Among the devices treated by the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is one that he calls *pronominatio*: ‘Pronominatio est quae sicuti cognomine quodam extraneo demonstrat id quod suo nomine non potest appellari’ (‘Pronomination is a device which designates, with a kind of alien cognomen, something which cannot be called by its own name’).1 The word *pronominatio*, modelled on the *antonomasia* of the Greek rhetoricians, refers to occasions when a person is denoted by somebody else’s *nomen* which serves in place of (pro) his or her own. In the early thirteenth century, Geoffrey of Vinsauf follows *Ad Herennium*, treating the same device in both his *Poetria nova* and his *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi*.2

From these discussions, three main points emerge. Geoffrey of Vinsauf makes it clear that only proper nouns are in question, distinguishing between *commune* and *proprium* in *Poetria nova*, lines 919 and 923, and in his *Documentum* between *proprium* and *appellativum* (that is, common). So an eloquent man may be called ‘Tullius’ or a handsome one ‘Paris’ (*Documentum*). Such cognomens may be accompanied by a modifier as in ‘ille Paris’ or ‘Tiphis noster’ (*Poetria nova*, lines 925, 928), marking the present application of the name as pronominative – ‘not the original Paris’.

Secondly, both authors classify pronomination among what would now be called tropes. *Ad Herennium* treats the device along with other tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole in its section on those ‘exornationes verborum’ where words depart, with a certain grace (‘quodam venustate’), from their customary meanings (‘usitata potestas’, IV xxxi 42). *Poetria nova* follows *Ad Herennium* closely here, and *Documentum* makes the same point in different terms when it treats the device in its section on ‘ornata difficultas’ (introduced at II iii 1–3); for ‘difficult’ devices are distinguished from ‘easy’ ones here again as tropes, by virtue of their various kinds of transferred sense (‘translatio’).3 So pronominations are more difficult than easy devices such as similes, because the latter display their meanings openly and in literal terms – ‘as handsome as Paris’, for example. Departures from the literal sense of words were held to have ‘a certain grace’, as *Ad Herennium* put it, and *Poetria nova* concludes its discussion of pronomination by observing that ‘Renovat talis mutatio verbum’: altered applications of this kind give a new freshness to words.

Thirdly, *Ad Herennium* observes that a writer will thus also be enabled, ‘not
without eloquence’ (‘non inornate’), to praise or censure a subject: ‘et in laudando et in laedando’ (IV xxxi 42). Geoffrey develops this idea further in Poetria nova. Taking up the Roman rhetorician’s neat coupling of laudare with laedere, he first states that the transferred application of a proper name will itself serve the purposes of either praise or blame: ‘Si proprium fuerit, vel ad hoc transfertur ut ipso / Laudes vel laedas tanquam cognomine’ (‘Where a proper noun is concerned, it may be transferred in such a way that, by doing so, you either praise or censure with a kind of cognomen’, Poetria nova, lines 923f.). So, he continues, you can praise a man as ‘ille Paris’ or blame another as ‘ille Thersites’; and you may also employ such namings ironically and derisively (‘per antifrasim, tanquam derisio’) where there is no true likeness between the people in question: an ugly man may be ridiculed as ‘Paris’ or an artless speaker as ‘Cicero’.4

Pronominations do not have to specify the qualities that they find in common between the two persons involved, as similes often do (‘as eloquent as Cicero’), so they in particular must be addressed to readers who can be trusted to share with the writer a knowledge of some familiar repertoire of named persons. In the absence of such a repertoire, the device can hardly be employed nowadays (though one may hear an indecisive person referred to as ‘a latter-day Hamlet’). Geoffrey of Vinsauf intended his treatises chiefly for contemporary writers of Latin verse, so he could safely assume that his readers and his readers’ readers would take the point of references to figures from Classical antiquity: they could be relied on to know about Paris, and even about Tiphys.5 Accordingly, all Geoffrey’s examples of pronominatio involve Classical names such as these. If he does not draw upon that other main source of familiar names then available, the Bible, this was because such references would have been indecorous in the kind of classicizing compositions with which he was concerned. However, the English poets from whom examples are taken here could draw upon both repertoires. Gower, Chaucer, and Skelton all assume some knowledge of the Latin classics in their readers, but they also, as we shall see, derive many namings from persons in the Bible.6

