

**ARNOLD OF
BRESCIA,
A TRAGEDY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649062591

Arnold of Brescia, a Tragedy by Gio. Batt. Niccolini & Theodosia Garrow

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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GIO. BATT. NICCOLINI & THEODOSIA GARROW

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A Tragedy,

BY

GIO. BATT. NICCOLINI:

TRANSLATED BY

THEODOSIA GARROW.

..... non ante revellar,
Exanimem quam te complectar, Roma, tuumque
Nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram.

Luc. Phars. Lib II.

London:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1846.

1248.



LONDON:
Printed by ALFRED DODD, 6, PRINCESS STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

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DEDICATION.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is with no ordinary feelings of pride and pleasure that I avail myself of your kind permission to dedicate to you the following attempt at translating what is considered one of the noblest works of the Poet NICCOLINI. I have the more satisfaction in doing so, because I fancy I perceive great congeniality between the mind of the Italian Poet and your own; the same love of ancient classical literature—the same aspirations for freedom—the same hatred of tyranny, political or ecclesiastical—the same depth of thought—the same fearlessness of expression. It is, however, to a quality higher than all these, (your unbounded benevolence) that I must address myself, when I presume to dedicate this volume to you.

I have the honour to subscribe myself, with admiration
for your genius, and gratitude for the unchanged and
enduring kindness of many years,

Your's most sincerely,

And affectionately,

THE TRANSLATOR.

Florence,

May 29th, 1846.

P R E F A C E.

IN offering the following work to the public, I have been actuated more by the desire of making known to the English Reader, one of the most remarkable productions of the age, the master-piece of the poet Niccolini, than by any hope of acquiring reputation as a translator. Much as the classical literature of Italy has been studied in England, I doubt whether, with the exception of Manzoni, Silvio Pellico, and one or two others, the productions of modern authors have as yet found readers amongst us. The very name of Niccolini has scarcely reached our shores, or if it have, it has not spread out beyond a limited circle. I shall not, I trust, be deemed presumptuous for indulging a hope, that this attempt at a translation of noble thoughts, clothed in poetic beauty, may induce many to search deeper into a mine of intellect which will amply reward their most assiduous labours. I say *attempt* at translation, because it is admitted on all hands, that a perfect translation of Poetry is almost an impossibility; still there are not wanting in our English translations examples of sense preserved, and of imagery faithfully reproduced, in language not revolting to English taste. It has been my study in this neither to paraphrase on the one hand, nor too servilely to copy on the other; and if the reader receive one half the pleasure from the perusal of the work in its English form, that I have enjoyed in translating it, he will be well repaid for his exertion*.

* Niccolini's first work, "La Pietà," was published in 1804. It is a poem written in the metre, and somewhat in the style, of Monti's *Basevilliana*. It

The Tragedy of Arnold of Brescia was not meant for the stage; and this is sufficiently indicated by its length, and the nature of some of the dialogue. Not but that there are passages which, in the present state of the Italian mind, would go home to the feelings of an Italian audience, and pictures of the *past*, which would so perfectly bear upon the *present*, as to redeem any languor in the representation, and probably make this one of

celebrates the institution of the fraternity of the *Misericordia* in Tuscany, and its pious offices during the plague and inundation which desolated Leghorn at the beginning of the present century. Then he wrote a long series of Greek Classical tragedies,—“*Polissena*,” “*Ino e Temisto*,” “*Edipo*,” “*Agamennone*,” “*Medea*,” and, finally “*Nabuco*.” This last created a great sensation, as it was thought to body forth, under Assyrian names, the catastrophe of Napoleon’s downfall.

Meanwhile the success of Manzoni and the Romantic School in Northern Italy made the poet aware of the necessity of choosing his subject more immediately near home. Changing, therefore, his theme, without much altering his style, he produced his “*Antonio Foscari*,” a tragedy that met with the greatest success, and has ever since held a high rank on the stage by the side of the “*Francesca da Rimini*,” by Silvio Pellico.

“*Giovanni da Procida*”* was first acted in 1830, at Florence, and immediately suppressed by the interference of the Austrian Ambassador. Then followed, in regular succession, “*Ludovico il Moro*,” and “*Rosmunda d’Inghilterra*,” “*Arnaldo da Brescia*” was not intended for scenic representation. Niccolini has also achieved a translation of “*Cephori*,” by *Æschylus*, “*Matilda*,” an imitation of Horner’s “*Douglas*,” and an imitation of “*Beatrice Cenci*,” by Shelley. His works in prose consist of Philological Treatises, and Academical Discourses; as also of several contributions to the “*Antologia di Firenze*,” an excellent Italian periodical work, suppressed at the instigation of the Austrian Government.

We have heard of Niccolini’s contemplating a tragedy on the subject of Gregory VII., and it is well known that he has been for twenty years labouring at a great History of the House of Swabia, intended to be the *Italian* version of that important period. The *German* ideas on that subject are given by Von Raumer, in his “*Hohenstaufen*.”

* *Giovanni da Procida* is also translated into English, and its publication may depend upon the success of “*Arnaldo*.”

the most popular of the Author's acted plays. Let not the reader, therefore, suppose that there is any deficiency of interest in the plot, or of artistic excellence in its development. Such scenes as the arrival of Arnold at Rome, and of his reception by the people, in the first Act; the death of Cardinal Guido, the Interdict in the second; the conference between Arnold and the Pope; a large portion of the fourth Act, which depicts so powerfully the haughty Emperor and the equally despotic Pope; the four first scenes of the fifth, and those immediately preceding the death of Arnold, would, with small cost of arrangement and curtailment, make a powerful acting drama; admitting the display of "pageantry and glorious pomps," and all the scenic adjuncts which appeal so immediately and so strongly from the eye to the imagination.

Like most eminent Italians, Niccolini is, and ever has been, a stout champion of civil and religious liberty; and some readers may find here and there the political predilections of the author exhibited in expressions stronger, and in principles carried further than may seem right, if measured by an English standard: but, they must recollect that the poet is an Italian writing for Italians,—for a people writhing under the iron heel of foreign domination,—not recognising, as we do, in kings and aristocracies, the elements of national governments, but seeing in the one only a local despot, and in the other a herd of despotic dependants.

With regard to the execution of the translation, I must request the reader's indulgence, more especially for the Choruses;—the great facility of rhyming in the Italian language, the constantly varying rhythm, and the extreme shortness of some of the lines, seem to defy imitation. I have, however, endeavoured to depart from the original as little as possible,—and in no case to sacrifice the sense to the sound, or to introduce an image or metaphor that was not in the mind of the poet.

Niccolini has prefixed to his Tragedy, a *Life of Arnold of Brescia*, taken from the "Apology for Arnold," written by