Writers in the Renaissance, like many of us, were fascinated by the way in which time moves in both circles and lines, although there were deep disagreements as to how we should imagine them doing so and which motion we should prefer. Both can be confusing, for as Augustine notes in his *Confessions* (XI.xiv), time is easy to understand until someone asks you about it. Yet we often do need to think about it. In an almanac for 1628, William Hewlett tries to do so, defining it in terms recalling Augustine’s own speculations:

> Time is the Measurer of Motion, or a number measuring the moving of the first moveable, and other mutable things. Which Time had his beginning with the world, and shall end with the same. It consisteth of two parts; that is, First and Last, or Before and After. Both which are knit together in this word *(nunc)* now, or at this present, which is the end of that which went before, and the beginning of that which followeth after.\(^1\)

Well, yes. Hewlett associates our very bodies to time, not merely through the usual zodiac man but in a little poem noting, with what basis in legend I do not know, that ‘So many Veynes in Man appeare, / As there be dayes in a whole yeare: / His Bones two hundred seventeene, / His Teeth thirty two, (as I deeme)’.\(^2\) But if time is ‘Before and After’, if our bodies inscribe it, it also has anniversaries, when *(nunc)* remembers *(tunc)*.

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2. The poem appears on the obverse of the title-page, beneath the traditional Zodiac man. Dr. Daniel Lieberman, a physical anthropologist at Harvard, tells me that the first claim is ridiculous, the last correct, and as for the 217 bones, ‘It depends on what you mean by a “bone”’. 

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Augustine himself contrasts paganism’s sense of recurrence to biblical time’s ‘straight path’; pagans, he says, want to lure us from forward motion and make us ‘walk in circles with them’. Anne Higgins, to whom I owe this reference, points out the ingenious use of Psalm 11 (‘in circuitu impii ambulant’): the impious – human imps – go in circles in part because they do not understand time as progressive revelation and forward motion. But few can live without commemoration, without circles, as doubtless Augustine also knew. The challenge is to commemorate without becoming circling imps, which may be why one anonymous almanac maker (or his printer, Thomas Dawson) says nervously, after listing some dates, that we should use them as a ‘remembrancce’ and ‘for no other cause’. Catholics, to be sure, thought they did have ‘other cause’. Thomas Hill, recusant author of a 1634 set of meditations on Gospel-readings appointed for every day of the week, writes that the Church ‘hath ordained a yearlie Commemoration of all these passages and misteries’, following a custom begun by the Jews and observed by Christ. But one year is not enough, he says, so we must ‘reiterate them every yeare, as long as we live, both to honour those misteries … as also to supplie every yeare our deffect of honouring them the yeare before, desiring to prolong our life rather for this, then for any vaine worldly respect’. Hill offers a commemorative circle that is also a pathway to Heaven. In fact, whatever their preference for Augustinian straightness, Protestants had their own memory, although one less crowded with names. A number of Protestant calendars and almanacs cannot resist filling in the calendar’s blank spaces, bending history into something that might not put the godly into the circle-treading company of the impious but that still ‘reiterates’ past events and people, not least those whose lives were exemplary, monitory, or both.

5 Thomas Hill (a Benedictine), *A plaine path-way to heaven* . . . [the first part, from Advent to Easter] (Douai: Martin Bogart, 1634), introduction.
6 How Protestants (e.g., John Foxe in his book of martyrs) rejected or reworked older traditions is a huge topic; on Calvinist reconceptions of time see M. Engammare, *L’Ordre du temps: L’Invention de la ponctualité au XVIIe siècle*, Geneva 2004.
Renaissance sonnet sequences, too, can oscillate between repeated memories and forward motion. Petrarch counts the accumulating years since he fell in love with Laura and also gives us a circle of three hundred and sixty-six poems (a year with a final flight upward toward the Virgin). The sonnets in Spenser’s *Amoretti* allude, through their placement or phrasing, to the Church of England’s liturgical cycle and are followed by an epithalamion that remembers the hours, days, and year even while setting bride and groom onto a linear trajectory toward first babies and then Heaven. Such gestures, and I omit other examples, make up but one way in which Renaissance sonnet sequences relate to Renaissance psalmody: in early modern times and especially in Reformed churches, the Psalter was interpreted, much more specifically than it had been before and sometimes by expanding the Hebrew titles and exploiting Jewish exegesis, in terms of David’s biography and Israelite history. The 1560 Geneva translation of the Bible surrounds the psalms with commentary that often cites events in 1 and 2 Samuel. But the Psalms are also central to the liturgy, both Catholic and Protestant: prayer books set certain psalms for special days and the entire Psalter is repeated over and over as the weeks circle by; in England, Sternhold and Hopkins’s metrical translations were basic liturgical equipment, although often printed with brief headnotes making plain that the individual psalms record, albeit not chronologically, moments in David’s life and thoughts.