Where praise is in question, these poets turn most often to figures from the great worlds of Classical history and legend. In the Trojan setting of Troilus and Criseyde, Antigone’s song will very naturally refer to a beloved man as ‘of wit Apollo’ (II.843), and Pandarus can recommend Troilus to his niece as ‘the wise, worthi Ector the secounde’ (II.158). Chaucer applies the same modifier, ‘secounde’, to a later hero in To Rosemounde, where the lover claims to be ‘trewe Tristam the secounde’ (line 20), but in Troilus the word does more than simply signal a pronomination – as ‘newe’ does elsewhere – for Pandarus is also conceding the indisputable superiority of Hector.

Unlike Chaucer, John Skelton very frequently writes about contemporary persons, and here he is lavish with laudatory Classical namings. He calls
Henry VIII ‘our noble Scipione’ (Agaynst the Scottes, line 117), and in a poem written on the occasion of Henry’s coronation, A Lawde and Praye Made for our Sovereigne Lord the Kyng, he refers to him as both ‘Adonis of freshe colour’ and ‘our Priamus of Troy’ (lines 43, 48). Two other names in the same poem make it clear that, in accordance with an ancient eulogistic topos, Skelton is praising Henry for combining the virtues of youth with those of age: ‘In whome dothe wele acorde / Alexis yonge of age, / Adrastus wise and sage’ (lines 12–14). Again, in Phyllyp Sparowe Skelton addresses Jane Scrope both as ‘sobre, demure Dyane’ and as ‘Dame Venus of all pleasure’ (lines 1224, 1227), two contrasting names which in this case, however, match the archly equivocal treatment of young Jane throughout the poem. It is more remarkable that the poet should glorify himself with such namings, as he does in the Garlande of Laurell. The Latin verses with which this poem opens boast that its author will be remembered everywhere as ‘another Adonis’ (‘Undique Skeltonis memorabitur alter Adonis’), and Skelton makes the same unlikely claim again in some later Latin verses addressed to the book. Here he speaks of himself, not only as ‘your Adonis’, but also as ‘your Catullus’ and even ‘your Homer’. One can only suppose that he is joking.

John Gower is a different case. What Gower more than once calls the ‘plein’ style of Confessio Amantis (VII.522f., for instance) admits an occasional ‘easy’ simile like ‘as povere as Job’ (V.2509), but there are no pronominations at all anywhere in this very long poem. The trope does figure, however, in the more difficult manner of Gower’s Latin verse. Book I of Vox clamantis, devoted to the events of the Peasants’ Revolt, describes the entry of the insurgents into ‘Nova Troia’, a common cognomen for the city of London (lines 879f.), and goes on to lament the failures of the king’s followers under similarly Homeric names, Calchas, Antenor, Thersites, Diomedes, and Ulysses (lines 961–8). These may, as Macaulay suggests in his note, be no more than ‘general types’; but elsewhere ‘Hecuba’ certainly designates Richard’s mother, Joan of Kent, for the insurgents did indeed invade her apartment as described in lines 997f.; and the passage goes on to narrate the murder of the Archbishop of Canterbury under the name ‘Helenus’, Helenus being a son of Priam noted for his prophetic powers (lines 1001–6). A later line, observing that ‘Priam could not save Helenus’ (line 1155), casts King Richard in the role of Priam. But these are no more than one-off namings – if the king is indeed Priam, then his mother can hardly be Hecuba – and Gower makes no general attempt to match the events of 1381 with what happened when Old Troy fell.

It is scriptural, not Classical, pronominations that take history seriously, for these commonly involve that central narrative which followed the history of God’s Church from the Old Testament to the New and thence further into modern times. It was of course generally believed that Old Testament events might prefigure events in the New, and the same prefiguration could also extend on to the post-biblical world. Such was God’s providence, in accordance with
which the history of salvation was to be understood ‘typologically’. So there may be a real, God-given relationship between a person in modern times and the scriptural ‘type’ by which she or he is named. Chaucer’s Prioress has this in mind when she names the mother of a murdered innocent grieving over his corpse:

Unnethe myghte the peple that was theere
This newe Rachel brynge fro his beere. (VII.626f.)

