  
Rauca repercussis miscens crepitacula Sylvis.  
Incoeptum nec sistis Iter, per Saxa, per amnes,  
Per Juga consequitur, donec defessus inani  
Spe, revocat gressus, & *Cerea Castra* revisans,  
Perfida conquiritur vacuis *Examina* Cellis.  
(Fisher 1650: 51-2).

*Like a country Shepherd, attempting to recall  
His fleeing bees with a ringing noise – bees who of their own accord  
Have abandoned their combs; he fervently beats  
The wooden beehives, and pounds a bronze vessel he holds up with his hand,  
Mingling the loud rattling with the echoing woods.  
Once begun, he does not stop, but follows on  
Over the rocks, the rivers, the ridges, until  
Exhausted, and all hope spent, he retraces his path  
And returns to the waxen camps, complaining  
Of his treacherous swarm to the empty cells.*

This careful characterisation-by-simile of Manchester (the crafty hunter), Cromwell (the force of nature) and the Scots (impulsive and ill-disciplined) adds to the similarly consistent evocation of Royalist courage and suffering, found already in the similes of the manuscript poems and retained (and in some cases extended) in the text of 1650. The increased political nuance, and arguably poetic interest of *Marston Moor* in its first published version resides to a large extent in the juxtaposition of these elements and their conflicting demands upon the reader: undoubted sympathy for the Royalist cause, but equally clear awe and admiration for the effective force of Manchester and Cromwell.

### **Reprinting *Marston Moor*: the poem in the *Piscatoris Poemata* of 1656**

Six years after the 1650 edition, Fisher reissued *Marston Moor* as one of the poems included in his collected poems, the *Piscatoris Poemata* of 1656.<sup>51</sup> In this edition, the poem has again expanded, though less dramatically, to 1,714 lines. The alterations to the poem consist almost entirely of additions or minor revisions – only a handful of lines have been removed completely. In general, the changes made to this version of the poem are of less poetic interest, though of clear political force. Significant alterations fall with only occasional exceptions into three categories, namely: increased hostility to the

Scots<sup>52</sup>; more detailed praise and approbation of the Parliamentary forces, with some shift of focus from Manchester to Cromwell (examples discussed below); and the considerable expansion of passages praising named individuals on both sides.<sup>53</sup> There are also some indications of greater distance from the royalist cause and experience, though these are fairly subtle.

At several points revisions appear to be intended to clarify the meaning of the poem, or to increase its historical accuracy. At the opening of book two, for instance, a substantial addition in the 1656 text offers greater detail of the organization and positioning of the armies around York, making clear – as the 1650 poem does not – that three separate forces were involved, commanded respectively by Manchester, Leslie and Fairfax (R2<sup>r</sup>-R2<sup>v</sup>). Manchester, referred to as *Ductor* ('General') at this point in the 1650 edition – which is careful to use the same terms for commanders of both sides – is now *Heros* ('Hero', R2<sup>v</sup>, p. 17 in 1650). Some revisions add to the clarity of the text but also sharpen its meaning: a single line at the end of the poem removes the ambiguity noted above surrounding the closing praise of an unnamed general in the final lines. Although he is still unnamed, the addition of the line '*Parlamenti acis erat haec victoria Turmis*' ('This was a victory for the *Parliamentarian* forces', li2<sup>v</sup>) at the start of this passage removes most of the ambiguity and makes it reasonably certain that Manchester is meant.

The first appearance of Cromwell in the poem is a site of particularly careful revision at each stage: ominously clad in iron, a human version of Statius' house of Mars in the manuscript poems, but – with the removal of that passage – deferred in an almost teasing fashion to a late but decisive appearance in the 1650 text. In 1656 he is once again introduced in Book 2 alongside Manchester, but an addition of just three extra lines to the 1650 text effectively reassign the whole of the following verse paragraph, including the memorable simile of the fisherman (discussed above), and by association the comparison to Hannibal, from Manchester to Cromwell. In the text below, [square brackets] indicate lines added in the 1656 edition; the last two lines correspond to the second and third lines of the passage quoted above (page 12) in its earlier (1650) form:

[Oh cum *Mancestro* duce quot sub sydere Noctes  
*Cromwellus* missisque exploratoribus haurit  
 Consilia, & Mentem *Eboraci*, & molimina frangit  
 Obvia, & hostile vigilans intercipit astum!]  
 Quae virtute sua miscet Stratagemata, fraudes  
 [Sedulus] & varias varia sub Imagine versat!<sup>54</sup>  
 (T1<sup>r-v</sup>; pages 21-22 in 1650)

[Oh how many nights, under Manchester's command, did Cromwell  
 Spend in sending out scouts and gathering information,  
 He broke the resolve and the resistance of York,  
 And, constantly watchful, intercepted any enemy ruse.]  
 He combined his courage with many stratagems,  
 And zealously pondered deceptions in various guises.

The association between Cromwell and Mars, suppressed in the text of 1650, resurfaces in 1656, albeit in a blunter fashion; in lines added near the end of the poem Fisher describes the royalist forces so astonished by Cromwell's speed on the battlefield that they took him for Mars himself, or even *Majorem vel Marte virum* ('a man even greater than Mars'), and *mersique pudore / Coepere attoniti Eboracae diffidere causae* ('overcome by shame, / They began in their shock to distrust the cause of York [that they were fighting for]', Fisher 1656: Ee2<sup>v</sup>).<sup>55</sup>

Only a handful of lines appear to have been revised primarily for stylistic reasons, and only three new epic similes are added, one each in books two, three and four. The first and longest of these is of particular interest, and fits the overall patterns of revision in this edition. It compares the beauty of the King's army as it prepares for battle to that of a bull adorned for sacrifice (Bb1<sup>v</sup>):

Ille habitus, luxusque fluens per castra nitebat  
 CAROLIDUM, sed vana nimis, minimeque decora  
*Grajugenis* ea pompa viris. Ducendus ad Aras,  
 Progreditur sic *Taurus* ovans cui cornua surgunt.  
 Purpureis vittata Rosis, redimitaque sertis  
 Frons nitet; Ille sui fidens rutilantia jactat  
 Colla feris crinita toris, mortisque Theatrum  
 Victor init, donec gemina inter cornua Ferrum  
 Personuit, tristes & adactae in colla secures,  
 Tum gemuit, Imbellique, solo cervice recumbit,  
 Sanguineoque luit fatalia gaudia letho!  
 Sic stabat *Carolina* cohors, Peditumque superba  
 Agmina, mox avido casura Piacula ferro.

*The splendid trappings of the Royalist forces  
 Shone as they flowed through the camp – but that pomp  
 Was too empty and unseemly for the Greek men. Like a bull  
 Destined for the altar, who steps forward joyfully, proud of his high horns.  
 Bound with purple roses, and wreathed in garlands  
 His brow shines; confident in himself he tosses his  
 Glowing neck, shaggy and muscled, and enters the Theatre  
 Of death as a victor, until between his two horns the Iron  
 Resounds, and grim axes hack at his neck,  
 Then he bellows, and falls to the earth, no longer warlike,  
 And satisfies deadly joys with a bloody death!  
 Thus stood the army of Charles, and the proud ranks  
 Of infantry, soon to fall as a propitiatory sacrifice to the greedy iron.*

The simile of the bull both echoes and contrasts with that applied to Manchester (the courageous bull who leads his herd across the river), and also contains an element of ambiguity – new in the 1656 version of the poem. The beauty and nobility of the Royalist cause is clear, but the bull in this simile is also slightly foolish, possibly ignorant of the meaning of his adornments (which mark him out as a sacrificial victim) and overconfident in his own strength (*sui fidens*). The pathos of his death is real, but the note of scepticism is new.