For the rest of this essay I will look at poetry by two women named Anne. One, Anne Lock, was an ardent Protestant Englishwoman. The other, Anne de Marquets, was an aristocratic nun who found Protestants repugnant and their leaders worthy of epigrams with a satirical bite surprising in a lady of the cloth. Each wrote a religious sonnet sequence. As the two Annes wrote and prayed, what was the impact on them of their sense of liturgical and historical time? Did their different religions matter? Here, in other words, is an opportunity to compare two poets who were both women, both sixteenth-century, both educated, both Christian, both authors of sonnet sequences and not just of sonnets, but who came from two distinct social classes, two different nations, two different parts of a now divided Christendom, and who wrote in two different languages. What was the impact on them of their sense of liturgical and historical time? Did their differing faiths matter? I
suspect that one can indeed see in their differences, differences we should of course not exaggerate, some support for the belief that the Reformation intensified the linear, historical impulse that Christianity inherited from Judaism, whatever Protestantism’s need also to remember and commemorate.

The much-married Anne Lock belonged to the upper reaches of London’s mercantile circles and to the world of international Calvinism headquartered in Geneva but in which many aimed to rebuild Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land; her son, Henry, would write numerous religious sonnets as well as smooth flattery of the great.7 Anne lived in Geneva in the late 1550s and then, in 1560, published the first sonnet sequence in English as part of her translation of a work by Calvin. At least I am almost sure that the sequence is her work; the note in the volume in which the poetry appears is a trace ambiguous
and I am largely but not utterly convinced that its ‘I’ is Lock’s ‘I’ and not that of the printer. The sequence comprises an introduction of five sonnets and then twenty-one more that meditate on and expand the verses of Psalm 51, the ‘Miserere Mei’, while a prose translation of this great penitential psalm looks on from the margin. This is the psalm, of course, in which King David, having been roundly condemned by the prophet Nathan (‘Thou art the man!’), bitterly laments his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband, Uriah. Of the traditional seven penitential psalms, it was this one that played the largest role in what one could call the Renaissance dramas of penitence and martyrdom, a drama often played out on the scaffold. John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, for example, tells of a number of Protestants who recited psalm 51 as they were about to be burned (when one of them, Dr. Rowland Taylor, began his recitation in English the sheriff gave him a blow and a threat: ‘Ye knave ... speake Latine, I will make thee’).8

Lock’s sonnets take David’s penitence to an extreme that is both good Calvinism and curiously sensuous, as witness the third sonnet of the paraphrase:

So foul in sin and loathsome in Thy sight,
So foul with sin I see myself to be,
That till from sin I may be washed white,
So foul I dare not, Lord, approach to Thee.
Oft hath Thy mercy washed me before,
Thou madest me clean. But I am foul again.
Yet wash me Lord again, and wash me more.
Wash me, O Lord, and do away the stain
Of ugly sins that in my soul appear.
Let flow Thy plenteous streams of cleansing grace.
Wash me again, yea, wash me everywhere,
Both lep’rous body and defiled face.
Yea, wash me all, for I am all unclean,

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And from my sin, Lord, cleanse me once again.⁹

That Lock would write on repentance is unsurprising. Calvinists enjoy feeling reprobate, for to their mind such feelings are, paradoxically, a sign of election. In 1590, when Lock and many of the Godly were discouraged by the slow pace of English reform, she applied this paradox to her whole community:

Then we with David shall confess,
That God from heaven above
(By humbling us) doth well express
his mercie and his love.
For ere we felt the scourging rod,
We er’d and went astray:
But now we keepe the law of God,
And waite thereon always.¹⁰

The more we feel the scourge, the safer we are. Why, though, in 1560, would a Calvinist woman want to rewrite David’s self-accusatory psalm as a group of sonnets? Perhaps Lock, who was educated and living in cities well supplied with learned biblical exegetes, reflected that the Psalter’s title in Hebrew means the ‘Book of Praises’. Why should Laura and her many sisters – or her somewhat fewer brothers, for that matter – have all the glory, laud, and honor? Moreover, David’s psalms offer one of our most compelling models for introspection and anguish in lyric poetry. Long before Petrarch looked toward Mount Ventoux or walked in the valley of the Vaucluse, David had lifted his eyes to the hills and had hoped for company in the Valley of the Shadow. If, as some say, Calvinism encouraged introspection into an inner self compounded of sin and folly, then it must have been possible for an intelligent woman such as Lock to realize that such seemingly opposed discourses as those of the Book of Psalms and the Petrarchan sonnet

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sequence had something in common. Like David – as a sinner with a divided soul and scattered self, although hardly as a figure for Christ – Petrarch was both lover and penitent.

