Olifant

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At the end of the nineteenth century, the reverend William Dunn Macray relates the following story:

On the death of the owner of a certain old estate, it was thought wise by heirs or executors to destroy *en masse* certain old writings, books, and papers, which they could not read or understand, and which they were unwilling should pass into other hands, as they themselves did not know what the contents might be. So these wise men of Gotham made a fire, and condemned the books to be burned. But the soul of the village cobbler was moved, for he saw that vellum might be more useful as material for cutting out patterns of shapely shoes and as padding than as fuel; and so he hurried to the place of execution, and prayed that he might have a cart-full from the heap; and his prayer was granted. Some time after, Mr. David Royce, vicar of Nether Swell, Gloucestershire, heard of what had occurred, and by his means the cobbler was “interviewed,” and all that was left of the precious load was obtained from him. [...] And by the gift of my old friend [...], I have myself some fragments of a fine early 13th century MS. of one of St. Augustine’s treatises, cut and marked for the measure of some rustic foot. That a remnant of an old monastic library perished on this occasion, there is only too much reason to fear. (1890, p. 384)

There are more stories of this kind. Even as recently as the 1960s, nuns in Bruges burned a fifteenth-century saint’s life. Parchment has
been used as bookmarks (Geirnaert, 2000, pp. 88-90), sewing patterns, for vacuum sealing wooden organ pipes and—unfortunately—it has also ended up in large quantities in cauldrons, being an excellent resource for the production of glue (Breugelmans, 1992, p. 5).

It may be assumed that the larger part of all the medieval manuscripts that ever existed was destroyed in similar ways. Fortunately there are also many manuscripts that escaped this fate when, in the late fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries, they were recycled in workshops where printed books were bound. Although this did not result in the preservation of complete manuscripts, bits and pieces did survive.

The Middle Dutch fragments of Charlemagne romances

All the extant fragments of Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances—with a single exception—are remainders: covers, pastedowns and fly-leaves, hinges, strengthening material of the spine and back strips (Geirnaert, 2000; Hermans, 1981; Breugelmans, 1992). Sizes vary from 38.5 cm high to 58 cm wide for a bifolium to 3 cm high and 16 cm wide for a stub. As a result it is often impossible to ascertain important codicological details. As the first and last leaves have seldom survived, there is no first initial, no prologue, no epilogue and no colophon—which means no data as regards the author, the patron, the scribe, and the date of composition. Cropping has led to the disappearance of prickings, quire marks, and foliations, while sometimes wear and tear has obliterated any ruling.

The Lorreinen II-fragments of MS H58 were also used for covers, with the exception of the Giessen fragments. The latter consist of 9 bifolia plus a single leaf, being the surplus of a pile of parchment of well over a hundred folia. Although they lay in a bookbinder’s workshop at one time—some of them still show knife cuts—they were never used.

The worst aspect of this state of affairs is, of course, the loss of text. All Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances survive as manuscript fragments, albeit that the size of the fragments varies. The largest number of
lines that has been preserved for any title is 10,300 (Lorreinen II), the smallest 58 (Willem van Oringen II). In total little more than some 30,000 lines of verse survive of all the Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances put together, while originally there must have been half a million (van der Have, 2005)!

There is just one narrative, Karel ende Elegast, that we know in its entirety, but this is due to a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century printed editions that contain the complete text. If we had had only the Middle Dutch manuscripts at our disposal, 20% of Karel ende Elegast would have remained unknown. However, apart from extant incunabula, other sources may also serve as clues to the complete narrative:

- the text was translated from French (for example, Lorreinen I, Aiol)
- there is a complete German translation (for example, Karel ende Elegast, Ogier)
- there is a Middle Dutch prose adaptation (for example, Vier Heemskinderen, Malegijs)

In other words, of the Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances little remains but flotsam and jetsam: fragments of approximately 27 different romances survive in the remains of 57 different manuscripts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of manuscripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limburg Aiol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flemish Aiol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspremont</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aubri de Borgengoen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beerte metten breden voeten</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fierabras</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flovent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garijn van Montglavie</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gheraert van Viane</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within this corpus shifts are possible. *Jourdein van Blaves* was added to the list only recently (Kuiper and Biemans, 2004), whereas *Unidentified Am* (also referred to as *Lion van Bourges*) has been removed (Claassens, 1996). It is not certain whether the three unidentified fragments derive from Charlemagne romances; on the other hand, there may be reasons to add *Sibeli en Aetsaert* to the corpus (Gärtner & van Dijk, 1999). The term “unidentified” suggests that all other romances have been identified, but that is not the case: *Garijn van Montglavie* and *Pepijn die naen* are little more than working titles. Every discovery of new fragments may, of course, confirm attributions or cast doubt on previous ones.

As a group these manuscripts have been described on two occasions: in Bart Besamusca’s *Repertorium van de Middelnederlandse Karelepiek*
MSS of the Middle Dutch Charlemagne Romances

(1983), and in De handschriften van de Middelnederlandse ridderepiek by Hans Kienhorst (1988). It is from these studies that I have derived the majority of the data for my overview. Whenever I add a number to a particular title—as, for example, in Roelantslied (H98)—it refers to the number assigned the fragment by Kienhorst.

Charlemagne romances in print

To complete the picture, it should be noted that six Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances also survive in printed form (Besamusca, 1983, pp. 7-8):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of prints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sibilla</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyghe van Bourdeus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karel ende Elegast</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malegijs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De vier Heemskinderen</td>
<td>26(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den droefliken strijt van Roncevale</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these are prose adaptations, with one exception: Karel ende Elegast, which contains the complete text in verse (Duinhoven, 1969; Duinhoven and van Thienen, 1990). All printed texts are based on a Middle Dutch manuscript source, with one exception: the Historie vander coninghinnen Sibilla (Besamusca et al., 1988), an adaptation of a Spanish prose text, the Hystoria de la reyna Sevilla.

Of Huyghe van Bourdeus two sixteenth- and two seventeenth-century printed editions are extant but no modern edition (Lens, 2004). Two extremely popular works even continued to be printed well into the nineteenth century: these are the Historie van Malegijs (Kuiper, 1903) and

\(^1\) On the number of 26 printed editions of the Vier Heemskinderen, see Spijker, 1990, pp. 264-65.
the Historie vanden vier Heemskinderen, a prose adaptation of Renout van Montalbaen (Spijker, 2005). Finally, in Den droefliken strijt van Roncevale, an adaptation of the Roelantslied, prose and fragments of the old verse text alternate (van Dijk, 1981).

**The typical Middle Dutch Charlemagne manuscript**

It is possible to give some idea of what the standard manuscript of a Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance looked like. The large majority of manuscripts have the following characteristics:

- **The manuscript was written on parchment.**
  Paper was used for only two manuscripts, for the rest (96%) parchment was used.

- **The text consists of rhymed couplets: aabbcc.**
  This applies to all manuscripts; no prose texts are found in manuscript form.

- **The book block measured 23-29 cm by 16-20 cm.**
  For 34 two-column manuscripts (83%) it has been possible to determine the size or to make an educated guess at it.

- **The written area measured on average 21 cm by 14 cm.**
  In 42% of the fragments only either the height or the width of the written area may be determined.

- **The layout of the page is in two columns of 40-50 lines.**
  This applies to 41 out of 57 manuscripts (72%).

- **Texts are written line by line.**
  This applies to 98% of the manuscripts; there is only one manuscript that employs scriptura continua.
• *The script used is the* littera textualis.
  Only two manuscripts use the *littera cursiva*; these are also the only two paper manuscripts.

• *Capital letters are in a separate column at the beginning of the line.*

• *Small initials in red of two lines deep are used, without penwork.*
  This applies to 29 (71%) manuscripts and probably for 32 (78%) of the two-column manuscripts.

• *The manuscript has been ruled with a plummet.*
  This can no longer be established for 29 manuscripts (51%). 23 manuscripts (40%) have been ruled with a plummet, 3 in ink and in 2 only grooves remain.

• *The manuscript has been cut up and used for bookbinding.*
  This is true of 53 out of 57 manuscripts (93%). One manuscript has escaped being used for bookbinding purposes; for 3 manuscripts it is not possible to establish this.

In conclusion:

The typical Middle Dutch Charlemagne manuscript was written on parchment, in two columns of 40 to 50 lines each. It measured 23 to 29 cm by 16 to 20 cm, with a script block measuring on average 21 by 14 cm. The text was written line by line in rhyming couplets, with the capital letter at the beginning of each line in a separate column. It was ruled by using a plummet and decorated with small initials in red across two lines, without penwork. The rhyming couplets were written in the *littera textualis*. The manuscript was cut up and used for book binding purposes.
Obviously these are all very modest manuscripts, “the product of a small workshop where writing could be carried out, where simple penwork could be added and a simple cover made [...] in most cases a small ‘one-man business’ or a workshop where perhaps two scribes worked together” (Biemans, in press; Klein, 1995b). This is in accordance with Maria Careri’s conclusion about the *chanson de geste* manuscripts: “Leur qualité graphique est souvent médiocre.” She quotes with approbation Joseph Duggan’s opinion “que ce n’étaient pas les adeptes les plus fins de l’art de l’écriture qu’on a engagés normalement pour copier les chansons de geste” (2006, pp. 23-24), adding that the parchment used is also second-rate, deriving from the outer layers of the skin (pp. 25-26).

This, then, is the rule. In the pages following I will discuss the exceptions to the rule:

- manuscripts in one column
- manuscripts in 3 or 4 columns
- segmentation (decoration and illumination)
- gatherings, numbering, foliation
- paper manuscripts in cursive script

At the end of this essay I will return to the matter of the modest execution of the average manuscript.

**Manuscripts in one column**

When a scribe opted for a layout in one, two, or three columns, this choice was always connected with the size of the manuscript and the length of the text or texts it contained. According to Pieter Obbema, the layout in two columns suited a text of 13,000 to 23,000 lines. For longer texts—up to 75,000 lines and more—the scribe would even use three or four columns and for shorter texts a layout in a single column. However,
with 25 lines per page and 15 gatherings of 8 folia this would still amount to 6,000 lines of text (1996, pp. 82-84).

In the category of one-column codices, there are seven manuscripts:

- Limburg *Aiol* (H1)
- Gheraert van Viane (H30)
- Karel ende Elegast (H41)
- Karel ende Elegast (H42)
- Karel ende Elegast (H43)
- Renout van Montalbaen (H95)
- Roelantslied (H101)

The last two titles in this list will be discussed below in the section on paper manuscripts. The five remaining texts have been discussed by Hans Kienhorst (2005).

Among this group the manuscript of the Limburg *Aiol* is exceptional. Within the context of Middle Dutch literature it is an early manuscript (late twelfth century) in *scriptura continua*: verse written as prose, each line beginning with a minuscule and separated by a point; 22 lines to a column. It was written in the area of Limburg and the Lower Rhine and belongs to the early German tradition, as do the fragments of Veldeke’s *Sint Servaes* (Kienhorst, 2005, p. 168). In the section dealing with gatherings, numbering, and foliation, we shall see that this *Aiol* manuscript numbered 144 to 152 folia, which means that it may well have contained this single text only.

The *Gheraert van Viane* manuscript, on the other hand, is probably more likely to resemble the French tradition. This tradition starts with a category unknown in Middle Dutch texts: simply executed one-column manuscripts of 28-34 lines, written on parchment, containing the text of one or more *chansons de geste*. They are sometimes referred to as “manuscrits de jongleurs,” manuscripts used by itinerant performers between courts to support their performance, the supposed crown witness of this tradition being the Oxford manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland*.
The concept of the “manuscrit de jongleur” has for some time been under attack (Hasenohr, 1990, pp. 241-43; Taylor, 1991, 2001). Jan Willem Klein in particular has been outspoken in his criticism: “The intention to make (literary) manuscripts for a specific use never existed” (1995b, p. 26).

After 1200 the longer chansons de geste were recorded in manuscripts with two or—if necessary—three columns per page. At the same time the one-column manuscript tradition continued, and the Gheraert van Viane manuscript (dated c. 1300, 24 lines per column) may be a late manifestation of that tradition. Two hands can be distinguished—which may indicate that it is a professional copy, produced by a group of collaborating scribes. Such manuscripts are also represented in French (Kienhorst, 2005, p. 163). It is difficult to make any statements concerning the size of Gheraert van Viane as its relation with Girart de Vienne is so obscure, but it may well have been a relatively short text, possibly of some 6,000 lines. Taking this layout into account, this means that about 15 gatherings, 120 folia, will have been used, making it quite possible that this manuscript, too, contained just one text.

None of this applies to the three Karel ende Elegast manuscripts, which have respectively 31-33, 25 and 32-34 lines per column. They belong to a type of manuscript that does not seem to have an equivalent in either the French or the German tradition: one-column manuscripts from the fourteenth century, written on parchment in a bold littera textu-alis, containing a text of a largely moralistic-didactic nature. Within this genre they represent all Kienhorst’s type C manuscripts: booklets of two or three gatherings, with, if anything, a simple cover (Kienhorst, 2005, p. 32). Within the constraints of this typology Karel ende Elegast is not a chanson de geste on mini-format, but an exemplum—a characterization that seems to accord with the content (Kienhorst, 2005, pp. 111-12). Small manuscripts of this kind may have been part of a miscellany or of a convoluto manuscript, but they also appeared independently. According to Jan Willem Klein, a substantial part of medieval codices with one or two columns per page consisted of just a few gatherings, sometimes even
only of one single gathering, while texts that were shorter still were recorded on a roll (1995b, pp. 19-23).

**Manuscripts in three or four columns**

In this category there are also seven manuscripts, the first six having three columns, the last, *Wisselau*, four.

*Fierabras* (H20)  
*Flovent* (H23)  
*Huge van Bordeus* (H34)  
*Lorreinen II* (H45)  
*Lorreinen II* (H58)  
*Willem van Oringen I* (H120)  
*Wisselau* (H121)

For exceedingly long works, let us say 50,000 lines or more, scribes tended to choose a layout in three columns of about 60 lines per column. *Lorreinen II* (H58) certainly was a very long work: in the section on the numbering systems of manuscripts I will show that this was an extraordinarily long Charlemagne romance, numbering about 150,000 lines of verse. This book could not be accommodated in one codex; there can be no doubt that the text was divided between two or probably three volumes (van der Have, 1990, pp. 133-34).

The idea that a second manuscript of *Lorreinen II* existed is not uncontroversial. Kienhorst registers the text of H45 as *Laidoen* (1988, p. 88). To my mind, however, Jan te Winkel’s identification from 1884 is still convincing (te Winkel, 1884; van der Have, 1990, pp. 121-23). If te Winkel is right, the three-column layout needs no further explanation. The same applies to *Willem van Oringen I*. The extant fragment is an adaptation of the *Moniage Guillaume*, which numbers 6862 lines in the long redaction (Andrieux-Reix, 2005), but is found exclusively as the ending of a cycle of texts which may easily be taken to comprise up to
50,000 lines (van der Have, 2005, pp. 84-85). In cases like these a three-column layout is only to be expected.

_Fierabras_, _Flovent_, and one of the four extant _Huge van Bordeeu_ manuscripts present a different case. _Huge van Bordeeu_ numbered 14,000 to 15,000 lines, _Flovent_ no more than 12,000 and _Fierabras_ probably less than 10,000 (van der Have, 2005, pp. 82, 86) —all numbers for which a two-column layout appears the most suitable, as is apparent in the other three _Huge van Bordeeu_ manuscripts. Why, then, three columns rather than two? There is only one plausible explanation: these were miscellanies, rather than single text manuscripts (Biemans, in press).

_Wisselau_ is a special case. The manuscript is in four columns, making it unique among Middle Dutch Charlemagne narratives. Apart from the _Wisselau_ fragment, this feature is found only in a _Roman van Caesar_ manuscript (Hegman, 1976; Kienhorst, 1988, pp. 26-28) and in four manuscripts of Jacob van Maerlant’s _Spiegel historiael_ (Biemans, 1997, pp. 143-49). There can be no doubt that Maerlant’s world chronicle was of an enormous size and the same is true—or at least possible—of the _Roman_ (or _History_) _van Caesar_, so that their layout is not surprising. But how does this apply to _Wisselau_? The story of the bear who throws a cook into his own cauldron and eats him is reminiscent of the tradition of twelfth-century German “_Spielmannsepik_” and was, therefore, probably a short text, between two and three thousand lines. The four-column manuscript must therefore have been a convolute manuscript or a miscellany, but it was also exceptional from a codicological perspective. A comparison with the _Spiegel historiael_ manuscripts in four columns shows that the leaves of the _Wisselau_ manuscript were too small for four columns: they were neither high nor wide enough and had too few lines per column: only 45 instead 70 to 80 as might be expected. As a result the columns have been squashed up close (Biemans, in press).
The segmentation of the manuscripts

Every text has a particular form of segmentation, for example in chapters, sections, and paragraphs. A modern typographer will make frequent use of white lines, but to his medieval colleague this was a senseless waste of parchment. His weapon was colour. It was by using colour that he took care of rubrication, decoration, and illumination.

