

*Department of Historical Magic
University of Pennsylvania*

May 8, 2002

Dear Mr. Laviano,

Please find enclosed the documents you sent to us for verification.

As you may be aware, we see a large number of forgeries in my field of work. I'm afraid that I had my doubts about your documents, which is why I allowed them to rusticate on my desk for a week and a half. I was all the more surprised, therefore, to discover that they were not only genuine, but evidence of a family that has been the subject of my own research for some years. If you are interested in their provenance, I recommend my article "Letters from Marie: Reinterpreting Gender Roles and the Lavori d'Aracne," JHM 57 (1993), 23-47. I am also enclosing a reprint edition of Mrs. Bury Palliser's pamphlet "On Links," which will give you a general idea of how art of the Lavori was viewed in the eighteenth century.

The small scrap would appear to be a partial plan for one of the magico-mechanical contraptions that were so popular in that period. (I estimate that this particular document dates to the early 1770s.) If you have any further samples of this type, we would be most interested: one of my graduate students might be able to build a working model.

As for the letter: we have used the lab's equipment to read it without unsealing it, to preserve it intact for your use. Indeed, I would urge you to leave it sealed for now. It contains some information that resolves questions that have long bothered me, but it will not make sense to you until you are already acquainted with the rest of the family's story; it is the last piece of the puzzle, not the first.

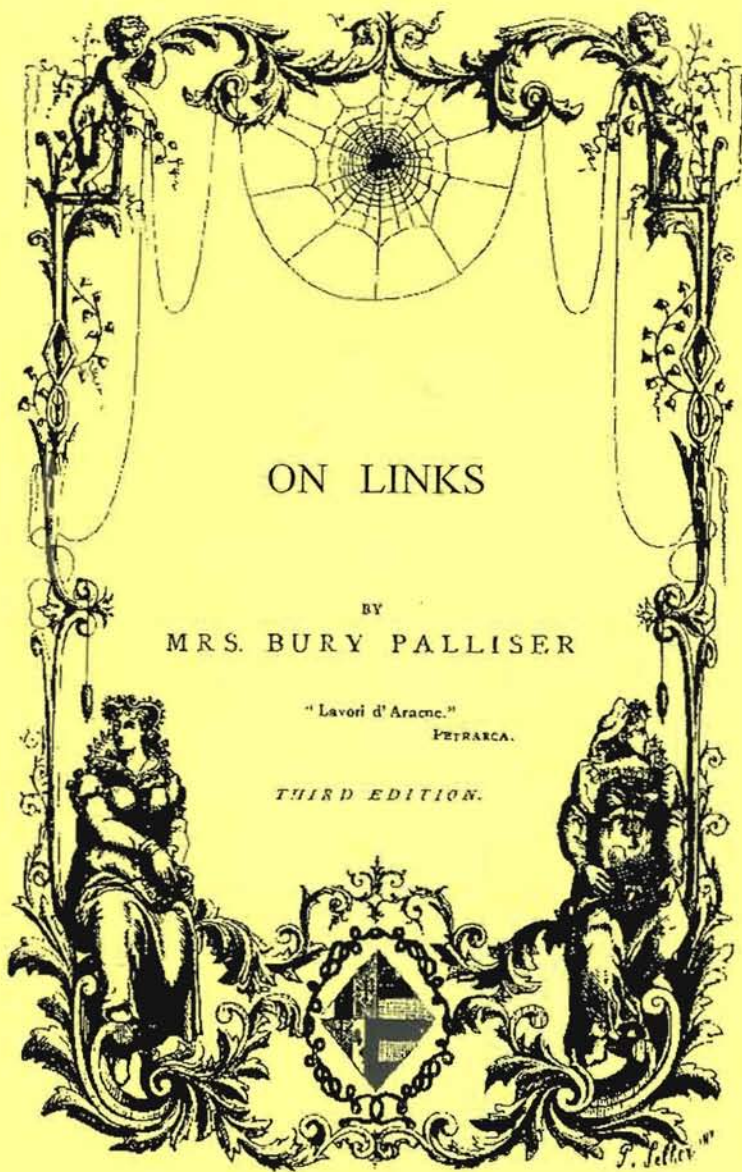
I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to look at these documents. I also hope that you might be willing to see them published. If you will allow it, I would like to use the photographs I took while the documents were in our possession, and make these intriguing discoveries known to the world.

