Three substantial manuscript fragments of a previously unknown and apparently unpublished early modern prose romance survive among the papers of the Jervoise family of Herriard, now on deposit in Winchester at the Hampshire Record Office (HRO). Transcribed across what is now a sequence of manuscripts, HRO 44M69/M4/13/3-5, these fragmentary drafts amount to just under 6,500-words of a prose romance across two related plot sequences. It is likely that the romance fragments, as I argue on material and contextual grounds below, date from the last decade of Elizabeth’s reign, c.1593-1603. In adding an early manuscript romance to our knowledge of a genre that has to this point been largely understood through print, the Vabrillax romance (as I will call it) substantially extends our knowledge of Elizabethan romance writing, complementing the recent discovery of Hester Pulter’s post-Restoration romance, *The Unfortunate Florinda*, while confirming at the same time the centrality of political readings to understanding early modern romance.\(^1\) The Vabrillax romance, in its quirks and improbabilities, and its narratives of desire and survival, is also terrific fun.

\(^1\) For Pulter, see Peter C. Herman, ‘Lady Hester Pulter’s *The Unfortunate Florinda*: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Rape’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 63 (2010), 1208-46; for a foundational account of
The earlier part of the romance narrative as it now survives in the HRO manuscripts is occupied with the events put in train when Sabassie, the son of Sarmadroy, an aged ruler of the Isle of Vabrilax, refuses to relinquish his life as a shepherd so as to take up his father’s throne. This narrative opening is told out across two not-quite-perfectly connected fragments in the surviving manuscripts, transcribed as Fragments 1 and 2 below. The second and much longer plot-sequence describes the dispersed travels and travails of three main characters, Doylus, Plorynus and Krego, who search for, or hinder attempts to recover, Plorynus’s lost daughter in the period after Krego has villainously taken to himself the crown of Vabrilax. This second plot-sequence also involves a narrative of mistaken erotic identity in which a cross-dressed page is courted by, among others, Krego’s virtuous son, Dymathyllos. It ends with Dymathyllos afloat with his fleet, anchored off shore, not knowing that his father, aggrieved at an apparent snub in dynastic marriage negotiations, is pursuing him.

Even in its physically consecutive sections, narrative coherence is not strong in this romance (if indeed ever in this genre), and the make-up of the manuscript today implies that some parts of this story necessary to its full explanation no longer survive, or perhaps were never written. The abrupt cessation of this narrative, if not its closure, leave the reader today, not unlike Dymathyllos, in the middle of a larger sequence whose points of origin and whose destinations

remain suspended. In the shorter first part of this article, I offer a contextualising introduction to
the three romance fragments, describing the manuscripts, the status of the text, and the literary-
historical contexts within which we might understand them today; in the longer second part of
the article, I offer a semi-diplomatic transcription of the three fragments.

The manuscripts

Fragments 1 and 2 of the Vabrillax romance each occupy one bifolium, now HRO
44M69/M4/13/4-5. They are written on written two sheets from a single paperstock, measuring
c.320x400mm, and bear the watermark of a tall thin single-handled pot of a kind in use right
across the early modern period. The much longer, and in narrative terms slightly later, Fragment
3 is transcribed across five bifolia and a single half-sheet that are now collectively HRO MS
44M69/M4/13/3, parts 1-6. These six parts are transcribed on a second, shared paperstock
measuring c.270x295mm. This paper, bearing a watermark apparently of a trefoil set within a
crown and mounted above a capital M, is related to paper documented elsewhere as in use in
1602.2 The torn outer edge of the half-sheet part 6 shows that it was formerly part of a sixth
bifolium, one leaf of which is now lost. Parts 2-6 are in fact each numbered 2-6 in an early
modern hand in the place of a catchword on the final verso of each leaf; and the pattern of the
folds in the sheets in Fragment 3, and the darkening to the outer leaf of the first bifolium,
indicate that all six pieces of paper were at some period folded together as a unit.

All three fragments are transcribed by a single scribe, who uses in the main a mixed early modern
hand, and inconsistently an italic hand using graphs from this mixed hand in order to emphasise
names of characters and places. The scribe’s mixed hand shows a distinctive rightwards slope,

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2 The watermark is related to Gravell M.001.1, used 1 December 1602 in legal correspondence
from John Reale to Walter Bagot (Folger Shakespeare Library, MS L.a.761).
and an equally characteristic strongly spurred a-graph, which is used interchangeably with a spurless a-graph; initial hooks both to v- and w-graphs are very pronounced; and the d-graph in this hand, both in initial and terminal positions, is very open, with its ascender often crossing back to the left. H-graphs, both in majuscule and miniscule forms, extend their closing stroke to the right in a regular flourish. Often it can be hard to distinguish initial majuscule from miniscule forms, something repeatedly apparent in the various forms of the names Doylus and Dyrmathylos. This hand does not appear elsewhere in the Jervoise family papers, save perhaps for one occasion, where a list of fourteen associative nouns, two of which are deleted, are transcribed on the initial leaf of a manuscript of Sir John Davies’s *Epigrams*, probably dating from c.1595 and once (as I have argued elsewhere) in the possession of Sir Richard Paulet.\(^3\) The hand in which the list on the *Epigrams* manuscript is transcribed provides such a small sample for comparison with the Vabrillax romance fragments that it can be no more than suggestive, but it does share the characteristics noted above, and particularly the combination of spurred a- and open d-graphs. These similarities do not amount to an identity of the one hand with the other. Nonetheless, in confirming that the hand in which the romance fragments are transcribed is broadly consistent in date with the evidence of the paper on which it is transcribed, the palaeographical evidence may allow us to engage more closely with the nature of the text that is transcribed in these manuscripts.

