

alienating, and dangerous to his intellectual aspirations. Eros both makes him who he is and threatens his hard-won sense of self.

Other erotic lyrics from the Arundel collection take up even more directly the materials of a twelfth-century humanist education, playing with stories from classical mythology, the paradigms of cosmic structure available in Neoplatonism, habits of female description codified in rhetorical handbooks, and the academic vision of the philosopher poet's place among the deified intelligentsia. The last three poems I would like to consider in this section (McDonough nos. 4, 8, and 1), while not linked quite as neatly as the three just examined, all focus closely on particular kinds of academic texts, working through their conventions to elucidate a clerical self whose erotic identity is in large part a creation of the texts themselves. The first of the three, "A globo veteri" (Arundel 4), might be called the signature piece of the Arundel collection (fig. 8). It is the most explicit enunciation of the intellectual allegiances of the poet or poets responsible for these works, combining quotation from the *Cosmographia* with extensive allusion to academic descriptions of female beauty. The second, "Seuit aure spiritus" (Arundel 8), also takes up the *effictio* as taught in the schools, but rapidly moves beyond that text, creating a new sort of female description with powerful metaphorical implications. The third, "Dionei sideris" (Arundel 1), paraphrases Martianus Capella in a highly mythological description of a spring moment, inviting the reader to consider the lyric as a sort of personal application of the *De nuptiis* and its exegesis to clerical erotic experience. These three poems, but particularly Arundel 1, will prepare for the rather long analysis, in the last chapter, of three final poems. Each of the poems in chapter 8 meditates extensively on a figure from classical mythology; because of their careful focus on mythological characters and events, these poems would, I believe, have asked a contemporary, clerical audience to understand them in light of twelfth-century Neoplatonic exegesis of the myths they consider; they would have invited a thoughtful clerical auditor or reader to consider the poems allegorically and to read himself and his life into the ancient stories retold in the lyrics.

"A globo veteri"

A full-blown sequence of five elaborate stanza-pairs without refrain, Arundel 4 is also found in the *Carmina Burana* and, with music, in the thirteenth-century Parisian manuscript Florence, Laurenziana Plutarchus 29.1.²⁷ The poem quotes seminal academic texts to bring the generalized erotic anxiety evident in Neoplatonic cosmologies to something like the level of individual experi-