In the most subtle (albeit brief) attempt to interpret Fisher's engagement with classical sources, Laura Knoppers comments on the 'bold syncretism' of his depiction of Cromwell in the *Irenodia Gratulatoria* of 1652 and the *Inauguratio Olivariana* of 1655.<sup>56</sup> Although her interest in the material is principally political, she is right to stress the sophistication of Fisher's classicism. Whereas in those later works, Fisher is interested (among other aspects) in using classical parallels to define and defend the nature of Cromwell's republicanism within the context of the Protectorate, the step-by-step evolution of *Marston Moor* shows his maturing attempt to create a poetic framework, almost a poetic methodology, capable of comprehending the events of the 1640s. At the same time, it charts a powerful process of self-definition as a poet. In his innovative appropriation of Silver Latin epic and (especially) the late antique short-epic panegyric of Claudian, Fisher broke new ground: just as the work heralds a new age in politics, his poetry is nothing like the neo-Latin epic models of, for instance, Sannazaro, Vida or Petrarch. Stylistically, the blend of effective narrative, frequent and vivid similes and

marked alliteration (a feature associated with British Latin poetry in particular) feels fresh, and the whole poem is animated by a kind of emotional realism which recognizes both the sorrow and honour of defeat, and the exhilaration of the rise to power.

Fisher's Latin poetry is – as I hope to have demonstrated – undoubtedly a rich resource for a fuller understanding of the cultural politics in this turbulent period; but it is also effective and often moving Latin poetry in its own right, which deserves a wider audience than it has received. Fisher, like Milton, Cowley, Marvell and many other now neglected authors, such as Edmund Waller, Mildmay Fane and Peter Du Moulin, was operating within a bilingual literary culture: if we ignore the Latin works of this period, we are hearing only half the conversation.

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## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Dr Stephen Bull, Curator of Military History and Archaeology at Lancashire County Museums for assistance with the military detail of the campaign, the likely meaning of individual Latin terms in a military context, and for help with relevant bibliography in the area of military history. I would also like to thank David Norbrook, Edward Holberton and Timothy Raylor for comments on this article at various stages.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> ESTC R202010, Wing (2nd ed.) F1029, Thomason, E.535[1]. The Thomason tracts copy is dated April 11<sup>th</sup>. The poem in the 1650 edition is 1,367 lines that is, around the length of two books of the *Iliad*, or a book and a half of Virgil's *Aeneid*; Virgil's *Georgics* is 2,188 lines long. Claudian composed several works of this scale, including *De consulatu Stilichonis* (three books, 1,253 lines) and *De raptu Proserpinae* (three books, 1,171 lines). 'Short epics' and 'eypllia' on religious, mythological or historical and political topics were a popular neo-Latin literary form, with influential examples including Jacopo Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis*, Girolamo Fracastoro's *Syphilis* and (in English) Milton's *Paradise Regained*. More closely contemporary parallels can be found in the Latin epics, short epics and epic fragments by British and Irish Latin poets including Milton, *In Quintum Novembris* (pub. 1645), Christopher Ockland, *Proelia Anglorum* (1582) and *Elisabetha* (first book 1582; second 1589), Dermot O'Meara, *Ormonius* (1615), George Carleton's first book of an Essex epic (printed in *Heroici Characteres*, 1603), Alabaster's attempt at an *Elisaeis* (c.1590), the last book of Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* (1668) and the Latin version of book one of the *Davideis*, and James Philp's *Grameid* (just over five books, 1691). Fisher had previously published two shorter pieces, *Hyberniae lachrymae* (1648, anonymously; but included in both BL autograph manuscripts discussed below) and *Chronosticon decollationis Caroli regis* (1649).

<sup>2</sup> For Fisher's career, see Peacey, 'Fisher, Payne (1615/16–1693)' and Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 228-38.

<sup>3</sup> Fisher has 55 entries in ESTC, ranging from 1649 to 1690, but this is not a full account. The bibliographic study of Fisher's works is complicated by multiple editions, his habit of editing and republishing material, and above all by a good deal of anonymous publication – at least two items currently listed anonymously in the ESTC (*Hyberniae lachrymae, or, A sad contemplation on the bleeding condition of Ireland. To the Honourable and excellently well accomplish Sir Iohn Clotworthy knight, and collonel* [London, 1648], ESTC R210968, Wing H3860 and *The anniversary ode on His Sacred Majesties inauguration, in Latin and English*, London: printed by Edward Jones, 1686; ESTC R214862; Wing (1994) A3240A) are certainly by Fisher. (In both cases, autograph copies are in manuscripts in the British Library.) Further archival research would almost certainly add to this list. Fisher continued to publish to the end of the 1680s, although apparently never recovered from his reputation as an agent of Cromwell.

