Dear All,

Thank you for taking the time to read my paper draft, currently titled “Chivalry in Philip II’s Italy (c. 1550-1650)”. This is still very much a work in progress, but I would appreciate any and all feedback you might be able to provide. My largest reservation is that a reader of an earlier draft said it was not “historical” enough. I am curious what your thoughts are regarding this. I am also looking forward to receiving critiques about other aspects of the project. Any suggestions regarding publication placement are also welcome.

As a bit of brief background, this project was originally written as a seminar paper that I intended to use as the final chapter of my dissertation. My revised project now stops in the 1380s and so I cut this and intended to forget about it. A few months ago, however, I came across Rosario Villari’s recent (2014) book on the 1647 Revolt of Naples, which I discuss briefly in the paper, and thought I might dig this up, brush it off, and send it in for publication as a stand-alone article. This is just a part of an interest which I foresee becoming a second project, early modern chivalry.

Now a word on the length: it is closer to 29 pages in length than the 36 it first appears on account of the several images you will find at the end. I would advise printing the paper in color or keeping close to an electronic device since the three final images are too dark when printed in black and white. Due to formatting and my effort to cut down on waste for this workshop, I have removed the images from of the text, placed them at the end, and directed you with in-text cues to an appendix for use. I hope this minor inconvenience can be forgiven.

Again, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to read this paper and meeting to discuss it with me. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Best,
Tucker
Chivalry in Philip II’s Italy (c. 1550 – 1650)

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Chivalry was not dead by the end of the sixteenth century. It certainly was not dead in 1544 when Blaise de Monluc (1502-77), a French knight fighting in the Italian Wars, called out to his commander at the beginning of the siege of Ceresole, "Sir, lead us to fight, it is better for us to die hand to hand than to be killed by a blast of the canon".¹ Or a few months earlier when a former commander praised Blaise’s new appointment as captain, saying, "I am happy that you will not bring us peace".² Or outside of the Italian stronghold of Savigliano when Blaise could not pierce through the enemy’s defenses and so set fire to an adjoining house to avoid wasting his night.³ We can also refer to the beginning of Blaise’s autobiography – begun in 1574 – where he states with plenty of confidence that his deeds of arms will educate and inspire future generations.⁴ Chivalry, it seems, still had a future in the age of Philip II (r. 1556-98). Indeed, the pursuit of honor, a thirst for war, and violent outbursts continued to influence the behavior of a knightly class in Europe.

But historians of early modern Europe typically omit chivalry from the historical narrative due to social and military developments that followed the spread of

¹ “menez nous au combat monsieur, il nous vaut mieux mourir main à main, que d’estre tuez à coups d’artillerie” (Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires de messier Blaise de Monluc, maréchal de France, ed. Florimond de Raemond (Paris: Par S. Milanges, 1592), 47v. All translations are those of the author unless otherwise stated.
² “Je sçauois bien que tu ne nous apporterois pas la paix” (Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 45r).
³ Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 37r.
⁴ Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 1r-1v.
government bureaucracies and the implementation of gunpowder in early modern warfare. If historians do include chivalry in their narratives they describe it as an institution “founded by the Church” to protect Christendom and no longer needed after the Reformation. Both interpretations require revision. Centuries of elite culture did not disappear at once with the dawn of the early modern period, whenever that might have been.

In this paper, then, I interpret Torquato Tasso’s (1544-95) magnum opus, *La Gerusalemme liberata* (1581) and visual representations of it through a chivalric lens provided by the autobiography of Blaise de Monluc. This approach offers an important, and previously unconsidered, glimpse of Italian chivalric culture under Philip II of Spain. This method will help us better understand cultural struggles initiated by the increasing

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centralization of power by monarchs between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. With inquiries into the nature of power also come contemporary debates regarding violence. It is by exploring the struggle between violence and power that I reveal the central theme of *La Gerusalemme liberata* is an intertwined narrative of two separate truths. In one narrative, private violence is condemned as a danger to the state; in the other, private violence in defense of honor provides the only pillar supporting knightly identity. Tasso maintains both views equally and leaves the reader to decide on his own. Blaise de Monluc compliments the latter point, but Philip II of Spain (1527-98) and his advisors enacted policy based on the former. I show that both narratives could and did coexist in late sixteenth century Italy but are understandable only through chivalry. How these differences fueled conflict is an interesting topic for future researchers to explore.

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But what does the study of Tasso bring to the history of chivalry that we cannot find in another, earlier knightly romance?10 First, the range and conflict of themes in the text rival those of any medieval example. As a clever cultural observer, Tasso recognized the ways in which knightly violence undermined peace and royal authority but in the same stroke of the pen justified knights’ historical rights to defend their honor.11 Second, this is the first study to consider early modern literature within the framework of the recent advances in the study of medieval chivalry.12 This stretches the boundaries of the period typically considered by historians of chivalry and demonstrates how important the knightly mentalité remained well into the early modern period. By writing one of the most influential works of literature in early modern Europe, La Gerusalemme liberata also presents a uniquely far-reaching example through which the historian can view Philip

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10 Scholars of La Gerusalemme liberata have focused either on linguistic forms or on placing Tasso within early modern debates over whether poetry or history should be considered the purer literary form. In a series of refreshing studies, however, David Quint has made strides by approaching the epic as a window into contemporary culture. He argues, for instance, that Tasso constructs the entire epic around the conflict between arms and letters as embodied by Rinaldo and Godfrey, respectively. While Quint incompletely ascribes this to a copying of the Ulysses-Achilles power dynamic in ancient literature (I believe Tasso also drew from the central theme of the Chanson de Roland between wise Olivier and fierce Roland, although this is itself pulled from Homer), he perceptively applies the debate to contemporary Ferrara where the ancient military family of the Este engaged in political and military struggles with the comparatively new, and lettered, Medici family of Florence. Quint also argues that Tasso preferred historical settings – such as the first crusade – so that readers would find the events and themes more relatable (Daniel Javitch, “The Disparagement of Chivalric Romance for its Lack of Historicity in Sixteenth-Century Italian Poetics,” Romance and History: Imagining Time from the Medieval to the Early Modern Period, ed. Jon Whitman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Giuseppe Mazzotta, “The Italian Renaissance Epic,” The Cambridge Companion to the Epic, Catherine Bates (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Walter Stephens, “Tasso as Ulysses,” Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife: Essays in Honor of John Freccero, ed. Dana Stewart and Alison Cornish (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); Joseph Tusiani, “Charlotte, Queen of Cyprus, as a Partial Model for Tasso’s Armida,” Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies 9 (1, 1975): 3-14; Alessandra Paola Macinante, “Tra le fonti tassiane: Africa e Liberata,” Lettere italiane 66 (4, 2015): 559-79; David Quint, “The Debate Between Arms and Letters in the Gerusalemme Liberata,” in Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife: Essays in Honor of John Freccero (2000): 241-66; David Quint, “Romance and history in Tasso’s Gerusalemme Liberata,” 201. See also recent scholarship on the martial court culture of the Medici, Riccardi Lucci, Col Senno, col Tesoro, e colla lancia. Riti e giochi cavallereschi nella Firenze del Magnifico Lorenzo (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1992); David Quint, “Romance and history in Tasso’s Gerusalemme Liberata,” 201).