*The status of the text*

Central to the status of the text of the Vabrillax romance fragments is the relationship of the transcriber to the text transcribed. Is this an author’s compositional manuscript? A scribal copy of a now-lost authorial manuscript? Or is perhaps an authorial copy of an earlier compositional

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manuscript? At times, the scribal habits witnessed in these manuscripts can give evidence for all three possibilities, themselves by no means limiting the whole field of manuscript possibilities in the early modern period. In a sequence such as ‘But (qoth he) whereat they began to replie, But (qoth he)’ (HRO 44M69/M4/13/5, fol. 2v) the deleted and then repeated phrase might perhaps signal an eye-skip error, as also might the later sequence ‘that if the worst happened shee would and Could and would by force save his liefe’ (44M69/M4/13/4 P.5, fol. 2r). But a rather different authorial habit seems to be visible when the travel plans of ‘Plorynus and his wife’ are rapidly adjusted. As the compositional drafting in this section of the text makes clear, this is a text in process, and almost certainly in the hand of its author. Plorynus, originally having been due to leave with his wife, very quickly leaves alone: ‘they departed. \\leaving Sarmilla in an Abbey there/ \he departed/. Later in the narrative, an author’s composing *currente calamo* revisions are again visible, when a ‘Companie of Ladies or rather Nymphes’ becomes – within the space of a sentence, a second thought and some strategic deletion – a more easily managed in narrative singular ‘Nymph’. Such moments lead me to argue this manuscript is a witness to a text that had not found a final form, and probably never did, so that it records a text in process towards completion in the hand of its still-revising, but unidentified and almost certainly amateur, author.

*Literary-historical contexts*

Many of the narrative motifs in the Vabrillax romance have parallels at large in the genre. In Robert Greene’s *Pandosto*, first published in 1588 and in its third edition by 1595, one can see in Bohemia and Sicilia clear analogues to the sea-bound locations of Vabrillax and Cubadro; the court intrigues of Greene’s cupbearer Franion as a model for those of Krego; an oracle’s pronouncement as a central plot device; the assumed pastoral identities of major characters as shepherds in both texts, and the discoveries of their real identities; as well as the lost daughters of the nobility. In the hands of a more knowing author than this, such identities between Greene’s over-determined narrative mode and the Vabrillax fragments might amount almost to
pastiche; in the case of the Vabrillax romance, however, I take it that they are much more the marker of sincere if sometimes inapt imitation. A second instance of such imitative practice may well present itself in the form of its (anti)hero’s name, Krego, which is strikingly close to the name given by Thomas Nashe to Petro de Campo Frego in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, a text completed on 27 June 1593, as its first edition confirms, and published in 1594, proving then so popular that two editions were printed in the same year (STC 18380 and 18381). Krego in the Vabrillax romance is much more varied and thorough-going villain than Nashe’s ‘pander’, but the form of their names is so striking, and so strikingly rare, as to be suggestive. Greene and Nashe, I would suggest, provide the coordinates within which future readers of the Vabrillax romance might look to plot its course.

Research remains to be done across the romance’s imagined locations – Vabrillax, Cubadro, Medynum and their courts, groves and monasteries – as well as into the careers of its often Hellenic characters, Dyrmathylos, Brachymella and their supporting cast of Queens, love-struck pages, shipwrecked ship captains and nuns with healing powers. In its names, though, some of its roots are visible. The majority of the romance’s names are made up of a patchwork of genuine Greek and Latin roots and suffixes, recombined in new configurations unattested in the ancient languages themselves and without any obvious significance. There are, however, a few exceptions. Some, most notably Vabrillax itself, though sounding plausibly classical, have no etymological connection to Latin or Greek words. Others have a relatively transparent Latin or Greek etymological significance: the name of the kingdom Medynum might plausibly be derived from the Greek verb μέδω (protect, rule over). Mastusia, also spelled Mestusia in the manuscript, suggests both μαστός (breast) and μεστός (full). Two characters’ social roles are reflected in their names: Doylus and Basillia are anglicisations of the Greek words δοῦλος (slave) and βασιλεία (princess). Finally, the ‘province of Melos’ might possibly recall a real place: the Greek island Μῆλος (*Mēlos*), rendered, due to the changing values of Greek vowels, as Milos in modern
English. I annotate this aspect of the romance further in the notes below.

If, then, these are the literary and etymological contexts for the Vabrillax narratives, what of its political contexts? The situation from which these stories departs, I argue, is very much of a piece historically with the presumptive date of the romance’s composition, in the decade or so between 1593 and 1603. Such a reading of the romance sees it as a series of thought experiments in elective monarchy told out as stories in Fragments 1 and 2, from which the longer narrative sequence in Fragment 3 then picaresquely departs. Such thought experiments in a ruler’s ‘governing and careful providinge for the quiett of his Countrie’ are in many ways of a piece with those late-Elizabethan propositions classically discussed by Patrick Collinson in his account of ‘The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I’. From the mid-1580s onwards, mechanisms by which an aging ruler without a natural heir might confer succession in her or his realm were an unavoidable consideration, whether or not the frustrations of that political succession were primarily biological (as in Elizabethan England) or oracular (as in Vabrillax). What Peter Lake has termed ‘proposals to perpetuate the Elizabethan state into the period after Elizabeth’s death’ took many forms, of course, from Cecil’s proposed interregnum to the eventual accession of James VI and I, with romance narratives, safely licensed by fiction and their imagined geographies, to explore the workings of polities not unlike England’s own, by no means the least

obvious. Indeed the model of elective monarchy by ‘nomynación and election’ explored at length in Fragment 2 resonate very strongly with debates that persisted into the early years of James’s reign. Such contexts provide a vital reason to explain why such stories might have been told at this period, even they go only some way towards glossing the oddities of the narratives that follow.