<sup>4</sup> Nigel Smith, for instance, writes 'It is not hard to see why Fisher was so ridiculed. In Latin or in translation, his verse grates on the ear.' Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 285.

<sup>5</sup> This is to my knowledge the first article or chapter devoted to Fisher. The only significant existing discussions of (any of) Fisher's work are Nevo, *The Dial of Virtue*, 82-4; MacLean, *Time's Witness*, 226-33; Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 284-6; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 228-38, 250-1, 264-5; Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, 58-64 and 89-93; Wenham, *Siege of York*, 129-32 (and associated notes); Miller, *Roman Triumphs*, 167-70 and Connell, *Secular Chains*, 23-32. Smith, *Poems of Andrew Marvell* notes several parallels in the course of his commentary on Marvell's poetry, though with no treatment of Fisher as such. Of these, only Wenham (whose focus is historical rather than literary) and Norbrook (231-2, 250) discuss *Marston Moor*; and only Knoppers, Miller and (briefly) Norbrook engage with Fisher's Latin texts rather than Thomas Manley's translation of the *Irenodia Gratulatoria* (T[homas] M[anley], *Veni, Vidi, Vici. The Triumphs of the Most Excellent & Illustrious Oliver Cromwell, &c.*, 1652).

<sup>6</sup> Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 231-2; Wenham, *Siege of York*, 129-32. There is to my knowledge no available translation, aside from the handful of passages translated in Wenham: these translations are reliable, but amount to only around 10% of the total poem.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher's Latin verse is typical in many ways of the British Latin tradition and shows evidence of influence by, for instance, Thomas May's Latin *Supplementum* to Lucan (1640), Milton's Latin poetry published in the *Poems* of 1645 and (less certainly) the Latin poetry included in Samuel Gott's *Nova Solyma* (1648). Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* (1668) alludes in turn to Fisher

as well as Milton and May. Future work will consider Fisher's style in more detail, and in particular his unusual and politically nuanced patterns of quotation and allusion.

<sup>8</sup> Both Fisher's passion for epic similes, and the detail of many of those similes, is indebted to classical Latin literature, especially Statius, Silius Italicus and (above all) Claudian.

<sup>9</sup> Many contemporary figures including Marvell, Waller, Nedham and even (briefly) Cowley transferred their allegiance at least once during this period. Critics have commented in particular on Andrew Marvell's transference in his poetry of royalist motifs to Cromwell (e.g. Davis, *Cambridge Companion*, 29; McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance*).

<sup>10</sup> Two further articles in preparation focus in detail on the relationship between Marvell and Fisher, and the patterns and significance of Fisher's intertextuality.

<sup>11</sup> One effect of the revisions Fisher made between the 1650 and 1656 editions of the poem was to make much clearer the presence of three distinct forces with separate commanders (see further below).

<sup>12</sup> Fuller details can be found in Peacey, 'Fisher, Payne (1615/16–1693)' and Bell, *English Poets*, 208-10.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of the glossing of technical terms include *cophonus*, a version of *cophinus* (meaning 'basket', from the Greek; attested in Juvenal and Columella) glossed as 'Gabeons & Cannon-baskets' (Fisher 1650: 13). On the same page, a more complex description of military clothing, *Consuitur Tegmen lateri impenetrabile* ('And an impenetrable covering for the body is sewn together') is glossed in the margin as 'Bufcoats' (that is, 'buff coats', thick leather jackets which resisted sword blows and offered some protection from falls). Many of these glosses do not appear in the 1656 edition, although some are retained, and a few new glosses are introduced.

<sup>14</sup> Wenham, *Siege of York*, 129-32 (and associated notes) identifies several of these, but refers only to the 1650 edition.