Rubrication: small initials of two to three lines deep, red or alternately red and blue; section marks, also red or alternately red and blue; red marking of the column of capital letters, whether in one stroke or all letters separately and display script in red, although rare in romance manuscripts.

Decoration: the penwork in the small initials and the initials executed in a counter colour: blue in a red letter, red in a blue one. Also, the first capital letter of a column often has been embellished calligraphically, with various degrees of sophistication.

Illumination: decorated initials in more than two colours, historiated initials (incorporating a representation of persons or animals), and miniatures. The last two categories are not found in what remains of the Middle Dutch Charlemagne manuscripts.

A manuscript always has at least one colour. If it contains only black text—as is the case in the Flovent (H23), Gwidekijn van Sassen (H32) or the Roelantslied (H101)—it has remained incomplete, in the sense that the small initials have not been executed. But they will always have been part of the plan, as the scribe has left room for them.

Some kinds of decoration are extremely rare in Middle Dutch Charlemagne manuscripts. Historiated initials are found in just one manuscript: Lorreinen II (H58). Penwork around small initials is limited to two examples: Lorreinen I (H59) and Lorreinen II (H58); paragraph signs are found only in the Flemish Aiol (H2), Lorreinen I (H60), Lorreinen II, (H58) and Unidentified Al (H127). Alternately red and blue small initials
occur in Renout van Montalbaen (H96) and Willem van Oringen I (H120) as well as in the three Lorreinen manuscripts. Gold is used in one manuscript: Aspremont (H128). Part of an initial A with a flourish in the margin has survived; of a second initial the flourish only survives. The colours are gold and—badly faded—green, which in any case suggests a rather luxurious codex. Another unique feature is the use of rubricated chapter headings in one manuscript: Renout van Montalbaen (H96). Preceding an alternately red and blue small initial, a rhyming couplet is written in red, as, for example, in: “Nu horet wat Rijtsarde weder voer / Do Ogyer Rypen truwe zwoer” (“Now hear what happened to Rijtsarde when Ogyer swore Rypen loyalty”). In the 320 extant lines this occurs three times.

Even though two persons may be involved, rubrication and illumination belong to a single system: the “hierarchy of decoration” (de Hamel, 2004, pp. 45-49). Even the simplest manuscript opened with a large initial on the first page, as is shown by two manuscripts of Karel ende Elegast: a U of seven lines deep in H39, a U eight lines deep in H44. Otherwise the two manuscripts are distinguished only by small initials of two lines deep in red. This indicates a segmentation into two levels, as in most Middle Dutch Charlemagne manuscripts. Alternate red and blue small initials—as in Lorreinen I (H59) or Willem van Oringen I (H120)—do not alter this: they serve to make a codex more luxurious, but it remains segmentation in two status levels. It is only when paragraph signs are added—Flemish Aiol (H2), Lorreinen I (H60) and Unidentified Al (H127)—that we can speak of segmentation in three levels.

Lorreinen II (H58) displays the most sophisticated segmentation with at least five levels. It consists of the following elements:

- 3 initials of 8 lines deep, in three colours
- 19 small initials of 3 lines deep, in two colours: blue with red or red with blue
- 159 small initials of 2 lines deep, alternately red and blue
- 334 paragraph signs, alternately red and blue

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Undoubtedly there also was an initial at the beginning. Perhaps it would be better to say that there was at least one, as we are acquainted with the romance’s overall structure: it was divided into three books, each of which might consist of “partieën” (“parts”). However, it is not known how this structure was visualised. In any case the 10,035 remaining lines of H58 were structured as:

- 3 parts of 3345 lines on average
- 22 chapters of 456 lines
- 181 sections of 55 lines
- 515 paragraphs of 19 lines (van der Have, 1990, p. 46)

Column initials serve no function in the segmentation of the text; they are purely decorative. However, they may be somewhat larger and more striking; they may have calligraphic embellishments; or they may occasionally be decorated with grotesques, as is the case in *Madelgijs* (H65) and *Lorreinen II* (H58). In the latter manuscript the scribe really went to town: on every page there are three large, elegant capitals with many grotesques, mostly human heads but also quite a few animals, like a bird with a snake in its beak. However, the segmentation of the text has priority: if the first lines of a column contain a small initial, the column initial has to make way. Usually these decorations are part only of the black text; however, in the Flemish *Aiol* (H2) they have been enhanced in red. In this manuscript there is considerable variation in the small drawings: there is a fish, a boar’s head, and the face of a man with a flower between his lips.

**Gatherings, numbering, and foliation**

Gathering numbers, foliations, and catchwords were in general written close to the edges of the original folia. As a result they are the first to be lost when the manuscript is cropped, which is almost inevitable prior to
binding. We may come across the odd foliation, as in *Madelgijs* (H68) on the recto side, or a catchword, as in *Loyhier ende Malaert* (H61) on the verso side, but too few clues remain to reconstruct the system that must have been there. A reconstruction of this kind is possible only in the cases of the Limburg *Aiol* (H1) and the *Lorreinen* manuscripts.

The manuscript of the Limburg *Aiol* is old by Dutch standards (c. 1175-1200) and originally did not have any foliation. It was not until some time in the fifteenth century that someone foliated the manuscript (at that time still complete) on the verso side of the folios. The following are extant:

\[
\begin{align*}
XXXV & \quad XXXVJ & \quad IV & \quad CV & \quad XXIIJ & \quad XXIIIJ & \quad XXVIIJ
\end{align*}
\]

which Deschamps interpreted as being:

\[
\begin{align*}
XXXV & \quad XXXVJ & \quad LIV & \quad XCV & \quad CXXIIJ & \quad CXXIIIJ & \quad CXXVIIJ
\end{align*}
\]

In addition one quire signature has survived: *vij⁹* on the verso side in the bottom margin. This is interpreted by Deschamps as being *xvij⁹*, which agrees with the place of the gathering in the codex (Deschamps, 1956-57, p. 9). The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the place of the foliation (on the verso side) and of the quire signature (also on the verso side, in the bottom margin of the last page of the gathering) are in accordance with medieval practice.

Once again the *Lorreinen* manuscripts are the most informative. In *Lorreinen I* (H59), we find in the bottom margin the boldly written numbers, *XII⁹*, and at the edge of the folio, the tops of a catchword are still just visible. This must have been the last page of the gathering and, assuming a regular assembly in quaternions, this must, therefore, have been folio 96 of the codex. This corresponds with the relation between the French *Garin le Lorrain* and the Middle Dutch translation.

H60 of *Lorreinen I* displays a remarkable feature: on a particular recto side we read *xxxix*, on the verso *xl*. This suggests pagination, which
means that this would have to be folio 20. However, in that case the Middle Dutch translation does not tally with the French original; to make the two agree it would have to be folio 40. No doubt it concerns an apparent pagination which is, in reality, a foliation: someone numbered the “spread,” wrote \textit{xxxix} on fol. 38 v° and 39 r° en \textit{xl} on 39 v° and 40 r° (Lehmann, 1960, esp. p. 32).

H58 of \textit{Lorreinen II} was assembled from senions. What is left of them is the following: the three middle bifolia of quire 25 and its last folio; the complete quire 26; and 9 folia or the remains thereof that belonged to what followed spread over at least 10 gatherings = 120 folia. Two quire signatures remain: \textit{xxvi} on the first leaf of the still complete foliation, on the recto side above the middle column, and, at a later stage, \textit{xxx} on a separate folio. Two catchwords are still visible: on the last leaf of quire 26 in the bottom margin under the right hand column on the verso side, and in the same place on the leaf that immediately precedes quire 26. There are also three foliations, \textit{CCC}, \textit{CCCX}, and \textit{CCCXC}, written quite large in yellow-brown ink halfway down the outer margin of the verso side.

The quire numbers and the foliations agree. A regular assembly in senions would have caused the first leaf of gathering 26 to be folio 301. According to the foliations, it is folio 305, a negligible difference. There can be no doubt, therefore, that \textit{Lorreinen II} did indeed number 150,000 lines of verse. Folio 309 is extant, and with it some 140,000 lines, after which the story has at least another three gatherings to go.

\textbf{Paper manuscripts in cursive script}

The only two manuscripts that were written in a cursive script are also the only two manuscripts on paper. They are also the last manuscripts in the chronological list (see below).

The first manuscript (H95) consists of ten scraps of paper, dated 1475-1525, which contain approximately 70 lines from \textit{Renout van Montalbaen}. They were not found in the binding of a book but in a chasuble.
Agnes Geijer, curator of old garments and textiles, found them while restoring a cowl from Stöde (Sweden). The fragments, together with other bits of paper, had been used as filling for the silk strips that had been sewn on to the cowl. The garment was produced in the Low Countries, “where, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, various workshops produced articles like these on a large scale for export” (Muusses, 1940, p. 258).

The second manuscript (H101) contains eleven folia (five leaves and three bifolia) of the Roelantslied. They form part of the so-called manuscript Borgloon, a miscellany that contained, in addition to the Roelantslied, the religious romance Jonathas en Rosafiere as well as songs and poems by chambers of rhetoric. The script and the watermarks in the paper indicate that it was produced c. 1475-1500. It has in the past been regarded as the repertory manuscript of a professional performer (Pleij, 1991), but its most recent editors take a different view: according to them it is “an ‘ordinary’ miscellany, meant for private use. At different times [...] the compiler extended his collection by adding texts in which he was interested” (Biemans et al, 2000, p. 19).

The Chronology of the Manuscripts

The following table is based on the work of Klein (1995a, esp. pp. 12-20).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limburg Aiol</td>
<td>late 12th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Aspremont</td>
<td>1290-1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Renout</td>
<td>1275-1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Renout</td>
<td>1300-1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Gheraert van Viane</td>
<td>1300 or early 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Willem van Oringen I</td>
<td>c. 1320-1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Loreinen I</td>
<td>1300-1325 or 1320-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Garijn van Montglavie</td>
<td>1315-1335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Olifant
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Lorreinen II</td>
<td>1325-1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1325-1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jourdein van Blaves</td>
<td>mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lorreinen I</td>
<td>1350 or mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Loyhier ende Malaert</td>
<td>1350 or mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1350 or mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1350 or mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Renout</td>
<td>1350 or mid 14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Ogier van Denemarken</td>
<td>1340-1360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flemish Aiol</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aubri de Borgengoen</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fierabras</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Flovent</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gwodekijn van Sassen</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Loyhier ende Malaert</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
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<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Ogier van Denemarken</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Ogier van Denemarken</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Wisselau</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Pepijn die naen</td>
<td>1330-1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Huge van Bordeus</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Huge van Bordeus</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Karel ende Elegast</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Karel ende Elegast</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Roelantslied</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Roelantslied</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Unidentified Al</td>
<td>1350-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Unidentified Av</td>
<td>1350 or 1350-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Lorreinen II</td>
<td>1350-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Madelgijs</td>
<td>1350-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is an extract from a longer list comprising all Middle Dutch romances. A remarkable feature of the complete list is that there is an equal division between manuscripts written before and after 1350. However, this does not apply to genres. Charlemagne narratives generally reach their peak in popularity after 1350 (65%), whereas Arthurian literature tends to be popular before 1350 (80%) (Klein, 1995a, p. 19). This may explain why there are Charlemagne romances among the printed prose romances but almost no Arthurian narratives. One might conclude that romances that were popular after 1350 also did well in printed form, whereas romances that few were interested in after 1350 had little chance of ever making the printing press. It would seem that fifteenth-century printers printed only modern literature.

Why are the Charlemagne manuscripts so modest?

Klein and Biemans agree that we need not expect a desire for translations of Old French texts into Middle Dutch in courtly environments. The
nobility would read those stories in French (Klein, 1995b, pp. 1-4; Bie-
mans, in press). However, the clergy may, I think, be a different matter. 
Although there were not many first owners of manuscripts among them, 
there can be no doubt that many clergymen were interested in secular 
narratives and made use of them in their sermons; traces of usage in the 
1508 printed edition of De vier Heemskinderen can be found (Spijker, 
2005, p. 322; Resoort, 1966-67). As we have seen, Karel ende Elegast 
could be an exemplum.

However, Jan Willem Klein must surely be right when he states: “The 
public for Middle Dutch literature must primarily be looked for in the 
upper echelons of the urban bourgeoisie” (1995b, p. 3). Jos Biemans 
narrowed this down to circles that probably did not belong to the very 
highest status groups. In his study of the Spiegel historiael manuscripts 
he argued that a new social order arose in Flanders after the Battle of the 
Golden Spurs in 1302. In the towns a new upper class became prominent, 
which was less exclusive and not as rich as the old elite (1997, pp. 263-
65, 292-93). These are the people who are thought to have been the pri-
mary owners of romances and of the Spiegel historiael manuscripts, 
written in the first half of the fourteenth century. The same situation 
probably applied to Brabant, as literary manuscripts from this region 
have been executed in the same modest style as the Flemish manuscripts. 
These burghers were interested first and foremost in the contents, not in 
luxurious execution—quite apart from the fact that they had less money 
to spend (Biemans, in press).

Among all these standard manuscripts of Middle Dutch Charlemagne 
romances the three Lorreinen manuscripts, in particular H58, are excep-
tions to the rule. It is only reasonable to look for their primary owners 
higher on the social ladder, perhaps even somewhere near the court of the 
dukes of Brabant.²

² This article has been translated from the Dutch by Thea Summerfield.
Works cited

[Note to the reader: Because the author/date system has been used for citations in the present article, multiple works by the same author(s) are listed chronologically in ascending order.]


Olifant


Roelantslied

Hans van Dijk

Doen sprac hi [Olivier] openbaerre:
“Lieve geselle, comt haerre.
Wi moeten met rouwe sceden.”
Doen ontvielen de tranen hem beden
Uten ogen haestelike
Ende weenden bitterlike.
Olivier verseerden sine wonde,
Dbloet ran hem uten monde.
Hi wert bleec ende onghedaen
Alse die ter doet wert gaen
Ende viel in onmacht te hant.
Doen sprac die grave Roelant:
“Hulpt God! Edel here,
Ic vruchte dat beten sere.
Betic vanden orsse neder,
Ic commer niet op weder.
Ay lieve geselle Olivier,
Moeten wi nu sceden hier?
Dat es mi de droefste dach
Die ic met oghen sach.
Ay Vrancrike,” sprac Roelant,
“Hoe seere sidi ghescant!
Karel verliest heden sere;
Dat hem gaet ane sijn ere.”
Van den rouwe die hadde Roelant
Viel hi in onmachte te hant.
Maer schiere hi bequam.
Doen sach hi ende vernam

26.2
Olivier ten wige gaen,
Die vanden onmacht was opgestaen.
Hem waren verdonckert daer
Die ogen scone ende claer.
Nochtan dedi groot genent
Ende ghinc vechten al blent.
Die edel grave Rolant
Volgede Oliviere thant
Ende nam sijns ware
Inde Sarrasinen scare.
Als Olivier vernam
Dat Roelant bi hem quam,
Gaf hem Olivier enen slach
Dat hi en hoorde no en sach.
   Doen sprac den grave Roelant
Tote Olivier thant:
   “Lieve gheselle, waer bi
   Soe hebdi geslagen mi?
   Ic ben doch dijn gheselle Roelant.”
Olivier antwoerde te hant:
   “Lieve geselle, inne sie u niet.
   Mi es leet dat mi es gesciet.
   Verghevet mi dor Gods ere,
   Want het rouwet mi herde zere.”
Doe sprac Roelant: “Olivier,
Ic vergeeft u gerne hier.”
Olivier neech hem dor dat
Ende trac achter een luttel bat,
Want hem porde die doot
Die hem dede pine groot. (H, ll. 173-226)

1 The cited text is based on the diplomatic edition in van Dijk, 1981, pp. 376-84. To increase readability some changes have been made: spelling

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Then Olivier said in a clear voice: “Dear friend, come here.Sadly we need to say goodbye.” Then tears streamed from the eyes of both and they wept bitterly. The pain from Olivier’s wounds increased, blood ran from his mouth. He looked pale and unwell like someone about to die and soon he lost consciousness. Then count Roelant said: “May God help me. Noble lord, I am afraid to dismount. Once I get down from my horse, I’ll not get on it again. Ah, dear friend Olivier, are we to say goodbye now in this place? This is the saddest day of my life. Ah France,” Roelant said, “How you are disgraced! Charles now suffers a great loss; it will affect his honour.” The sadness he experienced caused Roelant to faint. But he quickly came to again. Then he saw Olivier, who had regained consciousness, make his way to the battle again. His eyes that once had been so beautiful and clear were obscured by a film. All the same he behaved bravely and, completely blinded, entered the fight. The noble count Roelant followed Olivier at once and watched him among the Saracen host. When Olivier noticed that Roelant was approaching him, he gave him such a blow with his sword that he [Roelant] could neither hear nor see. Then count Roelant said to Olivier: “Dear friend, why did you hit me? It’s me, your friend Roelant.” Olivier answered at once: “Dear friend, I cannot see you. I am sorry that this happened. Forgive me, for God’s sake, for I regret it very much.” Then Roelant said: “Olivier, I forgive you wholeheartedly.” Olivier bent forwards [towards his friend] and
withdrew a little, for death overcame him, of which he was much afraid.²

This is how Roelant and Olivier say their final farewells in the Middle Dutch Roelantslied. Towards the end of the battle, Olivier is mortally wounded by a stab in the back delivered by the pagan commander Galifer (Marganice). Although severely weakened and near death, he continues to slash blindly at the enemy. In doing so he accidently hits Roelant. Deeply moved, the two friends say farewell. The scene is one of the high points in the narrative tradition of the Chanson de Roland. In the famous Oxford Version it is found in lines 1980-2010 of the second episode, which describes the actual battle near Roncevaux.³ Of the four episodes of which the Chanson de Roland consists, only the second has survived in Dutch.⁴ The Middle Dutch text begins with the preparations for battle by the Saracens and ends with Charles’s return when the battle is already over (Roland, ll. 841-2608).