I eagerly await your reply.

Yours etc.,

Emily Short

Emily V. Short, Professor
Department of Historical Magic
University of Pennsylvania



ON LINKS

BY
MRS. BURY PALLISER

"Lavori d'Aracne."
PETRARCA.

THIRD EDITION.

P. Seller

Preface

This text is a reprint of the famous booklet by Mrs. Bury Palliser, which came into circulation sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century. The booklet is an extraordinary document of its time, recording the imaginative folklore that had grown up around the *Lavori d'Aracne* (much like modern urban legends). But it is not all pure fancy. There is some indication, for instance, that the "soul links" of which Mrs. Palliser writes did exist; at least, it is difficult to account for the existence of certain apparently self-powered automata with an extraordinary range of motion, perception, and animal-like behavior.

At the same time, the document contains ominous shades of what is to come – though Mrs. Palliser was obviously fascinated by her subject, she was herself the wife of a City tradesman, not a member of the fashionable elite and certainly not one of those exclusive few whose blood gave them the ability to use the *Lavori*. In Mrs. Palliser's writing one catches traces both of envy and of resentment – sometimes better hidden than others – and of the popular spirit that was, a century later, to wreak such havoc on the households of the *Lavori*-class.

On the History of the Lavori d'Aracne

THE History of the Lavori d'Aracne, or Labors of Arachne, is a difficult one to write, encompassing as it does so much that is secret or jealously guarded by those who might know best.

From the earliest times, the Lavori have been practiced only by those of the most privileged Classes, whether because, as the Practitioners themselves would like to claim, it is an innate Nobility that runs in the blood of the best of Men, or because, as their Opponents most vehemently insist, it is a Skill too closely guarded for anyone of lesser Breeding to be allowed its Acquisition.

Even our Forefathers, the Greeks, knew of the Lavori as a privilege of the aristocratic Families; it is said that when Athens became a Democracy, she put aside as well all the Labors of Linkage; rowed her Triremes by the Strength of her own Citizens; and eschewed those Spectacles of Wonder so commonly adopted in the Celebrations of the Spartan cults. Whether it was a Policy grounded in Wisdom, one may doubt - for the Athenians lost their Sovereignty again, dwindled in Race and Power, and were no more heard from, save as Scholars and Instructors of Philosophy.

As for the Romans, they too possessed the Ability, which according to their own Accounting came down to them through the blood of Aeneas, the offshoot of Venus. For according to the philosophy commonly proposed, the Ability was the result of the natural affinities that inhered in all objects one for another; to link two objects was to play upon the force of Love that united them, which was Venus' special province, setting aside Discord.

What accidents of Birth and Fortune befell the ancient and honorable house of Caesar Augustus, there is not here time to recount. In the later Days of the Empire of Rome, it is said, even the Emperor had not the Skill of the Lavori, and trusted instead to the Miracles of a providential Heaven to protect him and his

People from Disaster; but this too failed, and the barbarian populace of the North swept down and found all Rome of little account.

A dark Time followed of some Hundreds of Years. When next we hear of the *Lavori*, it is as practiced by Charlemagne, about whom there is so large a Variety of Tales as to be open to almost any Interpretation a Scholar might wish to put to it. Some say that Charlemagne was, even as he claimed, Blood of the Emperors of Rome, and not of any petty late Family either, but of the very kind that ran in the Veins of Julius and of Octavian. Others, of a contrary Bent, remark upon Charlemagne's singular Association with the Scholars of the North, that is to say, those of England; where, they imagine, some arcane Knowledge had survived the Passage of dark Centuries under the Possession of the Celts, and came to Charlemagne by Alcuin of York.