11 Eugenio Donadoni, Torquato Tasso: saggio critico (Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1967); Giovanni Perrino, Torquato Tasso: il poeta tormentato dal dubbio di non essere allineato (Napoli: Loffredo, 1985).

12 There have also been excellent advances in Elizabethan chivalry in recent years, see note 7.
II’s reign since the emperor controlled the production of traditional historical sources, such as chronicles and histories.

Philip II has been the subject of much historiographical focus, but none of it with an eye on the knights in his empire. In a century which saw an increase in royal authority and severity, Philip looked to control as many aspects of managing his empire as possible, from military campaigns against England to maximizing the economic contribution of his various kingdoms for imperial defense. Composite monarchies – of which the Habsburg Empire undoubtedly was – necessitated a degree of decentralization, indeed of continued local autonomy. It was in this arena that knights and men-at-arms could continue to negotiate their position in a world which, according to historical tradition, had left them behind. Philip II’s economic reformation in particular gave locals who opposed his efforts at centralization the ability to resist and negotiate their position within the empire. Naples and Brussels led the way in giving money to the Habsburgs in return for confirmation of their local power. We should not, nevertheless, underestimate the conflict created in the interest of preserving this autonomy. He was just one in a line of rulers to sweep through the peninsula and so Italian knights knew to

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Especially, Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits*.

A problem he inherited from his father, Charles V of Spain (the subject of, Tracy, *Impresario of War*; Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory*, 195-286.)
keep an eye towards the future. And at times, Philip did overstep his position and stoked the anger of Italians in doing so.

Mountains of extent documents from Philip II and his advisors point to his conflict with – or at the very least his negative opinion of – Italian knights, and to belabor the point would only summarize what historians already know well. But in one revealing letter sent to the Roman court concerning his intention to invade England, Philip states that:

I reject the opinion [the Italians] have that necessity compels me to undertake this enterprise, because although over there they hold the law of vengeance to be general and immutable, they are also so knowledgeable about political expediency that they cannot fail to realize (for it is easily understood) that if I gain command of the [English…] I would be safe and sure of not being open to attack.  

Vengeance is in this case the opposite of military prudence. In the letter Philip II considers the conflicts of the Italians lowly personal matters, whereas he, with his crown, held the interests of an entire empire on his shoulders when contemplating armed conflict. Personal claims to rights of vengeance (knightly autonomy) and royal authority are incompatible without one ceding to the other. To his frustration, Philip II recognized the disparity.

At times, the conflict between Italians and Philip came to a violent head as Italians became dissatisfied with royal intervention in local affairs. In 1557 and 1558, at the end of the Italian Wars, for instance, Philip attempted to micromanage the Duke of Alba’s military excursions in the fight for the Kingdom of Naples. The delays in communication led to a stalemate with the French and the dissatisfaction of the duke’s army. Other,

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similar examples of Philip overcomplicating situations at the expense of locals flood the extensive literature on the monarch.¹⁹ The reactions in Italy, however, are overshadowed by the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648) and the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) that captured the emperor’s attention in his final years. First came a warning to Philip from Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517-86) who wrote to Philip stating that discontent Italian nobles were readying to join the Dutch rebels.²⁰ In 1596 Milan threatened rebellion upon the death of Philip, weary of continued Habsburg control in the region.²¹ And at times the threat of rebellion became real, most notably in Naples in 1585 and 1647.²² These violent outbursts remain little understood due to the Habsburgian control of contemporary historical narratives that helped downplay threats to Spanish homogeneity.²³ Due to this restrictive grasp on the contemporary historical narrative, I contend that we must turn to imaginative chivalric literature to further investigate the conflict between kings and knights. But did chivalry exist in the sixteenth century?

Recent revisions in the history of medieval chivalry call us to reexamine knights and men-at-arms in early modern Europe. In the Middle Ages, the chivalric elite partook in a unique and particularly destructive form of violence intimately tied to honor.²⁴ A

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prickly sense of honor and strong desire for autonomy (judicial, political, and military) helped shape the quick recourse to arms. Holding on to the memory of their ancestors, the chivalric elite continued practices of violence intended to maintain their social preeminence in the face of a new, rising elite composed of bankers, lawyers, and merchants. Yet, gaining access to the mentalité behind this conflict proves difficult considering the centuries-long gap separating us from them. Imaginative literature, however, allows scholars insight into the minds of the chivalric elite since they were composed for and read (or listened to) by contemporary knights and arms bearers. This same system persisted – as I will show – into Philip II’s reign.

Though often described as the first European “gentleman,” Blaise de Monluc, who served for the French in the Italian Wars, is a paradigm of early modern chivalry. Plenty of evidence from the Commentaires de Messire Blaise de Monluc situates Monluc’s mentality and actions within a medieval, chivalric frame of mind. His autobiography acts as a checklist for knightly traits in the same way as Geoffroi de Charny, William Marshal, Don

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The association of “knight,” or “Messer,” as a title in Italy is problematic following the Florentine Ordinances, also known as the anti-magnate laws. From the mid-thirteenth century on, the popolo, generally court lawyers and notaries as well as some merchants, began to buy knightly titles as a marker of their social status. These Italians, while knights by name, do not fall within the confines of the chivalric mentality defined by arms and the cultivation of honor, and so Sposato has created the idea of a “chivalric elite” that encompasses the exiled and usurped members of Florentine society which exhibit this mindset, Sposato discusses this and the scholarship on it (limited to himself and Giovanni Tobacco), in, Peter Sposato, “Reforming the Chivalric elite in Thirteenth-Century Florence: The Evidence of Brunetto Latini’s Il Tesoretto,” Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Brepolis, 2015): 203-27.