Anne de Marquets was an aristocratic nun who lived in a beautifully situated convent at Poissy, some twenty-five miles from Paris. In 1561 she attended the famous ecumenical Colloque de Poissy and, despite some irenic tendencies in the direction of tolerance, allowed the publication the following year of a set of pasquinades on the event. Each ‘pasquin’ is based on a biblical phrase and dedicated to a Catholic VIP, sometimes with flattering anagrams. Catholics get named; the Huguenots are merely nameless wanderers from the true faith. There follows a sequence of twenty sonnets praising the Catholic leadership; several are visionary, imagining destruction in terms that beg comparison with Joachim Du Bellay’s ‘Songe’ on the fall of Rome, the dream that Spenser translated as ‘the Visions of Bellay’. Huguenots were not amused, and some found it particularly vexing to see biblical verses deployed to denigrate their spokesmen. ‘Daughter’, says one verse reply that calls Sister Anne a ‘Latinizing nun’, it ‘would be better for you to translate scripture into the vernacular’.

In the 1570s and ‘80s, however, and writing after the Council of Trent had tightened the rules for ‘enclosing’ nuns, Marquets composed not biblical translations but a huge sonnet sequence, some of it presumably dictated after she became blind, that was published posthumously in 1605 by a grateful student. The volume, entitled *Sonets spirituels*, includes 334 sonnets based on the readings and prayers set for the church year’s cycle of Sundays and major feast days; next come ten sonnets on the dedication of a church; then eighty-two on

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11 The convent had recently been reformed, if not enough to prevent a dildo scandal; see G. de Rocher, ‘Ronsard’s Dildo Sonnet: The Scandal of Poissy and Rasse des Nœux’, in: R. C. La Charité ed., *Writing the Renaissance*, Lexington, KY 1992, pp. 149-64.

12 *Sonets, Prieres et devises, en forme de pasquins, pour l’assemblee de messieurs les prelats & docteurs, tenue à Poissy, M.D.LX I*, Paris 1562; one anagram (sig. A5v), for example, turns Charles de Lorraine (Carolus Lotaringus) into ‘Gloria Clarus, Notus’.

13 Huguenot response is described by M. H. Seiler, C.D.P., *Anne de Marquets: Poétesse religieuse du XVI siècle*, Washington 1931, ch. 3; Marquets wrote a self-defense that I have not seen.
feasts for the Virgin Mary admittedly in biographical rather than liturgical order; next fifty on All Saints; and finally a handful on the beatitudes and grace. Important days get more sonnets, as though the muses or Spirit blew harder then.\footnote{I quote from G. Ferguson’s superb edition of \textit{Sonets spirituels}, Geneva 1997.}

Anne Lock and Anne de Marquets, then, have in common their sex, their love of Scripture, and their taste for sonnets in sequence. What they share makes their differences more striking. For the rest of this essay I will focus briefly on how their volumes present themselves, how the two women imagine time, and how David appears in their poetry.\footnote{Also relevant as a contrast to Lock’s work is the religious poetry of Gabrielle de Coignard. Coignard, a Catholic and widow who shared with Lock a position in the upper bourgeoisie, having been, as the title page of her book notes, ‘la presidenté’ of Toulouse: married to the head of the provincial parliament. Her \textit{Œuvres chrestiennes} (printed in 1594) have been edited by C. H. Winn, Geneva 1995; her sonnet based on Ps. 61.6 (‘Tibi soli peccavi’, pp. 220-21) is useful to compare to Lock’s parallel sonnet; I give it in a translation: ‘It is I who have sinned, it is my guilty soul that has broken thy holy commandments, it is I who have sinned with all my feelings, engulfing my desires in the mutable world. Merciful Lord, my wound is incurable, which through a thousand regrets redoubles my torments, if thou dost not cure it with thy gentle ointments, delivering from death my wretched life. Alas! It is before thy eyes, alas! It is before thee alone, against whom I have done ill through my proud arrogance; and yet thou wilt justly punish my poor soul and wilt be recognized as true and steadfast, so equitably thou wouldest to chastise me with the sharpest pains of the infernal fire’. Anne Lock is more violent, more physical, her self-exposure furthered by a ‘rippéd heart’:}

\begin{verbatim}
Grant Thou me mercy, Lord. Thee, Thee alone
I have offended. And offending Thee,
For mercy, lo, how I do lie and groan.
Thou with all-piercing eye beheldest me
Without regard that sinned in thy sight.
Behold, again, how now my spirit it rues
And wails the time when I with foul delight
Thy sweet, forbearing mercy did abuse.
My cruel conscience with sharpened knife
Doth splat my ripped heart and lays abroad
The loathsome secrets of my filthy life
And spreads them forth before the face of God.
Whom shame from deed shameless could not restrain
Shame for my deed is added to my pain.
\end{verbatim
Two Annes, Two Davids