The Text

Transcription conventions

What follows is a semi-diplomatic transcription of HRO 44M69/M4/13/3-5 which expands contractions but otherwise seeks to present these manuscript texts in a form as close as possible to their original. I employ the following conventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>letters within a word</th>
<th>letters supplied by the expansion of contractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>text</td>
<td>text deleted by the scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text/</td>
<td>text added between the writing lines by the scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[text]</td>
<td>editorial additions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted above, it can be difficult in context to differentiate majuscule and minuscule forms of some initial letter forms; I have silently promoted all proper nouns to majuscule forms, but other capitalisation follows manuscript usage. Because of inconsistencies in the scribe’s usage I do not

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attempt to differentiate names transcribed in italic from those transcribed in a mixed hand. The foliation of the manuscripts from which this text is transcribed is recorded in what follows.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Fragment 1

[HRO 44M69/M4/13/5]

Basrilla daughter unto a famous shephard inhabiting in the Isle of Cubadro opposite to that populous nation of the vexeres) noe less vertuous, then fayre, yet wanting noe ornaments of beautie that Nature ever afforded to any nor any perfection that education and artes giue waye vnto, beloved of her father, deare vnto her mother, affected of her kinsfolke and Frinds, and generallie admired of all sorts./ Sabassie the father of this fayre mayden (for soe was his name) although he were by his lief and then profession and a shephard, and had in such habite lyved by many yeares togeather, Yet was he the oldest onlie Sonne andheyre of a mightie Prince, to whome the Crowne and diademe of A neighbouring Island called Vabrillax, did by right of Birth and due succession solely apperteyne. Having in the lief tyme of his father (the then Regent of that Isle) married a fayre young Virgen named Sarmilla, daughter vnto a noble man of that Countrie and having soe lived with her by the space of twentie yeares without any Child, did then despayre and hopeles of ever having any which was noe less discomfort vnto his aged Father, then grief to himself. Sarmadroy the father of this Sabassie (for soe was he called) having ruled and governed the same Isle of Vabrillax by the space of lxxx yeares, and then by reason of the extremitie of his age and ymbecillitie of nature (being about xvij years of age at the beginning of his Raigne) grown weary [fol. 1v] of that heavy burden, which by governing and carefull providinge for the quiett
of his Countrie he had then longe susteyned and being desirous not onlie to free himself from all troubles and cares, and with A quiett and disburthened mynd to prepare himself for that tyme, that noe fleshe can avoyde. But alsoe in his lief tyme with loye to see his sonne invested in that seate of governement wherein he himself had longe since sate. On a tyme summoning all his nobles and Peers of his Countrie to A Councell, did to that end frame a short speeche to them in this manner. That forsomuch as they had all by the space of soe many yeares submitted themselves and been contented to haue bene governed by A man of soe meane desert as himself, and were (as he thought) well pleased soe longer to subiect themselves, yet forsomuch as he was by nature decayed and vnable longer to preserue the part of A governo\(ur\) (especiallie over soe worthie A people as they were) And soe that that after his death, it was not vnknowne vnto them, that by right of succession, the Crowne and dyademe of that Realme did belong vnto Sabassie his eldest onlie sonne and heyre apparant, and because that his tyme could be by course of nature but very short. And for that he doubted not but as they had ever seemed carefull and desirous of his quiett, soe now they would in noe sort contradict that, which was of all thinges in the world chieflie desired of him. Which was that they would be all contented, that he might resigne his Crowne and governement vnto Sabassie his Sonne, and that they would submitt themselves vnto [fol. 2r] him, and become his faithfull and loving Subiects. Which speech being noe sooner ended, but that noble assemblie (although they seemed desirous to haue their aged Kinge bene should ever (if it had bene possible) their Governour) with a generall good liking of that his mocion, did all guie therevnto their free consentes./ Wherevpon the kinge did presentlie cause his Sonne Sabassie to be sent for, to Repayre vnto that noble assemblie. At whose Coming thither the Nobles there assembled by thappoyntment of their kinge, did make knowne vnto Sabassie both the honorable mynd and princelie regard of their good king vnto his Subiects and his and their desire and the generall humble petition of the whole Commons by his fathers voluntary resignacion to create him their kinge and governo\(ur\). And did therefore in the name of the kinge his father, of themselves, and of all the Commons,
most earnestlie expect his kind and willinge acceptance thereof, and his free consent therevnto. 
To which (though honorable yet unlookt-for) mocion Sabassie in reverent manner vnto the kinge 
his father and friendly countenance vnto that honourable assemble did shape such an aunswere 
as the present mocions of his mynd without præmeditacion, or desire of deliberacion presented. 
which was That as bothe by the Lawes of nature and limites of dutie he should iustlie incurr the 
scandal of a disobedient sonne ye he should in any wise contradicte the Command and Will of 
his Princelie father, soe, if he should seeme slacke in yealding to the Requestes of his soe many 
noble Frinds,(especiallie the same being for soe high an advancement vnto himself) he should not 
onlie deserve the name of an ingratefull person but alsoe minister vnto them iust cause to call his 
originall in question as one proceeding rather from some base Peasunt, then from the loynes of 
soe Wise A prince mynded Prince, as his kinglie Father, in neglecting or refusing soe high and 
honourable an estate [fol. 2v] estate. That therefore \aswell/ in regard of his dutie vnto his aged 
Father in accomplisshing his desires, bothe to free him of the heavy burden he complaines he 
hath long susteyned and for his more encrease of joyes in seeing him his sonne invested in his 
seate of honour As alsoe to shew himself both gratefull and A willing accepter of soe kind an 
offer of such his honourable frindes, and not to be thought degenerate from soe worthie and 
honourable A father. Although in regard of partes, or any desert proceedinge from himself, he 
were farr vnworthie of soe high A dignitie, and though (as he then vowed) he had an inward 
hartie desire (if it might stand with his noble Fathers and their good liking) to leade a private lief, 
and to be freed of soe weightie A chardge and great care \by being kinge/, as it behoved a good 
king to haue of \he should haue for the/ well ordering and governing his Realme, and yet in 
respect of the promises, he oas and would be most willinge in all obedience to his Father and 
thankfulnes to that noble assemble to accept of his and their honorable offer. But (quo’th he) 
whereat they began to replie, But (quo’th he) vnder the Kinges my honorable fathers Correction, 
and your honorable pacience That forsomuch as, it is not vnknowne to you all how long my 
father hath raigned kinge over you, and how that for thes many hundred yeares the Crowne and
dyademe of this nation hath contynewed in his progenitors, and hath in a lyneall descent from
tyme to tyme bene rightlie Carried. And that there hath never (as Chronicles report) bene any
kinge of our Auncestors, without yssue apparent of his bodie begotten, to whome the same
should descend. Yet that now (the gods as it seems being angrie and displeased for some offence
or other haue (as it seems) fullie determined that I shall be that barren stocke from whome noe
fruicte shall springe, and that in me shall blast and wither that fruitfull happie plant, which hath
for soe many ages flourished \ and that I shall be the last of my fathers house that shall be kinge
of Vabrillax/and that I even I shalbe that yssules kinge, of whome our auncient prophetes and
wise men fo haue for many yeares

