

Summary

WHY THERE IS NO LOVE IN THE NEOLATIN EPIC POETRY?

No writer of neolatin epic poetry could shun the mighty influence of Vergil's *Aeneid* and, after about 1600, that of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. But strangely enough, love-affaires modeled on the famous fates of Dido and Aeneas or Armida and Rinaldo in all these poems never occur. The reason seems to be that to Christian morals, omnipotent at the time, these were sinful actions. Then why coeval poets writing epic poems in their native languages had no qualms introducing condemnable lovers into their verses? As for instance de Scudéry and Voltaire, not to mention Tasso himself. Apparently the obedient Latinists, respecting the sublimity of the epic genre and the ecclesiastical character of the Latin language, shyed away from the abyss of desperate love, whereas poets using the native language shook off the restricting traditions and opened new roads to originality and freedom, as well as they did in other genres.

Keywords: love-affaires; neolatin epic poetry; vernacular epics

LUDWIG BRAUN, Ditmarstraße 19, D-60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, ludwig.braun@mail.uni-wuerzburg.de.