Keen, Chivalry, 240.
Pero Niño, and a list of other medieval knights’ works did centuries earlier. The Frenchman, for example, comments that should any knight fail in arms, he should abandon them forever out of shame. Further representative of a traditional chivalric mindset, the fear of losing in war haunts Monluc so greatly that on the eve of battle he has nightmares of being defeated, which keeps him awake. Even in the face of the supposed rise of standing armies and the diminishing role of the knight in warfare (as Keen argues), Monluc maintains that "nobody knows how to fight but the nobles and we must expect no victory but that achieved by us" and that “we cannot think of a more honourable death” than one achieved in battle – a true knight indeed. In each of these cases, Monluc adhered to a medieval chivalric mentality since he always saw a chance to cultivate his honor in war. Any knight who did not live this lifestyle, however, faced criticism. Indeed, Monluc condemns any man who stays behind at court instead of going to war because, "as we conceive it to be the greatest disgrace to a man to have a whore as his wife, the women also think that the greatest shame to befall them is to have a coward as their husband". It is this mentalité that drives Tasso’s epic.

It is pertinent that I make one final digression here to briefly outline the characters and plot of La Gerusalemme liberata so that the subsequent examples will make sense. By way of the title it immediately becomes clear to the reader that Tasso wrote a crusading epic historically grounded in the First Crusade. In it, he breaks away from recent Italian

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b Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 42v.
c Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 50r.
d Keen, Chivalry, 241-43.
e “il n’y a combat que de noblesse. Il faut que nous esperiós, que la Victoire doit venir par nous […] car nous ne sçaurions choisir mort plus honorable” (Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 253v).
f “que nous pensons, que la plus grand honte d’un homme est d’auoir une femme putain:les femmes aussi pensent, que la plus grande honte, qu’elles ayent, est d’auoir un mary couárd” (Blaise de Monluc, Commentaires, 110r).
authors Matteo Boiardo (1441-1494) and Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), who both wrote fantastical epics based upon the twelfth century French *Chanson de Roland*. For the first four cantos Tasso tasks himself with artistically repackaging William of Tyre’s *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, the eyewitness chronicle finished shortly after the First Crusade. For the other sixteen cantos, which often wander in topic and focus, Tasso aligns more closely with the tradition of chivalric literature and indulges the reader with tales of magic, love affairs, and, of course, excessive and bloody violence in the never-ending pursuit of honor. As is the case in epics ranging from *Chanson de Roland* to *Raoul de Cambrai*, the violence inherent in the pursuit of honor within *La Gerusalemme liberata* is hostile to the state but crucial to the perpetrator’s identity.

Within a chivalric tradition, then, the court poet of Ferrara constructs three threads that follow three main heroes – Tancred, Godfrey, and Rinaldo – across the Holy Land and through magical lands in their quest to conquer Jerusalem. Rinaldo’s quick recourse to violence to protect his honor, a subject explored in more detail below, leads to his expulsion from the Christian army after he kills a fellow crusader. Shortly after this, a witch lures Tancred away from the camp to her lair which leaves Godfrey outside the walls of Jerusalem without his two best knights. Tancred, through a series of feats of arms, frees himself and returns to Godfrey who gives the Italian the task of locating Rinaldo and convincing him to return to the army. Without Rinaldo, the final siege of Jerusalem cannot begin. Even though Rinaldo has fallen in love with a pagan sorceress (who we learn staged a scene to make it appear as though Rinaldo had died so Godfrey would call off his search), he comes readily back to the Christian army and leads the crusaders to victory over the Muslims. The epic then ends when Godfrey orders the crusaders not to ransack the city and instead spare and treat the inhabitants with care. In all of these instances we get insight into accepted, and unaccepted, modes of behavior.
within elite circles. Throughout his work, Tasso ably shifts from one side of the debate regarding Rinaldo’s violence to the other (is he justified or a criminal, he asks). One can imagine a captivated audience arguing over this same theme that a weeks-long performance would undoubtedly have stoked. Indeed, this is the true value of *La Gerusalemme liberata* as we glimpse arguments for and against the increasing centralization of power.

We see a reflection of Tasso’s two narratives, those that support either Rinaldo or Godfrey in their actions, in visual representations of *La Gerusalemme liberata* which are split in their support of the heroes. Keeping with the split I will consider two artists in turn. The differences are striking and will help inform the more detailed discourse on chivalric culture within *La Gerusalemme liberata* that follows. First, I will consider Bernardo Castello’s (1557-1629) illustrations in a 1617 edition of the epic printed in Genoa and currently held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. I will then proceed to a series of paintings by the Neapolitan painter Paolo Domenico Finoglio (1590-1645) who painted a ten-canvas series for Duke Giangirolamo II Acquaviva d’Aragona (1600-65), a prominent knight from the region of Apulia in Southern Italy. The paintings remain in the duke’s castle today.

Castello, a prominent artist born in Genoa who specialized in frescoes depicting scenes of war, introduces each of the twenty cantos with beautiful, full-page prints. In these he guides the reader to a single scene in which he often chooses to highlight, or at least include, Godfrey. For instance, the frontispiece of canto five depicts the initial confrontation between Godfrey and Rinaldo, despite the latter’s absence at the scene in the epic [*Image 1 in Appendix*]. Castello’s Godfrey points accusingly at Rinaldo (the

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“Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme liberata* (Genoa: Giuseppe Pavoni, ad instanza di Bernardo Castello, 1617): http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k51335q/.”
shaven man standing defiantly relaxed) while Tancred (to Rinaldo’s left) and Raymond (in the middle proffering his advice with a raised hand) look on. Anonymous soldiers stand in the background with their heads turned either towards Rinaldo or towards one another as if in debate over the scene unfolding before them. The king’s tent stands towering behind the crowd like a modern courthouse, a reminder of Godfrey’s power and supreme judicial authority on crusade. Additionally, Jerusalem’s walls, as in so many of the images, loom behind the camp as a constant reminder of the ultimate task, a theme not always obvious in La Gerusalemme liberata. Unfortunately, Castello chose not to include the act of vengeance, only the dismissal of Rinaldo and thus focuses on the presence and enforcement of royal authority. The lounging but powerfully prominent king overwhelms the martially superior Rinaldo in the image suggesting that the king stands – or rather sits – on the correct side of the debate in this instance.