which the authors could have been reading as well as composing, and possibly reading other women. The culture in which both women lived was broader than the cloister at Poissy or Lock’s mercantile and Calvinist worlds. What poetry might Lock have read in French or Latin? Need it all have been religious? To Calvin’s Geneva had come news, texts, and visitors from many countries, and some (Clément Marot, for example) had also had a presence in the courtly secular world. That Lock was ‘godly’ need not have stopped her from glancing at secular sonnet sequences being published by women in Italy and France. An eye on religious texts other than David’s and Calvin’s, moreover, might even help explain her lines on sin as a plant, an image not in her source: ‘Such bloome and frute loe sinne doth multiplie’, she says, ‘Such was my roote, such is my juyse within’. Margaret Hannay notes that Calvin mentions ‘seed’ – *semen* – when commenting on a different verse of this psalm, but Lock may also recall the overactive vegetation at the start of Marguerite de Navarre’s devout but nonbiblical *Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, perhaps in Elizabeth’s translation, printed by the Protestant polemicist John Bale in 1548:

I perfoyghtly fele, that [sin’s] roote is in me. And outwardly I se non other effecte but all is eyther braunche leafe, or els frute that it bryngeth fourth all aboute me. If I thynke to loke for better, a braunche commeth and closeth myne eyes, and in my mouthe doth fall whan I woulde speake, the frute so bytter to swallowe downe. If my sprete be sturred for to harken, than a great multytude of leaves doth entre in myne eares, and my nose is all stopped with flowers.17

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16 Sig. B3. The first edition of the *Miroir de l’âme Pécheress*, evangelical in tone but not fully Lutheran, was published in Alençon in 1531, and in Paris in 1533; there is a modern edition by J. L. Allaire, Munich 1972. In late 1544 young Elizabeth Tudor translated the *Miroir* as a present for her step-mother, Catharine Parr, and in 1548 the aggressively Protestant John Bale arranged for an edition at Wesel: *A Godly Medytacyon of the Christen Sowle* ...; the translation was published several times thereafter.

17 Combining foliage and the human form is hardly uncommon, but Marguerite’s and Anne Lock’s images seem specifically to recall the widespread and possibly very ancient image, often found carved in older churches and cathedrals, of a human face with greenery coiling around it or emerging from its mouth.
Presentation

How should a nun dress when going into print, albeit posthumously? Sister Anne sports a wimple sequined with praise, some of it recycled from earlier compliments on her published writings (her pasquinades, her translations). For Pierre de Ronsard, who did her a liminary poem, she is Poissy’s new flower: ‘Her spring is the Heavens, her root is the Church / Her works and faith its leaves and fruit’. For one N. Sanguin, a writer given to metaphors that might strike a logician as imprudent, this wise mother has given birth to lines that may serve as a lighthouse to others (luminous lines, luminous progeny); her ‘Bear’, we read, is the virtue that allowed her to escape the dangerous gulf in which Icarus lost himself (keeping an eye on Ursa Minor, might have helped the young flyer avoid the sun and keep his feathers glued on). Père Cointrel, her almoner, notes that although the poetess Sappho had embellished her infamous matter with pinks from Parnassus, Sister Anne knows that a lady has only modesty for treasure and thus learnedly exalts the Eternal. A fellow nun writes that in this ‘nymph’ a holy lyre and chaste voice imitate the harmony of happy spirits. And Antoine de Montchrestien, a distinguished poet and dramatist, says that were David to live again he would sing these songs and claim them as his own.18 He had himself planned to imitate David, adds Montchrestien, but after reading Marquets he has abandoned his project. The very stars measure their dance to her poems’ cadence – a compliment befitting a calendrical work – and her poetry is like the Phoenix: each line resembles that bird in being both unique and yet different from itself (‘unique sont ces vers, / Semblable au Phenix, mais à soy divers’). The conceit gets tangled by its own cleverness, but I think Montchrestien is saying that Marquets combines continuity and identity on the one hand with variety or difference on the other, a good way to imagine a sonnet sequence or, for that matter, the Psalter itself.

Compare this fanfare and gallantry to the spare presentation in Lock’s text. The difference is the more poignant because Lock really is imitating David, as both poet and penitent. All we hear about her sequence is that somebody unnamed handed over a manuscript of the

18 To imagine David appropriating lines by a French nun seems curiously relevant to recent thoughts about voice and gender in Renaissance psalm translation.
Two Annes, Two Davids

sonnets either to her or to the printer (the wording is unclear) and said to do with them whatever the recipient thought best. This casual treatment, one that allows the poetry to sidle by the back door into a volume of sermons, could be Anne Lock’s own modesty. It could show her nervousness about publishing anything as stylish as a sonnet sequence, something nobody had yet done in English, and certainly not to accompany a text by John Calvin, of all people. The nervousness could also be the printer’s. In any case, had Anne Lock been treated, or treated herself, more like Anne de Marquets, her sequence would have come prefaced with poems by such mid-century luminaries as Thomas Churchyard, something in Latin by Theodore Beza, and a laudatory preface by her good friend John Knox. The differences may be in part a matter of class: Anne de Marquets was an aristocrat, particule and all (her ‘de’), in a very upscale convent, whereas Lock came from a bourgeois world of finance and urban governance. Although sophisticated and wealthy, that world was not much given to fancy rhetorical gewgaws. But the differences are also religious: Sonets spirituels is a carefully structured rose window in a complex cathedral; Lock’s meditation is a rectilinear Calvinist temple with no stained glass to distract worshippers from the Word and its call to repent.