Fragment 2
[44M69/M4/13/4]

Crowne and kingdome to some one man whoe for his virtuous well ordered manner of lief,
wisdome and discreete demeanour should be of all his Countriemen most admired, and such a
one as should be scene to exceede all other in Leuitie and curteous behaviour, and one to soe
abounding in the guift of pacience that could not by any Crosses be moved to Dollor or
impacience and to Conclude such a one that should be scene a mirrour to the world for all
manner of Vertuos Conversacion. Theis, and such like were in Sabassies conceipt porswasiue
argumentes; And as to the prophecie of the Childles kinge, If he were the man meant (whereof
he scarce doubted) that contynewing Kinge, he had noe hope of having any children because it
was otherwise decreed of the gods/ Yet had he this hope that by unkinging himself he might
without contradiction to the gods determinaciones haue yssue which might in tyme be successors
to the Crowne of Vabrillax. Theis and such like were in Sabassies conceipt porswasiue reasons to
enduce him to hold on that determynate course and theis did soe prevayle with him That he
could not be in any sort satisfied or not reste vntill he had put his resolucion in practyse. For
before he had Raigned as kinge of Vabrillass the spane of Twoe Yeares, he had by his studious
endeavours wonne the greatest part of his Nobilitie to giue their Consents therevnto [fol. 1v]
therevnto and before much longer tyme passed, he had procured the generall Consent of all his
Peeres and Commons./ Although the greater part of bothe sortes would gladlie haue 