However this may be, it is much more certain what happened afterwards: that when Charlemagne's Empire was at his Death divided, those of his Lineage took into its component Kingdoms that same Ability born in their Blood, so that it was commingled with the highest Nobility of France, of Italy, and of the Holy Roman Empire; thereafter it dispersed also to England by the Conquest of the Norman William, and by divers Means elsewhere as well. Everywhere the use of the *Lavori* became a token of high Birth, but nowhere so much as in Italy and France.

In the Italian States, Aphrodite's Gift was renamed a Labor; if it had ever been used to sew Concord, it was not so used now. The various Princes of that land, aptly advised in every sort of Villainy and subtle Treachery by the teaching of Machiavelli, made spies of their own Number, and mingled the *Lavori* with other skills of Poisoning, Deceit, and undetectable Assassination, until their land was drenched in Blood. It was they who first put the *Lavori* to a use explicitly Politickal, the making of the Hostage Link, by which one Person was bound irrevocably to another, and any Misfortune to one became a Misfortune to them both.

As for *Lavori* in France, they were there used with less Violence but more Pride; those of the Aristocracy who possessed the skill, especially in any great degree, were soon raised above all the others: so that there were many of the Rank of Count and Marquis and even of Prince who did not have the *Lavori*, and envied those who did, tho their Rank were the lesser. For these few were set aside the greatest privileges of Versailles, and none



might approach the King in his Bedchamber but that that Man had first opened the Royal Doors by Magickal means; tho a Tax might be enforced upon the rest of the Nobility, it was not enforced upon these; and there is now in short no Privilege enjoyed by any Frenchman that is not enjoyed by those who possess the Lavori.

So it stands currently. Of the Lavori in England, there is less Noise made. The English, being too stable of Sense and staid of Disposition to make so much a fuss of Anything, as the French are wont to make of Everything, disdain to laud their Nobility of magickal means with the same Reverence; there is merely an exclusive Club in St. James' Street reserved for their Use.

A Typology of Links

AS for what the Lavori may do, there are many variations, of which all but a few are quaint and uncommon, either because of the extreme Difficulty of performing them, or because of the Danger inhering in Success.

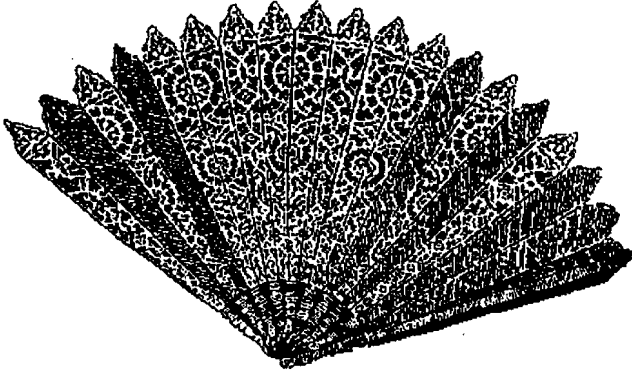
The sort of Link which is known to a Layman, and which we shall here call Regular or Ordinary, is that which is both easiest to perform, and least significant in its Outcome. For these links may be forged between any two Objects of strong physical Similarity, whether that Similarity be of material Substance, Size, Shape, or Design, or some combination of these attributes. To form such a Link, in one who has the skill, is no more difficult than an act of Will, easily accomplished so long as each of the things being linked lies within ready View.

Once such a Link is made, it affects such properties of each object as are commonly changeable: if one is opened, so is the other; if locked, then the other is locked; if one or the other is burnt or broken, then so are both.

Even the Ordinary Link persists over great distances. The story is told that a certain Gentleman, suspicious of his Wife's Virtue, and very jealous of a Footman employed in their house, linked to her bedroom door his own Snuffbox. This Snuffbox he would then carry about with him where-ever he went – always being solicitous never to open it himself. (For it seems that he did not care for Snuff, but brought the box only as an affectation.)