Castello, in the next image from Canto Eighteen, depicts a scene in which Godfrey looks on while angels charge from heaven above an army of crusaders against the fortifications of Jerusalem [Image 2 in Appendix]. Godfrey does not lead his own army with exemplary feats of arms (as he does in the epic), but rather stands back to oversee the organization of the siege alongside an angel who looks at him with arms outstretched welcoming the Holy City back into Christian arms. In the distance on top of the battlements, we see that Rinaldo has scaled the walls and stands alone fighting the enemy as his comrades still struggle to climb the ladders and Tancred circles at the back of the army (far left, partially cut-off in the frame). Castello here emphasizes Godfrey’s leadership and the holiness of the enterprise he has undertaken rather than the actual act of liberating the city. The ability of Godfrey to organize and maintain a successful siege, then, overshadows Rinaldo’s prowess; Philip II, and Charles V before him,
micromanaged his campaigns and received equal amounts of criticism and praise. Indeed the king’s authority stands untarnished and unquestionable at the center of the Castello’s print, once more depicted as superior to knightly prowess.

The final image under consideration is even more striking as Godfrey kills and tramples an enemy captain (Rinaldo and Tancred already having killed the sultan and his retinue which constitutes the climax in the epic) [Image 3 in Appendix]. The crusading army disappears into a faceless mob in the background, once again in an attempt to emphasize Godfrey and his deeds as the clouds part and spray sunlight over the newly liberated Jerusalem. In La Gerusalemme liberata, Tasso creates this scene as a means for the defeated captain to offer Godfrey a large sum of money if the king lifts the siege and returns to France. By not accepting, Tasso confirms the sanctity of Godfrey’s character at the exact moment of Jerusalem’s liberation. However, he completes the spiritual and martial domination of the holy city only after Tancred and Rinaldo’s prowess win the field; for Castello, Godfrey rose above the others and led the rout of the enemy. Once more, the authority of king rises above the ability of the individual knight in Castello’s interpretation of poem. The artist’s images portray a model, indeed the ideal model, of chivalric kingship in which the king acted prudently and martially but, in doing so, he allows the deeds of Godfrey to surpass and even suppress the deeds of Tancred and Rinaldo.


\footnote{Torquato Tasso, Gerusalemme liberata [hereafter, GL], ed. Giorgio Cerboni Baiardi (Modena: Tipo-Litografia Dini, 1991), XX, 141-43.}

\footnote{On chivalric kingship and how this is a bad development, see, Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence, 89-120; Kaeuper, Medieval Chivalry, 233-63; Timothy Guard, Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century (Woodbridge, MA: Boydell Press, 2013); Taylor: Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War (New York: Cambridge University Press, paperback, 2016); David Crouch, William Marshal: Knighthood, War and Chivalry, 1147-1219, 3rd edition (New York: Routledge, 2016); Matthew Strickland, Henry the Young King, 1155-1183 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).}
The ten paintings of Finoglio, a Neapolitan painter specializing in both religious and military scenery, present the observer with a different, inherently “knightly,” interpretation of *La Gerusalemme liberata*. Placed in the central room of a castle in Apulia, all guests of the local duke would have encountered these masterpieces. In this series completed around 1640, Finoglio features Rinaldo in five canvases, Tancred in three, Raymond in one, and Olindo and Sofronia in one. Of these, three depict combat, six love, and one fantastical – an appropriate gauge of the range which *La Gerusalemme liberata* takes in regard to themes and geographic location. Giarngirolamo noticeably did not commission a single image of Godfrey despite wishing to visually represent the other major turning points and characters in the epic’s plot. Intended for a prominent castle in Southern Italy, the Castello di Conversano in Apulia, the duke commissioned this cycle of paintings by Finoglio for the knights who populated his court. The paintings in the Castello di Conversano, therefore, represent the exploits of the knight-errant instead of the errant ruler. Whereas Castello’s printed images directed the private reader or small groups, Finoglio’s paintings helped capture and hold the attention of a public audience or community of readers in this castle in Southern Italy. Visitors to the castle would have been surrounded by a series of images which suggested love posed a greater threat to knightly autonomy than royal authority – a testament to the longevity of the chivalric mentalité and an interesting expression of the disregard of royal authority.

To capture the range of Finoglio’s artistic ability and the array of themes in *La Gerusalemme liberata*, I will survey three of his contributions (numbers eight through ten in a series of ten). Importantly, Finoglio chooses to focus not on Rinaldo’s wrongs but

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* Olindo and Sofronia were to be burnt at the stake for supposedly smuggling religious relics out of a city following a Muslim invasion. A female knight rushes to their aid once she learns that the two assumed responsibility for the crime to save their fellow Christians.

rather on his redemption, first through love and later on the battlefield. The first under consideration here, *Rinaldo abbandona l’Isola Incantata*, depicts a longing gaze which reminds the reader of Rinaldo and Armida’s love for one another, especially important in later cantos as Armida strives to kill her escaped lover [Image 4 in Appendix]. Armida lures Rinaldo to her island out of love for the knight and her desire to have him as her own. Under her spell (for love puts men under spells in chivalric romance), he forgets his life of arms and troubles at the crusader camp and lives a life of illicit love and leisure. Yet the scene warrants further consideration because Finoglio puts love into the heart of a scene and relationship left ambiguous by Tasso until the final canto when Armida and Rinaldo reconcile their differences and rekindle the possibility of a relationship after the war.\(^*\) This image marks the end of Rinaldo’s life of ease and love and his return to the hardships and dangers of warfare – a common transition in imaginative chivalric literature. He found love when the king did not need him but returned once the Godfrey admitted his fault. Godfrey’s mercy, ultimately, frees Rinaldo from the spell-bound captivity of love, a larger threat than Godfrey’s initial punishment.

The next image, *Erminia ritrova Tancredì ferito*, is an early example of one of the most widely reproduced scenes from the epic in which Erminia finds Tancred unconscious in a field after a gruesome two-day battle with Argant [Image 5 in Appendix]. Here too, Erminia’s love for Tancred dominates the emotions of the scene, but the choice of the frame presents the observer with another interesting example of commentary on the dangers of vengeance. Indeed, the image captures the moment right after Tancred has finally killed the Muslim champion who had earlier challenged the crusader army. The pursuit occurs throughout the course of the epic and the final battle

\(^*\) Quint points out the unpopularity of this part of the epic which Tasso later scrapped when he published the 1593 edition of the epic, Quit, “Romance and history in Tasso’s Gerusalemme Liberata,” 212-13.
dominates an entire canto, but Finoglio chooses to consider only the result of Tancred’s journey. Thus, like Tasso, Finoglio focuses on the destruction and social toll of warfare and personal honor-violence among the chivalric elite. Real war is, of course, a dangerous and chaotic enterprise, but epics are orderly and well-thought out and so Tancred’s injuries could only have occurred on account of his own actions, actions in which Godfrey had no role. Even against a Muslim enemy on crusade, Tancred suffers because he allows a personal vendetta to drive his passions while his prudence succumbs to desiring victory over his opponent at any cost. Yet at least he had the freedom to seek that vengeance. Here, love acts as a savior and Erminia successfully brings him back to consciousness.