Details

The Roelantslied belongs to the oldest remains in the vernacular literature of the Low Countries. It may have been translated from French into Flemish as early as the twelfth century. Jacob van Maerlant refers to the work in his Spiegel historiael around 1285 (de Vries and Verwijs, 1857-63, IV, 1, 29, 51; vol. III, p. 204), but the work’s static versification suggests that by this time the Roelantslied had already been around for a century. As the research of linguist E. van den Berg has shown, the rela-

² The English translation is provided by Thea Summerfield based on the author’s modern Dutch translation of the Middle Dutch text.
³ The Chanson de Roland is cited according to the Moignet edition.
⁴ The four episodes of the Chanson de Roland in the Oxford Version are: Prelude (ll. 1-840), Roncevaux (ll. 841-2608), Baligant (ll. 2609-3704) and Ganelon’s Punishment (ll. 3705-4002).

Olifant
tionship between syntax and versification in Middle Dutch romances gradually increased in complexity (van den Berg, 2007). In the earliest period – that is to say, in the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth – sentences in general coincide with one rhymed couplet, as in Ay, lieve geselle Olivier / Moeten wi nu sceden hier? (H, ll. 187-88). From the beginning of the thirteenth century, versification becomes more dynamic and sentences more often extend beyond the limits of the couplet or even single lines. With its static versification, the Roelantslied belongs to the oldest category. As the language of the oldest surviving fragments has Flemish dialect characteristics, it may be assumed that the text was originally written in Flemish (van den Berg, 1985, p. 23). The county of Flanders was the only region in the Low Countries that was part of the kingdom of France. It is not, therefore, surprising that it was there that the French chansons de geste were known at an early date.

The survival rate of the Roelantslied is poor. Five short, parchment fragments (R, H, Ro, and B) from the fourteenth century are extant as well as a number of paper leaves (L) from the 1480s. Moreover, large sections of the rhymed text have been integrated into two sixteenth-century printed editions (A from c. 1520 and B from 1576). These sources vary greatly in character and quality. The fourteenth-century fragments contain relatively few corrupt places, but as they number only a limited number of lines—from fewer than a hundred to no more than a few hundred lines—they are too small to carry much weight. They derive from manuscripts of the usual type for fourteenth-century romances (van der Have, 2011, pp. 14-15. The paper leaves of L date from the end of the fifteenth century. They once formed part of a miscellany that was probably compiled by a private reader. This may be deduced from the unusual layout of the manuscript (one column in a careless italic hand) and the many errors that the text contains. The two printed editions are small, plainly executed books entirely in the style of the early Dutch printed

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editions of romance adaptations. They contain a hybrid text of the *Droef\-\-liken strijt van Roncevale*. The prose text alternates with considerable sections in rhyme which derive from a late fifteenth-century version of the *Roelantslied*.

If, however, all the pieces are put together in the right sequence, an almost complete rendition in Middle Dutch of nearly 2000 lines of verse from the second episode of the *Chanson de Roland* appears. It should, however, be borne in mind that this rendition is extremely heterogeneous in origin. We follow now one, now another of the Middle Dutch sources, while sometimes the text is based on nothing more than emendations and guesses. The quotation at the beginning of this contribution derives mainly from the relatively reliable fragment H, but even so, it had to be supplemented in many places from other sources.

**The tradition**

How does the Middle Dutch text compare with the international transmission of the text of the *Chanson de Roland*? As we have seen, only fragments of the second episode (the description of the battle near Roncevaux) have come down to us. It may be that there never was more in Middle Dutch than this single episode, which is after all the core of the narrative. Comparisons with other texts in the *Chanson de Roland* tradition show that the *Roelantslied* most resembles the Oxford Version of the French tradition. Many precise similarities between the two texts prove that it concerns a written process of transmission here, that is to say that a written French exemplar was translated by means of writing into Dutch. The translation largely follows its exemplar which has not, however, been translated literally; on the contrary, an adaptation has been made. The main points have been kept intact, details have been left out. The result is a text which, in comparison with the French texts, is short and gives a straightforward account of the events. A comparison of the passage at the beginning of this article (about the final farewells of Roelant
and Olivier) with the corresponding passage in the Oxford Version (ll. 1980-2010) gives a good impression of the translator’s choices.

In the Middle Dutch story, as in its French counterpart, Charles is an elderly king of France, a leader in battle and a conqueror of many lands. In addition he is the leader of the Christian world, who, in the fight against the pagans, has God on his side. A painstaking comparison shows that the Dutch text tends to stress, rather more than the Oxford Version, that the fight against the heathens has spiritual and religious rather than secular and feudal motives. For example, when in the French text Roland fights for his lord Charlemagne, in the Dutch text this becomes his lord God. However, it is really only a question of differences of emphasis. Nowhere is there a departure from the main story line. Dutch audiences have been presented with a French story about a French battle and have shared in the distress arising from the fate of la douce France (dat soete Vrankerike) (van Dijk, 1981, pp. 144-47). This may be the reason why the Chanson de Roland had relatively little success in the Low Countries. Certainly fragments of five manuscripts are extant and the story even made it into print, but despite this, the reception of the most important chanson de geste remains decidedly poor in the Netherlands. The text was probably never translated in its entirety and cultural witnesses to familiarity with the story in the Low Countries are scarce.

An exception is the Antwerp printer Roland van den Dorpe. In all probability he edited a printed edition of the Roelantslied (which is no longer extant) around 1496 (van Dijk, 1981, pp. 72-76). Two years later he included an extensive description of Charles’s campaign to Spain according to the prose tradition of the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle in his Alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant (Tigelaar, 1997). His printer’s mark, depicting his heroic namesake, also testifies to Roland van den Dorpe’s extraordinary interest in this material.
Roland van den Dorpe’s printer’s mark.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Copied from Debaene, 1951, p. 284.
Roland van den Dorpe’s interest led around the year 1500 to a peculiar compilation of texts. An unknown compiler (van den Dorpe himself?) added to the “historical” prose of the Pseudo-Turpin as found in the Alder excellenste cronyke material from other sources and embellished the text by adding long rhymed passages from the Roelantslied. The resulting hybrid text (Boekenoogen, 1902), which earlier was referred to by its abbreviated title, is entitled in full Den droefliken strijt die opten berch van Roncevale in Hispaniën gheschiede daer Rolant ende Olivier metten fluer van Kerstenrijc verslagen waren [The Grievous Battle that Took Place on the Mountain of Roncevaux in Spain, Where Roelant and Olivier Were Beaten along with the Flower of Christendom].

The integration of the textual material from the traditions of the Chanson de Roland and the Pseudo-Turpin posed a number of problems. This is particularly apparent in places where the two traditions contradict each other. An obvious example is the role of archbishop Turpin, who, according to the Chanson de Roland, is killed at Roncevaux. As the author of the chronicle pretended to be Turpin, van den Dorpe was forced to change the archbishop’s role in his chronicle. After all, he could hardly be killed in battle and write a description of it later. According to the chronicle, Turpin was not at Roncevaux at the time of the battle but with Charles in the main body of the army. In the Middle Ages the two versions of Turpin’s role posed an insoluble historical problem. David Aubert, author of Croniques et conquestes de Charlemaigne from the middle of the fifteenth century, devotes an entire passage to this contradiction and comes to the following conclusion: “Si ne scay lequel croire des deuks” [“And I do not know which of the two I should believe”] (Guiette, 1940-51, vol. 2, p. 7; Schobben, 1972, vol. 1, p. 11; Moisan, 1995, pp. 400-01). The compiler of the Droeefliken strijt is less reticent. First he casually merges the two versions of the story and subsequently obliterates all contradictions by means of a number of remarkable devices. For example, although he refers to the presence of Turpin on the battlefield, he neutrally refers to him as the noble French bishop and adds by way of an explanation:
Dese bisscop was wel bekent met bisscop Tulpijn, om dat hi so vrome was so segghen eenige dat hi selve Tulpijn was een vanden .xij. ghenoten. Maer dat en was niet, want Tulpijn ende die hertoge van Bayvier waren met coninc Kaerle ende niet opten Roncevale. (Boekenoogen, 1902, p. 41; van Dijk, 1981, P558-63, p. 429)7

This bishop knew bishop Turpin well and because he was so brave, some say that he was Turpin himself, one of the twelve pairs. But that is not true, because Turpin and the duke of Bavaria were with king Charles and not on the mountain of Roncevaux.

Another interesting feature of the text is that the compiler strongly emphasizes the figure of Ganelon (van Dijk, 1981, pp. 117-20). Of course he is the archtraitor, but in the Droefliken strijt he also boasts powerful international relations, since his sons occupy high positions among the Saracens and his daughter Irene is married to the emperor in Constantinople. They come to their father’s aid in his struggle with Charles and Roelant. These additions appear intended to effect an important change in the fundamental concept of the narrative. Whereas in the tradition of the Chanson de Roland there are two more or less equivalent causes for the catastrophe at Roncevaux, that is, Ganelon’s treachery and Roland’s demesure (his refusal to send to Charles for help), in the Droefliken strijt it is really only Ganelon who is blamed. The blacker Ganelon, the whiter Roland! This change is most clearly visible in the prologue. Here again it is Ganelon who is said to have caused the death of many

7See also pp. 110-12. The adaptor of Den droefliken strijt incorrectly assumes that “Roncevale” is a mountain. This is also apparent in the title of his book in which he states explicitly that the battle took place “opten berch van Roncevale in Hispanien” [“on the mountain of Roncevaux in Spain”].
noble Christians and who would even have deprived Charles of his throne if God had not intervened. Ganelon got what he deserved, for “whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased” (Matt. 23:12). As a contrast to this deterrent example, Roelant is presented to the reader as an exemplary hero:

Laet ons metter herten gheestelic te nieute bringen der valscher Turecken gheloove ende bevechtense inwendelijke van binnen ghelijc datse Rolant ende Olivier bevochten van buyten ende haer heylige bloet daer vore ghestort hebben, op dat wij mogen verdienen den hooghen loon die si vercregen hebben. (Boekenoogen, 1902, p. 3; van Dijk, 1981, P38-44, pp. 415-16)

Let us with our heart destroy the false faith of the Turks in the spirit, and fight them internally as Roelant and Olivier did externally, and in so doing spent their holy blood, in order that we may deserve the same high reward that they earned.

This passage contains an incitement to the reader to fight unbelievers, albeit in spirit, as Roelant and Olivier had done at Roncevaux. In the prologue the story is presented as an exemple. This view is supported by material evidence in the extant copy of the c. 1520 edition. The booklet was the property of a religious foundation in Southern Germany, where a reader made notes in the margins in places that concern Christian aspects of the story (Resoort, 1976-77).

However, the clergy will certainly not have been the only readers of the Droefliken strijt. The early printers in the Low Countries aimed their ancient stories about Charlemagne and his knights primarily at the wealthy burghers in the towns. These people gradually developed a taste for cultural matters in addition to their business affairs, and the printers catered for this need. The famous romance of Karel ende Elegast was

26.2
printed by them in its old metrical form, but other romances, like *Renout van Montelbaen, Madelgijs* and *Hughe van Bordeeuw*, were first converted into prose. In this connection the *Droefliken strijt*, containing as it does both prose and rhyme, is a unique experiment. Not just the contents, but the form too is hybrid. It seems to me that the compiler has tried to reach as large a readership as possible. In this way the increasingly emancipated burghers who preferred prose as being the more common, “scientifically reliable” form were provided with something that was to their taste, while at the same time those who appreciated the old romances in their trusted metrical form were not disappointed.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) This article has been translated from the Dutch by Thea Summerfield.
Works Cited

[Note to the reader: Because the author/date system has been used for citations in the present article, multiple works by the same author(s) are listed chronologically in ascending order.]


Kroniek van Pseudo-Turpijn in Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant (Antwerpen, Roland vanden Dorpe, 1498). Groningen: Passage.
**Karel ende Elegast**

Edited with an introduction and notes by Bart Besamusca and Hans van Dijk
Translated by Thea Summerfield

*Karel ende Elegast*, the story about Charlemagne who goes out stealing in the middle of night on God’s orders and in the process discovers a conspiracy on his life, is known as the jewel in the crown of the Dutch Charlemagne tradition. The text owes this qualification not just to its literary qualities. The fact that this is a compact story, numbering only 1400 lines, has also contributed to the high esteem it enjoys (van Oostrom, 2006, pp. 234-41). In addition *Karel ende Elegast* is the only Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance that has survived in its entirety.

**Details**

*Karel ende Elegast* is extant in incomplete form in a number of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts. In each case it concerns single leaves or bifolia containing no more than several hundred lines of verse. A survey based on Besamusca (1983, pp. 37-44), Kienhorst (1988, 80-87), and Klein (1989 and 1995) provides the following information:

- a bifolium kept in Arras (siglum: M, after its discoverer F. Mone), c. 250 lines, written in a preponderantly Brabantine dialect (van den Berg, 1987) in the second half of the fourteenth century;

- 17 stubs kept in Gent (siglum: Ge), containing the remains of 618 lines, copied in the dialect of the southwest of Brabant in the second half of the fourteenth century;
• a bifolium kept in The Hague (siglum: H, after its discoverer J.W. Holtrop), c. 130 lines, copied in the dialect of the southeast of Limburg in the fourth quarter of the fourteenth century;

• two leaves kept in Namur (siglum: N), c. one hundred lines, copied in a Flemish dialect in the fourth quarter of the fourteenth century;

• two bifolia kept in Munich (siglum: G, after the discoverer G. Gött), c. 200 lines, copied in a Limburg dialect between c. 1375 and 1425;

• a bifolium kept in Brussels (siglum: Br), well over one hundred lines, copied in a dialect of the southeast of Limburg between c. 1375 and c. 1425;

In the Karlmeinet-compilation a complete Ripuarian version of Karel ende Elegast is found (siglum: K). Although the compilation was probably produced between 1320 and 1350, the copy dates from c. 1480 (Bastert, 2010, pp. 98-102).

We owe it to the printers that Karel ende Elegast has survived as a complete Middle Dutch text: in its versified form the text was printed several times (Besamusca, 1983, pp. 43-52; Duinhoven and van Thienen, 1990). Of the oldest surviving printed edition only a single page survives; it is kept in Cambridge (siglum: F). This book was printed by Gherardus Leempt in ’s Hertogenbosch (Brabant) between 1484 and 1488. The oldest (virtually) complete extant printed copy was produced in Delft between 1486 and 1488 (siglum: A). It is not known whether this incunabulum was printed by Jacob Jacobsz. van der Meer or by Christiaen Snellaert, as the printing type used was utilised by both printers. The only surviving copy is kept in the Royal Library in The Hague.
Three other printed editions may be dated around 1500. In Antwerp Govaert Bac printed *Karel ende Elegast* at least twice: between 1493 and some time after 1500 (siglum: B) and between 1496 and 1499 (siglum: C). The only copy of printed edition B is kept in Berlin; the unique copy C in Washington. In St. Peterburg a copy is kept of a printed edition produced after 1493 and probably after C (siglum: L).