One night as he sat at cards with his Friends, he observed at quite a late hour that the Snuffbox flew open of its own Accord, flinging its contents violently over the table. Alarmed by this Sign, he hastened home, planning to lay violent hands upon the Footman. Upon his Arrival, he discovered his

Mansion in Flames; and the swift Opening of his Snuffbox, it emerged, was the result of his Wife's precipitate departure from her Bedchamber upon the Occasion of its becoming engulfed in Smoak.



This Fan is said to have belonged to Queen Louise, who in a Fit of Pique linked it to the elaborate Skirts of the Royal Mistress. The latter was excessively proud of her Dancing, and the Queen feigned to observe a Performance with perfect Complacency; only, during an especially difficult Maneuver, snapping the Fan abruptly shut, so that the fair Performer, trapped in her Garments, fell and broke both Arms at once.

There are all the same many points on which the Commoner would be well advised to take care: in particular it is best to avoid any Gambling Establishment at which the Nobility may play, for there are numerous methods by which they have been known to render the game of Chance less than Random by means of unscrupulous Links - either by linking to the Cards or Dice themselves, or by subtler Stratagems. It is said that a Man playing Cards with a Viscount once looked down and noticed that a Button on his Sleeve, that ought to have reflected Light in quite an ordinary fashion, instead revealed a view of the underside of the Table - whereupon he

knocked the Table over, and the Viscount was revealed to have a bit of reflecting Mirror in his lap in which he had been able throughout the game to read with perfect Clarity his opponent's Hand.

The Efficacy of this sort of Link in scientific Exploration also explains why so many of the greatest Scientists, and especially Astronomers, have been those with the powers of the Lavori at their disposal. It is said that when Copernicus had formulated his Theory of the construction of the Universe, he was able to prove it by constructing a small Model and then linking all of its parts - ith the result that when all the links were set in place, the Model began of its own accord to move just as he supposed that it must; and he would have taken the Demonstration to be shown to many Doubters, had it not been for an unfortunate Accident in the Road whereupon his Suitcases were stolen by Bandits.

Of Ordinary Links, there is this additional nicety practiced by some few who have the talent: which is, to make the Link and then by some additional Art to twist it. Whereupon, whatever befalls the first object is passed to the second in opposition, so that opening one box closes another, for instance. But this Twisting of Links is not only difficult to effect, but limited in its results. It is not possible, for instance, to Link an Heap of Ash to a Paper that is whole, and by burning the Paper, reconstitute the Ash from nothingness to its original state. (Or, if this can be done, it is a jealously guarded Secret, of which Lawyers and others who thrive upon the general Confusion of a lost Will or the like have done their best to stifle any Word.)

Besides this Ordinary sort of Link, the next most useful and common in Application is the Reverse Link, which blends together the Properties of the two things linked, making them the less vulnerable, so that a fragile thing becomes harder, a heavy thing lighter.

In addition to being used for protective Purposes, the Reverse Link has many cunning and sportive Pranks associated with it; various Gentlemen of Learning have been wont to try to discover new Sciences by Reverse-Linking a pair of existing Treatises, and seeing whether the Results are

legible at all. Likewise, there is a common Trick at the Universities for a Student to Reverse-Link his Teacher's Food to an waxen Model thereof, rendering them both unsavory and inedible.

In addition there is that kind of Link discovered by the Italians, the Hostage Link. It is a Link more gentle than most; being forged between two people, it does not compel the one to undertake the Motions of the other, to wear the same Clothing or digest the same Food, or any of the other things commonly suggested to the popular Imagination in bawdy comic Plays. It has one rule only, which is this: that what kills one Member kills the other as well, and that any grievous threat of Sickness, or any great Sorrow, will affect the other Member of a Pair.