Time

Lock takes one ardent psalm and expands it into a powerful expression of individual, if not entirely personal, anguish; Marquets imitates a whole year of services that incorporate phrases of Scripture, including many from psalms proper to the Sunday or feast at hand. The prayerbook’s collects themselves, as her editor Gary Ferguson points out (and one might argue that this is much truer of the Catholic liturgy than of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer), reinforce this commemorative aspect of worship by the repeated use of ‘hodie’ (‘on this day’).19 These two distinct treatments of passing time (cyclical and liturgical, linear and historical) parallel a similar distinction between Marquets’ chief supplementary source, Jacob Voragine’s medieval Golden Legend, its saints and their stories arranged according to the circular church year, and Foxe’s Actes and Monuments. Foxe’s sufferers,

19 Ferguson ed. (above, n. 14), p. 35.
Anne Lake Prescott

like Lock’s penitent, are stones better suited for rebuilding Jerusalem, restoring a lost truth but also looking forward to God’s kingdom, than for processing around a year. The same year that saw Lock’s sonnets in print, 1560, also the publication of the Geneva Bible and its picture of the New Jerusalem erected against this world’s ruins: Lock, as has been noted, hopes to help erect those walls soon, in historical time, for she hopes that:

That Thy Jerusalem with mighty wall
May be enclosed under Thy defense,
And builded so that it may never fall
By mining fraud or mighty violence.
Defend thy church, Lord, and advance it
So in despite of tyranny to stand,
That trembling at Thy power the world may know
It is upholden by Thy mighty hand,
That Sion and Jerusalem may be
A safe abode for them that honor Thee.\(^{20}\)

Lock looks forward, even if her sequence and David’s words in the margin make a provocative interplay of divine Word and a voice that passes through a human throat (female or not). The largely linear scriptural nonfiction thus makes straight through the margin a highway, so to speak, restraining and potentially correcting verse that at least generically gestures toward something more repetitive and ceremonial, with repeating rhyme and the suggestion that what was said and done long ago can be repeated now, and often. The margins keep the sonnets from any generic tendency to curve or drift.

Marquets’s sonnets on dedicating a church, however, assume that the capital C Church is already here in all its magnificence, not something that has for long centuries been invisible or decayed and now needs re-edifying. True, right after the Colloque de Poissy she had written a sonnet hoping that stony-hard heretics would join Catholics in making part of God’s city, for in those days many, in France and elsewhere,

\(^{20}\) From Sonnet 25. On such hopes, although with a focus on Lock’s 1590 translation of the Huguenot John Taffin, see M. Hannay, ““Strengthening the walles of... Jerusalem”: Anne Vaughan Lok’s Dedication to the Countess of Warwick’, \textit{ANQ} 5 (1992), pp. 71-75, who gives the text.
Two Annes, Two Davids

still hoped that all Christians might unite to undo history. Nor was it the case that only Roman Catholic poets thought liturgically – Spenser’s *Amoretti*, as I have noted, alludes to and may imitate the church year. So too, John Boys arranged his collection of eloquent Anglican sermons calendrically. And, long after Lock, an Anglican poet, Nathaniel Eaton, created a church year of epigrams, stopping, it is true, to grieve over Charles I’s execution and to celebrate the saints of a now restored and united realm: David, Patrick, Andrew, and George (allegorizing the latter, in case he wasn’t real).21 Still, it is hard to imagine Lock creating a Christian version of Ovid’s *Fasti*. That was done in the Renaissance, but not by friends of John Knox.

David

Anne Lock’s David is a historical figure, in a historical circumstance, whose words apply to English history at the start of a new reign and its fresh opportunity for a reform that may well look forward to or even usher in the end of history. Anne de Marquets’ David, only one of many voices who figure in her poetry, is scattered into many ‘days’ of a circular set of texts – both the liturgy itself and this set of sonnet sequences – and serves not a future City but a present one. Anne Lock meditates on a single psalm, well aware of its supposed source in a king’s shame and grief for his murderous abuse of power and the destruction of another man’s marriage and life. The psalm has a place in worship of course, and equally of course her David is a figure for Christ, as witness several Christological additions to her paraphrase – nor would Calvin and Knox object. The psalmist’s words are both by the Holy Spirit and, when we recite them, our own as well as David’s. But Protestants, even more than Renaissance Catholics, were likely to stress the psalmist’s role in Israelite history and hence David’s specific if varied relevance to modern monarchs, whether as illustrious parallel