yet/ he had during the tyme of his raigne, ruled his Realme and demeanes himself toward his
subiects \
with such Clemencie Justice Wisdome and vertuous Care, that he had soe
wonne the hartes of his subiectes that never was Prince more faithfullie beloved/ and by reason
thereof, they were able in noe sort to deny or gainsaye anything that stood with his liking, still
assuring themselves that what (having by experience found it true,) that what soever he did was
intended by him for the speciall good of his Countrie. Wherein they were nothing at all
deceyved. But his greatest lett and stay in this his proceedinges was his aged Father, whoe had to
thend to make him kinge made himself A sub A sub of A Kinge a subiect, and if he must resigne his
Crowne reason \
dutie/ and naturall instinction tould him that it was most fitt to yeald it to his
father, which had a bene contrary to his purpose, although he could haue desired bene contented
that aboue all other choyces it should be soe, yet then was he still in doubt, that his father being
verie old and not likelie longe to by [fol. 2r] Course of nature long to liue, that the Crowne would
againe by his death be ymposed on him to be freed whereof he had then such care. But while he
was most busied in beating his braynes about his best course therein his father falling sicke of A
fever sodeynlie died./ whose death (although it were by reason of nature and the deare affection
and sonnelike ten deare affection grievous vnto Sabassie and by him much bewayled) yet was it
the onlie meane to giue passage vnto his almost smouthered enterprise./ For he being once
deceased that there was none that did contradict Sabassies endeavoured purpose, Insomuch that a
generall Consent of all the Peeres nobles and Commons was obtayned; that Sabassie should
resigne his Crowne and governement, to some one such person as should by them all be thought
best worthie of soe high an estate. and to such a one as might by all coniectures be seeme to be
farthest from A tirannous disposicion. For the nomynacion and election of which person there were divers Conversaciones and Counsels, but to none end, for ambicion and desire of wearing A Crowne did take such hold of the hartes of all the Nobles and Pieres that each of them attributing the highest desert vnto himself and thinking himself best worthie of high dignitie would not give their Consentes for the election of any one. Soe that Sabassies intended purpose was there likelie to take an end and from thence great strife to arise howbeit some small tyme Sabassie by his provident and discreete wisdom had appeased their debates and controversies and soe much prevayled with them, that they were [fol.2v] all Contented that he whome soever Sabassie should of his owne choyce elect should be king and Ruler, and that they would all without repyning or envying at him or at Sabassie for his choyce, with most willing hartes submitt themselves vnto his governement. Wherevpon Sabassie with due and carefull regard weying and foredeeming with himself what might be best, and intending to make choyce of such A person as might by all likelihoods of conjecture, desire and to preserve the good of his Countrie, And at the last by after long deliberacion finding that to what Pier soever of his Realme he did elect, might to establish himself oppresse his Countrie, (which by reason that they were then of great power they might the more easilie effect) he did fullie resolve with himself to make choyce of some private man, and emongst all that were his subiects he could not find out any whoe soe well ordered carriagge widome leuitie and vertuos life was soe much reverenced as and beloved as a private gentel man of the Cittie of Heka named Krego Fellie. Whome indeed after sufficient triall of his wisdom and vertues had and the good will and liking of all the Nobles and Commons obteyned Sabassie did elect and appoynt Not with standing But before he should be Created or Crowned Kinge it was agreed between Sabassie and the Nobles That the Reuercion and Remaynder of the Crowne after the decease of Krego should by Acte of parliament be lymited and established to the heyres of the bodie of Sabassie lawfullie begotten. And for want of such heyres To the heyres Males of the bodie of Krego And for want
Krego was sent to the oracle, he contrary to his oathe, opened the Scroll, of the Aunswere, and
added some words of himself rather of an evill & busy disposition then of any/
substantiall purpose; as it may be guessed The king resigned his Crowne by meanes of the Oracle
to Krego reserving to himself a dukedome, after K Plorinus had a daughter And tying the
Crowne to the heyres of his body. After he had a daughter. From the Whome by all meanes the
elected king endeavoured privilie to make away, and fayling hereof wrongfully lay treason to
Plorinus Chardg. He fearing the worst feyt himself garded as long as he Could within his Castle
of Mountpery, but deprived by Krego daylie of his Friends, was forced to save his owne wives
and daughters lives to flie privilie in a night out of the Castle, having with him only his wiefe and
young daughter And being soe escaped, they in short tyme Conveyed themselves out of that
Island into the Countrie of Cubadro, and after some short tyme of stir there bought a small
Countrie lyving and endeavoured shepheards Liues, being indeed of the natuies taken for people
of that profession, Contynewed soe till such tyme as their daughter was grewen to any yeares of
age. About which tyme their daughter being in the field looking to theire sheepe Was by Pyrates
which roved on the Sea coste neare and when [fol. 1v] by force taken and Carried a board their
shippes, which facte was scene only by twoe shepheards of that Country both of which were farr
in loue with her, whereof shee never vnderstood, Newes thereof was brought to Plorynus" her
father, whose therewithall exceedingly grieved, but knowing noe remedy was determynd himself to travell from Country to Countrie during his lief in search of her; But before he departed, it fortuned that Krego to whome he resigned his Crowne, being deprived by Dyrmathylos' his sonne of his kingdome to save his owne lief, fled privilie alsoe into that Island of Cubadro lyttle Imagining that Plorynus was there [hating], for he had never heard of him after his departure though he had sent many spies aswell into that as into other Countries to find him out) And having travellyd there some small tyme, the ye one daye as it was his chauce to com neare the Cottage wherein Plorinus dwelt, they he was sodenly striken blynd, having then not one in his Companie And being at that tyme in a thicke wood [folded deletion] Lay bemoyning even hopeles of life, was happened on (as he lay lamenting his mssery on the ground) by Plorinus himself, whose had then bine walking and full of melancholick Circonstawnce; but by reason of his owne grieve and loathenes to be over long from his wief, and being indeed sent for her, sent his Caused his servant whoe came for him, to repayre to Plor Plor Krego (but not knowing him to be Krego) and to bring him home to his house his servant (called Doylus) repayred to him, and Comforted him the best he could, Krego despayring indeed of lief, disclosed himself and whole state to Doylus, vpon promise of him of secreacie; after all which doylus brought him home to Plorynus house, whoe was cheerfully recyved of Plorynus and his wife, neyther of them knowing him, nor as much as as once conceyving him to be whome he was./ Plorynus much moved with charyte, vsed his best meanes to Comfort him and was indeed drawne with a certain kind of special affecction and love to his words, and in a farr higher [fol. 2v] degree, then ever he had bine to any other but to him himself when he knew him; And by meanes thereof having then in purpose to leave his Countrie and never returne without he could find his daughter; did after a Covert sort open to Krego what he had bine, and how he had favoured a young man, and geven all that ever he had to him, and how evillie he requited him, by first by seeking his only daughters lief and next by banishing him; Krego and Doylus to whome Krego had formerlie Confest himself began to haue many straunge Conceytrs, hearing the likeness of their tales in
substance, though under several and different names and qualities of persons; And Krego though he was blynd, yet And he could he not but Imagine him to be Plorynus himself; yet keep imagining if it were soe indeed, that seeing he knew not him or he Coniectured intended to keepe himself vnrevealed to him; and therefore having heard his full discourse not knowing whether Doylus had heard his Masters repeticion as soone as he could be alone with him, besought him of his seacreacy in what he had disclosed vnto him Concerning [44M69/M4/13/3 P.2, fol.1r] his person and estate, which promises to him of straunge good fortunes that should through his meanes happen to him whereas Doylus (regarding more then his new promises, his new frened plited faith & protestacons of secreacie,) faith fully consealed. Krego not quiett in mynd, desired rather to remove from his new hoste then longer to Contynewe for that he could not well tell what to resolve on, For he could not yet indeed trulie repent him of his villainous demeanour, had conceyved further mischief against Plorynus to whome he had formerlie done soe much, though indeed deeply dissembling it; Made shewe to Plorynus, that he desired to be Conducted to A certen Pilgrims house some twentie leagues distant from thence, there to spend in devocien the small remnant of his dayes, and desired Plorynus that he would not only giue him leave to departe, but alsoe to send as his guide his servant Doylus, to which purpose he had before sollicited him. Plorinus consented and they & (Krego geving many many thankes, and [fol. 1v] promising his contynewall prayer both of that he might haue good newes of d his daughter and prosperous successe in all other acconcs) departed togeather toward the monastery of despazar. But Krego after that tyme began to be more sparing in opening himself to doylus, and indeed thinking that he had not heard his Masters discourse, and therefore vnderstood not soe much as th otherwise he thought he might haue done, never spake one word to him of the same; which doylus well observing thought surley (wherein he was nothing mistaken) that he was even the person of whome his Master soe much complayned yet keeping his Conceit to himelf performed trustely his chardge, and brought him to the Monastery whither, being brought Krego was entertayned and placed accordinglie; And then offered some Iewells to doylus for his
reward; which he refusing Krego doubting that he would bewray him, wished his death, and to effect it having poison about him, which he had long kept, vnawares to doylus gaue parte of it to him in drinke, whereupon he falling [fol. 2r] suudenly sicke, was recovered by a Monke of that house whoe had great skill that waye, so Doylus after his recoverie little imagining how his sicknes came, proponing to departe tooke his leave of Krego, whose seeing his purpose had fayled was enforced to let him departe. Doylus coming home to his Masters house, having in purpose to have revealed his conceipt whome the blynd man was, found strangers in his Masters house, and vnderstood that he with his dame were gone in search of their daughter, but whether none of them knewe, each one lamenting their losse – and withal that before their departure his Master had geven to him all the lyvings and goods he had; and had left a Writing purporting the same which they deliuered him. But doylus exceedingly Lamenting the losse of his Master, e nothing respecting his goods; deliuered them all to them/two Shepheards, which soe much affected amylla Basillia* his Masters daughter, to be redeliuered if they should com backe, And soe departed to find eyther his Master or her his daughter. [fol. 2v]