By these means, the Italian usage was to link one Prince to another – or, more commonly, to put their women-folk at Hazard instead, so that a Prince's Wife or Daughter would stand the severest Penalty if any Ill befell the other House. Such means obviated the need for simple Vengeance, when a wrong done to one House was done instantly to Another. So much is amply demonstrated in the story of that Play, Romeo and Juliet, in which the Link forged by Romeo destroys Tybalt at the very moment Tybalt strikes Mercutio down, and both fall bleeding out their Lives, to the Horror and Sorrow of all the onlookers of each House.

Though these practices have in recent days fallen mostly into Disuse, there are still those who follow them, both in Italy and elsewhere, where-ever a dangerous and untrusted Alliance must be made. Occasionally, too, some Man whose Relative or boon Companion has fallen into disgrace of the Law and is due to be Executed, will stand Pledge for him, allowing himself to be linked to the Miscreant; so that if the Crime is repeated and the Criminal executed or in the course of his Misdemeanor killed, the same Fate will befall the one who offered Pledge for him – as we see enacted in that very pathetick Tragedy of Racine's.

Those with especially delicate skill at the Lavori are able to thread Multiple Links, whereby a whole Host of like items will be forced to act as One. Such a labor is not only difficult, but

also tedious: each item must be linked carefully to each of the others, and all must be alike in the same essential Features; it is not enough to link the first to the second, the second to the third, for the Link will grow thin and break if the first and third are not themselves linked in addition. Nor is it easy to attach a new Link to an object, without first removing the Links that are already there. For if the previous Links be stronger, then it is difficult for the new ones to hold; or if they be weaker, it is difficult for the new not to replace the old entirely.

(Some say it is possible to knot Links together, as it is possible to twist them: so that one makes an open-ended Link to each of a number of Objects, and then ties the Links at the other End, perfecting the Connection. How this is possible, or even conceivable, the present Chronicler cannot say; it seems an outright Defiance of all else that is known of Links.)

In addition, there are Rumours of even more fantastic types of Link, of which the Description cast the honest Chronicler into some degree of Doubt. Nonetheless, whatever has come to our ears is here presented for the Judgement of the Reader, whether it can be True or not; or if not True, it may perhaps serve as Entertainment of no meaner kind than is commonly enjoyed upon the Stage.

One such type is the Soul Link, whose property is that it transfers the Behaviour and Movement of a whole Animal, or even a Human, into a tiny Model thereof. And upon the death of the Creature so linked, the Model takes on thereafter a semblance of independent Life, even if it be made of Glass and Metal and Porcelain; so strong is the Soul Link, according to this Story, that it overcomes in some way the Effects of Death. Those given to fanciful explanation will say that this is the origin of the much-told story of the Italian Puppet, which was able to dance and move without Strings, having had the Soul of a little Boy transported whole into its Wood and Joints. But as there is almost certainly no Truth in the Story, one need not trouble oneself for Truth in the Explanation. It is quite likely that this Rumour arose when the Uneducated first came into contact with mechanical Objects with the capacity to move themselves by Gears and Clockworke, the

which is most startling and memorable in Effect when the Object is formed like an Insect or other Creature.

There is also the so-called Martyr Link, which can be made between objects or between People; its nature is that it transfers all Damage that occurs to the first Object onto the second, until the second has been utterly destroyed. Little is said of such Links in recent times; it is claimed that the Emperors of Rome knew these Links, and would use them often to protect themselves against Assassination, choosing an unwilling Slave to become the Martyr for any Ills that might befall the Ruler, and attaining thereby an unnatural old Age despite the Number and Ferocity of their Enemies.

In a like Vein, the Historian Tacitus imputes to the Family of the Caesars the Ability to link abstract things. According to his claim, the Emperor's Daughter Julia was in fact an Adulteress of the blackest Reputation; only, to prevent her Father discovering her in her Iniquities, she linked her own Reputation to that of another Woman, one Turia, who was not only stainless in loyalty to her Husband, but had performed many extraordinary Actions in his Defense. As a result, none spoke any Harm of Julia thereafter, and her Father was spared the Knowledge of her Behaviour.