21 John Boys, *An exposition of the dominical epistles and gospels, used in our English liturgie, throughout the whole yeare* London 1610 and its many sequels and editions. Nathaniel Eaton’s title is worth giving in full: *De fastis Anglicis, sive Calendarium Sacrum. The Holy Calendar: being a treble series of epigrams upon all the feasts observed by the Church of England: to which is added the like number of epigrams upon some other more especiall daies, which have either their footsteps in Scripture, or are more remarkable in this kingdome*, London 1661.
for the likes of Elizabeth Tudor or as a terrible warning to the likes of her sister Mary, Elizabeth’s Saul.

Anne de Marquets’s David, though, seems largely typological, with little relevance to Charles IX or Henri III and with the focus on his timeless or at least cyclical allegorical significance. She is aware of David the penitent, of course – how could she not be? But her theology on this score is very different from Lock’s. Lock, as I have said, has an almost sensuous taste for imagining ‘her’ own wickedness – I say ‘her’, although the gender of the speaker is unclear. In the prefatory sonnets, which arguably are in her own voice, Lock tells how Despair (who sounds very much like Spenser’s figure of that name) says that in vain she cries out in ‘bootlesse noyse / To him for mercy, O refused wight, / That heares not the forsaken sinners voice. / Thy reprobate and foreordeined sprite, / Fordamned vessell of his heavie wrath, … / Of his swete promises can claime no part’. The penitent sounds desperate, but her very state has enabled her to pray, some sonnets earlier, in nearly luxurious fashion, ‘Yet washe me Lord againe, and washe me more. / Wash me, O Lord, and do away the staine / Of uggly sinnes that in my soule appere. … / Wash me againe, yea washe me every where’. This is not Anne de Marquets’s style. She does echo Psalm 51 in a sonnet for Pentecost when saying that the Spirit will never come to a malevolent soul or into a body stained by sin (‘Et ne se loge au corps par peché vil et ord’). But Anne Lock might also argue that such a soul or body is exactly the one that needs the Spirit – yet we cannot wash ourselves clean enough to be a proper receptacle for it; without the Spirit we cannot hope to be fit for the Spirit: the Protestant dilemma. Hence the powerful prayer to wash me, wash me, wash me. Marquets in fact seems to prefer David the champion to David the penitent. Take, as examples, two sonnets written for Good Friday.

No. 173 says that just like David, Christ (the ‘Roy debonnaire’) took only a staff and five stones when he valiantly fought for us against our great adversary Satan. This teaches Christians that if we wish to conquer the infernal giant we too should take these same arms … The staff is the cross we must bear in the heart and the stones with divine efficacy are Christ’s wounds that that grant us, in our extremity, his favor and grace’ (an intriguing reversal of concave hole and convex projectile). Like Lock, Marquets offers a Christological reading of the
Psalter, or at least a Christological application, but she also enjoys allegory – easy and traditional allegory, but allegory nonetheless. There is a version of inwardsness, to be sure, for we are to carry the cross inside us so that we can cudgel our cardiac Goliath, the sin inside that is both ancient (Goliath comes from the old race that lingered after the Israelites came to the Promised Land) and bigger than we are (he is a giant). It is not, then, that Anne de Marquets’s poetics lacks a sense of interiority, only that she has little interest in abasing herself beyond what is expected of a good nun. It is I, not she, who has spelled out the logic that implies an inner Goliath to go with the inner Davidic cudgel, and she speaks of ‘us’, not ‘me’, for she seems to think that there is an inner cross/cudgel for everyone, not unlike the miracle of the loaves and fishes, one might say: there is plenty to go around.22

Another sonnet for Good Friday, sonnet 182, is on the Harrowing of Hell. Christ does not just wash us, in Anne de Marquet’s imagination; he battles. The sonnet’s drama derives from a spectacular scene in the Golden Legend derived from (as the author says) a passage in the apocryphal but still popular Gospel of Nicodemus. Christ’s descent to Hell figures in the Nicene creed and hence in the Church of England service, but one could forgive radical reformers for having their doubts, especially doubts about the version in so problematic a text as the notorious and fantastic Golden Legend. The story is undeniably dramatic: during Easter Saturday, after the Crucifixion and before the Resurrection, a voice outside Hell thunders out twice, ‘Lift up your gates, Princes; open, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in’. Hell asks, ‘Who is this King of glory?’ And David replies: ‘The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle’.23 He knows the right

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22 The original French of sonnet 173 reads: ‘Tout ainsi que David, Christ, le Roy debonnaire, / Pour toutes armes print un baston seulement, / Et cinq pierres aussi, quand pour nous vaillamment / Il combatit Sathan, nostre grand adversaire: / Enseignant au Chrestien qu’il luy est necessaire, / S’il veut bien batailler et vaincre heureusement / Ce geant infernal, aussi semblablement / Ces mesmes armes prendre, et son bouclier en faire: / Car ensemble elles ont d’assaillir le pouvoir, / Et de defendre aussi que mal on ne nous face. / Ce baston, c’est la croix, qu’au cœur il faut avoir; / Et ces pierres aussi de divine efficace / Sont les playes de Christ, qui nous font recevoir, / En nostre extremité, sa faveur et sa grace’. This is, of course, a Christological reading of the Psalter.