The Prioress recalls the grief of Jacob’s wife Rachel over her childlessness: ‘And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die’ (Genesis xxx.1). Her reference to ‘this newe Rachel’, however, is chiefly prompted by Matthew’s account of the Massacre of the Innocents, for Matthew there recalled a prophecy of Jeremiah: ‘In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not’ (Matthew ii.18, Jeremiah xxxi.15). So the child-murder in modern times – by Jews – is prefigured in the New Testament by Herod’s Massacre of the Innocents, an event which itself recalls ‘Rachel weeping for her children, because they are not’.

Skelton shared this figural understanding of salvation history, and he uses its terminology in another of his laudatory references to Henry VIII: ‘In hym is figured Melchisedeche’ (A Ballade of the Scottyshe Kyngye, line 23, repeated in Agaynst the Scottes, line 115). Melchizedek was both ‘king of Salem’ and ‘priest of the most high God’ (Genesis xiv.18), and he is invoked in Psalm cx.4, where the king addressed receives the Psalmist’s assurance that ‘Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek’. So Skelton casts Henry as another latter-day priest-king, championing his people against James IV of Scotland, the ‘disloyall Amalek’. Elsewhere, in Speke Parott, line 60, he refers to Henry directly under the same cognomen: ‘Melchisedeck mercyfull made Moloc mercyles.’ This enigmatic line evidently refers to Wolsey, intimating that Henry, by a too generous treatment of the cardinal, has allowed his over-mighty subject too much rope.

Naming Wolsey after Moloch, ‘the abomination of the children of Ammon’ (I Kings xi.7), is just one of many places where Skelton employs pronomination for purposes of censure rather than praise. But before returning to him, we may note the rather few instances where Chaucer uses the trope ‘laedendo’. The Man of Law addresses the wicked sultaness in his Tale with the words ‘O Sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee! / Virago, thou Semyrame the secounde!’ (II.358f.). Semiramis was a notorious queen of Babylon, so the present Middle Eastern villainess is aptly ‘Semyrame the secounde’. More frivolous are the apostrophes addressed by the Nun’s Priest to his treacherous fox:

O newe Scariot, newe Genylon,
False dissymulour, O Greek Synon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe! (Canterbury Tales, VII.3227–9)
These namings rather boldly couple Judas Iscariot both with Sinon and also with Ganelon, a traitor to Charles in the Charlemagne cycle. Chaucer has the same cycle in mind when the Monk plays on the name of Oliver de Mauny, one of those responsible for the assassination of King Pedro of Spain, the English favourite. He may have been christened ‘Oliver’, but the Oliver of the Charlemagne story was a faithful follower of the emperor, so this must be a different kind of Oliver, a ‘Genylon-Olyver’:

Noght Charles Olyver, that took ay heede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genylon-Olyver corrupt for meede. (VII.2387–9)

Not one of the other pronominations in Chaucer’s poetry refers, as this one certainly does, to a contemporary individual; but in this respect Skelton’s practice is entirely different. Indeed, all the targets of his hostile namings are contemporaries: either private individuals, or Scotsmen, or, very often, Cardinal Wolsey himself. The private individuals are John Clarke and Adam Uddersale, both in the Epitaphe, and Sir Christopher Garnesche in Agent Garnesche. In the Epitaphe, Skelton writes as the Rector of Diss, Norfolk, censuring two of his parishioners both by name and by nickname (‘John Jayberd’ and ‘Adam All a Knave’). He speaks of Clarke as an old trouble-maker who has even abused his rector, and identifies him, as Skelton so often does his targets, with Old Testament adversaries of Israel: John is a Chaldean or a Jebusite, ‘Caldeus … ceu Iebuseus’ (lines 26f.). Similarly in the second epitaph, he refers to Adam as Agag (line 22), a king of the Amalekites killed by Samuel (I Samuel xv.33); and he even names him as ‘this Pilate sprung from Belial’ (‘satus / De Belial iste Pilatus’, lines 7f.). These are comical extravagances, but there is a more particular point in the naming of Adam as a ‘cruel Cacus’ (line 23), the legendary monster who stole cattle from Hercules; for Adam, a onetime ‘Baillyve of Dis’, is said to have been a rapacious extortioner of other men’s goods (lines 3–6).