<sup>15</sup> Wenham suggests that the poem may be responsible for two widespread errors. 'The first is that Prince Rupert entered the city in person on the evening (1 July) preceding the battle of Marston Moor and the second that when the city was relieved on that occasion the inhabitants were on the brink of starvation.' Wenham, *Siege of York*, 131. Other aspects of his work reinforce stock elements also found elsewhere – for instance, his inventive Latin description in the manuscript poems of Cromwell's 'Ironsides' armour (discussed below), reflects the appearance of this moniker, attributed by the 16-26 September edition of *Mercurius Civicus* to Prince Rupert in the aftermath of the battle.

<sup>16</sup> Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 449, n. 43 points out similarities between the Lucanian 'hyperbole' of the war in heaven in *Paradise Lost*, and Fisher's narrative of Marston Moor, though he connects this to 'the unusual feature of blank verse' – that is, to the brief English version the 'Abstract of York' found in these manuscripts, not directly to any of the (much more substantial) Latin versions of the poem. Fisher's English verse is not the focus of this article, although his humorous realism about the miseries of life campaigning or in prison certainly challenges our expectations of 'Cavalier' poetry, and Norbrook is right to point out the links of the 'Abstract of York' to Milton in both form and style. These manuscript collections deserve greater attention in their own right.

<sup>17</sup> Many of the individual addressees are identified either in full or (more often) by initials. I have succeeded in identifying some but not all of them. Identifiable addressees include Colonel Thomas Cooke; Sir John Clotworthy (whom Fisher served under in Ireland in 1641-2); Henry Dixon; Major Falkland Ellis; Lord Falkland (Lucius Cary); Mrs A. Pelham, daughter of Sir Thomas Pelham; John Pulleyn (who had taught Fisher at Magdalene, Cambridge); Master Plumbtree, a schoolmaster of St. Alban's and Denzell Holles. The 'Gunpowder Plot' poem as a sub-genre of its own is discussed by Haan, 'Anglo-Latin Gunpowder Epic'. The vogue for this peculiarly British version of the epyllion was long-lasting and examples are found throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including by John Milton (*In Quintum Novembris*). I have seen an example in the Evelyn papers in the British Library dated as late as 1700. Fisher may have had Milton's poem, published in 1645, particularly in mind, since *Marston-Moor* borrows from Milton's description of Satan in that poem (see below).

<sup>18</sup> Fisher would reuse the unusual term 'Decollation' in his first known printed work, the broadsheet *Chronostichon Decollationis Caroli Regis, &c.*, printed very shortly after the execution of Charles I in January 1649. Several other elements of this elegy for Laud relate to Fisher's later political poetry, including imagery of thunder, lightning, the ship of state and a description of Laud as the 'cedar of our realm'.



<sup>19</sup> In fact, it was Holles who had carried the articles of impeachment against Laud from the House of Commons to the House of Lords on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1640. See Morrill, 'Holles, Denzil'. I have not yet been able to identify the dedicatee of Add MS 19863, given only as 'E. P.'

<sup>20</sup> This poem also appears in the Additional MS volume, though at a later point.

<sup>21</sup> The poem is 276 lines long in Add MS 19863, 278 in Harley MS 6932.

<sup>22</sup> The verb *stipo* means 'to crowd' or 'press together', and so in this passive form, to be 'crowded', 'pressed together', or 'surrounded'. It is quite often but by no means always used in a military context in classical Latin, and is a standard term found in both prose and poetry. *Glomero* is a poetic word in classical Latin, meaning literally 'to form into a ball', and more generally 'to gather in a heap', 'collect', 'press', or 'crowd'. It is found frequently in Virgil, and also several times in Lucretius and has a more clearly epic register than *stipo*. Both words fit the patterns of alliteration with *g* and *s* in the final two lines of this extract. The verb *stipantur* is found in the classical model for this passage (Statius, *Thebaid* 9.243-5), comparing fear at the sight of Hippomedon in a river to that of small fish at the approach of a dolphin. There may also be a borrowing from a description of fish in Aonio Paleario, *De immortalitate animarum* (1536), 1.452. Fisher's use of quotation and allusion to earlier Latin poets (classical and post-classical) is markedly rich, sophisticated and (in its choice of models) unusual. It is the subject of a separate forthcoming article.