All other known printed editions date from the sixteenth century: printed edition D from Antwerp, printed around 1530 by Adriaen van Berghen, Jan van Doesborch, or Jan Berntsz (conserved in Brussels); and printed edition E, produced in Antwerp between c. 1550 and 1608 by Jan van Ghelen (also conserved in Brussels).

### The tradition

Repeatedly the presence of fairy tale elements in the story has received comment. The figure of Elegast especially, who understands the language of the animals and knows how to put people to sleep by using magic, appears better suited to a fairy tale than to a *chanson de geste*. Moreover, stories about a king who, together with a magical helpmate, sets out in the night as a thief and discovers a conspiracy have been found in Finland, Greece, Russia, the Baltic states, Germany, and Bohemia. Such striking correspondences suggest that *Karel ende Elegast* originated in the world of the oral literature, and that it was the popularity of the *chansons de geste* that led to a new variant in which Charlemagne was the king and Elegast the thief (Varvaro, 1995, pp. 269-75). Unfortunately that original story has not survived.

Scholarly opinions as regards the origin of this new variant diverge. As an Old French original that may have served as an exemplar has not come down to us, it has been suggested that the poet of *Karel ende Elegast* composed an original work (Ramondt, 1917; Duinhoven, 1975-81). It is a likely supposition which has been accepted by a considerable number of scholars. However, caution needs to be exercised here as there are strong indications that at one time a French *chanson de geste* about
Charles as a thief did exist. References to this story are found in *Renaut de Montauban* (c. 1200), *Elie de Saint-Gilles* (late twelfth century) and *Restor du Paon* which dates from the early fourteenth century (Varvaro, 1995, pp. 262-65). The course of the narrative in the French text may be reconstructed by reference to a work from Old Norse literature. The *Karlamagnús saga*, a compilation of prose adaptations of Old French Charlemagne texts from the middle of the thirteenth century, begins with the story about the young Charles who, shortly after the death of his father Pippin, is told by an angel to go out stealing with a thief and subsequently discovers a conspiracy (Hieatt, 1975-80, vol. 1, pp. 54-102). In this story the thief is called Basin, a typical name for thieves that is also found elsewhere. It is Charles himself who discovers the conspiracy to kill him during his coronation. In the traitor Renfrei’s bedroom he eavesdrops, together with Basin, on a conversation and catches the blood of Renfrei’s protesting wife, who is hit on the nose by her husband.

The narrative in the *Karlamagnús saga* is strongly reminiscent of *Karel ende Elegast*. Does this mean that the Middle Dutch poet knew the now lost *Chanson de Basin*? In that case it is highly likely that he adapted the Old French text in a creative manner, for example by giving the thief a different role and a different name and by setting the scene not in Charles’s youth but at a time when he is a mighty king and emperor (Janssens, 1988, pp. 1-88; de Ruiter, 2005).

There is no certainty as to the time of *Karel ende Elegast*’s date of composition. Although some scholars regard the work as a very early representative of the genre and assume that the text was written even before 1200, according to the communis opinio the Middle Dutch *Karel ende Elegast* is a thirteenth-century text (van Dijk and Finet-van der Schaaf, 1994, p. 1). On the basis of the versifaction used in *Karel ende Elegast*, the linguist Evert van den Berg dates the work somewhat more accurately. He has shown that the text consists of sentences which are on average quite short; more specifically, they extend over two lines of verse, while verse limits and syntactic limits usually coincide. This style

*Olifant*
probably suggests that *Karel ende Elegast* originates from the first half of the thirteenth century (van den Berg, 1998, pp. 247-48).

On the basis of the dialect of the rhyme words it is usually assumed that the poet was a Fleming (van den Berg, 1985, p. 22). However, does this also imply that he worked in Flanders? As the career of the poet Jacob van Maerlant (c. 1230-1295) shows, this need by no means have been the case. After all, Jacob was a Fleming, but he lived for many years in Holland where he produced works for the aristocracy of the county of Holland (van Oostrom, 1996).

In the case of the *Karel ende Elegast* it has been suggested that the poet wrote his verse story for audiences and readers situated in Brabant. This hypothesis is based on a textual witness from Brabant. In his treatise *Der leken spiegel* ("The Layman’s Mirror"), written between 1325 and 1330, the Antwerp town clerk Jan van Boendale comments in the chapter "Hoe dichters dichten sullen ende wat si hantieren sullen" ("How poets should write and what they should be capable of") that many nonsensical tales about Charlemagne are current. Boendale records that Charles (in Dutch: Karel) is sometimes said to have been named after the place where he was conceived by a servant girl: on a cart (de Vries, 1844-48, Book III, Chap. 15, ll. 136-39). And, Boendale writes, in yet another story one might read that Charles went out stealing, which is denied vehemently by Boendale (ll. 133-35). It may safely be assumed that Boendale was referring to *Karel ende Elegast* here. If this is correct, the story was known in Brabant.

Limburg has also been suggested as the area where the Middle Dutch version of Charles’s nocturnal thieving adventure originated (van Oostrom, 2006, p. 239). Three out of the six extant fragments show characteristics of the Limburg dialect. And should it not be remembered that the story is set somewhere in Limburg around Charles’s *palt* Ingelheim on the Rhine and Eggeric’s fortress Eggermonde (Aigremont near Liège on the Meuse)? And that in Latin chronicles, written in the vicinity of Limburg (Duinhoven, 1975-81, vol. 2, pp. 25-26), songs (*carmina*) are mentioned about Charlemagne who was told by an angel to
go stealing and, when doing so, discovered a conspiracy? And is it not the case that the great king and emperor was buried at Aachen, the very place where the story of Karel and Elegast was incorporated into the Karlmeinet-compilation?

In view of the uncertainty as regards the communities for whom the poet of *Karel ende Elegast* worked, regrettably little can be said with any certainty about the cultural context in which the work functioned. It has been suggested that the story served as propaganda for the dukes of Brabant to support the claim that they descended from Charlemagne (van Dijk, 1987, 1105). Evert van den Berg, on the other hand, assumes a Flemish environment for *Karel ende Elegast*. He thinks it likely that the patron for the work lived within the sphere of the Flemish comital court; he argues that the text, if regarded as a plea for the existing social order, would have suited the perception of the world held at that court (van den Berg, 1998, pp. 248-49).

In the absence of new data it does not seem possible to substantiate assumptions about provenance and targeted social circles for *Karel ende Elegast* by convincing arguments.

**Artistic achievement**

The literary qualities of *Karel ende Elegast* are self-evident. We have here a story, told in a strikingly straightforward way, the attractive and occasionally amusing content of which has been shrewdly structured. Among the distinctive properties of the text, the plot’s build up of suspense should certainly also be mentioned (van Dijk, 1987, pp. 1100-01). When, at the beginning of the romance, the angel has delivered his message, the reader asks himself, as does Charles, what God, who ever desires what is good, may mean with this command to commit a sin, that is, to go out and steal something. As soon as this question has been answered by the discovery of the conspiracy (ll. 973-75), a new question presents itself: will Charles manage to escape the danger and how? The answer is given at the end of the story by the single combat between

*Olifant*
Eggeric and Elegast. In addition to these two main questions, the poet increases the tension by means of a range of questions about details that are always answered within a short space of time. A fine example is offered by Charles’s meeting with the unknown black knight in the forest. Charles’s fear that it is the devil he has encountered (ll. 285-88) creates a tension that is relieved as soon as it becomes clear that the black knight is none other than Elegast (l. 475).

The composition of the work is governed by its spatial structure. The narrative is set in just three places, which may be imagined as the three points of a triangle (van Dijk, 1987, p. 1101). They are separated by descriptions of the journeys that the protagonists make from one place to another. At the beginning of the romance Ingelheim is the location (ll. 3-165). Next, after a short ride (ll. 166-94), Charles finds himself in the forest (ll. 195-675), which he subsequently leaves with Elegast to ride to Eggermonde (ll. 676-93). After the events at Eggermonde (ll. 694-1045), Charles returns to his castle (ll. 1046-54). The final episode is set at Ingelheim again (ll. 1055-1401).

Each of the locations is the domain of one of the three main protagonists (van Dijk, 1987, pp. 1101-02). Charles resides at Ingelheim and has enfeoffed Eggeric with Eggermonde; Elegast, being a banned vassal, necessarily lives in the forest. This constellation gives the reader a clue as to the deeper meaning of the narrative. Clearly it can be regarded as the description of the relationship between a liege lord and his two vassals, one seemingly loyal and the other seemingly disloyal. Whereas the treacherous Eggeric enjoys the esteem of his lord, loyal Elegast has been renounced by him. It is God, who, as the supreme overlord, makes Charles, his loyal servant, understand that he has acted unwisely. By means of supernatural interference order has been restored at the end of the story: the loyal vassal regains the position he merits, the treacherous vassal the punishment he deserves. If viewed in this way, the story propagates the message that the social order benefits from a wise overlord and a loyal vassal (Claassens, 2002, pp. 7-8). On a more general level Karel ende Elegast teaches that God will be with us if we, like the
mighty king and emperor Charles, allow ourselves to be guided by him full of faith (ll. 1402-05).

**Edition, notes and translation**

Like earlier editions of the text that were accompanied by a translation into French (van Dijk and Finet-van der Schaaf, 1994) or German (Bastert, Besamusca, and Dauven-van Knippenberg, 2005), this edition of *Karel ende Elegast* is based on Incunabulum A (see also below, Editorial Principles). Following the edition of the text and its translation, explanatory notes have been provided for a limited number of lines, notably information about historical and fictional persons, facts and customs of a historical and/or cultural nature, references to quotations from the Bible, and allusions to other medieval works. We also discuss important emendations of the text and elucidate, if necessary, problems connected with the translation. In a few cases, an interpretative comment is made on a particular passage.

The English translation was made in close cooperation with the editors. It aims to provide readers with a line-by-line, yet easily readable rendition of the Middle Dutch text in modern English. Only in a few cases was it necessary to transpose lines; in those cases it never concerns more than two or three lines of the Middle Dutch text (see, for example, ll. 1122-24, 1187-88). Repetitions of vocabulary in Middle Dutch, a characteristic stylistic feature of the text, have been retained as much as possible in the translation. As the referential use of personal and possessive pronouns in the Middle Dutch text may sometimes lead to confusion, pronouns have on occasion been replaced by the name of the person concerned. Doublets (as, for example, “seide ende vraghede” ‘said and asked’) have usually been translated by a single verb. Other, more specific problems are discussed in the Notes.
Editorial principles

As the base for our edition of *Karel ende Elegast* the text as found in Incunabulum A has been used. The only surviving copy of this printed edition is kept in the Royal Library in The Hague, siglum 169 G 63. This base text was chosen as Incunabulum A contains the oldest (practically) complete extant redaction of *Karel ende Elegast*. In the left-hand margin of the edited text line numbers have been added; the right-hand margin contains references to the sequential signatures in the printed text.

This is a critical edition of *Karel ende Elegast*. This means that some of the readings found in the base text have been emended. It concerns the following adaptations:

1. In Incunabulum A the text of *Karel ende Elegast* has been structured by means of capital letters of two lines deep. In our edition this segmentation is indicated by means of indentation.

2. The use of *u/v/w* and *i/j* has been adapted to conform to modern conventions. The same applies to the use of capital letters. The punctuation as found in the Incunabulum A text of *Karel ende Elegast* (double points or semi-elevated points, all at the end of the line) has been adapted to present usage.

3. Abbreviations have been expanded without notice. In the Incunabulum A text of *Karel ende Elegast* abbreviations are sparse. The overline has been used by the printer for a nasal (*men, hem*) as well as for *de* (*ende*). A comma above a letter represents *er* (*verloren, souder*).

4. Words printed as compounds or as separate words are presented in the same way as in the Incunabulum A text. Incomprehension as a result of the unusual form of the word is obviated by the translation in modern English.
5. It has not been our aim to reconstruct the original *Karel ende Elegast*. Only in those places where the text of Incunabulum A is incomprehensible or contradicts other story elements have we emended the edited text. All such emendations are printed in italics. They are listed below; in a few cases explication has been added. Wherever necessary, the sources of the emendation are given in brackets. These sources are indicated by the conventional sigla, listed in the introduction to the description of the textual transmission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Edition</th>
<th>Incunabulum A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hoorter (Ge, M, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>hoort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>ten (Ge, M, D, E)</td>
<td>den</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Het</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>sine (Ge, M, K)</td>
<td>si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Ic</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>harentare (Ge, M, Br)</td>
<td>hare tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>et</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>sede (Ge, M, N, K, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>seden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>dede (Ge, M, N, K, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>den</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Doen</td>
<td>oen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>hadden si (N, K)</td>
<td>haddi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>ende ... naer (Ge, N, K)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>avontueren (K, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>avontuer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>verdreven</td>
<td>verdreven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>hi was (K, B, C)</td>
<td>was hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>veerde (K, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>werde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>Mit</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>hi (K, B, C, D, E)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ende (K, D, E)</td>
<td>en</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Olifant*
According to Charles’s reaction in lines 486-89 it is here that Elegast gives his name rather than in line 501 as is stated in Incunabulum A.
The use of direct speech in Incunabulum A does not fit the story line.
This is a necessary addition, although not based on any of the other redactions.

Bayvier  Baynier
u (G, K)  ons
duchten (Ge, C, D)  duchhen
voort (Ge)  –
wouden (Ge, B, C, D, E)  woude
men (D, E)  –
Dies (Ge, D, E)  Dat
dat ... op (Ge)  die mi op dorste
Waer (K, B, E)  Voor
dit (Ge, K, B, C, D, E)  –
Dat (Ge, K)  –
 nadat ... bereiden (Ge, K)  –
over (Ge)  ende
dit (Ge, K)  –
desen  desn
date (Ge, K, B, C, D, E)  en
dat (Ge, K, C, D, E)  daer
Without this addition, based on Ge, the passage in Incunabulum A is incomprehensible.

This line, which seems to be an addition in Incunabulum A to repair a corrupt passage, is redundant as a result of the addition of lines 1230-48.

This is a necessary addition, although not based on any of the other redactions.

Two-thirds of leaf D6 has been ripped off, resulting in loss of text on the recto side. For the addition D has been used (to avoid the triple rhyme in B and C).

Olifant
Dutch Edition

1 Fraeye historie ende al waer
macht ic u tellen, hoorter naer.
Het was op enen avontstont
dat Karel slapen begonde

5 t'Engelem op den Rijn.
Dlant was alle gader sijn.
Hi was keyser ende coninc mede.
Hoort hier wonder ende waerhede!
Wat den coninc daer ghevel,
dat weten noch die menige wel.

10 t'Engehelem al daer hi lach
ende waende op den anderen dach
crone draghen ende houden hof
om te meerderen sinen lof.

15 Daer die coninc lach ende sliep,
een heilich engel aen hem riep,
so dat die coninc ontbrac
biden woerden die dengel sprac
ende seyde: “Staet op, edel man.

20 Doet haestelic u cleeder an,
wapent u ende vaert stelen,
God die hiet mi u bevelen,
die in hemelrike is here,
of ghi verliest lijf ende eere.

25 En steeldi in deser nacht niet,
so is u evel gheschiet.
Ghi sulter omme sterven
ende uwes levens derven
eer emmermeer scheit dit hof.

30 Nu verwacht u daer of,
vaert stelen of ghi wilt.
Neemt uwen speere ende uwen schilt,
wapent u, sit op u paert
haestelic ende niet en spaert.”

35    Dit verhoorde die coninc.
Het docht hem een vreemde dinc,
want hi daer niemant en sach,
wat dat roopen bedieden mach.
Hi waendet slapende hebben gehoort
ende hilt hem niet an dat woert.
Dengel die van Gode quam,

40 sprac ten coninc als die was gram:
“Staet op, Karel, ende vaert stelen,
God hiet my u bevelen
ende ontbiedet u te voren,
anders hebdi u lijf verloren.”
Met dien woerde sweech hi.

45 Ende die coninc riep “Ay mi,”
als die seere was vereent.

50 “Wat ist dat dit wonder meent?
Ist alfs ghedroch dat mi quelt
ende dit grote wonder telt?
Ay, hemelsche drochtijn,
wat node soude mij sijn

telesten? Ic ben so rike.
En is man in aertrijcke,
weder coninc noch graven,  A3r
die so rije sijn van haven,
sine moeten mi sijn onderdaen

55 ende te minen diensten staen.
Mijn lant is so groot,
men vint nyewers sijns ghenoot.
Dlant is algader mijn

Olifant
tot Colene opten Rijn
ende tot Romen voort,
alst den keyser toe behoort.

