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Sister M. Thea BOWMAN, FSPA, *A Complete Explication and Critical Analysis of the RUFUL LAMENTACIŌ OF THE DETH OF QUENE ELISABETH*, by Sir Thomas More.

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Sister Thea, whom I am proud to have counted among my summer students in *Early Tudor Humanism*, tackles More's 84 line elegy "in terms of its formal properties as English verse", taking us away from earlier, rather impressionistic evaluations. Her study includes 1. "the establishment of a correct text, an annotated bibliography of scholarship of the poem, a brief discussion of bibliographical material that throws light on the process of its production, and 2. an explication and formal analysis of its structure of meaning and sound."

Sister even treats us to a phonetic transcript of the whole poem: vowel sounds are important for assessing the wealth of assonance (pp. 46-47). What she says of More as versifier sometimes strikes one as true of More the man and citizen: "He works freely and creatively within an established tradition", and his life like his verse is "rising in direction".

Altogether, a neat and thorough piece of work. It contains at least one addition to Gibson's *Bibliography: William Winstanley's Life of the Most Famous English Poets* (1686). And whoever has read the 1503 poem attentively will endorse the conclusion of her perceptive analysis:

"More's *Ruful LamentaciŌ* is not a poem. It is a highly patterned and effective rhetorical construct which at times deviates into poetry. It is clearly the work of one with "some glimmers of poetical power, which cultivation might have conducted to excellence" (Phillips, p. 53). It has value as a record of More's early thinking on questions of death, wealth, and life in high places; as a document in the history of ideas; and as an example of transitional work in English metrics and pronunciation.

It also has literary value. More wrote in a prose age, and his *Ruful LamentaciŌ* verse is not surpassed by any poet of the first decade of the sixteenth century save Skelton, who wrote in an altogether different vein. Furthermore, *Ruful LamentaciŌ* gives evidence of the power of capturing the spirit of a dramatic moment, the aptness of characterization, the pathos and rhetorical efficacy, the penchant for balance and parallelism, and the skill in application of Tudor figures of rhetoric which would make More a master of English prose."

G.M.