Plorynus and his wife toke their Jorney first into Coselo thence without tydings of their daughter leaving Sarmilla in an Abbey there/ they departed/ into the Countrie of the vexoes; where travelling one evening something late he was assayled of twoe theeves or Robbers, in such sort that if he had not bestirred him they had slayine him. But he by good fortune geving one of them a wound thether fled he which was hurt, fell downe on the ground, and indeed began to faynt, wherewith Plorynus being moved did his best to succour him; but he suddenly faynting more and more, with weake voice besought pardon of the gods soe many synnes and amongst the rest, for a foule synne he once Committed in the Ile of Cubadro, for taking a younge girle from her friends by force. Plorynus hearing him name Cubadro, and a girle su taken away, vrdged him to tell him when whow and whome, he described her and the place & tyme, and how by Chaunce the first night after they had tane her the\[44M69/M4/13/4 P.3, fol. 1r\]

Shippe lyghting on A Roke was splitted, and shee and all in the Ship himself only except were
drowned. Which Plorynus hearing was soe much moved that he thrust his sword to his hart and
soe he dyed. With which newes Plorynus thinking search in vayne returned where he had left his
wiefe, and there contynewed resolving with her there to end his dayes.
Doylus contynewing his search happened with many accidentes and was often in great of lief; Itt
happened while Krego Contynewed in the Monastery the Monke which recovered Doylus
recovered alsoe in very short space his sight; which when he had having playd the villeyn at his
departure by robbing the house of their treasure went his waye having in purpose to returne into
Vabrillax and there to redeeme grace at his sonnes hands whoe had banished him, which he the
rather hoped to effect by bringing him newes of Plorynus for he assured himself that
that would be very gratefull to him; yet that he might be assured of it by his sight, he purposed to
returne by his house, in disguised manner, but being com thither he heard of his departure but
could not learne whether this much changed his resolucion, for he knew it to noe purpose to
Carry such newes, that there he was; Then Crost he the Sea and landed at Medynum, being
indeed indifferent whether he went; as he was travelling towards the great Cittie Idena he
happened in company with a younge boye thither alsoe travelling, of him he demaunded many
questions; of whome he received such quicke and wittie anuweres that conceyving
extraordinarie of him he enterteyned him to serve him, the youth being indeed without service
having gotten him such an attendunt, he travelled to the Court of Medynum, and there in short
space grew in great Favour of Brachymella the Queene of that Countrie, whoe was about his
age, him she shee reared to much honour, and in thend indeed married him; but
altogether against the good wills of her Nobilitie, yet he being king, having bine formerly
practised in such matters, soone gott himself in with the greatest parte of them This Queene had
only one daughter, about fifteene yeares of age Shee beholding Kregoes boye, whome he had
then made his page, and much esteemed him, made meanes to obtayne him for her page,
which Krego though very loathe granted; with him shee fell deeplie in loue, and vsed many
meanes to make him vnderstand it, but he seamed not to perceyve any such matter and still held in dutiful observaunce.