\textit{Ic} ben here, mijn wijf is vrouwe,
oest totter wilder Denouwe
ende west totter wilder see.

Nochtans heb ic goets veel meer:
Galissien en Spandien lant,
dat ic selve wan mitter hant,
ende ic die heydene verdreef,
dat mi tlant alleene bleef.

Wat node soude mi sijn dan
te stelen ellendich man?
Waer om ontbiedet mi dit God?
Node brekic sijn ghebot -
wistic dat hijt mi ontbode.

En mochs niet gelhoven node
dat mi God die lachter onste
dat ic te stelen begonste.”
Daer hi lach in dit ghepeyns,
\textit{harentare}, weder ende gheyns,

so vaecte hi een luttelkijn,
so datti looc die oghen sijn.

Doe seide dingel van te voren:
\textquote{\textit{Wildi Gods ghebot verhoren,}}
heer coninc, so sidi ontdaen.

Het sel u an u leven gaen.”
Dengel vanden paradise
sprac: \textquote{\textit{Coninc, doet als die wise,}}
vaert stelen ende wert dief.
Al hebdijs nu groot ongerief,

\textquote{\textit{Het sal u namaels wesen lief.”}}

\textit{Met deser talen voer dengel dan}
ende Karel hem tseynen began vanden wonder dat hi hoorde:
“Gods ghebot, sine woerde, en wil ic niet laten achter.
Ic sel dief wesen al ist lachter, al soudic hanghen bider kelen. Nochtan haddic liever vele dat mi God name ghemeene dat ic van hem houde te leene, beyde borch ende lant, sonder mijns ridders ghewant, ende ic mi moeste gheneeren mitten schilden ende metten speere, als een die niet en heeft ende op die aventure leeft. Dat ware mijn wille bet dan ic ghevanghen ben int net ende ic nu moet stelen varen A4r sonder eenich sparen.
Varen stelen oft God verwercken, nu so moetti mi gestercken. Ic woude ic ware uuter sale sonder nieumar ende tale, ende mi waer ghescost opten Rijn seven borghen van steenen fijn. Wat sel ic segghen van oneeren den ridderen ende den heeren die hier liggen in die sale?
Wat sal wesen mine tale dat ic in deser duyster nacht alleene, sonder yemants cracht, moet varen in een lant dat mi is vremde ende onbecant?”

Olifant
Mit deser talen ghinc hem gereyden
die coninc Karel ende cleyden
mit sinen dieren gewaden,
asls die te stelen was beraden.
Het was altoes sine *sede*
datmen sine wapene *dede*
ten bedde daer hi lach.
Het waren die beste die ye man sach.
Als hi aldus ghwapent was,
ghinc hi doer dat palas.
Daer en was slot noch dore so goet,
noch poerte diene wederstoet; sine waren tegen hem ontdaen.
Daer hi wilde, mocht hi gaen.
Daer en was niemant dien sach,
want dat volc algader lach
in vasten slape, als God woude.
Dat dedi al door des conincs houde.
Sine hulpe was hem bereet.
Als hi die borch brugghe leet,
ghinc die coninc mit liste
totten stalle, al daer hi wiste
sijn ors ende sijn ghesmiden.
Sonder eenich langher beyden
hi sadelet ende satter boven
opt ors, datmen mochte loven.

*Doen* hi ter poorten ghereden quam,
sach hi daer ende vernam
den wachter ende den poortiere,
die luttel wisten dat hoer heere
so na hem was mitten schilde.
Si sliepen vaste, alst God wilde.
Die coninc beette ende ontdoet
die poorte die besloten stoot
ende leyde sijn ors uut
sonder niemare ende gheluyt.
Doen sat hij in sijn ghereyde,
die coninc Karel, ende seyde:
“God, also ghewaerlijcke
als ghi quaemt in aertrike
ende wort sone ende vader
om ons te verlossen alle gader
dat Adam hadde verloren
ende dat na hem wert gheboren:
ghi liet u aenden cruce slaen
doen u die joden hadden ghevaen;
si staken u met eenen speere;
si sloegen u, dies hadden si geere.
Dese bitterlike doot
ontfincdi, here, door onsen noot
ende braect die helle daer naer.
Also waerlic alst was waer
ende ghi, here, Lasaruse
daer hi lach in sine cluse
verwecket, heere, vander doot
ende vanden steenen maket broot
ende vanden water wijn,
so moeti in mijn gheleyde sijn
in desen duemsteren nacht
ende verbaert aen mij u cracht.
Oetmoedich God ende vader,
aen u keer ic mi alle gader.”
Hi was in vele gedochten
waer hi best henen varen mochte,
daer hi stelens soude beghinnen.
Doe quam hi in een wout binnen,
Karel den edelen man,
dat niet verre stont van daen.
Doen hi quam gereden daer,
die mane scheen seer claer.

200 Die sterren lichten aenden trone.
Dweder was claer ende scone.
Dus peynsde die coninc:
“Ic was ghewone voer alle dinck
dieve te hatene daer iese wiste,
die den lieden mit liste
hoer goet stelen ende roven.
Nu mach ik hem wel gheloven,
die leven bider *avontueren*.
Si weten wel dat si verbueren

210 lijf ende goet, machmense vaen.
Men doetse hangen ende thooft of slaen,
of sterven arger doot.
Horen anxté is dicke groot.
Nemmermer en ghevalt mi dat,
dat ic man doer cleynen scat
sterven doe in al mijn leven.
Ic hebbe Elegast *verdreven*
om cleyné sake uut minen lande,
die dicke set sijn lijf te pande

220 om tgoet daer hi bi leeft.
Ic wane hi dicke sorghe heeft.
Hi en heeft lant noch leen,
noch ander toeverlaet geen,
dan hi mit stelen can bejaghen.

225 Daer op moet hi hem ontdraghen.
Ic nam hem tlant des *hi was* heere, *A6r*
dat mach hem nu wel rouwen seere,
beide borch ende lant.

26.2
Des was ic herde onbekant,
want hi hadde in sine scaren
die met hem onthouden waren,
ridders, serianten een ghetal,
die ic heb onterft al,
beyde van lande ende van goede.

Nu volghen si hem al doer armoede.
Ic en laetse niewers gedueren.
Diese onthilde, ic daden verbueren
beyde borch ende leen.
Hi en hevet toeverlaet gheen.

Hi moet hem al onthouden
in wildernissen ende in wouden
ende moet allee ne bejaghen
daer si hem alle op ondraghen.
Mer so vele isser an:

hi en steelt gheenen armen man,
die bi sijnre pinen leeft.
Dat pelgrim ofte coepman heeft,
laet hi hem gebrueken wel,
mer hi en versekert nyemant el.

Bisscoppen ende canoniken,
abden ende moniken,
deken ende papen,
daer hise can betrapen,
comen si in sijnre veerde,

hi neemt hem mulen ende peerde
ende steectse uut haren ghereyde,
dat si vallen op die heyde,
ende neemt hem mit sijnre cracht
al dat si daer hebben bracht:
silver, cleeder, facelment.

Dus bejaecht hi hem ontrent,
daer hi die rike lieden weet.
Hy neemt hem haren scat ghereet,
beyde silver ende gout.

265 Sinen list is menichfout.
Nyemant en cannen ghevaen.
Nochtan heefter om ghedaen
menich man sine cracht.
Ic woudic nu in deser nacht

270 zijn gheselle mochte wesen.
Ay, heere God, helpt mi tot desen!”

Mit deser talen voer hi voort,
die coninc, ende heeft verhoort
hoe een ridder quam ghevaren

275 inder selver ghebaren
als die riden wil verholen,
met wapenen swart als colen.
Swart was helm ende schilt,
die hi aenden hals hilt.

280 Sinen halsberch mochtmen loven.
Swart was den wapenroc daer boven.
Swart was dors daer hi op sat
ende quam enen sonderlingen pat
dwers riden doer den woude.

285 Alsen die coninc ghemoeten soude,
segende hi hem ende was in vare
ende waende dat die duvel ware,
om dat hi was so swart al.
Den riken God hi hem beval.

290 Hi pensde in sine moeet:
“Ghevalt mi quaet ofte goet,
en vlie te nacht doer desen.
Ic sel der avonturen genesen.
Nochtan weet ic te voren wel:
tis die duvel ende niemant el.
Waer hi van Gods alven yet,
hi en ware so swart niet.
Tis al swart, peert ende man,
al dat icker aen gemerken can.

Ic bidde Gode dat hi waket,
ic duchte dat mi toren naket,
dat dese mi niet en scende.”

Ende als hi bet quam ghehende,
seghende hi hem ende was in vare
ende waende dat die duvel ware.

Ende die swarten ridder heeft vernomen
den coninc teghen hem comen.

“Dese is verdoelt hier in
ende hevet sinen wech verloren.
Ic mach dat aen hem verhoren.
Hi salder laten die wapen sijn,
die die beste sijn in schine
die ic in seven jaren sach.

Si verlichten als den dach
van steenen ende goude.
Wanen quam hi inden woude?
Ten was noyt arm man
die sulcke wapen droech an

ende sulc ors hadde bescreden,
so stere ende van scone leden.”

Doen si quamen te gemoeten,
leden si al sonder groeten.
Deen besach den anderen wel,
mer si en seyden niet el.

Als hi den coninck was leden,
diet swart ors had bescreden,
hilt hi stille ende dochte wye die ander wesen mochte:

330  “Waer om dat hi aldus lijt ende sijnre talen aldus vermijt datti mi niet en groete doen hi mi ghemoete ende om gheen dinc en vraghet?

335  Ic wane dat hi quaet jaghet. Waer ic seker van dien dat hi quame om verspien, datti mi ofte mine

A8r

340  brenghen wilde in pine teghen den coninc, die ic ontrade, hi en lede te nacht sonder scade. Wat node soude hi jaghen achter bosschen ende haghen, ofti mi niet en sochte?

345  Biden heere die mi ghwrochte, hine ontrijt mi te nacht. Ic sel proeven sine cracht. Ic willen spreken ende kennen. Hy mach sulc sijn, ic sel winnen

350  sijn ors ende dat hi hevet an ende doen met lachter keeren dan. Hi es hier comen als een domme.” Met dien werp hi sijn ors omme ende volchde den coninc naer.

355  Doen hien achterhaelde daer riep hi lude: “Ridder, ontbeyt! Waer na ist dat ghi rijt? Ic wil weten wat ghi soect ende jaecht ende roect, eer ghi mi ontrijt van hier,

26.2
al waerdi noch so fier
ende so diere uwer tale.
Berechtes mi, so doedi wale.
Ic wil weten wie ghi sijt

365 Ende waer ghi vaert op dese tijt
ende hoe dat u vader hiet.
En machs u verlaten niet.”

Doen antwoerde die coninc:


“Ghi vraget mi so menich dinc,
en wistu hoe berechten.
Ic heb liever dat wi vechten
dan ict u seide bi bedwanghe.
So haddic gheleeft veel te langhen,
dat mi een man dwinghen soude
van dinghen die ic niet en woude
berechten, ten ware mi lief.
Coemter mi goet af of miskief,
wy sullen desen strijt nu scheyen
deend becorten tusschen ons beyden.”

380 Des conincs schilt was verdect.
Hi en wildes niet voeren ontdeect,
om teyken datter aene stoet.
Hi en wilde niet dat men waer vroet
dat hi ware die coninck.

385 Si worpen omme met deser dinc
haer orssen sterce ende snel.
Si waren beyde ghewapent wel;
hare speeren waren sterce.
Si versaemden in een perc

390 mit sulcken nide onder hem tween
dat dorssen boghen over haer been.
Manlic vingen si ten swaerde
als die vechtens begaerde.

Olifant
Si vochten een langhe wile,
datmen gaen mochte een mile.
Die swerte was sterc ende snel
ende sine consten waren fel,
so dat die coninc was in vare
ende waende dat die duvel ware.

Hi sloech den swarten opten schilt
dien hi manlic voor hem hilt,
dat hi in tween stucken vloech,
oft ware een linden loof.
Die swarte sloech den coninc weder.

Die swerde ghingen op ende neder,
opten helme, op die maelgien,
datter menich moeste faelgien.
Daer en was halsberch gheen soe goet,
daer en dranc dore dat bloet
doer die maelgien uuter huyt.
Daer was van slaghen groot ghelu yt.
Die spaenderen vanden scilde daer vloghen.
Die helmen op hoer hooft, die boghen
ende ontfingen scarde ende vlegghen,
so scaerp waren der swaerden eggen.

Die coninc pensde in sinen moet:
“Dese is te wapene goet.
Sal ic liden mijns namen,
ic soutsi mi eewelic scamen.

Nemmermeer en gecreech ic eere.”
Doe sloech hi eenen slach so seere
opten swarten die voor hem hilt,
that hien nalic hadde ghevelt
ende vanden ors tumelen dede.

Tusschen hem beyden en was gene vrede.
Ende die swarte sloech opten heere
ende sloech enen slach so seere
opten helm dat hi booch
derd tswaert in twee stucken vloech,
so anxtelic was die slach.
Als dat die swarte sach,
datti sijn swaert hadde verloren:
“Tfy dat ic ye was gheboren,”
pensde hi in sinen moet.
“Dat ick leve, waer toe ist goet?
En hadde noyt gheval,
noch nemmermeer en sal.
Waer mede sal ic mi verweeren?
En prise mijn lijf niet twee peeren,
want ic ben ydelre hande.”
Doe docht den coninc scande
op eenen te slane die voor hem helt.
Doe hi sach liggen tswaert op velt
in twee stucken ghebroken,
pensdi: “En is niet ghewroken
die eenen wille slaen of deeren
die hem niet en can gheweeren.”
Dus hilden si stille int wout.
Haer ghepeyns was menichvout,
deen wie dander wesen mochte.
“Byden heere die mi ghwrochte,”
sprac Karel, die coninc,
“ghi en berecht mi een dinc,
heer ridder, des ic u vraghe,
ghi hebt gheleeft al u daghe:
hoe ghi hiet of wie ghi sijt.
Ende laet ons corten desen strijt.
Mach ic met eeren liden,
ic sal u henen laten riden,
als ic uwe name weet.”

Die swarte sprac: “Ic ben bereet, in dien dat ghi mi maket vroet wat nootsaken dat u doet dat ghi hier quaemt te nacht ende wiens toren dat ghi wacht.”

Doe seyde Karel, die edel man: “Segt mi tierst, ic segh u dan wat ic hier soecke ende jaghe. En derf niet riden bi daghe.

Ten is sonder nootsake niet dat ghi mi dus ghewapent siet. Ic sel u seggen hoet coemt, als ghi mi uwen name noemt.” “Dies sijt seker ende vast, heere, ic het Elegast.”

Dat sprac die ridder herde saen: “Ten is mi ten besten niet vergaen. Ic heb goet ende lant verloren, dat ic hadde hier te voren, bi onghevalle, als menich doet. Soudict u al maken vroet hoe mine saken comen sijn, eer ic u geseyde den fijn het soude u dunken veel te lane.

Mijn gheluc is so cranc.” Als dit die coninc verstoet, was hi blider in sinen moet dant hadde al ghewest sijn tgoet dat vloyt opten Rijn.

Hi seide: “Ridder, eyst u bequame, ghi hebt mi geseit uwen name, nu segt mi hoe ghi u gheneert.
By al dat God hevet weert
ende bi hem selven te voeren,

495 van mi en hebdi gheenen toren.
Ic sal u so vele berechten,
vraechdijs mi sonder vechten
ende sonder evelen moet,
in dien dat ghi mi maket vroet.”

“Nu sijts seker ende vast,
heere,” antworde Elegast,
“en wil u niet helen:
daer ic bi leve, moet ic stelen.
Mer so vele isser an,

505 en steels geenen armen man,
die bi sijnre pine leeft.
Dat pelgrim ofte coopman heeft,
dies laet ic hem ghebruken wel,
mer ic en verseker niemant el.

510 Sint dat ic was gheboren
ende ic mijn goet had verloren,
daer ic bi soude leven,
ende mi die coninc had verdreven,
Karel, uut minen lande,

515 ic salt segghen, al ist scande,
so heb ic mi onthouden
in wildernissen ende in wouden.
Daer si twalef bi leven,
moeten rike luden gheven,

520 bisscoppen ende canoniken,
abden ende moniken,
deken ene ende papen.
Daer icse can betrapen,
ic neme haer goet met liste.

525 En weet so vast geen kiste,
weet icker goet in,
ic brent in mijn gewin
ende onder mine ghesellen.
Wat soudicker meer of tellen?