In the final image, Rinaldo fa strage di nemici, Finoglio focuses on the ultimate act of violence and vengeance: the liberation of Jerusalem by way of Rinaldo’s sword [Image 6 in Appendix]. Here, at the climax of the epic, Rinaldo prepares to strike a cowering knight as another flees from under his horse’s hooves. In the background, ladies watch in approval as Rinaldo displays the purest form of prowess while on crusade. Compared to Castello’s representation of the same event, Godfrey’s ability to organize and maintain a siege does not win the battle since Rinaldo leads the crusaders to victory with his personal feats of arms – just as Tasso wrote the scene. With the completion of this final sword blow Rinaldo will have completed his full journey as the ideal knight after falling from the king’s graces. He commands respect in the painting which Giarngirolamo could not have failed to realize would remind his courtiers that, in the end, Rinaldo succeeds. The painting is certainly the crowning jewel to a series of paintings depicting an idealized image of the chivalric lifestyle, a lifestyle full of love, loss, and violence and prominently on display in the Castello di Conversano to help shape an audience’s interaction with La Gerusalemme liberata.
But why should we, as historians, care about La Gerusalemme liberata and the art it inspired? First, Tasso’s epic, and these early examples of art based upon it, influenced generations of artists and authors, from Edmund Spenser’s Faerie Queene (England, 1590) to Antonio Vivaldi’s opera Armida al campo d’Egitto (Venice, 1718) and from Nicolas Poussin’s Les Compagnons de Renaud (Rome, c. 1633-34) to Eugène Delacroix’s Clorinde befreit Olindo und Sophronia (France, 1856). These later works are better understood in their context than the original epic in its own. Second, as the two artists considered above showcase, no single interpretation of the epic existed. Although Tasso himself presents us with two narratives of truth, we see this best in the large and diverse body of artistic production spread across centuries and throughout much of Europe. And third, the very existence of multiple interpretations can help us better understand Italian culture and social constructs under Philip II. Tasso did not write in a vacuum or without any knowledge of Italy’s past, present, or potential future so why should we not trust that he includes social commentary in La Gerusalemme liberata?

Only by considering the medieval influence on sixteenth century Italian culture can we fully understand Tasso’s work and thus the society he lived in. In many medieval romances – such as the Chanson de Roland, Raoul de Cambrai, or Tristano Riccardiano – the authors facilitate debate regarding the worthiness of prowess and prudence. They also maintain a careful balance between the two and often side in favor of prowess. Tasso exchanges prudence for royal authority. He also constantly refers back to Rinaldo’s flight from the crusading camp after his deadly act of vengeance; the reader cannot escape the

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a Though by no means complete, Max Wickert provides a helpful appendix in the Oxford World’s Classics translation of the text in which he traces the influence of individual cantos on subsequent literature, music, and art: Torquato Tasso, The Liberation of Jerusalem, tr. Max Wickert, intr. Mark Davie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 400-03.

b Olivier, in the Chanson de Roland, quickly cedes his position of calling reinforcements at the Roncevaux Pass to Roland, preferring to stand and fight.
debate. Connections between *La Gerusalemme liberata* and medieval romances could continue indefinitely, though. Ultimately, we find too many traits which we can attribute to medieval knights to ignore any longer the existence of a chivalric culture in the reign of Philip II.

As described above, the plot hinges on a debate regarding personal honor within the expanding role of royal authority. Before honor, though, comes prowess, the primary means of acquiring status among members of the chivalric elite, and there is no shortage of it in *La Gerusalemme liberata*. The hero who embodies royal authority (Godfrey, here) recognizes prowess’ centrality and encourages the use of violence as a means to acquire and protect honor, though not for personal matters. Prowess, however, is intimately tied to the identity and status of the crusaders. In no instance is this clearer than when Tasso creates a hierarchy based on feats of prowess in which Rinaldo comes first, Tancred second, and Godfrey third. Only Rinaldo can lead the crusaders to victory over Jerusalem and no amount of clever commanding by Godfrey can overcome the enemy; only the knight can win. It seems like a small point, but prowess redeems Rinaldo and thus leads the reader to the epic’s climax. The overbearing Godfrey, too, can be compared to the meddling of Philip II in Habsburgian military campaigns of Italy. Rinaldo’s prowess becomes a repeated focus within the epic and acts as a constant point of speculation over whether his dismissal from the camp was worth casting the success of the campaign into doubt. Praise of feats of arms inundate the epic and quickly become redundant, although no less representative of chivalric values. Yet chivalric culture consisted of more than

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*T Note 26.

*R Repetition reinforces values in knights and men-at-arms aspiring to be chivalric.*
spectacular displays of arms to increase one’s fame. The careful cultivation of personal and familial honor proved the true cornerstone of the chivalric identity.\(^a\)

The complex honor-shame culture of knights proved the most important trait of their mentalité but proves the most elusive for historians to uncover.\(^a\) Recognizing the dangers of upstreaming, we must rely on a series of insightful anthological studies published in the last half century to produce a definition for and understanding of honor. We can safely say that an individual’s honor is not only internal, but also external, as judged by his peers at the apex of society.\(^b\) Consequently, chivalric practitioners had to consider the impact of their every action on the health of their honor and thus status in society. Closely related to this is the idea of an honor-shame continuum, in which the successful practice of chivalric virtues – prowess – resulted in the accumulation of honor, while failing to act in a chivalric way – often displaying cowardice – led to dishonor. At this point the continuum becomes less clear as the failure to rectify a dishonorable act becomes the emotion-laden construct of shame.\(^c\) Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social capital proves a useful tool in understanding the function of honor in an economy of honor.\(^d\) Following this definition, honor can be conceived of as a social commodity which is then readily exchanged among the chivalric elite through means of prowess in the form of

\(^a\) Kaeuper states emphatically, but not without cause, that to knights “honor is worth more than life itself,” Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 130.
\(^c\) Honor is not only “the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth to claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his right to pride” (Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status”, 21).
\(^e\) He defines it as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital” (Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J., Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 21).
honor-violence or warfare. The economy of honor is a zero-sum arena; for each knight who gains honor, another must lose his. For the medieval, and early modern, knight, defending the contents of this ethereal bank account was a matter of life or death. Rinaldo acted to prevent an act of dishonor from turning to shame and it is in this way that we can made advances towards understanding his actions otherwise so detached from the modern mindset.