Dymathylos/ Meryno sonne of Krego who had soe expeld his father and raigned in his steed, did soe demeane himself to all in generall and especiallie to such as were Chab Plorynus kinsemen or Friends, that he [fol. 2v] truly merited the name of a vertuous and good king soe farr loathing the steps of his father and his actes that he even to free the Countrie of such a Tyrant banished him the land. He sent spies every ways to fynd out Plorynus intending as his daughter were lyving to resigne the Crowne to her, and to restore her father to his dukedome./ or to the Crowne if soe he would desire it. during which tyme, his Fa Krego whoe had then wedded the Queene of Medynum hearing that Meryno Dymathylos/ his sonne the king of vabrillax remeyned vnmarried sent Ambassadors with the consent of the Queene to Meryno \him/; (not opening himself to be his father) with offer of marriage Mastusia the heyre to that Crowne in marriage vnto him provided that he came in person to woee her for somuch as shee would not in other sort consent./ A

Meryno Dymathylos/ after some fewe interchange of Ambassages was content, and made A voyage in person to the Land of Medynum where he was royallie intertayned and had with much more ease concluded the marriage\[44M69/M4/13/4 P.4, fol. 1r] had not shee Mestusia/ had such former affection to her page Doylus contynewing his search, having wandred over Cubadro, Valdrsyum the Countrie of Portugo, bothe the Madessyes, bs and likewise that Landge C of Erythoos, about to departe thence being one daye in a groue in that Countrie sate him downe fast by A R brooke side, and there bewayling his hard fortune, bewrayed himself to himself (as he thought) bothe what he was, and what his occasions of travel were, when looking behind him, he sodenly espied A good Company of Ladies or rather \a/ Nymphes behind him with whome having much Conference, after his astonishment was passed over, one of them \shee/ told him that he should not
despayre, but should Contynew his search, For he might attayne his desire, and that shortlie and soe they all shee/ vanished out of his sight./

Leaving that Countrie he toke shipp for Medynum but his voyage was dangerous to him, for they suffered Shipwracke, and all his Companie perished except himself and one person besides whoe was Capten of that Shipp, whoe saved themselves by the folded word Boate; whoe being togetheer in the boate, the Capten amongst other speeches told him, that he now doubted not of drowning, For (quoth he) This is the third tyme I haue bine endangered by Shipwrack and every tyme noe more haue escaped but my self and one more at the most, the last (quoth he) was in Coming from the Coastes of Cubradro; with which trulie was a chaunce that hath much grieved me since; for at that tyme was drowned with the rest, a most fayre young Girle. Doylus asked him what she was; Quoth he I know not what she was, but I toke her by chaunce in the province of Melos in Cubadro neare the Towne Vao. Doylus perceyving it was his Masters daughter, drew out his sword, and ran him through. and soe turned him over board into Sea.

Then being alone in the boate he was the next day brought asbore, even as he wished at a port Towne in Medynum where having a while stayed, hearing of the kinge of Vabrillax and great Royaltie at the Court he repayred thither but was soe much altered by the newes that he heard of the death of Basrilla, that he little regarded eyther himself, or any spectacle whatsoever. yet went daylie vp and downe, but desiring rather death then lief

Doylus well frequenting thus the Court in the habite onlie of a private gent, was had bine often noted by the Queene, insomuch as she speciallie affected him, He was reteyned by her, and by her as she thought much advanced, and in theme made to vnderstand her mynd soe fullie, that he must eyther fulfill itt or be in danger of his lief by refusing. Att a Juste he was by the Queenes meanes soe much honoured above all the nobles of that Countrie, that he was matched with S Dyrmathylos the young King of Vabrillax, in which he soe behaved himself that with the preyse and honour of the field he wanne the heart of that young Kinge, Insomuch as from thenceforth
he was thonlie person in his [fol. 2v] favours, his advise he onlie vsed in wooying his Love, 
wherby he was much envyed.

In Company with him he often had accessse unvto Mestusia from whose hands he receyved more 
favours, then ever Dyrmathylos could, althought unsought for, and against his will; Being one 
tyme in her Chamber, her page (which she obteyned from her father), was playing on a Lute and 
singing therewith, which shee performed soe exquisitely, that each one admired him and 
doylus, he knew not how was soe inchaunted with beholding him, that he began though against 
ordnary Course of nature to be in Love with him/ Mestusya alone in her Chamber revolving 
each thing, and greeving at the dullness of her page, that he could not (as she thought) 
understand her love in soe long tyme, wished that she could cease louing him and vowed if she 
could doylus should be the man for her deserved her/ But checking herself for such Conceiptes 
purposed to hold on with her Page./

Brachymella burned more and more in affection to Doylus, and vsed many pollicies to let him 
know her mynd./ But he yet carried a deafe eare [44M69/M4/13/4 P.5, fol. 1r]

Doylus being alone, Complayned himself of his strange loue Condemning and yet excusing 
himself, by such excuses as indeed were none/ walking by himself in the garden Brachmillia 
having espied him came to him, whome he not able to avoyde stood to itt. betweene whome 
were many discourses and very neare the matter but that doylus willinglie mistooke them./ 
during their busynesses, Dyrmathylos put in the head by some of his followers, rather of malice 
then of any cause by him, grew jealous of doylus, thinking that through his meanes he had soe ill 
successe in his wooying; Therevpon after some tyme he Challendged Doylus for it, and grew to 
such poyntes with him, that he wishit him neare his equall which if he were, he would fight with 
him. Doylus Cleered himself of all meanes, and sought to appease him./ yet tould him in the 
end, (which on his honour he bound him to keep seacreat) that he was every way his equall,./ 
They fight in single Combate, and Doylus had him att his mercy [fol. 1v]
After that Krego taking it whotlie, that any one should demesne himself in such sort toward his Sonne, to whome (although he concealed himself) had he some [nrald] affection had Doylus without the Queenes privitie in [execución], and in thend Committed him to prison/ Whereof the Queene hearing grew much discontented, yet dissembling it to the Kinge, shee seemed all otherwise./