23 The Gospel of Nicodemus, which makes inevitable anti-Jewish comments (not, of course, applied to the Israelite), was widely available in Renaissance editions.
words, of course, for both question and answer are from Psalm 24. Then Light enters the infernal darkness and Christ’s rescue of faithful Israelites is at hand. Psalm 24 has become dialogue and drama, raising questions of voice even more complex than those raised by Psalm 51: is it only now that David understands his prophecy? When he wrote the psalm whom did he imagine, Christians might wonder, asking the identity of the King of Glory? As a type of Christ (for traditional Christians), does David participate in the very Word that now, says this tradition, liberates his people?

And if we repeat David’s words in a sonnet? Marquets does so, perhaps remembering but not quite saying that most people need to be somehow harrowed, somehow restored to light. She writes: ‘Open now your gates, ye infernal princes: now must you unwillingly receive this victorious king who has power over all and will destroy you in thousands and thousands of ways. But who is this king of glory, say these malign troops, this boastful prince who dares prevail upon us so that by will alone he breaks these bolts and strong bars. Ha! It is the King of Glory, the splendid Lord to whom alone belongs victory and honor, for his power is great and his force invincible, which he well showed when, by happy effort, he destroyed sin and overcame death by enduring on the cross an unspeakable torment’. Marquets does not need to read Psalm 24 Christologically, for the Gospel of Nicodemus and Voragine had done that for her. Notice again the stress on the collective: Christ has broken our chains. The unspeakable suffering is his. This is a battle between princes (Psalm 24 itself has no princes), and to the victor belongs a large group of people, ‘us’. The ‘us’ we may assume includes the speaker, but Marquets does not focus on her

English printed editions, some of then crudely illustrated, begin in 1507. For the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, who cites the Gospel of Nicodemus, see the translation by W. G. Ryan, Princeton 1993, I, pp. 222-224.

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24 O princes infernaux, ouvrez ores vos portes, / C’est ores qu’il vous faut mal-gré
vous recevoir / Ce Roy victorieux, qui sur tous a pouvoir, / Et qui vous destruira en mille et mille sortes. / Hé, qui est, disent lors ces malignes cohortes, / ‘Ce Prince glorieux, qui s’ose prevaloir / Contre nous tellement que de son seul vouloir / Il rompt ja nos verroux et nos closures fortes? / Ha, c’est le Roy de gloire, et ce brave Seigneur, / A qui seul appartient la victoire et l’honneur, / Car sa puissance est grande, et sa force invincible: / Ce qu’il a bien monstré quand, par heureux effort, / Il a destruict peché et surmonté la mort, / Voire endurant en croix un tourment indicible.
Two Annes, Two Davids

own rescue, her own relation to Christ – Anne Lock would have done just that.

Finally, Some Thoughts on Gender

It has been said, and I quote the title of a collection edited by Margaret Hannay, that early modern Englishwomen were ‘silent but for the Word’. Anne Lock’s poetry, especially her hopes for raising the walls of Jerusalem, serves a specific agenda on the part of a specific segment of English Protestantism – Calvinist, focused, energetic, militantly reformist, and with an eye on linear history: the visible church’s stumble into error and invisibility, the promise of its perhaps imminent reappearance as its re-edified and true self. Barred from pulpit, law court, and Parliament, Lock can engage David’s own voice so as to admonish England. What of the Catholic liturgy? Hannah Fournier thinks that Marquets wrote against the cultural grain in appropriating its masculinist traditions. Marquets’ editor, Gary Ferguson, thinks the opposite, noting that even if women cannot be priests, there is nothing particularly male about the liturgy.25 Is Anne silent but for the Mass?