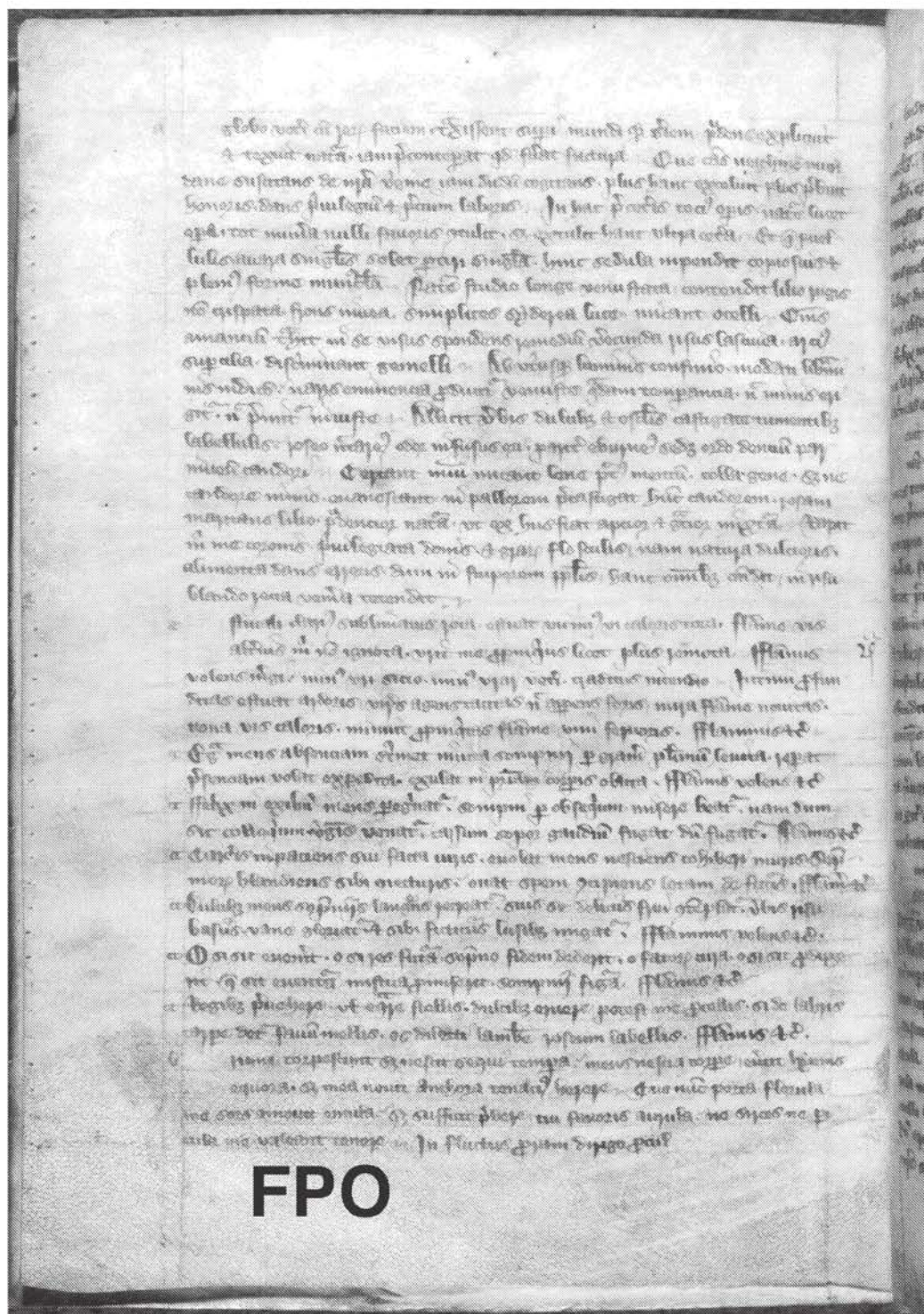


Fig. 8. London, British Library MS Arundel 384, fol. 233^v. Late fourteenth century. A largely prose manuscript, it includes on fols. 223–242 twenty-eight rhythmic Latin poems all likely composed in the twelfth century. This final section of Arundel 384 may have circulated for some time as a separate and unbound booklet. “A globo vet-eri” occupies the top half of the page. (Reproduced by permission of the British Library.)

ence. Half-stanza 1a quotes the first lines of Bernardus Silvestris's "Megacosmos," and half-stanza 1b quotes an important moment near the beginning of the "Microcosmos."²⁸ Most of the poem, stanzas 3a–5a, consists of a truncated *effictio* that closely echoes Gerald of Wales's "Descriptio cuiusdam puellae," the sort of schoolish description ultimately codified, as Peter Godman points out, in the description of Helen in Matthew of Vendôme's *Ars versificatoria*. At the end of the poem, in the second half of the final stanza, the speaker calls up the ambivalent male self created from these philosophical and rhetorical texts.²⁹ At base a pastiche of academic set pieces, Arundel 4's juxtaposition of the fragments of a mid-twelfth-century humanist education makes more concrete the implications of those texts for the lives of the clerics who studied and lived them.

In place of a descriptive spring opening or the cosmological clock we saw in the first three Arundel poems, "A globo" moves from the spring as an always available metaphor for the first creation, to the actual Creation as elaborated in Neoplatonic mythography, and to a Natura who does not simply paint the earth, but who makes manifest the ideas in the divine mind. The gods, through the "rerum faciem," impose order on chaos by an almost literary act of organization ("texuit" and "explicuit"), in language that echoes the concluding sentence of Bernardus's "Megacosmos," where Imarmene "disponit, textit et retexit que complectitur universa" [disposes, joins together and rejoins the universe of things thus comprised].³⁰ This opening places in the broadest possible perspective the description that follows, pointedly setting that description in parallel to the description of the new man that is the "Microcosmos," and, most important, supplying what is missing in the Neoplatonic text, a companion female to the male subject:

1a
A globo veteri
cum rerum faciem
traxissent superi,
mundi que seriem
5 prudens explicuit
et texuit,
Natura
iam preconceperat,
quod fuerat
10 factura.

1b
 Que causas machine
 mundane suscitans,
 de nostra virgine
 iam dudum cogitans,
 5 plus hanc excoluit,
 plus prebuit
 honoris,
 dans priuilegium
 et precium
 10 laboris.

2a
 In hac pre ceteris
 tocius operis
 Nature lucet opera.
 tot munera
 5 nulli fauoris contulit,
 set extulit
 hanc vltra cetera.

[1a

*When, from the ancient mass, the gods had drawn out the form of things and, foreknowing, unfolded and interwove the order of the cosmos, Natura had already planned out what she was going to do.*³¹

1b

Natura, stirring up the causes of the world machine, for a long time already thinking about our maiden, the more she perfected her, the more she furnished her with honors, giving special favor and the gift of her labor.