The social context of the four poems that make up Agent Garnesche is quite different, for these are all said to have been composed ‘By the kynges most noble commaundment’. Sir Christopher Garnesche, himself a well-established member of Henry’s household, has evidently challenged the poet to engage in one of those formal exchanges of insult then known as ‘flytings’, ‘Rudely revilyng me in the kynges noble hall’ (I.2); and Skelton responds in kind. In his second poem, he again draws on biblical namings, addressing his adversary as a ‘Gabionyte’ (II.15) – the Gibeonites being yet another of Israel’s adversaries – and the refrain both names him Caiaphas (‘Cayface’) and compares him to ‘prowde Pylate’. However, with one exception (‘Harvy Haftar’, V.164), all the other cognomens in these poems mock Sir Christopher as a man whose ‘knavyche condycyonns’ (III.12) render him unworthy of his knighthood, for
they name him with a fantastic variety of ‘Sirs’. The refrain of the first poem addresses him as ‘Syr Satrapas’ and ‘Syr Chesten’, names apparently invented for the purpose. More evidently disparaging are ‘Syr Dalyrag’ (III.186), and especially ‘Syr Olifranke’ (II.30), for the latter recalls the incongruously knighted giant ‘sire Olifaunt’ in Chaucer’s burlesque Sir Thopas (VII.808). And when, as Skelton gleefully imagines, a would-be mistress of Garnesche dismissed him as ‘Syr Gy of Gaunt’ (III.70), she clearly did not have the hero Guy of Warwick in mind.11 There is, though, one other ‘Sir’ of a different calibre: ‘What, have ye kythyd yow a knyght, Syr Dugles the dowty, / So curryshly to beknave me in the kynges place?’ (I.8f.). As Scattergood notes, the knight in question can hardly be other than Sir James Douglas, ‘celebrated in ballads as one of the heroes of the battle of Otterburn’. So it may seem that this naming, alone among all the others, is to be understood ‘per antifrasim, tanquam derisio’. Or perhaps Skelton considered that it was sufficiently insulting to designate an Englishman by a Scottish name, however creditable.

Four of Skelton’s poems ridicule and scorn the Scots. One of these, Against Dundas, is another flyting, addressed to a Scottish ‘dunghill knight’, but it is too short to have any pronominations. Two of the other poems were prompted by the defeat of the Scots at Flodden in 1513: A Ballade of the Scottyshe Kynge and Agaynst the Scottes. The former has the two lines already noticed, where Skelton contrasts Henry VIII as Melchisedek with James I of Scotland as an Amalekite (lines 23f.), lines which are reproduced when the Ballade is incorporated into the longer Agaynst the Scottes (lines 115f. there). These poems are both ‘invectyves’, glorifying the English commander, the Earl of Surrey, as ‘the Whyte Lyon’, his heraldic badge, and treating James with contempt, naming him ‘Syr squyer-galyarde’ in both (Ballade line 11, Agaynst the Scottes line 101) and ‘Kynge Koppynge’ in the longer poem (line 57). Agaynst the Scottes also repeatedly addresses him with a scornfully familiar ‘Jemmy’: ‘Kinge Jamy, Jemmy, Jocky my jo’ (line 91). Of course the issues here are much more serious than in the Garnesche and Dundas flytings; yet in Agaynst the Scottes Skelton invokes, not only the tragic muse, but also Thalia, the muse of comedy: ‘A medley to make of myrth with sadnes, / The hertes of England to comfort with gladnes’ (lines 87f.), and there is indeed (from an English point of view) a good deal of gleeful ‘myrth’ in these poems. And the same can be said of the last of the anti-Scots poems, prompted by the defeat of another Scottish incursion, led by the Duke of Albany some ten years after Flodden, Howe the Douty Duke of Albany, this being addressed to the duke ‘In ernest or in borde’ (line 319). He is ‘Syr Duke, nay, Syr ducke’ (line 222), as well as, for some reason, ‘Sir Dunkan’ (lines 271, 330), and Skelton writes him off under two ridiculous names: ‘Adue, nowe, Sir Wrig-wrag! / Adue, Sir Dalyrag!’ (lines 296f.). The most pointed of these pronominations, however, addresses Albany as ‘Sir Topias’ (line 287).12 The Scottish commander has run away from
the Earl of Surrey (again ‘the Lyon White’, line 309) just as the effeminate hero
of Chaucer’s burlesque ‘drow abak ful faste’ when faced with the giant Olifaunt
(*Cantebury Tales*, VII.827).