<sup>23</sup> This strange spelling of Cromwell appears consistently in both manuscript sources.

<sup>24</sup> In this extract, the main text is from Add MS 19863 (12<sup>r-v</sup>), although the second and third lines (the parenthesis in praise of Manchester) are found only in Harley MS 6932. This passage is totally recast in 1650.

<sup>25</sup> There is a pun in the Latin here between *Comes* ('Earl') and *comes* ('companion', or 'comrade').

<sup>26</sup> In 1650, Fisher adds a second related simile, comparing the joy of the people of York at the arrival of Prince Rupert to relieve the city, to nestlings almost toppling out in their joyful eagerness at the sight of their returning mother (Fisher 1650: 35).

<sup>27</sup> In December 1651 the council of state decided to support Fisher, and discussed how best to do so. Subsequent publications during the 1650s show evidence of support from leading republican figures such as Marchamont Nedham, who contributed a first dedicatory poem to the *Irenodia Gratulatoria* of 1652. In 1652 Fisher was awarded £50 by the council of state in April 1652, and a further £100 to fund a trip to Scotland in September of that year. He received another payment of £100 in late 1654. Later Latin poems commemorate the inauguration of the protectorate in 1653, and the anniversaries of that event in subsequent years, as well as the death of Cromwell in 1658. Other publications commemorate military victories in 1653, 1656 and 1658 and commemorate the deaths of important figures such as Admiral Robert Blake and Archbishop James Ussher. He published a collection of his work, *Piscatoris poemata*, in 1656.

<sup>28</sup> The ESTC lists 27 copies, including five in Cambridge, five in Oxford, two in York and individual copies in Edinburgh, Lincoln and Leeds. I am grateful to Timothy Raylor for pointing out that Benlowes was a model for Fisher's tendency to produce 'bespoke' collections of his printed works. On Benlowes, see Jenkins, *Edward Benlowes*.

<sup>29</sup> The dedicatory poems are by Edward Benlowes (A3<sup>r-4<sup>r</sup></sup>), Robert Gardiner of the Middle Temple (A4<sup>v</sup>), Pierre de Cardonnel (a1<sup>r</sup>-a2<sup>r</sup>), Alexander Ross (a2<sup>v</sup>), Thomas Culpepper of the Inner Temple (a3<sup>r</sup>), John Sictor, *Bohemus* ('a Bohemian') (a3<sup>v</sup>), and Thomas Philipot (a4<sup>r-v</sup>). All this prefatory material is in Latin.

<sup>30</sup> *Miscellania quaedam ejusdem autoris. Quibus etiam accessit, THRENODIA In Memoriam Ferd. Fisheri Turmae Equestris Praefecti. A Domino Petro de Cardonnel Decantata*. It is also dated 1650 and printed by Thomas Newcomb. As well as a dedicatory poem to Cardonnel; there is a poem to Dr Benlowes; a poem 'Ad Amicum mihi Charissimum H. D.' (probably Henry Dixon) which also appears in the BL manuscript volumes; a funerary inscription for three children of 'Dom. Th. M.'; an epithalamium for Col. Th. Tomkins and Lucy Neal; a commemorative poem on the death of Col. John Chichester (died 1647), a long French Ode by Pierre de Cardonnel in honour of Ferdinand Fisher, Fisher's brother, lost in a shipwreck in 1646; and finally a short Latin poem addressed to Fisher, on the occasion of the printing of his poem, signed 'J. H.' – possibly John Hall, who contributed to *Mercurius Politicus*.

<sup>31</sup> A typographical error in the 1650 volume makes it appear that there are only four 'metra', as both the third and fourth are titled 'Metrum III' (p. 33 and p. 45).

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 285 oddly claims that 'Fisher's Latin poem *Marston Moor* (1650) was composed as royalist panegyric, yet was published, little altered, as parliamentarian'. The manuscript versions of the poem are certainly royalist (though they are closer to elegy than

panegyric in tone), but, as this article demonstrates, the poem was expanded and altered very substantially in its 'conversion' to a parliamentary work.