2a

*In her, when compared with the rest of the entire work, Natura's effort shines forth. She conferred on no other so many gifts of grace, but praised this one above all the rest.]*³²

The neat literary sequence mapped out in stanza 1—the opening and the conclusion to the “Megacosmos” followed by an allusion to the opening of the “Microcosmos” that in turn moves from Bernardus’s cosmological treatise to a version of the Ovidiana being taught in the schools—extracts philosophy and rhetoric from the prose and distiches of their original forms, and reworks them into Latin song. Out of the whirring of the “world machine” and the first

process of earthly cultivation comes a *puella*, not just the abstracted perfection that Gerald described or the arch-beauty of Matthew, but *nostra virgo*. She is an ideal who is the speaker's own woman, the cosmically sanctioned female companion for the deified cleric missing from the "Microcosmos," the woman inscribed in the cosmos since chaos was first brought to order by the *labor* of the gods. Her beauty, the culmination of all the efforts of the third hypostasis, inspires those who love, and what the lover reads in her face promises a cure for desire:

3b

Omnes amancium
trahit in se visus,
spondens remedium
verecunda risus

5

lasciuia.
arcus supercilia
discriminant gemelli.

[3b

*Her appearance attracts to itself all lovers, the smile in bashful playfulness promising a remedy. Twin arches divide the eyebrows.]*³³

This ontologically superior woman appears to present a reliable image to her observer, not the false readings the more terrestrial Flora offered in Arundel 15 and 16. Her eyes ("simplices ocelli") shine with a light ("syderea luce") that makes clear the *virgo's* celestial origins, as does the luminescence of her flesh (in stanza 5a). Her face has the geometrical balance of a perfect moderation:

4a

Ab vtriusque luminis
confinio
moderati libraminis
indicio

5

naris eminencia
producitur venuste.
quadam temperancia
nec nimis erigitur
nec premitur

10

iniuste.

4b
 Allicit verbis dulcibus
 et osculis,
 castigate tumentibus
 labellulis,
 5 roseo nectareus
 odor infusus ori.
 pariter eburneus
 sedet ordo dencium
 par niuium
 10 candori.

[4a
From the border of both eyes, with the mark of a balanced scale the rise of the nose is prettily produced. By a certain moderation neither is it raised up too much nor is it inappropriately pressed down.

4b
The honey-sweet odor infused in a rosy mouth attracts with sweet words and kisses, and with lips swelling modestly. In like manner sits the ivory order of the teeth, as white as snow.]

Stanza 5a describes the “gracior mixtura” of rose and lily that is the maiden’s skin, but the poet has no interest in the details of her body, erotic or otherwise, once he has located her existence so firmly in the mannerist Ovidian poetry of the schools.³⁴ As Godman notes, this sort of description was hackneyed by the second half of the twelfth century and already the subject of parody. Here the poet incorporates the *Ars versificatoria*, or texts like it, as the basis for the description of female because it is so explicitly textual. While it is entirely unoriginal, except for the compressed presentation and for the translation from classical meter to rhymed verse, it does distill contemporary teaching of classical literary methods. Coronis epitomizes the eroticized female body as a text taught to men in the schools, a figure standing for the intellectual and sexual anxieties of the clerical class. The maiden’s name, mentioned for the only time in stanza 5b, appropriately marks an object of literary and erotic interest for a self-deifying cleric.³⁵ Coronis of Larissa, the most beautiful maiden in Thessaly, is the beloved of Apollo in *Metamorphoses* 2.542–632, whom he kills when he discovers, thanks to the “garrula” crow, that she has been unfaithful. Thus the source of the medieval poet’s distress is the female consort of a god, enshrined in a mythographic Ovidian text, who betrays the

god sexually and dies as the result of too much talk.³⁶ The medieval Coronis is a celestial *virgo* who teaches the speaker to be what he is and takes him from himself.

5b
 Rapit michi me Coronis,
 priuilegiata donis
 et Gratiarum flosculis.
 nam Natura, dulcioris
 5 alimenta dans erroris,
 dum in stuporem populis
 hanc omnibus ostendit,
 in risu blando retia
 veneria
 10 tetendit.

[5b
 Coronis, privileged with (these) gifts and the flowers of the Graces, steals me
 from myself; for Nature, giving the food of a sweeter error, when, as a won-
 der, she showed off this woman to all the world, stretched out, with an allur-
 ing smile, Venus's nets.]

She receives her gift of beauty from Natura and from her handmaidens, the Graces, yet that gift is an ironic "alimenta erroris." Despite the Neoplatonic machinery of the opening stanza, which implicitly makes her the equal of the male described in the "Microcosmos," and despite the long lesson of the *effictio*, which places her in the literary tradition of Ovidian poetics as manifested in current pedagogy, she remains a snare to the cleric. The ambiguous phrase "in stuporem" of 5b.6 ("as a wonder") may convey something of the mixture of amazement and stupefaction her presence brings.