530 Minen list is menichvout.
Mine gesellen sijn int wout
ende ic voer uut om aventure
ende heb vonden enen sueren,
want ic heb mijn swaert verloren.  

535 En coeser gheen have voren
ende ict weder hadde gheheel.
Der slaghen heb ic ooc een deel,
meer dan ic ye ghewan
op eenen nacht van eenen man.

540 Nu segt mi, ridder, hoe ghi heet
ende die ghene die u veet.
Is hi van sulker machte
dat ghi riden moet bi nachte?
En condise niet ghematen,
die ghene die u haten?
Ghi sijt te wapene so goet.”

Die coninc pensde in sinen moet:
“God heeft mijn bede ghehoort.
Nu moetti mi beraden voort.

550 Dit is die man die ic begheerde
boven alle die leven op daerde
mede te varen op desen nacht.
God heeft mi te poente bracht.
Nu moet ic liegen door den noot.”

555 “Biden heere die mi gheboot, “
sprac die coninc tot Elegast,
“aen mi hebdi gheleyde vast,
ghestade vrient ende vrede.
Ic sel u seggen mine sede.

560 Wat helpt vrienden verholen?
Ic heb so vele goets gestolen, waer ic mitter helft ghevaen, men liet mi waerlic niet ontgaen om mijn ghewichte van goude root.

565 Mar het dede mi den noot. Noot breket alle strijt.”
“Nu segghet mi, ridder, wie ghi sijt.”
“Ick sel u segghen minen name, ist u wille ende bequame.

570 Ic ben ghehieten Adelbrecht. Ic pleghe te stelen over recht in kerken ende in cluysen ende in alle Gods husen, Ic stele alderhande saken, en late niemant met ghemaken.

575 Den rijcken ende den armen, ic en achte niet op hoer carmen. En weet gheenen armen man daer ic mijn ghewin weet an, en naem hem liever sine have dan ic hem die mine gave. Aldus heb ic mi ontdraghen ende hebbe gheleyt nauwe lagen om eenen scat die ic weet.

580 Mi souts wesen wel ghereet eer emmermeer morghen vroe, haddicker goede hulpe toe, also vele als ics rochte ende mijn peert dragen mochte.

585 Die scat is qualic ghewonnen. God en souts ons niet vergonnen

82 Bart Besamusca, Hans van Dijk, and Thea Summerfield

Olifant
al hadden wijs een deel.
*Die scat leyt in een casteel
daer mi die eyghenoot is cont.*

595 Al haddens wijs vijf hondert pont,
ten mochten niet deeren
dat wi vanden sinen teeren.
*Wille wir omme doen onse macht
dende gesellen zijn te nacht?*

600 Dat wi connen bejaghen
*onthier ende het sal daghen,*
*dat sel ic deylen ende ghi sult kiesen.*
Dies achter gaet, moet riesen.”

Elegast seide: “Waer leit den scat,
lieve gheselle, segt mi dat,
ende in wat stede?
Het mach daer sijn, ic vare mede.
Ic wils wesen vroet,
ear ic u volghe eenen voet.”

610 Doen seide Karel, die edel man:
“Ic selt u berechten dan.
Die coninc heeft so groot een scat,
het mochten luttel deeren dat
van sinen scatte, daer hi leghet.”

615 Als die coninc seghet
datti hem selven stelen wille,
Elegast en sweech niet stille.
Hi seyde: “Dat moet mi God verbieden!
Si en leven niet diet mi rieden
B5r

dat ic den coninc dade scade!
Al heeft hi mi bi quaden rade
mijn goet ghenomen ende verdreven,
ic sel hem al mijn leven
goet vrient sijn na mijn macht.
In sijn scade en coem ic te nacht,  
want hi is gerechtich heere.  
Dade ic hem anders dan eere,  
ic mochs mi scamen voor Gode.  
Men mochs mi gheraden node.”

Als dit die coninc verstoet,  
was hi blide in sinen moet  
dat hem Elegast, die dief,  
goet gonste ende hadde lief.  
Hi pensde, mochti keeren

behouden sjijnder eeren,  
hi souden goets so vele geven,  
hi souder mit eeren sijn daech op leven  
sonder stelen ende roven.  
Des mocht men hem geloven!

Na dien gepense daer hi in was,  
vrachde hi Elegaste das,  
oft hien yewers wilde leyden  
daer si tgoet onder hem beyden  
mochten bejaghen op dien nacht.

Hi deder toe sijn beste cracht  
gheerne, ende sijn behindichede,  
woude hi hem laten varen mede.  
Elegast sede: “Ja ic, gerne.

En weet niet of gilt segt in scerne.

tHeggericx van Eggermonde,  
daer moghen wi stelen sonder sonde,  
die des conincs suster heeft.  
Het is scade dat hi leeft.  
Hi heeft den menighen verraden

ende ghebrocht in groter scaden.  
Ende ooc mede sinen heere  
soudi nemen lijf ende eere,
mocht na sinen wille gaen.
Dat heb ic wel verstaen.

660
Nochtan houti vanden coninc
herde menich scone dinc,
beyde borch ende leen.
Al en haddi toeverlaet anders geen,
het mochten luttel deeren
dat wi vanden sinen teeren.
Daer selen wi varen, ist u wille.”
Die coninc peynsde ende sweech al stille,
na dat daer ghescepen stoet,
dat daer ware stelen goet.

670
Al hadden sijn suster ghevangen,
si souden node laten hangen.
Dus droeghen si overeen
daer te varen onder hem tween
te stelen Eggerics scat.

675
Die coninc hem niet en vergat.

Si quamen ghereden op een velt
op haer orssen wel ghestelt.
Daer vonden si een ploech staen.
Die coninc beette neder saen
ende Elegast reet voren
daer si den wech hadden vercoren.
Die coninc nam tcouter in die hant,
dat hi aen die ploech vant.
Hi pensde in sinen moet:

680
“Dit is den ambocht goet.
Die graven wil in borghen,
hi moeter toe besorghen
sulcke dinc als hem bedorste.”
Doe sat hi op al sonder vorste
ende volchde Elegaste

26.2
na met sporen vaste,
die een luttel was voren.
Verstaet, so moechdi horen!
Doen si quamen voor die veste,

695
die de scoonste was ende die beste
die yewaert stoet opten Rijn,
Elegast sprac: “Hier wil ic sijn.
Nu siet,” seyti, “Adelbrecht,
wat dunct u ghedaen te recht?

700
Ic wil wercken bi uwen rade.
Mi ware leet, gheschiede u scade,
datmen mochte seggen dan:
‘Het quam al bi desen man.’”

Die coninc antwoerde na dier talen:

705
“En quam noyt binnen der salen,
och inden hove, daer ic weet.
Het soude mi wesen ongereet
soudicker nu binnen gaen.
An u selven moet al staen.”

710
Elegast seide: “Tis mi lief.
Sidi een behendich dief,
dat sal ic cortelic verstaen.
Laet ons een gat maken gaen
inder muer ter goeder ure,

715
daer wi moghen crupen dore.”
Dit loveden si beyde wel.
Si bonden hoer orssen snel
ende ghingen ten muere sonder gheluyt.
Elegast trec een yser uut,

720
daer hi den muer mit soude picken.
Doe began die coninc te trekken
tcouter voert vander ploech.
Doe stont Elegast ende loech,

Olifant
“Constic tsmeesters huus gheraken,
ic dede maken sulc een.
Dus ghedaen en sach ic noyt gheen
beseghen tot sulcken sticken,
daermen mueren mey doer soude picken.”

Die coninc sprac: “Het mach wel sijn.
Ic quam ghevaren opten Rijn,
dies is leden die derde dach,
dat ic voer om mijn bejach,
daer moestic mijn yser laten.

Het ontviel mi opter straten,
daermen mi volchde achter.
En dorste niet keeren door den lachter.
Dus was ic mijns yser ane
ende dit nam ic bider mane,
daer ict vant aen een ploech.”

Elegast sprac: “Het is goet genoech,
mogen wi daer te punte in geraken.
Hier na doet een ander maken.”
Si lieten die tale, si maecten tgat.

Elegast voechdent bat
dat hi daer toe dede sine leden
dant den coninc Karel dede.
Al was hi groot ende stere,
hi en conste niet sulc werc.

Doen si tgat vander muere
hadden bracht al duere
ende si daer in souden gaen,
Elegast sprac: “Ghi sult ontaen
hier buten, dat ic u sel brenghen.”

Hi en woudes niet ghehenghen
dat die coninc binnen quame;
so sere ontsach hi hem der onvramen.
Hi en dochten geen behendich dief.
Nochtan woudi, leet ende lief,
met hem deylen sijn ghewin.

Die coninc bleef buten, Elegast ginc in.
Elegast conste behendichede,
die hi proefde ter menigher stede,
die was minlic ende mate.

Hi trac een cruyt uut eenen vate
ende deet binnen sinen monde.
Die sulc een hadde, hi verstonde
wat hanen craeyen ende honden bilen.

Doen verstont hi ter wilen
an enen hane, an enen hont,
ende seide dat die coninc stont
buten den hove in haer Latijn.
Elegast sprac: “Hoe mach dit sijn?
Soude die coninc sijn hier voren?

Ic duchte dat mi naket toren.
Ic ben verraden na mijn ghedochte,
oft mi verleyt alfs gedrochte.”

Elegast ginc daer hi den coninc liet,
ter stede daer hi van hem schiet,
ende seide hem wat hi hadde verstaen,
hem en bedrogge sijn waen,
beyde aen hanen ende aen honden,
diet in haer Latijn vonden
dat die coninc ware daer.

Mer hi en wiste niet hoe naer!
Doen seyde Karel, die edel man:
“Wie hevet u gheseit dan?
Wat soude die coninc hier doen?
Soudi gheloven an een hoen,
Karel ende Elegast

790 oft dat een hont bast,
so en is u ghelove niet vast.
Mi denct dat ghi mi saghen telt.
Waer toe ist goet dat ghi mi quelt?
U ghelove en is niet vast.”

795 “Nu hoort,” sprac Elegast.
Hi stac den coninc inden mont
een cruyt dat daer voor hem stont
ende seyde: “Nu suldi verstaen
so ic te voren hebbe ghedaen.”

800 Echter craeyde die hane ende sede,
also als hi te voren dede,
dat die coninc ware daer.
Elegast seide: “Hoorter naer,
gheselle, wat die hane craeyt.

805 Ic wilde mijn kele winde waeyt,
is die coninc niet hier bi.”
Doe seide Karel: “Het fy,
gheselle, sidi vervaert?
Ic waende dat ghi coender waert.

810 Doet dat ghi seyt, laet ons gaen,
al soudemen ons heden vaen.”
Elegast sprac: “Ic sals beghinnen.
Laet sien, wat soldi daer an winnen.”
Elegast eyste sijn cruyt weder.

815 Die coninc sochte op ende neder,
weder ende voort in sinen monde,
mer hi verlost ter stonde.
Hi en mochs vinden niet.
Die coninc sprac: “Wats mi gesciet?

820 Mi dunct, ic heb mijn cruut verloren
dat ic had hier te voren
beloken tusschen minen tanden.
Bi mijnre *wet*, dat mach mi anden."

*Doe* loech Elegast echt

825 ende seide: "Steeldi over recht?
Hoe coemt datmen u niet en vaet,
telken als ghi stelen gaet?
Dat ghi leeft, is wonder groot,
ghi en waert langhe wile doot.

830 Gheselle," seit hi onverholen,
"ic heb u cruyt ghestolen.
Ghi en weet van stelen niet *een* hare."
Die coninc peynsde: "Ghi segt ware."
Mittien lieten si die tale.

835 Gode beval hi al te male
dat hien moeste borghen.
Een deel was hi in sorghen.
Nochtans consti beheyndichede,
daer hi alle die ghene mede

840 slapen dede vanden sale
ende ontsloot dan al te male
sloten diemen met slotelen sloot,
waren si cleyne ofte groot,
ende ghinc ten scatte, daer hi lach,
eert yemant hoorde of sach
ende haelde ende brochte
also vele als hem goet dochte.
Doen wilde Karel van danen riden.
Elegast die hiet hem ontbeiden.

850 Hi soude om eenen sadel gaen,
die in die camer ware ghestaen
daer Eggeric ende sijn wijf in lach,
die scoonste die noyt man sach.
Hi en leeft niet die u gheseyde
die verweentheid vanden gereyde.

_Dit_ was den coninc onbequame.

Hi hadde eer ontbeert der vrame vanden sadel ende tghewin, dan Elegast keerde weder in. Als Elegast quam ten ghereyde daer ic heden eer of seide, doe hijt waende dragen dan, die scellen die daer hingen an gaven sulc enen clanc datter Eggeric bi ontspranc uut sinen slape ende seyde:

“Wie is daer te minen ghereyde?” Hi woude trecken sijn sweert, haddet die vrouwe niet gheweert, die hem seide ende vraghede wat ware dat hi jaghede;

often alven wilden verleiden. _Si nam tswaert_ al mitter schezeyden ende seyde: “Daer en mach niemant in _comen_ sijn, meer noch min. Tis ander dice dat u deert.”

_Si_ bemaenden ende beswert dat hi haer seide sijn ghedochte, waer bi dat hi niet en mochter slapen binnen drien nachten,
dat si conste ghetuichten,
890 noch eten binnen drien daghen.
Dit began si hem te vraghen.
Vrouwen list is menichvout,
sijn si jonc, sijn si out.
So langhe lach si hem an
895 dat hi haer te saeghen began
dat hi des conincs doot hadde ghesworen.
Ende die te doen waren vercoren,
souden cortelike comen.
Hi ghincse haer bi namen nomen,
900 hoe si hieten, wie si waren,
die den coninc wilden daren.
   Dit hoorde al Elegast
ende hielt in therte vast.
Hi pensde hi sout brengen voort,
905 die ondaet ende die valsche moort.
   Alse dit die vrouwe hoerde,
   si antworde na den woerde
   ende seide: “Mi waer liever vele
datmen u hinge bider kele
910 dan ic dat ghedoghen soude!”
Ende Eggeric sloech soe houde
die vrouwe voor nase ende mont
dat haer tbloet ter stont
ter nase ende te moonde uut brac.
915 Si rechte haer op ende stac
haer aenschijn over thedde boom.
Elegast wasser bi ende nams goem
ende croper liselike toe.
In sinen rechten hantscooe
920 ontfinc hi dbloet vander vrouwen,
om dat hijt wilde scouwen

Olifant
diet den coninc te voren brochte,
dat hider hem voor wachten mochte.
Doe seyde Elegast een ghebede,
daar hi mede slapen dede
_Eggeric ende die vrouwe;
ende sprac sijn woert mit trouwe,
dat si beyde sliepen vast.
Doen ontstal hem Elegast
sinen sadel ende sijn swaert,
dat hi lief hadde ende weert,
ende maecte hem sijnre vaerde
buten den hove tsinen paerde,
totten coninc, die seere verdochte.
Om al tgoet dat Elegast brochte,
hine hadder niet langher gestaen,
hadt na hem moghen gaen,
so seere was hi vererret.
Hi vraechde waer hi had gemerret.
Elegast seide: “En mochs niet,
bi al dat God leven liet.
Tis wonder dat mi thert niet en breect
vanden rouwe die daer in steect.
_Sone breeckt si nemmermeer
door rouwe noch door seer,
dies ben ic seker te voren;
si heeft so groten toren.
Gheselle,” seiti, “dits tghereyde
daer ic u heden of seide.
Dit hout. Ic sal gaen
Eggeric sijn hoofd of slaen
of doden met eenen knive,
daer hi leyt bi sinen wive.
Dat en lietic om al dat gout
dat die warelt inne hout.
Ic sel weder keeren schiere.”
Doen *bemaenden* die coninc diere
dat hi hem seide door wat sake
hi ware so seere tongemake.

“En sidi niet al gesont
ende hebt wel X hondert pont
ende tgereyde daer ghi om ghinct?”
“Ay heer, het is al ander dinc
dat mijnre herten deert
ende minen droeven sin verteert.
Ic heb minen heer verloren.
Ic hadde toeverlaet te voren
te comene te minen goede
ende te verwinnen mijn armoede.

Mijn heer sel sterven morgen vroe.
Ic mach u seggen hoe:
Eggeric heeft sinen doot gesworen.”
Doen wiste Karel wel te voren
dat hem God te stelen ontboot

om te bescudden vander doot.
Hi danckes oetmoedelike
Gode van hemelrike.

*Doe* antwoerde die coninc saen:
“Hoe so waendi dan tontgaen,
of ghien staect mit eenen knive,
daer hi leit bi sinen wive?
Thof selde verstornen al.
Ghi en had meer dan gheval,
ghi sout saen hebben vercoft
ende u lijf *ten* eynde brocht.
Soudi u worpen inden noot?
Sterft die coninc, so is hi doot.
Wat talen souder of wesen?
Ghi sout des rouwen ghenesen."