In each instance except for when Rinaldo kills a fellow crusader, almost every character in La Gerusalemme liberata understands the repercussions of their every act – understands their position in relation to the economy of honor. In this instance the confusion comes from Godfrey who, in trying Rinaldo, attempts to change the delicate balance of honor and shame to reinstate stability. Indeed, only Godfrey fails to grasp the impact of his action – or inaction – on his public standing. His authority and control over the army only provide him with so much power and the reader follows as Godfrey’s standing with the army deteriorates along with morale as the crusaders wait outside of Jerusalem for Rinaldo’s return. Each member of the crusading army had the desire to engage in armed conflict to increase their honor and thus social standing. Importantly and to his shame, the king falls short in feats of arms and requires the assistance of Rinaldo and Tancred to even prepare for the siege of Jerusalem. It is in these nuances that we can locate sixteenth century chivalric culture and so it is worth exploring the theme of honor and shame through the course of the epic.

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*Kaeuper writes that “any society animated by a code of honour will be highly competitive” (Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence, 149).

“Sol Raimondo in consiglio, ed in battaglia/ sol Rinaldo e Tancredi a lui s’agguaglia,” but the later evidence explored below demonstrates that he was not equals with Rinaldo and Tancred (III, 58, 7-8).
The stakes for honor could be a matter of life or death to the chivalric elite, and the heroes’ behavior in *La Gerusalemme liberata* confirms this. For example, Emiren, Rinaldo’s sorceress lover turned maiden knight, tells her king before going to burn down the Christian siege engines that, “I will not return if I am not in turn victorious,/ loss shall bring death, not shame.” The Sultan heaps praise on her for this sentiment and promises her great wealth should she succeed (which she does). In addition, her lone companion on the mission, Argant, assumes an interesting position in the epic. Though a pagan, Tasso does not write of Argant as evil or as unworthy of praise. In fact, he is well respected and a knight worthy of praise for his deeds of arms. Tasso praises Argant’s prowess and his magnanimity and makes him less a villain and more a worthy opponent for Rinaldo. The greater the opponents standing, the greater the honor received by the victor. When Argant finally does meet the Italian in battle and is swiftly defeated Tasso writes that he, “would rather die than not be victorious.” To die is to not be victorious, but the knightly mentalité stressed the cultivation of honor up to the point of death and that meant not surrendering. It also meant not retiring as the never-ending search for honor does not, or rather should not, wane with age. The goal was to die in battle. For example, Count Raymond, senior advisor to Godfrey who had to step in to fill the void left by the absence of Rinaldo and Tancred, acknowledges that even in old age he cannot remain idle lest his past deeds of arms, which brought him honor, be forgotten. A knight could not acquire a large amount of honor in youth and live for the rest of his life on this fame, nor could he, to return to the Finoglio series above, settle down to start a family.

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“Kaeuper states emphatically, but not without cause, that to knights “honor is worth more than life itself,” Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 130; Sposato, “Reforming the Chivalric elite in Thirteenth-Century Florence”.

“né tornerò se vincitor non torno,/ e la perdita avrà morte, non scorno” (*GL*, XVII, 39, 7-8).

“viol morendo anco parer non vinto” (*GL*, XIX, 1, 7).
Honor, unlike gold, erodes slowly over time. But at times the necessity of avoiding shame temporarily took precedence over the knightly search for honor.

Shame, or rather the desire to avoid it, also motivates the heroes of imaginative chivalric literature. To keep with the epic’s anti-hero, Godfrey receives no greater criticism than when accused by a young crusader of neglecting his duties as commander. Knights expected their commanders to put them in situations where they might win honor. The crusaders’ charge follows when the king, due to the absence of Rinaldo and Tancred, refuses to let his army take the field and confront the Muslim army. In this face of widespread discontent with his management of affairs, this moment marks the point of change in the king’s character as Godfrey retorts,

this soul is not so lazy and vile
that it would rather die ignobly
than magnanimously [in battle.]^5

While he does delay in taking the field in this instance, Godfrey eventually submits and assumes the traditional, medieval role of the chivalric king. Monarchs in chivalric literature, with Godfrey as no exception, usually have the task of leading their knights to situations in which they might win honor. More generally, kings should not interfere in their knights’ ability to acquire this honor, at least from the knight’s point of view. As the fountainhead of honor in medieval and early modern Europe, kings remained under constant pressure to place the chivalric elite in situations to demonstrate their prowess. With this expectation looming over him, Godfrey begins to question his decision to dismiss Rinaldo, and he later refuses advise that he should remain at the rear of the army during a counterattack because, as a chivalric king, his proper place was at the front of.

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^5 Richard W. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 93-98.

^6 “né sí quest’alma è neghittosa e vile/ ch’anzi morir volesse ignobilmente/ che di morte magnanima” (GL, VI, 9, 4-6).
leading his knights to honor. Rinaldo, tellingly, does the same later in the tale by being the first to scale the walls of the holy city. Indeed, Rinaldo must not concede to the royal authority of Godfrey, but Godfrey must become more like Rinaldo, more violent, or be shamed in front of his army.

When kings encroached on the ability of soldiers to draw their swords for the acquisition or protection of personal and familial honor, they threatened chivalric identity. Indeed, knights felt that they not only had a right to gain honor but protect it, too. It is therefore no surprise that more than half of Tasso’s La Gerusalemme liberata revolves around the conflict over rights to licit violence (and what constitutes licit violence, for that matter) between Godfrey and Rinaldo. If knights continued to claim their rights to seek vengeance then they would continue to undermine the state’s authority, the claimant to most forms of judicial processing by the sixteenth century. More research is required to assess how widespread this theme is in sixteenth century literature, but if La Gerusalemme liberata and Philip II’s letter to his advisor in Rome can be taken as representative, then the conflict between knightly autonomy and royal authority was far from settled by the sixteenth century.