<sup>33</sup> In classical Latin, *scloppus* appears only at Persius 5.13 and is defined by the *OLD* as 'the sound made in striking something full of air'. It appears to be a standard term in late 17<sup>th</sup> century military Latin, and Fisher does not gloss it in *Marston Moor*; the fact he does not use it in the earlier versions of the work perhaps suggest that he encountered the word with this meaning for the first time at some point in the late 1640s. I am grateful to Stephen Bull for help with the military terminology of the poem. See Helander, *Neo-Latin in Sweden*, 193-6 on 'sclopus' and related words, largely in seventeenth-century Swedish Latin texts; Helander gives the meaning as (usually) 'gun', but it does not seem to have exactly this meaning in Fisher.

<sup>34</sup> Fisher says 'more than seven thousand men' fell in the battle (Fisher 1650: 68). This is an exaggeration, but of the right order of magnitude: losses were probably around four thousand.

<sup>35</sup> The conventions of this scene are related to those of the 'Gunpowder plot' mini-epic or epyllion, an enduringly popular British neo-Latin form, which typically relates the gathering of the agents of hell (see e.g. Milton, *In Quintum Novembris*, published in 1645, as well as many earlier examples). The BL notebooks include Fisher's own attempt at this genre. Fisher's version of this scene is probably indebted in particular to a similar scene at the beginning of Book 1 of Claudian's *In Rufinum*, which has itself been identified as an important source for Milton's similar scene in Book 2 of *Paradise Lost*. These links are beyond the scope of this article but deserve further attention.

<sup>36</sup> The opening lines of *Marston-Moor* invoke the Muses ('Pierides'), but also Mars and Bellona, gods of war. The invocation is further expanded in 1656.

<sup>37</sup> Fisher's use of the 'ship of state' simile, both here and in later works, is discussed in more detail in a forthcoming article on Fisher and Marvell.

<sup>38</sup> This element of the revision reflects the changed political situation of 1649/50, in which the Scots were now enemies rather than allies of Cromwell and the English Commonwealth.

<sup>39</sup> Fisher 1650: 52. The text even seems to allude to this teasing of readerly expectations, adding a parenthetical explanation (*ut semper erat magnos servatus in usus*), '(As he [Cromwell] was always reserved for occasions of greatest need').

<sup>40</sup> The most personal expression of grief is for Posthumus Kirton, who commanded a regiment in Newcastle's army (Fisher 1650: 60). This loss also elicits one of the most lyrical passages of the poem: *Quàm vaga deciduis vergunt Colocasia capsis, / Pubentésque Rosae primos moriuntur ad Ortus* ('As the spreading Egyptian lily bends with its dropping seed-cases / And the young men are dying at the first rising of the Rose.') *Capsa* meaning 'seed-case' is not classical (in classical Latin the word means a round box or case); the closely related word *capsula*, however, appears to mean a 'seed-case' in Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* (1668), 4.361 (of a marigold) and 4.795 (of a poppy).

<sup>41</sup> Descriptions of siege tend to engender sympathy for those besieged, since it is only on the besieged side that women, children and the elderly also suffer. This aspect links the poem with the *Iliad* as well as the books of the *Aeneid* set inside Troy as it falls (and implicitly links the defeated royalists with the Trojans in general, and the family of Aeneas in particular). On Lucan as a model for ambiguity of this kind, in this period in particular, see Paleit, *War, Liberty and Caesar* and Norbrook, *Writing the Revolution*.

<sup>42</sup> The frequency of epic similes in the poem allies it stylistically more with Statius than with Virgil or Lucan; Statius's *Thebaid* has roughly twice the number of similes as Virgil's *Aeneid* (see Dominik, "Similes in the *Thebaid*", 266). Fisher's fairly frequent use of double or even triple similes may also be modelled upon Statius (Dominik, "Similes in the *Thebaid*", 268) as well as Claudian (Cameron, *Claudian*, 296-303). Twentieth-century critics generally judged Statius' epic similes as excessive.