The last poem that Skelton wrote, *A Repylcacion*, directed in 1528 to two young
English heretics, classes them among a list of Old Testament adversaries of God;
rather than Israelites, they are Ishmaelites, Midianites, Askalonites, Ammonites,
and Gibianites (all in the Latin after line 299). Skelton dedicated this poem in
the most fulsome terms to Cardinal Wolsey; yet earlier in the same decade, the
same Wolsey had been the object of his abuse in three satirical writings; and two
of these, *Speke Parott* and *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, bombard the cardinal
with discreditable cognomens.13

*Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, written in 1522, is a poem of 1,250 English lines
followed by three short Latin poems. It never names Wolsey directly, but all its
cognomens have him in mind. Some of these, apparently, do no more – and no
less – than identify him in a general way with Old Testament adversaries of God.
So he is referred to or addressed as ‘this madde Amalecke’ (line 478), as Dathan,
the enemy of Moses in Numbers xvi (2nd Latin 4, also line 892), as Balak, King
of the Moabites in Numbers xxii–xxiv (line 896), as the Midianites Oreb, Zeeb,
and Zalmunna in Judges (2nd Latin 3), as Achitophel (2nd Latin 5), and as the
Philistine Goliath of I Samuel xvii (2nd Latin 7). However, the poem does also
have namings which approach their target much more nearly. The second Latin
poem is introduced with the heading ‘A Virulent ten lines about a mitred Lycaon
of the sea etc.’ (*Decastichon virulentum / In galaretum / Licaonta marinum
e.tc.*). Lycaon was turned into a wolf by Zeus for serving his altar with human
flesh, and Skelton noticed that the first syllable of his name (Lyk- ‘wolf’, as in
lycanthropy) matched that of Wolsey’s (Wolf-); and he completes the identification
with ‘marinum’: Wolsey is ‘Wolf-sea’, or, as the ensuing verse puts it, ‘Wolf of
the sea’ (‘maris lupus’). Like Chaucer with his reference to Oliver de Mauny as
‘the wikked nest’ (‘mal nid’), Skelton here employs ‘etymology’ for purposes of
blame.14 Elsewhere in *Why Come Ye?*, he goes so far as to allude to the cardinal’s
intimate medical complaints. Lines 1166–1201 open with a reference to Wolsey as
‘this Naman Sirus’. Naaman the Syrian is the leper healed by Elisha in II Kings
v, and, as Scattergood notes, ‘since syphilis, which Skelton hints that Wolsey has,
was frequently at this time confused with leprosy the comparison is a pointed
one’. So Wolsey has a ‘flap afore his eye’ (line 1169, and see line 1197) and is
pustular (‘pocky’, line 1170). The passage goes on to refer to him as ‘this proude
Antiochus’ (line 1175), an enemy of Israel afflicted with a loathsome disease in
II Maccabees ix.5f., 9. Accordingly, the first Latin poem is introduced with the
heading ‘Here follows the epitome about the diseased Thomas, and also about
the obscene Polyphemus etc.’, naming Wolsey after the Cyclops blinded by
Ulysses; and the verses themselves compare him again to Naaman (line 4) and
describe him specifically as syphilitic: ‘Neapolitano morbo gravatum’ (‘weighed down with the Neopolitan disease’ line 6).

Like Why Come Ye?, Speke Parott (1521) has many discreditable namings, all of which designate Wolsey. The poem alludes to him twice as Moloch, a god of the Midianites (lines 60, 402), and twice as Lycaon (lines 289, 400); and only Wolsey can be the Judas Iscariot of ‘magnus est dominus Judas Scarioth’ (line 133). There are also two instances of honourable cognomens that must be intended ironically, ‘per antifrasim, tanquam derisio’. One of the poem’s envoys calls on Parott to request that ‘owur soleyne Seigneour Sadoke’ return from France (line 304), recalling II Samuel xv.25–9, where David orders Zadok the priest to return to Jerusalem with the ark of God. And in ‘Sydrake’ (line 326) there is another ironical pronominatio, Sidrak being a wise counsellor, as in the Middle English Sidrak and Bokkus.