990 Dit seidi doer behendichede,
on Elegast te proeven mede.
Nochtan wasser een ander an,
hi hadde gherne gheweest van dan.
Dlanghe letten was hem leet.

995 Elegast antwoerde ghereet:
"Bi al dat God leven liet,
waerdi mijn gheselle niet,
ten bleve te nacht onghewroken
dat ghi hebt so na ghesproken

den coninc Karel, minen heere,
die waerdich is alder eere.
Biden heere die mi ghewrochte,
ic sel vorderen mijn gedochte
ende wreken minen toren

1000 -- tconines doot is ghesworen --
eer ic vander buerch scheide,
gaet mi te lieve of te leyde."
Die coninc peynsde: "Dits mijn vrient,
al heb ics qualic op hem verdient.

1005 Ic salt beteren, mach ic leven.
Hi sal verwinnen al sijn sneven."
"Gheselle, ic sel u wisen bet
hoe ghien brenghen selt int net,
Eggericke van Eggermonde.

1010 Rijt inder morghenstonde
	C6r
totten coninc daer ghien vint.
Vertelt hem ende ontbint
die ondaet ende die moort.
Als hi sal horen u woert,

1020 ghi selter bi versoenen al.
U loon en sel niet wesen smal.
Ghi moghet ridden bi sijnre siden
alle u daghe ende u tiden,
of ghi sijn broeder waert,
so langhe als u God ghespaert.”

Elegast seyde: “Wats mijns gheschiet,
en come voor den coninc niet.
Die coninc is te mi so gram,
omo dat ic hem eens nam
van sinen scatten sulken scaederen
dat cume gedroech twee paerden.
Ic en come niet daer hi mi saghe,
noch bi nachte noch bi daghe.
Dats pine teghen spoet.”

“Wil ic u segghen wat ghi doet?”
sprac Karel, die edel man.
“Rijt wech in uwen dan,
daer ghi liet u ghesellen.
_Nu hoort wat ic u sal_ vertellen:

Voert voor u ons bejach
tot morghen opten dach.
Dan deylen wi mit ghemake.
Ic sal bode sijn vander sake
totten coninc, daer icken weet.

Sloech men doot, het waer mi leet.”
Mit deser talen dat si schieden.
Elegast voer tot sinen lieden,
daer hise liet inden _dan_.
Ende Karel, die edel man,
voer tYnghelem in sijn casteel.
Sijn herte was sonder riveel,
datten die gheen wilde verraden
die hem soude staen in staden,

Olifant
soude recht na rechte gaen.

1055 Noch stont die poorte ontdaen
de ene liesen sliepen alle.
Hi bant dors opten stalle
de ene ginct ter cameren daer hi lach,
eert yemant hoorde ofte sach.

1060 Hi hadde sijn wapen af ghedaen,
*doe* was die wachter gestaen
ter hoger tinnen *ende* blies den dach,
diemen scone verbaren sach.
Doen wert in wake menich man,

1065 dien God den slaep seynde an
doe die coninc stelen voer.
Dat was hem een scone boer!
Doe seynde Karel die coninc
*eenen* sinen camerlinc

1070 om sinen verholen raet
ende seide hoet met hem staet: D1r
dat hi wiste wel te voren
dat sinen doot ware ghesworen
van Eggheric van Eggermonde,

1075 die comen sal in corter stonde
met alder macht vanden lande
om hem te doene scande,
als te nemen sijn leven;
dat si hem goeden raet geven,

1080 dat hi behoude sijn eere
ende *si* daer toe haren gherechten heere.
Doe seide die hertoge van Bayvier:
“Laetse comen, si vinden ons hier.
Het sel den menighen kosten tleven.

1085 Ic sal *u* goeden raet gheven.
Hier is menich stere Fransoys

26.2
uut Vrancrijc ende Baloy,  
menich ridder, menich seriant,  
die mit u quamen hier int lant.

1090 Si selen hem wapenen alte male  
ende trekken in die hoghe sale.  
Ende ghi selve, heer coninc,  
sult ghwapent staen inden rinc.  
Die u daer slaen wil of deeren,

1095 wi sellen wel weeren.  
Dbloet sel hem lopen ter sporen  
ende Eggheric als te voren.”  
Desen raet dochten wesen goet.  
Si wapenden hem metter spoet,  
D1v

1100 alle die daertoe dochten  
ende wapenen dragen mochten,  
beyde cleyn ende groot.  
Si duchten swaren wederstoot.  
Eggeric was van groter macht

1105 ende alle die hadden cracht  
weder ende voort op ten Rijn  
wouden in sijnre hulpen sijn.  
Men dede ter poorten LX man,  
gewapent ende halsberch an.

1110 Doen Eggerics lieden quamen gevaren  
in tconincs hove met scaren,  
tondde men die poorte wide  
ende lietse alle door liden.  
Doen si quamen int hof,

1115 dedemen hoer cleeder of.  
Men vant naest haren live  
witte halsberghe, scarpe knive.  
Die ondaet was openbaer.  
Men leydse gevangen daer,
altemet dat si quamen,
tot datmense had benamen.

Eggeric quam gevaren
al mitter lester scaren,
daer alle die moort aene stoet.

Doe hi gebeet was te voet
ende waende gaen in die sale,
slootmen die poorten te male.

Men vincken als men dander dede.

Men vant gewapent sine leden
bat dan yemant die daer was.

Men leyde hem in dat pallas
voor den coninc sinen heere.

Dies mochti hem wel scamen seere.

Die coninc leide hem vele te voren.

Hi en woudes een niet horen.

Hi lochende der ondaet
ende seide: “Heer coninc, hebt beteren raet.
Dadi mi lachter onverdient,
ghi hadt verloren menigen vrient.

Ghi en waret ooc niet so coene,
noch geen uwer baroene,

\[dat ghijt mi dorste op staden\]

dat ic u hadde verraden.

Waer yemant dies begaerde,

di daet hem lochenen mitten swaerde
of mitten oerde van minen spere.

Nu come voort dies begheere.”

Als dit die coninc verstoet,
was hi blide in sinen moet

ende seynde om Elegaste
boden na boden vaste,
daer hi was inden woude,
ende ontboot hem herde houde
ende vergaf hem alle misdaet.

1155 In dien dat hi den camp bestaet
tegen Eggericke,
hi souden maken rike.
Die boden en lieten niet,
si deden dat hem die coninc hiet.

1160 Si voeren tot dien stonden
daer si Elegast vonden.
Dat hem die coninc beval,
seiden si Elegast al,
die seere verblide vanden woerde,
als hi die nieumare hoorde.
Hi liet leggen sijn ghereyde
sonder eenich langher beyden,
dat hi Eggericke stal.
*Dat* hiet hi ende beval:

1170 *nadat hem die coninc woude geleiden,*
*soudi Eggeric lachter bereiden.*
Hi swoer bi sijnre kerstenhede,
waer hem God sculdich een bede,
hi en begeerde ander goet
dan hi den camp vechten moet
*over* sijn gherechten heere
om te behouden sijn eere.
Si voeren wech metter spoet.
Doen Elegast, die ridder goet,

1180 quam in des conincs sale,
-- nu moechdi horen sine tale --
hi seide: “God hoede dit ghesinde,
den coninc ende dat ic hier vinde.
Mer Eggeric en groetic niet.

1185 God, die hem crucen liet

*Olifant*
om onsen wille ende vele vermach, 
die late mi sien op desen dach, 
ende Maria, die maghet soete, 
datmen te winde hanghen moete

1190 Eggheric van Eggermonde. 
Mochte God doen sonde, 
so heeft hi sonde ghedaen, 
dat hi der galgen is ontgaen, 
om dat hi swoer mijns heeren doot 
sonder bedwanc oft noot.”

Als dit Elegast hadde gesproken, 
Eggeric hadt gerne ghewroken, 
mer hi en hads die macht niet. 
Daer was menich die hem liet.

1200 Die coninc antwoerde daer of: 
“Sijt willecomme in mijn hof. 
Nu vermaen ic u bi alle dien 
dies God van sonden plien, 
dat ghi segt ende brenct voort 
die ondaet ende die moort 
van Eggeric die ghi hier siet. 
Dat en laet door niemant niet, 
ghi en segt waer ende niet el 
hoe die aventuer gevel.”

1210 Elegast seide: “Gerne, 
mi en staets niet tontbeerne. 
Ic ben seker wel te voren 
dat Eggeric heeft u doot gesworen. 
Ic hoordet hem seggen daer hi lach 
ende gaf sinen wive enen slach, 
dat sijt dorste anden, 
dat haer bloet ten tanden, 
ter nase ende ter mont uut brac.
Si rechte haer op ende stac
1220 haer aenschijn over tbedde boom.
Ic was daer ende nams goom
ende croper liseliken toe.
In minen rechteren hanscoe
ontfinc ic tbloet vander vrouwen.”
1225 Doen liet hi den coninc scouwen
ende hem allen diet wilden sien.
“Dorste Eggeric lochenen van dien,
ic dade hem lien der ondaet
eer die sonne onder gaet
1230 tusschen ons II in enen campe,
ten scinde nod ende rampe.”
Eggeric antworde mettien:
“Dien lachter en moete niet gescien
in minen live, no dat meskief,
1235 dat ic jegen enen verbannen dief
minen hals soude aventuren.
Het en soude oec niet geburen
camp te vechten jegen mi.”
Ende Elegast anwoerde: “Twi,
1240 al en benic hertoghe als ghi sijt
ende wasic ballinc enen tijt,
dat mi die coninc mijn goet nam
omdat hi was te miwaert gram,
in was noit mordenare.
1245 Ende hebbic ghenomen harentaere
den riken lieden van haren goede,
dat dede mi noyt ende ermoede.
Maer ghi een mordenare sijt,
en moget ontseggen camp noch strijt
1250 ter warelt gheenen man
diet u wille staden an.”

Olifant
Die coninc antwoerde daer na:
“Bi mine wet, ghi seght waer.
Soudicken voeren na recht,
1255 ic deden slepen eenen knecht
ende hangen bider kelen.”
Doen ghinct met Eggeric uuten spele
ende peynsde in sinen moet,
na dat ghescepen stoet:  D4r
1260 “Beter is camp dan hals ontween.”
Int hof en was man gheen
diet spreken dorste siere vromen.
Dus wert den camp an ghenomen
een luttel nader noenen.
1265 Die coninc ontboot zijn beroene
dat si ghewapent te velde waren.
Hi en wildes camps niet ontbaren.
Hi hiet den camp ghereyden
ende bad God dat hi moest scheiden
den camp ende tghevechte
na reden ende na rechte.
1270 Die coninc trooste Elegast wel
ende seide, verghinge wel zijn spel
ende behilti sijn leven,
1275 hi souden sijnder suster geven,
die Eggeric hadde te voren,
die sijn doot had ghesworen.

Men sloech coerden opt velt,
daer menich man ghewapent helt,
1280 een luttel voor vespertijt.
Elegast quam eerst int crijt,
on datti aen legger was.
Hi beette neder int gras
ende viel in knien ghebede
ende seide: “God, doer u goedertierenhede, 
ic come u heden te ghenaden 
van allen minen misdaden 
die mi ye ghevel. 
Ic kenne mine misdaet wel.
1290 Oetmoedich God, diet vermach, 
en wreect niet op desen dach 
an mi mine sonden.
Doer u heylighe vijf wonden, 
die ghi ontfinct doer ons misdaet,
1295 hebt heden mijns raet, 
so dat ic niet en sterve, 
noch inden camp en bederve. 
Ist dat mi die sonden niet en slaen, 
so waen ic wel van hier ontgaen.
1300 Volmaect God, door u doghet, 
ic biddu dat ghi mi verhoghet. 
Ende Maria, soete vrouwe, 
ic wil u dienen mit rechter trouwe. 
Ende nemmermeer voort an 
1305 en werdic rover, noch *scaecman* 
in wildernissen ende in wouden, 
mach ic hier mijn lijf behouden.” 
Doen hi eynde sijn ghebede, 
seghende hi alle sine lede.
1310 Scone mit sjinder rechter hant 
seghende hi sijn ridders ghewant 
ende seghende dors dat voor hem stoet 
ende bat Gode dor oetmoet 
dat hem draghen moest met eeren 
1315 ende uuten campe laten keeren. 
Met dat hi die tale seyde, 
sat hi op in sijn ghereyde

*Olfant*
ende hinc den schilt ter luchter side.

Nu naket eenen groten stride.

1320

Hi nam in die hant dat speere.
Ende Eggeric quam met groeter geere
ten crite wert ghewapent wel,
die seere was int herte fel.
Hi en seide noch en dede
te Gode waert gheene bede.
Hi sloech met sporen vaste
ende reet op Elegaste
ende Elegast op hem weder,
die Eggeric stac doer tleder
vander curien mit gewelt,
datti neder viel opt velt
vanden orsse op daerde.
Eggheric vinc ten swaerde,
dat hi trac uuter scheyde,
ende seide: “Nu sal ic u doden beyde,
Elegast, u ende u paert,
ten si dat ghi ter vaert
neder beet op die moude.
So mach u ors dlijf behouden.

1330

Hets so sterck ende so groot,
het waer scade, sloech ict doot.
Die menighe soudt beclaghen.
Moechdi u lijf ontdragen,
so behoudi u paert.”

1335

Elegast sprac ter vaert:
“En ware dat ghi te voet sijt,
ic soude corten desen strijt.
En wil u niet te voete slaen.
Ic wil prijs an u begaen,

1340

al souts mi sijn te wors.
Nu sit weder op u ors.
Laet ons vechten ridder wise.
Ic heb liever datmen mi prise
dan ic u sloeghe bi rampe,
al soudic bliven inden campe.”

Dit was den coninc Karel leet,
dat Elegast so lange meert
ende Eggericke spaert.
Eggeric vinc sijn ors ter vaert.

Doe Elegast die tale seide,
sat hi op in sijn ghereyde.
Doen verhief daer een strijt
tot langhe na vespertijt.
En quam niemant daer, hi sach

noyt op eenen dach
so fellen strijt tusschen hem tween
als si hadden al in een.
Dats loghene ne geen!
Doe seide die coninc van Vrancrike:

“God, also gewaerlike
als ghi hier moghende sijt,
so moetti corten desen strijt
ende dit lange ghevechte
na redene ende na rechte.”

Elegast hadde een swaert,
het was sijns gewichte waert
van ghemale goude root
eleke man te sijnre noot.
Die coninc hadt hem gegeven.

Elegast die hevet verheven
ende sloech eenen slach so seere
bi der hulpren van onsen heere
ende doer coninck Karels bede

Olifant
Karel ende Elegast

die hi over Elegast dede,
1385 alsoe dat hi hem beroofde
dat meeste deel van sinen hoofde
dere veel doot uuten ghereyde.
Dit aensach die coninck ende seyde:
“Ghewarich God, ghi sijt hier boven.
1390 Met allen rechte moet ick u wel loven,
die mi also menighe eere doet.
Wie dat u dient, hi is wijs ende vroet.
Ghi mocht wel helpen ende beraden
die aen di soecken ghenaden.”
1395 Nu wil ick corten dese dinck.
Men sleyte Eggherick ende hinck
hem ende alle die verraders mede.
Daer en halp scat noch bede.
Elegast bleef inder eere.
1400 Dies dancti onsen heere.
Die coninc gaf hem Eggerics wijf.
Si waren tsamen al haer lijf.
Dus moet God al onse saken
voor onse doot te goede maken.
1405 Des gonne ons die hemelsche vader.
Nu segghet “Amen” alle gader.
Translation

1  A true and truthful history
   I can tell you, listen to it.
   It happened one evening
   as Charles was dropping off to sleep
5  at Ingelheim on the Rhine.
   The land was his entirely.
   He was both emperor and king.
   Hear now of wonder and truth!
   What happened to the king there,
10  many still remember it well.
   It was at Ingelheim where he resided
   and planned to wear his crown
   the following day and to hold court
   to increase his renown.
15  As the king lay there and slept,
   a holy angel called out to him,
   so that the king woke up
   at the sound of the words that the angel spoke.
   He said: “Rise, noble man.
20  Quickly put on your clothes,
   arm yourself and go out stealing
   —I was told to charge you with this by God
   who is Lord in heaven—
   or else you will lose your life and honour.
25  If you do not go out stealing tonight,
   evil shall befall you.
   You shall die as a result
   and lose your life
   even before this court disperses.
30  Now take heed of this,
go out stealing if you please.
Take your lance and your shield,
arm yourself, mount your horse
without delay and do not tarry.”