<sup>43</sup> A marginal note here glosses the italicised phrases as *Vocabula militaria* ('Military vocabulary'), meaning 'To march', 'To halt', 'counter-march' and 'wheel'. This is apparently a description of drilling.

<sup>44</sup> The migration of cranes is often described in Latin literature (e.g. Statius *Thebaid*, 5.9ff; Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 5.711ff). Both Strymon, in Thrace, and the Nile as a winter destination appear in many of these passages.

<sup>45</sup> The allusions to Claudian, a more straightforwardly positive and purposeful passage, also work 'against' the Lucanian associations.

<sup>46</sup> *Sublacto* is not a classical word, and nor have I found it in any of the (incomplete) guides to neo-Latin usage. *Lacto*, - are, however, means to 'wheedle', 'dupe' or 'cajole'.

<sup>47</sup> Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 7.498-503. Such a domestic simile is unusual in Silius Italicus. In the 1656 edition of *Marston Moor*, these lines refer to Cromwell, not Manchester (discussed further below).

<sup>48</sup> Hannibal is famous for using elephants in battle. Marvell compares Cromwell to Hannibal: 'A Caesar he ere long to Gaul, / To Italy an Hannibal' ('An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland', 101-2). In his note on these lines, Smith, *Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 278 observes that Fisher compares Cromwell to Hannibal in the *Irenodia Gratulatoria* of 1652. *Marston Moor* both in its manuscript and 1650 published versions predates 'An Horatian Ode', which was almost certainly written in June or July 1650. The multiple links between Fisher and Marvell will be discussed further in a forthcoming article.

<sup>49</sup> The simile is indebted to Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 6.208-10, describing the exploits of Scaeva, a centurion in Caesar's army.

<sup>50</sup> The intertextuality here is once again complex, including echoes of Virgil, but the simile is indebted in particular to Claudian, *Panegyricus de Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, 259-64, describing Alaric in defeat. Stilicho had fought alongside Alaric earlier in his career, before Alaric changed sides and became his enemy, whom he defeated on several occasions. This may be relevant here, since the Scots fighting alongside Parliamentary forces in 1644 had become the enemies of the Commonwealth by 1650.

<sup>51</sup> *Piscatoris Poemata* is dated 1656; *Marston-moor*, however, has its own title page (as do all of the more substantial works included), dated 1655: the *Piscatoris Poemata* may reprint a now lost second edition of the poem dating from that year, though no such title is recorded in the ESTC. The text of *Marston-moor* runs from N2<sup>r</sup>-Ii2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> For example, lines on the British peace under James I (Fisher 1650: 2) are removed; the adjective *vigentes* ('flourishing') describing the Scots in the earlier poem (Fisher 1650: 5) is replaced by *bacchantes violato Foedere Scotos* ('the Scots, rejoicing like worshippers of Bacchus in the breaking of the treaty', Fisher 1656: O1<sup>v</sup>), and the Scottish failure of nerve on the battlefield at Marston Moor is given much greater emphasis in the later version (Fisher 1656: T2<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>53</sup> A complete list of individuals named in 1656 but not in 1650 is too long to give here, but includes individual on both sides.

<sup>54</sup> The word *sedulus* ('careful') in line six of this extract replaces the more pejorative adjective *versipellis* ('that changes its form or appearance', 'crafty', 'cunning'). These lines describe Manchester in 1650, Cromwell in 1656.

<sup>55</sup> Stilicho is described as the *vivida Martis imago* ('living image of Mars') in Claudian (*De Bello Gothico*, 468), a poem to which Fisher alludes repeatedly. Stilicho (c. 359-408), a supremely skilled military commander, was regent during the minority of the emperor Honorius, and effectively in charge of the Western Empire.

<sup>56</sup> Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, 58-65 (on *Irenodia Gratulatoria*, 1652) and 88-93 (on *Inauguratio Olivariana*, 1655) 'eclectic syncretism' (63), 'bold syncretism' (92). In this respect, she links Fisher's practice to that of Milton in particular.

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