"Seuit aure spiritus"

"Seuit aure spiritus" (Arundel 8) also appears, lacking various stanzas, in the *Carmina Burana* collection (where it is CB 83) and in an early-thirteenth-century French manuscript now in the Vatican (Vat.reg.lat. 344).³⁷ Like the first three poems discussed in this chapter, Arundel 5, 15, and 16, it is built from a series of identical stanzas with refrain. Here the stanzas are ten lines long, from four to seven syllables per line, with the added demand of five b-rhymes in

each stanza (7a4b7a4b 7b8c7b8c 7b6d); the final anomalous d-rhyme (-ore) links each stanza to the others. Since the song lacks music in all three manuscripts, we cannot know if it was intended to be sung as a hymn or if it was through-composed in the manner of a sequence. Like Arundel 5, 15, and 16, "Seuit" opens with a seasonal setting for the action of the lyric, though the opening is less astrologically detailed than we find elsewhere. As in Arundel 15 and 16, the female object of the speaker's desire is named Flora, a name that, as we have suggested, must have struck the author as particularly appropriate for works that explore the sublunar and material manifestations of eros in the context of a carefully constructed cosmological moment.

Arundel 8 continues and elaborates certain features of "A globo veteri," and at the same time it can be linked to the three lyrics—5, 15, and 16—alluded to a moment ago. Where Arundel 4 appropriated some of the verbal details of an idealized face from Ovidian poetic pedagogy, the *effictio* in "Seuit" rejects that literary model and concentrates with much greater originality on the outspread body of the *virgo*. The poem's most recent critic sees the author in conscious competition with, and "reaction against," more "verbose and conventional" versifiers such as Matthew of Vendôme, "simplifying and refashioning Matthew's flawed model . . . [to] focus upon the sensual features of the idealized nude" and avoiding the "veiled euphemism" with which Matthew passes over erotic details.³⁸ It is absolutely true that the author of Arundel 8 achieves a much greater intensity of focus on the material physicality of the naked female body than Matthew ever does. Nevertheless, and to no reader's surprise by this point, my impulse would be to see that effort directed to heightening the erotic impact of the piece while also fashioning a work that implicitly sets up the body of the woman as an object of exploration and discovery in line with the philosophical exploration of the cosmos. Assuming there is, in fact, some connection among the erotic poems in Arundel, the move from the restricted and literary Coronis of Ovid in Arundel 4 to Flora³⁹ may signal a movement away from a construction of the beloved as a Neoplatonic and rhetorical artifact to an analysis of the female body as a part of the larger cosmos. In some ways the work foreshadows a poem like Donne's *Elegy XIX*, "To His Mistress Going to Bed," in which the speaker imagines himself exploring the woman's body as a seventeenth-century adventurer explores the world:

License my roving hands, and let them go
 Before, behind, between, above, below.
 O my America! my new-found-land,

19. There are eight Flora/Florula poems in the Arundel collection: 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16.

20. Text from McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 97–98; my translation. McDonough points out (97n), following Dronke, a possible play on the Latin form of Peter of Blois's name (Petrus Blesensis) in the word "blesencia." I have rendered the refrain according to McDonough's suggestions.

21. See McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 97.

22. Ps. 54:2–4. For the Vulgate text see Alberto Colunga and Laurentio Turrado, eds., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1965); for the Douay-Rheims text, *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (1899; Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1971).

23. Ps. 54.22–24.

24. Bernardus Silvestris elaborates a version of this in his commentary on the *De nuptiis*: "Visus et alloquium, contactus et oscula, factum" [Sight and speech, touch and kiss, deed]; see Westra, *Commentary*, 75. See also Godman, "Literary Classicism," 162–65 for a discussion of this topos as it appears in Arundel 10, "Grates ago Veneri."

25. Text from McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 82–83; my translation.

26. McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 83, points out this ambiguity.

27. "A globo" is *Carmina Burana* 67. For the music from Florence, Laurenziana Plutarchus 29.1, which lacks stanza 5, see Gillingham, *Critical Study*, 98–99, and *Secular Medieval Latin Song: An Anthology* (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1993), 116–18. The song is through-composed, but only the text for half-stanzas 1a, 2a, 3a and 4a is recorded.

28. McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 8onn, quotes the relevant passages from "Megacosmos" 1.1:

Congeries informis adhuc, cum Silva teneret
Sub veteri confusa globo primordia rerum,
Visa deo Natura queri. . . .

and "Microcosmos" 3.1:

Sed quoniam par est diligentem opificem claudentes partes operis digna consumatione finire, visum est michi in homine fortunam honoremque operis terminare. Inpensoribus eum beneficiis, inpensoribus eum impleam incrementis, ut universis a me factis animalibus quodam quasi dignitatis privilegio et singularitate concertet.

For a discussion of the relevance of these passages for an understanding of stanza 1 of "A globo" see David A. Traill, "Notes on 'Dum Diane vitrea' (CB 62) and 'A globo veteri' (CB 67)," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 23 (1988): 149–51. Traill calls the poem an "elegant masterpiece" (149) and the poet "a man of refined education and unimpeachable Latinity" (150).

29. Munari, *Ars versificatoria*, at 2.56, pp. 82–84; cited in Godman, "Literary

Criticism,” 160–62. McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 80–81, cites five instances of verbal parallels with Gerald’s poem and two passages parallel to the *Cosmographia*.

30. Dronke, *Bernardus Silvestris Cosmographia*, 120, “Megacosmos” 4.14; Wetherbee, *Cosmographia*, 90.

31. Traill’s analysis in “Notes,” 149–51, of the difficult stanza 1a of “A globo” in light of the opening of Bernardus’s *Cosmographia* produces an expanded translation that would read something like this: “When the gods [Noys and Natura] had drawn from the ancient mass [of unreformed Silva] the form of things [i.e. reformed Silva], which, once it had received its mind soul, unfolded and interwove the order of the cosmos, Nature had already . . .”

32. Text from McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 80–82; my translation.

33. Stanzas 2b and 3a read:

2b

Et, que puellulis
auara singulis
solet partiri singula,
huic sedula
5 inpendit copiosius
et plenius
forme munuscula.

3a

Nature studio
longe venustata,
contendit lilio
rugis non crispata
5 frons niuea.
simplices syderea
luce micant ocelli.

[2b

And who is greedy is accustomed to distribute single gifts to each of the little girls, on this one she diligently weighs out more fully and generously the little gifts of beauty.

3a

Made lovely at length by the devotion of Nature, the snowy brow, not creased with wrinkles, vies with the lily. The frank little eyes shine with a heavenly light.]

My translation.

34. Stanza 5a reads:

5a

Certant niui, micant lene

- pectus, mentum, colla, gene;
 set, ne candore nimio
 euanescant in pallorem,
 5 precastigat hunc candorem
 rosam maritans lilio
 prudencior Natura,
 vt ex hiis fiat apcior
 et gracior
 10 mixtura.

[5a

They vie with the snow, they glimmer gently: breast, chin, neck, cheeks; but, lest with too much whiteness they disappear into pallor, a more prudent Nature, marrying the rose with the lily, moderates in advance this whiteness, so that out of them there might be made a more apt and a more lovely mixture.]

My translation.

35. Dronke believes the name Coronis is found in medieval Latin love poetry only in Arundel 1, 4, and 10 (“Peter of Blois,” 219).

36. This is the only Coronis cited in Lewis and Short; the story is perhaps most famously known to medievalists as the penultimate of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, where it is told by the Manciple. There are other reasons, besides the Ovidian associations, that the name Coronis might have appealed to the author and might have seemed an appropriate name to distinguish this woman from the Flora of Arundel 15 and 16. On the one hand, a *coronis* is (to quote Lewis and Short) “the curved line or flourish formed with a pen, which writers or transcribers were accustomed to make at the end of a book or chapter,” thus a marker for a complete text. On the other hand, a *corona* is both a crown (such as the crown of poetic renown) and the constellation, the northern crown.

37. In *Carmina Burana* the stanzas are arranged 1 2 3 5 7; in the Vatican manuscript 1 2 5 4 7; the refrain is found only in CB. Meyer, *Arundel*, 20. In his edition, Meyer rearranges the stanzas as they are found in Arundel 384 to suit his own notions of coherence. McDonough, *Oxford Poems*, 86–87, retains the sequence of stanzas found in the manuscript, as does Wollin, *Petri Blesensis Carmina*, 430–39, who notes the different versions of the poem (431). None of the poem’s editors has suggested that the refrain is not original to Arundel 8, though, of course, its weak manuscript tradition increases the possibility that that is the case.

38. Godman, “Literary Classicism,” 162.

39. Flora was the goddess of flowers; her festival was celebrated in late April, “often with unbridled license” (Lewis and Short, 759).

40. Ll. 25–30; A. L. Clements, ed., *John Donne’s Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), 55.

41. Walter of Châtillon makes use of the same figure in “Autumnali frigore,”