The tradition of imaginative chivalric literature would have left the late-sixteenth century chivalric reader knowing that the roots of the conflict favored Rinaldo in the end. Tasso includes passages throughout the epic that explain, perhaps even justify, the actions of Rinaldo. In a rare instance of personal commentary, Tasso writes that “anger is ever virtue’s whetting-stone” because it spurs men to deeds of arms. He also states that

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61 “virtù cote è lo sdegno” (GL, X, 10, 6).
the “foretaste of [...] revenge” could mitigate “the bitter temperament” that knights endured on account of shame. These are different cases but, as with the rest of the insults and actions leading to shame and necessitating violent action on behalf of the aggrieved, all lead back to a single case. At last we reach Rinaldo’s violent outburst of anger impossible for the modern mind to comprehend.

The central point of conflict in *La Gerusalemme liberata* begins when Prince Gernand of Norway shames Rinaldo by insulting him for hailing from “servile Italy” (*serva Italia*). Within the context of late sixteenth-century Italy where Tasso and his contemporaries actively attempted to bury all reminders of foreign rule in the aftermath of the Italian Wars, Gernand’s slight strikes deeply. It is no surprise, then, that Rinaldo interprets this insult as a significant assault on his honor and a successful attempt at publicly shaming him. Only one course of action was appropriate to rectify the situation: violence.

In order to avoid shame, Rinaldo kills Gernand. Actually, Rinaldo slaughters him in the public eye. First, however, he rushes at Gernand with sword drawn in front of the entire army, and the crusaders instantly become divided over the scene unfolding before them. They, too, draw their swords and shout either in support or condemnation of Rinaldo, but since none can stop him his shame becomes theirs in an episode worth quoting extensively:

> Between all men and arms he goes,  
> He drives his lightening sword in a circle,  
> Cutting a clear path, [and] despite  
> One thousand opponents, he assaults Gernand [...]  
> He did not cease till his wild sword  
> Plunged in his foe’s chest once and then twice.

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*“temprò gli amari” (*GL*, XII, 105, 3-4).
* GL, V, 19, 7-8.
* Many of the Italian cities reworked or created foundation myths which placed their roots in the Greco-Roman past, not in the immediate aftermath of the wars which shaped many of them in reality. Tasso, as a single case and as mentioned above, lauded Alfonso I d’Este in the poem as the man who freed the city from imperial and papal rule; his was no longer a “servile Italy” (*GL*, XVII, 90-91); see note 11 for more.
* GL, V, 26-27.
The wretch falls forward on his wounds, and poured
His soul and spirit forth.
Then the victor sheathes his bloody arms,
Not staying above him [whom he killed] longer,
But leaves elsewhere,
And strips his cruel spirit and his wrathful will."

The final line points to something amiss in Rinaldo’s vengeance. Tasso does not here refer to Rinaldo as possessing a “cruel spirit” or “wrathful will” because of the act itself, but because of his striking Gernand with “a thousand blows” (not quoted above) and delivering not one, but two killing wounds. Indeed, Tasso does not criticize the act of vengeance but rather warns her of the excessively violent nature that vengeance encouraged among members of the chivalric elite. This is a different matter entirely. Here begins the development of Tasso’s two truths and sets out the divergent paths of Rinaldo and Godfrey, between knightly autonomy and royal authority, both arguing that a single act occupies opposite ends of the honor-shame continuum.

Tasso, of course, did not intend to circumvent the contemporary debates over rights to licit violence and he molds his narrative around the issue as he clearly constructs two lines of argument – one for and one against Rinaldo’s actions. As Godfrey comes to the scene and witnesses the sight of Gernard lying in his own blood and dying in agony, he asks who had the audacity to commit the deed in his camp and thus undermine his authority. A young knight close to the king responds that Rinaldo did it after

\[ \text{“e frag li uomini e l’armi oltre s’aventa,} \quad \text{e la fulminea spade in cerchio gira,} \quad \text{si che le vie si sgombra e solo, ad onta/ di mille difensor, Gernando affronta” […] “Nè cessò mai sin che nel seno immerse/ gli ebbe una volta e due la fera spade.} \quad \text{Cade il meschin su la ferita, e versa/ gli spirit e l’alma fuor per doppia strada.} \quad \text{L’arme ripone ancor di sangue aspersa/ il vincitor, né sovra lui piú bada;/ ma si rivolge altrove, e insieme spoglia/ l’animo crudo e l’adirata voglia” (GL, V: 29, 5-8; 31, 1-8)} \]

Many of Boccaccio’s fourteenth century epics include a similar theme. The most famous medieval example in which the dangers of vengeance are discussed is in the anonymous \textit{Raoul de Cambrai} in which the author leaves only one male character living after honor-violence tore Charlemagne’s court apart from the inside. \textit{GL, V, 32.}
experiencing “a slight loss of face” – an understatement of the Norwegian’s purposefully harsh insult. He, the knight, also warns that,

if he could receive a pardon for this crime,  
others would become emboldened,  
since all who take offence want for themselves vengeance  
which only judges commit

and in this way confirms what the king wanted to hear: personal violence has no place in the crusaders’ camp because it undermines royal authority. Honor-violence fueled a seemingly endless series of vengeance killings and was recognized as a social pestilence, but it was centuries old by the sixteenth century and well ingrained in the chivalric mentalité. For this reason, Tancred rebuts the young knight’s claims, arguing powerfully that Rinaldo acted “showing a just cause and provocation great” and, furthermore, that “Justice is equal only among peers.” In other words, Godfrey has no right to punish Rinaldo and Rinaldo cannot have let the insult go unpunished. Indeed, the Italian not only has a right to react to Gernand’s shaming, but he is, in fact, bound to do so on account of his great heritage and noble inheritance. This inheritance also gives him the right to exact his vengeance.

With both sides established, the debate continues in the presence of the crusading forces. The camps seem (and as we saw in the images above, were represented as) split equally when Raymond enters the conversation. Using a Machiavellian mentality, he argues that Godfrey should use Rinaldo as an example to instill fear in the rest of the army because, “No discipline is whole while one man strays / who plans on pardon and

\begin{quote}
“da leggiera cagion d’impeto stolto” (GL, V, 33, 4).  
“che se de l’error suo perdon riceve,/ fia ciascun altro per l’esempio ardito,/ e che gli offesi poi quella vendetta/ vorranno far ch’a I giudici s’aspetta” (GL, V, 34, 5-8).  
Sposato, “Reforming the Chivalric elite in Thirteenth-Century Florence”.  
“e sol l’egualità guista è co’ pari” (GL, V, 35, 6 and V, 36, 8).  
GL, V, 36, 1-6; Stewart, Honor, 54-63.
\end{quote}
not the lash of law.” Raymond and Tancred then continue their exchange of words while Rinaldo, in his tent throughout the entire debate, threatens to kill any man who might come to take him to prison. He stubbornly maintains that he had a right to this violence and that he had not acted excessively. This forces Tancred to dissuade the enraged knight from killing his countrymen and convinces him, though he has committed no wrong, to flee the camp until Godfrey and Raymond come to see the wrong of their ways. The burden is not on the murderous knight but rather on the justiciars. And so, in a series of actions which in later cantos reveal a lapse of judgement and poor leadership, Godfrey and his advisors expel their best warrior in the midst of not just a war, but God’s war. Rinaldo does not fade into the background, though, because his absence becomes increasingly worrisome as the Christian army prepares its siege of Jerusalem and finds that it cannot succeed without Christendom’s best knight.