In any case, each Anne faced the problem, in different ways, of creating a cross-gendered voice. How does a woman translate David? For Christians, as I have noted, the ambiguities of his voice are multiple: an Israelite king, he is also Christ and, when a believer recites him he is also that person’s self speaking – the Logos speaks to the Logos through David and through the modern re-voicer. Can his voice be female if the translator is female and has interiorized the voice of the male David? In Christ, or so says Paul the apostle, is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28), but should that eliminate gender in a biblical translation, especially in a language in which the grammatical rules can make gendering a voice more difficult than it is in less inflected languages such as English? And how should a woman gender male biblical voices in the liturgy? All priests are male, yet women respond and pray. Lock’s speaker is male, say some, but this is hard to prove, and it might be worth remembering that her son, Henry Lock, would

adopt the personae of several biblical women when composing his own religious sonnets. As for Marquets, the language in which she writes has much more grammatical gender than languages such as English require, yet the closer she comes to paraphrase of David’s own words, the more her pronouns escape any syntax that would force her to use the feminine form. In one sense her ‘je’ is feminine, for the author is ‘Anne’, although her ‘nous’ is usually, even if not always, default masculine. But when the ‘je’ is that of David she seems to make every effort to keep her own femaleness out of the wording.26

Do the two Annes share a feminine poetics? Scholars have noted each woman’s seemingly deliberate lack of ‘invention’, for modern scholarship has sometimes identified an early modern ‘female’ style with plainness: rhetorical curls and ribbons are for guys and serviceable sobriety is for never-did-read-Cicero girls. Lock, though, indulges in some effective anaphora, metaphors, and repetitions; give Lock’s sonnets to George Puttenham – he of the Arte of English Poesie – and he could find many of his rhetorical tropes and schemes. And Marquets is happy to exploit analogies and typologies. Thus, for example, a sonnet on the Virgin (no. 372, on the Annunciation) compares Mary to the heroine Jael, slayer of Sisera. The Virgin’s humility in calling herself God’s handmaid, says the sonnet, is the spike with which she nailed Pride, head of all sin, much as Jael once slew Sisera, enemy of Israel. The language is spare, but this is allegory of sorts – inventive semi-fiction – and with a violence legitimated by the biblical parallel.

It has been said that Marquets ‘feminizes’ Jesus by stressing his mercy and gentleness and associating Satan with rape and violence and that she likes metaphors and imagery that associate the religious life and imagination with motherhood and matter, with the ground of being and its fecundity.27 Yes, although such gender stereotypes make

26 Gabrielle de Coignard does the same. Both poets are willing to gender their ‘je’ in a number of poems; both seem deliberately to avoid gendering the speaker as female when the ‘je’ is David’s.

27 See Fournier, ‘Voix’ (above, n. 25), pp. 82-88. Fournier cites feminine imagery that would be interesting to compare to the metaphors that Margaret Hannay has found in Mary Sidney Herbert’s psalm translations; see her “House-Confinéd Maids”: The Presentation of Women’s Role in the Psalms of the Countess of Pembroke’, ELR 24 (1994), pp. 44-71. The feminization of Jesus is not, though, peculiar to Marquets or to women writers.
slippery as well as ambiguous evidence for feminism. More impressively, Anne de Marquets can be explicitly proto-feminist (nuns are as well-positioned as wives to experience exasperation with male authority and condescension). ‘Do not cast upon us such heaps of insults, oh Men, too ungrateful and with hardened heart’, she says in an Easter sonnet (no. 193), for ‘has not God care for us as well as for you? Is He not Creator of women and of men? I know well that among you there are many brave men – there are likewise many good women. Neither sex is deprived, for we are made of the same flesh. See how at the Resurrection women had the honor of being first to see the sovereign Lord, to kiss his feet, to tell the Apostles that He has vanquished death and now lives. So cease henceforth to reprove us: do not envy our honors – be content with your own’.28 Sisterhood is powerful.

Lock never published anything this dyspeptic on misogyny, yet her poems remain a compelling contribution to the tradition of recapturing and revising the grief of King David after his sin with a woman. That she did so in of all things a sonnet sequence shows a capacity to imagine genre and voice in fresh and adventurous ways. Thinking about how these two women, one so determined to build a Calvinist Jerusalem the other so scornful of Rome’s enemies, exploited the poetry of David, I also wonder: is it not possible that Anne Lock, who presumed to teach by example the reprobate how to repent, and Anne de Marquets, who satirized famous Huguenot clerics and armed the Virgin Mary with spike and hammer, also hoped to share a little in the voice of King David’s sharp-eyed and brave-tongued prophet, Nathan?

28 The French reads: ‘Ne jettez plus sur nous d’injures si grands sommes, / Hommes par trop ingrâts et de cœur endurcy; / Dieu n’a-il pas de nous comme de vous soucy? / N’est-il pas Createur des femmes et des hommes? / Je sçay bien qu’entre vous il y a maints prêd’hommes, / Maintes femmes y a vertueuses aussi: / En l’un et l’autre sexe il n’y a nul sans si, / Car d’une mesme chair environnez nous sommes. / Voyez comme aujourd’hui les femmes ont l’honneur / Les premières de voir le souverain Seigneur, / De luy baiser les pieds, d’aller dire aux Apostres / Qu’il a vaincu la mort et qu’ore il est vivant. / De nous blasonner donc cessez doresnavant: / N’enviez nos honneurs, contentez-vous des vostres’. 