While he was in prison, he had often by the Q: meanes Mestasiers Page sent to him, in messages and to playe on his Lute and to singe to refresh his spiritt./

In thend the Queene herself having sought his deliuerance of the king, and being denied itt disdayned it in her hart, that and repented her to haue made herself subject to soe ill a deserving person yet still dissembled all./ Att last disguising herself in homelie apparell, shee Conveyed herself out of her Chamber (which shee then kept in phisicke) and repayred to the prison [fol. 2r] to him, at first delivering him A letter from the Queene, but in the end disclosed herself and forgetting modestie besought his Loue/ – He for that tyme satisfied her with the heavy disposicions of his soule; which did presage his death to be neare, but made her such promises as shee seemed satisfied for that tyme, and being advised by him how shee should behaue her self concerning him and his deliuerie, Comforting him, that if the worst happened shee would and Could and would by force save his lief, shee departed, and requeneed herself./

Dyrmathylos recouered of his wounds in the fight, would delay his business noe longer, for eyther he would now speed or haue a full denyall; And yet first made he meanes to the King for doylus deliuerie which pleased much the king, to find such true valour in his sonne, yet determyning to trie his sonne farther that waye made excuses of delay and still reteyned him, yet with this posture, that [fol. 2v] he would haue dyrmathylos himself to be a suiter for him,

Intending vpon such occasion to make himself knowne vnto him./ But Dymathilos taking it in scorne to be denied such a request, made by message, resolved that he if he spedd noe better in his wooying no sute, That he would in despite of him and all els bothe haue her and his deliverance, or to make them all repent the offering him such dishonour/
Then made he his sute againe for his Loue. or att least if he must haue deniall to haue it without longer delay for death delayed was worst/ he receyved from Mistusia noe flatt denyall, but yet such as he tooke for a deniall, wherevpon causing privyly/ his Ships to be made readie, he in A night with all his Companie without the knowledge of any of that nation departed. Whose such departure Krego tooke soe grievouslie, but that he would not dye with griefe he had dyed; exceedinglie repenting that he had soe longe concealed himself from his sonne, that by meanes thereof all this had happened.

Att this tyme whether with Loue or some grief else, or els some other disease, the Queene was exceeding sicke and indeed in such sort that much doubt upon her lief was had. All theis things thus Croslie happening to Krego; he being much opprest with melancholie, Caused Doylus to be brought forth purposing to put him to death Imputing all theis mischiefes to him. Doylus was brought forth, and by sentence from his owne mouth adiudged to present death; Thexecucion whereof he himself before he departed would behold. Mestusiars Page beholding this business sodanlie poasted to his Ladie, and shee to her mother, the Queene with those newes being very weake before, fell into a swowne, A messenger was presentlie sent to the king wth newes of the Queenes extremitie in sickness, which came in good tyme for Doylus for as the Execucioner was making him readie he came wth newes the King being much troubled wth Comandment to haue doylus backe to prison he departed [fol.1r] He soone his weake very weake wth sicknes, he vsed comfortable Speeches, but she began to hate him in her hart, for his such proceedings wth doylus, yet spake shee not a word to him of him. – while they were thus togeather newes came that Lettres were com from Dyrmathylos/ He receyves reads them, and much moved wth the manner of them./ vowed to revenge himself and to him/self promised to Chastice his sonne aswell for his banishment, as for this his over mightie message./ Resolving if it were possible to overtake the fleete yet on the Seas and to surprise the king being there but weake, he presentlie toke shipping wth Twenty sayle his sonne having only Ten. – His purpose therein was that hauing taken Dyrmathylos, he would eyther by
force or otherwise recover againe that kingdome and suppresse his sonne as he had formerlie done him.

Plorynus being arryved neare the Coastes of Vabrillax he was mett by a A boate which came from thence as sent to him with letters from A Noble man his Friend advertising him of strang accidentes which were that Plorynus and Sarmylla were eoe returned to Vabrillax, and were soe Joyfully receyved of all the Subiectes that there was great and perilous likelihood of Rekinging him./

Dyrmathylos with theis newes somewhat astonished came with all his Fleete to an anker, and there spent some day or twoe in Consulting what was best to be done/ — yet at last resolved to try the uttermost of his Fortunes, and to land in some Towne

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1 Sabassie] Suggests both σαβακός (rotten, shattered, effeminate) and Σαβάζιος (one name for the god Dionysus).

2 Sarmadroy] Suggests Greek σάρμα (chasm) and Latin sarmentum (brushwood), with French roi (King).

3 Krego] Suggesting, perhapsironically, κρήγυος (good).

4 Plorynus] From μέδω (protect, rule over).

5 Dyrmathylos] Probably from δόγουμαι (lament, mourn) and a root matb- deriving from the verb μαθήσω (learn, perceive, understand), found in such words as μάθημα (knowledge) and μάθησις (knowledge).

6 Doylus] From μέδω (protect, rule over).

7 Basillia] From βασιλεία (princess).

8 ‘2’ in early modern hand positioned as a catchword.

9 Medynum] From μέδω (protect, rule over).

10 Brachymella] Seemingly from βραχύς (short) and either μέλας (black), μέλι (honey), or μέλλω (I
intend to do, am fated to do).

xi Mastusia] Suggests both μαστός (breast) and μεστός (full).

xii ‘3’ in early modern hand positioned as a catchword.

xiii Erythoos] From ἐρυθρός (red).

xiv Melos] Perhaps modelled on the Aegean island of Μήλος.

xv kingle] kinke ms

xvi ‘4’ in early modern hand positioned as a catchword.

xvii ‘5’ in early modern hand positioned as a catchword.