It does not take long for Godfrey to realize he acted rashly. Regret swiftly overtakes the king when a Muslim knight approaches from Jerusalem and challenges any Christian champion bold enough to face him in combat. Without Rinaldo, Tancred and Raymond assume the responsibility but fail to kill their adversary (which shames Godfrey by association). Around the same time, morale declines and individual crusaders begin to recall publicly Rinaldo’s great deeds of arms, and regret taking the king’s side. The last of the pro-Godfrey camp then capitulate when a rumor that Rinaldo has been killed (false though it is) circulates in camp. At this point the Italians immediately blame Godfrey first, the French second (for what reason we know not), and

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“‘It is much safer to be feared than loved’ (Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61; ‘ché già non è la disciplina intera / ov’uom perdono e non castigo aspetti’ (*GL*, V, 39, 5-6).


“*GL*, VII, 58.

“*GL*, VIII, 46, especially 4-6.
finally rise up in arms to force the king’s hand. Godfrey’s authority effectively deteriorates. God, however, has no intention of allowing Godfrey to lose control of the crusade, but it is the Lord who must rectify the situation by appearing to the king in a dream to order Godfrey to call Rinaldo back and make amends. He reminds the king that victory in the Holy Land should take precedence over any internal disputes and that the Christians can only find success through the arms of Rinaldo. Absolute royal control, encouraged by Raymond, must wait. As for the hero, Godfrey’s messengers find Rinaldo trapped by Love and lost without royal direction. Indeed, the man they find is only shell of his former self having lost his warlike spirit by lying idle in an enchanted garden with women. Each was weaker without the other and here we glimpse the true balance of the knight and the king. Reunited with Godfrey, Rinaldo leads the crusaders with exceptional feats of arms to capture Jerusalem and Godfrey gives Rinaldo a purpose for his violence by channeling it not into vengeance but towards a common enemy. Yet Rinaldo, clearly, gets away with killing Gernand not just because the crusaders needed him but because God himself intervenes on his behalf by arguing that the deed did not warrant such punishment. God also notes that Godfrey had the authority to expel the Italian. God, it seems, agrees with both sides, and here we have the culmination of Tasso’s two truths and a representation of the stalemate between knightly autonomy and royal authority.

The conflict between Rinaldo and Godfrey which structures the entire epic, I have argued, presents a potential point of contention for knights at the courts of Italy. Tasso presents various arguments for and against each side via Godfrey and Raymond (on the

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78 GL, VIII, 66-74.
79 GL, XIV, 12, 7-8.
80 GL, XVI, 29, 3-6.
81 Rinaldo and Godfrey both apologize, GL, XVIII, 1.
side of the need for centralized authority) and through Rinaldo and Tancred (on the other arguing for their historical rights to knightly autonomy). Tasso in the end follows a common thread in imaginative literature by suggesting a middle ground by demonstrating that given enough direction (but not punished or suppressed) the chivalric elite could use their martial prowess to the benefit of everyone. Indeed, it should be read as a text of reform as much as of a reflection of sixteenth century culture, just like medieval imaginative chivalric literature. The sixteenth century economy of honor allows the acquisition of honor under the direction of the king but permits honor-violence in cases of potential shame. It is, indeed, a medieval construct for a later period. This proposed model presents one way for historians to reframe the “crisis of the seventeenth century” in a light other than class-conflict.

From La Gerusalemme liberata we also learn much about chivalric culture in early modern Europe, a relatively untouched subject in recent historiography. Far from being an archaic remnant of the Middle Ages clung to by a few nostalgic individuals, debates regarding elite autonomy, so central to the chivalric mentalité, seem as lively as ever in La Gerusalemme liberata. Yet Tasso does not simply copy medieval precedents, and the tone of his epic suggests that fundamental shifts in the knightly ideology have occurred since the composition of the Chanson de Roland. For instance, entire cycles of medieval literature come unequivocally down on the side of knights in matters concerning rights to violence; these authors hardly allow for the other side of the debate to surface, let alone take center stage as Tasso does. Much remains to be done in order to better understand exactly how this process worked and how honor-violence and the chivalric elite began to come under the control of the state. I believe we should keep in mind, however, that concern about monarchs overstepping their rights could and did set off a series of revolutions in early modern Europe, just as happened in the revolt of Naples and Sicily.
in 1647, and just as the Italian knights in Tasso’s epic did in response to Godfrey’s injustices:

So, boiling in a copper pot
upon too hot a flame, it begins to gurgle and smoke,
until in the end, contained no more, it runs
over the jar’s rim in floods and froths.  

\[ \text{On this series of revolutions, see, General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (Boston, MA: Routledge, 1978). “Cosí nel cavo rame umor che bolle/ per troppo foco, entro gorgoglia e fuma;/ né capendo in se stesso, al fin s’estolle/ sovra gli orli del vaso, e inonda e spuma” (GL, VIII, 74, 1-4).} \]
Appendix

[Image 1: BnF, Valerio Castello in, Tasso, La Gerusalemme liberata (Genoa, 1617), 46]
[Image 2: BnF, Valerio Castello in, Tasso, La Gerusalemme liberata (Genoa, 1617), 198]
[Image 3: BnF, Valerio Castello in, Tasso, *La Gerusalemme liberata* (Genoa, 1617), 228]
[Image 4: Finoglio, *Rinaldo abbandona l’Isola Incantata* (1640), from the Ciclo della Gerusalemme Liberata, Castello di Conversano]
[Image 5: Finoglio, *Erminia ritrova Tancredi ferito* (1640), from the Ciclo della Gerusalemme Liberata, Castello di Conversano]
[Image 6: Finoglio, Rinaldo fa strage di nemici (1640), from the Ciclo della Gerusalemme Liberata, Castello di Conversano]