There is one passage in Speke Parott which warrants particular notice, as an exceptionally powerful and concentrated instance of pronomination:

Ulula, Esebon, for Jeromy doth wepe!
Sion is in sadness, Rachell ruly doth loke;
Madionita Jetro, our Moyes kepyth his shepe;
Gedeon is gon, that Zalmane undertoke,
Oreb et Zeb, of Judicum rede the boke.
Now Geball, Amon and Amaloch – ‘Harke, harke,
Parrot pretendith to be a bybyll clarke’!
O Esebon, Esebon, to the is cum agayne
Seon, the regent Amorreorum,
And Og, that fat hog of Basan, doth retayne
The crafty coistronus Cananeorum. (lines 113–23)

These plangent lines grow out of one of the lamentations of Jeremiah: ‘Howl, O Heshbon’ (Jeremiah xlix.3). Heshbon, Skelton’s ‘Esebon’, was city of the Amorites ruled over by Sihon (‘Seon’). The Israelites killed this king, ‘Seon, the regent Amorreorum’, and went on to establish themselves in Heshbon, a city which, as Scattergood notes, medieval exegetes were then able to take as one of their Old Testament types of Holy Church. But now the Amorite has ‘cum agayne’ in the person of Cardinal Wolsey, causing new grief for Jeremiah, Zion, and Rachel. In the ensuing lines Parott – mocked by his listeners as a would-be Bible clerk – piles up other discreditable types from the Old Testament. The first of these is puzzling, for how can Wolsey be ‘our Moses’? But this is surely to be understood ‘tanquam derisio’, for it refers to the time when the young Moses was serving a Midianite master, Jethro (Exodus iii.1), and the passage goes straight on to recall, as Why Come Ye also does, the Midianites as enemies of God’s people in the persons of Zalmunna, Oreb, and Zeeb. These names from Judges prompt the Bible clerk to recall Psalm lxxxiii (AV), for there the same
Midianite trio are named among enemies defeated by God, along with the very same other enemies to whom Parott then refers: ‘Geball, Amon and Amaloch’ (Psalm lxxxiii.7). And it is another Psalm that accounts for the coupling of Seon with Og in lines 121f., for Psalm cxxxv.10f. sings the praises of a God who ‘smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan’. Such is the company to which Skelton commits Wolsey, our new Sihon.

Elsewhere in the poem, Parott claims that his employment of tropes such as metaphor and allegoria will serve as his ‘protectyon, his pavyss and his wall’ (lines 202f.) – as defences, that is, against possible reprisals from the object of his satire. Yet in reality Wolsey, though unnamed, could hardly have failed to recognize himself as the target. Nor would contemporary readers have found the passage as difficult to interpret as we do today, given their greater knowledge of the Old Testament and especially of the Psalms, which played such a prominent part in their liturgy. If pronominations contribute to what Geoffrey of Vinsauf called ‘ornata difficultas’, this was not because readers of the Bible and the Latin classics were thought incapable of understanding them. Their ‘difficulty’ consists rather in the fact that, like all tropes, they require two distinct acts of recognition – of the person to whom the word normally refers, and of the similar person in question. This may seem to be no more than a technical point, but in fact it is precisely by such translatio that Geoffrey distinguishes all difficult devices from easy ones in which words are employed in their ordinary, literal senses. The contrast between these two kinds of ‘ornation’ can be seen very clearly in Speke Parott. Towards the end of the poem, Parott is challenged by Galathea to ‘Sette asyde all sophysms, and speke now trew and playne’ (line 448), and he responds at length in an ‘easy’ manner:

So many morall maters, and so lytell usyd;
So myche new makyng, and so madde tyme spente;
So myche translacion into Englyshe confused … (lines 449–51)