But this Tale, one imagines, is merely an attempt by the embittered Historian to cast in Shadow one whose Loyalty and Honor are become a By-word for feminine Fidelity.

On Philosophies of Linking

THROUGH the course of Time, many Philosophers have put forward Explanations, more or less plausible in Nature, as to what the Link is.

Those who follow Plato are accustomed to say that all things partake of Ideals: so that for all Chairs, there is an ideal Chair, which is the Type from which all others derive their characteristics. That being so, they argue, Links can only be made between those items that in some way participate in the same Ideal. One Chair may thus be reminded of its relationship to another Chair inasmuch as both of them partake fundamentally in the Essence of Chair-Nature; whereupon, having been reminded, it will try to make itself as similar as possible to the other Chair, in the hopes of eradicating any flaws in itself that distinguish it from the Ideal Chair.

Another popular Explanation is that adopted by the Philosopher Berkeley. According to his Idea, all the Universe exists as a Thought in the Mind of God. Since this is the case, he argues, all that God thinks, Is; to change that which is, one need merely suggest a new Idea to God. It is his Notion (though not one widely approved by the Church) that the divine way of Thinking is similar to that of Humans - that like objects are conjoined in the Mind of God simply because the one reminds him of the other. Therefore, Berkeley argues, all that the magickal Practitioner need do is point out to God the obvious similarities between two Objects, and then the Connection will endure in the divine Perception and thus in the Universe itself.

There are many who find this View of God's Gullibility rather distasteful, and Berkeley himself was excommunicated

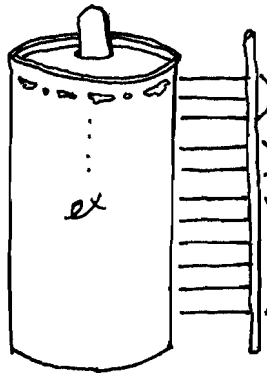
for his Heresy. Many have also found time to point out that while Plato is supposed to have possessed the Ability of Linking, it is certainly known that Berkeley did not; therefore, whatever he may suppose or not suppose concerning this Matter is generally held to be of little Account.

The alternative View that the Lavori constitute an unholy Pact with the Powers of Darkness is one not widely accepted, except among certain Protestant Sects currently residing in the Americas.

Machine For Culinary Efficiency

Recipe -

how it is specified to
the machine



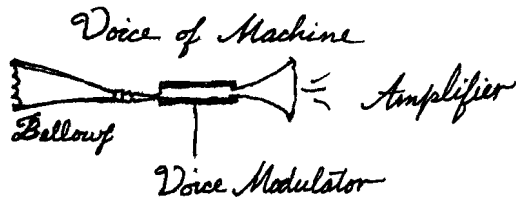
Specification of ingredients (which if it were left blank
the machine would admit all

Secondary preparation (such as chopping, mincing,
and the like)

Cooking itself which is to be further divided as to heat,
duration, and degree of wetness.

Calings of Cylinder -
prepare first in wax

Procure list of desired recipes from Anton.



Possible sources of vocal example -

- Father - too busy
- Anton - wants refinement
- Vincent the priest - shows a promising interest in the project
though voice naturally irritable - sounding
which cannot be an asset in the confessional
- ~~St. Enver~~



Dear Daughter -

I am glad your troubles with D'Enverf were not worse yet - had I known I would not have left you so ill-protected.

I came away in hope of discovering why the Baronesse D'Enverf died so swiftly that your mother though hostage-linked to her showed no ailment before her decease.

The answer came from a travelling apothecary in Dijon. It would appear that the hostage-link, and my supervision through Couliquet's mirror, had become so noisome to D'Enverf that he poisoned his own mother to be free of them.

Of that, I can say no more - but all the less reason for you to feel any guilt at what you had to do.

As for the other, more happy matter -

I ask only that you await my presence so that I may convey my blessing in person. I travel in such haste I may outpace this letter -

Your loving father.