The repetitions and patterning of ‘ornata facilitas’ are displayed here in no fewer than seventy lines of sustained anaphora, complaining about the general evils of the time in literal terms that contrast sharply with the ‘sophysms’ employed by Parott when he addresses the particular case of Cardinal Wolsey. It is more artful – more concise and more interesting – to speak of Wolsey as ‘Sihon’ than to condemn him in plain terms as an enemy of the Church (and Skelton can always claim at a pinch to have had someone else in mind). In Parott’s lament for Esebon, pronominatio plays its part in an exceptionally rich and strange passage of poetry; but in all its uses noticed here, the device can be seen to contribute ‘non inornate’, as Ad Herennium put it, to the praise of some and the censure of others.
NOTES


2 For texts of both, see Les Arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1924; repr. 1958). The treatments of pronomination are in Poetria nova lines 923–35, and in the Documentum at II 3 6. For another treatment, see Evrard’s Laborintus, ed. Faral, Ars poétiques, lines 369–72: ‘I transfer a proper name; I approve or disapprove’ (‘Transumo proprium; probo vel reprobo’), with examples such as ‘Paris’ for beauty, ‘Sinon’ for fraud.


4 Ad Herennium touches on pronomination also in its treatment of another trope, ‘permutatio’ or allegory (IV xxxiv 46), giving examples where an impious man may be called ex contrario ‘Aeneas’.

5 Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argonauts, is coupled with Automedon, the charioteer of Achilles, in Poetria nova, lines 927–9 as in Ovid’s Ars amatoria 1 8: ‘Tiphys et Automedon dicar Amoris ego’ (‘I will be spoken of as the Tiphys and Automedon of Love’).

6 I cite from the Riverside Chaucer, general editor Larry D. Benson (Chicago, Ill., 1987); The English Works of John Gower, ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS, es 81, 82 (London, 1900, 1901); The Complete Works of John Gower, Vol. IV: The Latin Works, ed. G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1902); and The Complete English Poems of John Skelton, ed. John Scattergood (rev. edn, Liverpool, 2015). I am much indebted to the notes in these editions. The only earlier study of pronomination known to me is the essay by Amanda Holton: ‘Chaucer and Pronominatio’, Reading Medieval Studies, 33 (2007), 69–86. Holton understands the term much more broadly than I do here, to include every form of periphrastic naming, such as ‘Christ’s mother’ for ‘Mary’. She stresses Chaucer’s debt to Virgil for this high-style device, and his discriminating use of it in Troilus and the Prioress’s Tale.

7 Lines 1522–4. As Scattergood notes, a preceding line (1520) is taken directly from Poetria nova, line 281. He also notes the derivation of a sidenote to Speke Parott, line 50 from Poetria nova, lines 594f. (Scattergood does not reproduce sidenotes in his texts).

8 In Gower’s Cronica trierptita, which takes up the story from Vox clamantis, Richard figures as ‘Phoebus’ (I.61 etc.), a naming which refers to one of the king’s heraldic badges. Similarly in the Cronica, Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick are all named from their coats of arms, as ‘Swan’, ‘Horse’, and ‘Bear’, respectively. Of these namings Gower writes: ‘Si non directe procerum cognomina recte, / Hec tamen obscura referam, latitante figura’ (‘If I will not refer directly to the titles of these nobles, I will nevertheless identify them disguisedly in a concealing figure’, Cronica trierptita I.45f.).

9 In the same stanza, the name Mauny is punningly rendered as ‘the wicked nest’ (‘mal nid’), and his fellow conspirator Bertrand du Guesclin is identified by his coat of arms (compare n. 8 above).

10 Where this word occurs again, it is coupled with the reduplicative ‘Wrig-Wrag’, as noticed below.

11 See Scattergood’s note on Collyn Clout, line 1155. ‘Sir’ was prefixed to the names of priests as well as knights, and the context in Collyn Clout strongly suggests a priest; but in the present context Sir Guy must surely be understood as a knight (and also at V.56).

12 Forms of the name Thopas with a medial -i- appear in three copies recorded in John

13 On the relations between Skelton and Wolsey in this period, see Greg Walker, *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s* (Cambridge, 1988).


16 There is no evidence to suggest that Wolsey was provoked to retaliation by these poems (supposing that he read them). On the contrary, in the remaining years of Skelton’s life he bestowed favours on him, as shown by Greg Walker, *John Skelton*, ch. 6, “Obsequious and loyall”: Skelton’s political work under Wolsey’s patronage’.