The king heard this.
It struck him as very strange
—as he did not see anyone—
and he wondered what the voice might signify.
He assumed he had heard it in his sleep
and took no notice of the words.
The angel who came from God,
said angrily to the king:
“Rise, Charles, and go out stealing
—I was told to charge you with this by God
who insists that you set out—
or else you will lose your life.”

Having said this, he was silent.
And the king cried: ‘Woe me”,
as he was very upset.
“What is the meaning of this wonder?
Is it a delusion that plagues me
and tells me of this great wonder?
Ah, Lord in heaven,
what need would I have
to go out stealing? I am so rich.
There is no man on earth,
neither king nor count,
who possesses so much wealth
or he is subject to me
and obliged to be in my service.
My land is so extensive,
nowhere can its equal be found.
The land is mine altogether
from Cologne on the Rhine
to as far as Rome
that belongs to the emperor.
    I am lord, my wife lady,
in the east to the wild Danube,
in the west to the wild sea.
Yet I have even more possessions:
Galicia and the land of Spain,
that I conquered myself by force of arms,
when I chased the heathen from it,
so that the whole land is now mine.
What need would I have then
to steal like a wretched man?
Why does God order me to do this?
I am loath to break his command,
if only I felt sure that he really ordered
I can hardly believe
that God would cause me the disgrace
of having to start stealing.”
As he lay turning this over in his mind,
here and there, back and forth,
he dozed off for a little while,
so that his eyes fell shut.
Then the same angel said as before:
“If you intend to disregard God’s command,
lord king, you are lost.
It will cost you your life.”
The angel from paradise
said: “King, be sensible,
go out stealing and become a thief.
Although it now causes you great misery,
later you will be glad of it.”
After these words the angel disappeared

Olifant
and Charles made the sign of the cross because of the wonder he had heard.

“God’s command, his words, I do not wish to disobey. I’ll be a thief, even though it is shameful, even if I’d end up hanging by the neck. Nevertheless I would much rather that God took from me all that I hold in fief from him, both castle and land, except for my armour, and that I should have to fend for myself with my shield and lance, like someone who owns nothing and lives from hand to mouth. I would prefer that to finding myself caught in the net of having to go stealing without any delay. Go out stealing or brave God’s ire, well, let’s hope He’ll give me strength.

I wish I could get through the hall without attracting notice, even if it would cost me seven castles along the Rhine of high quality stone. What am I to say about the dishonour to the knights and lords who sleep here in the hall? How am I to explain that I, in this dark night, all alone, without help from anyone, have to venture into a region that is unfamiliar and unknown to me?”
Having spoken these words, King Charles began to make preparations and dressed in his costly garments, like someone intending to go stealing. It was always his custom to have his weapons laid by the bed in which he slept. They were the best anyone had ever seen. When he had armed himself in this way, he walked through the palace.

There was neither lock nor door, however solid, nor even a gate to bar his way, he found them all open before him. Where he wanted to go, he might. There was no one who saw him, for all the people lay in a deep sleep, as God intended. This He did entirely because of the king’s loyalty. Charles was assured of His assistance. When he had crossed the castle’s bridge, the king went cautiously to the stables, where he knew he would find his horse and his tack. Without waiting any longer he saddled and mounted his horse that might well be admired.

When he came riding up to the gate, he spotted there the guard and the gate-keeper, who had little notion that their lord, carrying his shield, was so close upon them. They were fast asleep, as God intended. The king dismounted and undid Olifant
the gate that was locked
and led his horse out

165 without any noise or sound.
Then he mounted his horse,
King Charles, and said:
“God, as truly
as you came on earth

170 and became son and father
to redeem us all
who had become tainted by Adam’s sin
and who were born after him:
you allowed yourself to be nailed to the cross

175 when the Jews had captured you;
they pierced your side with a spear;
they struck you, which they enjoyed doing.
This bitter death
was yours, lord, because of our sorrow

180 and then you opened the gates of Hell.
This is as true as it is true
that you, Lord, raised Lazarus
from the dead where he lay
in his tomb,

185 and from stones made bread
and from water wine
and therefore now be my guide
in this dark night
and reveal to me your power.

190 Merciful God and father,
to you I surrender myself entirely.”
He was at a loss
where he might best go
to start his stealing.

195 Then he entered a wood,
Charles the noble man,  
that was not far away.  
When he came riding there,  
the moon was shining very brightly.

The stars twinkled in the sky.  
The weather was clear and fine.  

The king thought as follows:  
“I was accustomed more than anything else to hate thieves wherever I came across them,  
who, with their tricks,  
steal people’s goods and rob them.  
Now I feel I understand them,  
the people who lead precarious lives.  
They know very well that they’ll forfeit life and property, if they are caught.  
They are made to hang and have their heads cut off, or die even worse deaths.  
They often live in great fear.  
Never in my life shall it happen again that I, for a minor offence,  
will cause someone to lose his life.  
I have exiled Elegast for a minor matter from my land, who often risks his life  
to scrape together a livelihood.  
I imagine that he is often beset by cares.  
He neither owns nor holds any land, nor has he any means of subsistence other than what he can make by stealing.  
That is how he has to make a living.  
I took from him the land of which he was lord—that must rue him sorely now—both castle and land.
That was most unwise of me, 

230 because he had among his followers, 
who depended on him, 
knaves and squires in great numbers, 
all of whom I have deprived 
both of land and of property.

235 Now they all follow him from sheer poverty. 
I never give them any rest anywhere. 
Whoever sheltered them, I caused him to lose both castle and fief. 
There is nowhere that he can go.

240 He has to keep entirely 
to the wilderness and the woods 
and all by himself has to find the means of keeping them all going. 
But so much is true:

245 he never steals from a poor man who lives by his labour. 
What the pilgrim or merchant possesses he allows them to keep for their use, but he does not spare anyone else.

250 Bishops and canons, 
abbots and monks, 
deacons and priests, 
wherever he can waylay them when they cross his path,

255 he robs them of mules and horses and pushes them out of their saddles, 
so that they fall to the ground, and he robs them with force of all they have with them:

260 silver, clothes, costly vessels. 
In this way he meets his needs
wherever he knows of rich people.
He does not hesitate to rob them of their treasures,
both silver and gold.

His tricks are many and various.
No one can catch him.
Nevertheless efforts have been made
by many with all their power.
I now wish that tonight

I might be his companion.
Ah God, help me with this.”

After these words he rode on,
the king, and he heard
that a knight approached

who acted like someone
who wished to ride in secret,
with armour as black as coal.
Black were his helmet and his shield
that he had hanging round his neck.

His coat of mail deserved to be praised.
Black was his surcoat over it.
Black was the horse he sat on
and he followed an untrodden path,
cutting straight across the wood.

As the king was about to meet him,
he crossed himself and was afraid
and thought it must be the devil,
as everything about him was so black.
He prayed the Almighty God for help.

He turned this over in his mind:
“Whether evil befalls me or good,
tonight I shall not flee for this man.
I’ll face this danger.
Nevertheless I know full well:

Olifant
it is the devil and no one else.
If he were on God’s side,
he would not be so black.
Everything is black, horse and man,
whichever way I look.

I pray God that he may protect me
—I fear that great distress awaits me—
so that this man does me no harm.”
And when he rode up closer,
he crossed himself and was afraid
and thought it must be the devil.
And the black knight spotted
the king coming towards him.
Then he thought to himself:
“This man is wandering around here
and has lost his way.
His appearance makes that clear to me.
He will lose his weapons here
that appear to be the best
that I saw in seven years.
They shine as brightly as the day
with precious stones and gold.
Where is he from, to end up in this wood?
There never was a poor man
carrying such weapons
and riding such a horse,
so strong and so well built.”

When they met each other,
they passed by without any greeting.
The one man watched the other carefully,
but they did not speak a single word.
When he had passed the king,
the man riding the black horse
reigned it in and he wondered
who the other man might be:

330 “Why does he ride on like this,
without speaking a single word
and why did he not greet me
when he met me
and why did he not ask any questions?

335 I reckon that he has evil intentions.
If I knew for certain
that he had come as a spy,
and that making trouble for me and mine
with the king, whom I fear,
340 is what he intends,
he would not pass the night without injury.
What else would he seek
behind bushes and hedges,
unless he is looking for me?

345 By the Lord who created me,
he will not escape me tonight.
I shall test his prowess.
I shall speak to him and learn his name.
Whoever he is, I shall win
350 his horse and all he is wearing
and make him turn round, humiliated.
He is a fool to come here.”
Then he turned his horse
and followed after the king.

355 When he had caught up with him
he shouted: “Knight, wait!
Where are you heading?
I wish to know what you seek
and what you’re after
360 before you ride on from here,
however proud you are
and sparing with your words.
Tell me, you would do right.
I wish to know who you are
and where at this hour you are going
and what your father is called.
You are obliged to tell me.”

Then the king answered:
“You ask so many questions,
I do not know how to answer you.
I would prefer fighting
to telling you this under duress.
I have lived far too long
to allow anyone to force me
to talk about things
I do not wish to explain, unless I feel like it.
Whatever befalls me, whether good or bad,
we shall now end this argument
and decide it between ourselves.”

The king’s shield was covered.
He did not wish to carry it uncovered,
because of the coat of arms painted on it.
He did not want people to be aware
that he was the king.

After this they turned
their horses strong and fast.
They were both well armed;
their lances were strong.
They ran against each other in an open space
with such fury between them
that the horses’ legs buckled.
They both drew their swords
like men spoiling for a fight.
They fought for as long
as it would take to walk a mile.
The black knight was strong and swift
and his skills were terrifying
so that the king was afraid
and thought he might be the devil.

He hit the black knight on the shield
that he bravely held before him,
so that it broke into two pieces,
as if it were a leaf from a linden tree.
The black knight returned the king’s blow.

The swords went up and down,
on the helmets, on the chainmail,
which caused many rings to break.
There was not a coat of mail so strong
or blood from the skin seeped
out through the chainmail.
There was a great clamour from the blows.
The chips flew off the shields.
The helmets on their heads slipped
and were soon full of dents and cuts;
that is how sharp the edges of the swords were.

The king thought to himself:
“This is an accomplished swordsman.
If I have to reveal my name,
I would be ashamed forever.

Never again would I be honoured.”
Then he delivered such a heavy blow
upon the black knight in front of him,
that he nearly felled him
and made him tumble off his horse.

They did not spare each other.
And the black knight hit the lord

Olifant
and delivered such a terrible blow
on the helmet that it slid forwards
and the sword flew away in two pieces;
that is how terrifying that blow was.

When the black knight saw
that he had lost his sword:
“Woe me that I ever was born,”
he thought to himself.

“That I live, what’s the point?
I never had any luck,
and never shall have.
What shall I defend myself with?
I consider my life worth less than two pears,
for I stand here empty-handed.”

Then the king thought it a disgrace
to hit a man standing before him.
When he saw the sword lying on the ground,
broken into two pieces,
he thought: “Nothing is won
by him who wants to hit or harm
someone who cannot defend himself.”

And so they stopped fighting in the wood.
They racked their brains
about who the other might be.
“By the Lord who created me,”
said Charles the king,
“If you do not tell me the one thing,
sir knight, that I ask you,
your days are numbered:
what you are called and who you are.
And let us end this fight.
If I may proceed with honour,
I shall let you ride on
when I know your name.”
The black knight said: “I am willing, provided that you explain to me what made it necessary for you to come here tonight, and whose anger you fear.”

Then said Charles, the noble man: “You tell me first, then I will tell you what I seek here and hope to find. I dare not ride by day.

It is not without need that you see me fully armed like this. I shall tell you what brought it about, if you tell me your name.”

“Be assured and without doubt about this, lord, my name is Elegast.”

Then the knight continued at once: “It did not go well with me. I have lost the property and land that I had in the past, due to misfortune, as happens to many. If I were to explain to you what happened to my affairs, before I might have told you the details, you would think that it was taking far too long. Mine is a very miserable lot.”

When the king heard this he was happier in his heart than if all the goods had been his that are transported on the Rhine. He said: “Knight, when it pleases you, you have told me your name, now tell me how you make a living.
By all that God loves
and above all by God himself,
you need not fear my anger.
I shall tell you everything
if you ask me without fighting
and without evil intentions,
if you inform me of this.”

“Now be assured,
lord,” Elegast answered,
“I do not want to hide it from you:
what I live from, I must steal.
But this is certain,

I do not steal from a poor man,
who lives by his hard labour.
What the pilgrim or merchant possesses
I allow him to keep for his use,
but I do not spare anyone else.

Since that I was born
and had lost my property
from which I was meant to live,
and since the king banished me,
Charles, from my land,
—I will say it, even if it is shameful—,
since then I have kept myself
in wildemess and in woods.
What twelve people have to live from
has to be provided by rich people,
bishops and canons,
abbots and monks,
deacons and priests.
Wherever I can waylay them,
I use tricks to take their goods.

However solid the chest,
if I know there are valuables in it,
I can get hold of it
for myself and my friends.
What else shall I say about it?

530 My tricks are many and various.
My companions are in the wood
and I went out to try my luck
and I found nothing but misfortune,
for I have lost my sword.

535 Nothing would please me better
than having it in one piece again.
I have also had a fair share of blows,
more than I ever received before
in one night from one man.

540 Now tell me, knight, what is your name
and what is the name of your enemy.
Is he so powerful
that you must ride by night?
Are you no match for them

545 who hate you so?
You wield your weapons so well.”
The king thought to himself:
“God has granted my prayer.
Now he has to give me further counsel.

550 This is the man whom I wished
above anyone living on earth
to ride with me this very night.
God has sent him to me at the right moment.
Now I need to think up a lie.”

555 “By the lord who created me,”
said the king to Elegast,
“In me you find reliable protection,
a trusted friend and peace.
I shall tell you how I live.

560 What good is it to hide it from friends?
I have stolen so much property
that, if I had been caught with half of it,
they truly would not have let me go
for my weight in red gold.

565 But I did it from dire need.
Necessity breaks all rules.”
“Now tell me, knight, who you are.”
“I shall tell you my name,
if you like and it pleases you.

570 I am called Adelbrecht.
In truth, it is my habit to steal
in churches and in monasteries
and in all church buildings.
I steal all kinds of things,

575 and leave no one in peace.
The rich as well as the poor—
I take no heed of their laments.
If I know how I can profit
by some poor man,

580 I much prefer taking his property
to giving him mine.
This is how I have kept myself alive
and I have been lying in wait
because of a treasure I know of.

585 I could certainly
before early tomorrow morning,
—provided I had the right kind of help—
take as much of it as I wished
and as my horse could carry.

590 The treasure has been acquired unlawfully.
God would not hold it against us
if we had a part of it.
The treasure lies in a castle
where I know the lay of the land.

595 Even if we took five hundred pounds,
it would make no difference to the owner
that we took some of what is his.
Shall we make an effort
and be companions for tonight?

600 What we can lay our hands on
before the break of day,
I shall divide and you will have first choice.
Who turns this down, must be mad.”

Elegast said: “Where is the treasure,
dear friend, tell me,
and in what place?
Depending on where it is, I shall come along.
I shall want to be informed about it
before I move a foot to follow you.”

610 Then said Charles, the noble man:
“In that case I shall explain it to you.
The king has such a large treasure,
it will hardly do him any harm
if some of his treasure is taken away.”

615 When the king said
that he wanted to rob himself,
Elegast did not remain silent.
He said: “May God forbid me to do this!
No one alive has ever suggested
that I might harm the king!

620 Even though on false advice
he seized my property and banished me,
I shall be all my life
as good a friend to him as it is in my power.
I shall not do him any harm tonight, for he is lord by law. If I fell short of honouring him, I should be ashamed of myself before God. It would be very hard to persuade me.”

When the king heard this, he was pleased in his heart that Elegast, the thief, wished him well and loved him. He thought to himself that, if he should return with his honour in tact, he would give him so much property that he would all his life be able to live from it honourably without stealing or robbing. Of this one might be assured.

Following the thoughts that had occupied him, he asked Elegast if he could direct him to a place where the two of them might find some booty that same night. He would be pleased to give it his best powers as well as his skill, if Elegast would let him come along. Elegast said: “Certainly, with pleasure. I don’t know if you are speaking in jest.

At the place of Eggeric of Eggermonde, there we can steal without sinning; he has married the king’s sister. It is a pity that he is alive. He has betrayed many people and has brought great misery upon them. And also his own lord he would deprive of life and honour,
if he had his way.
That I have certainly heard.

660 All the same he holds of the king
many very fine things,
both castles and fiefs.
Even if he had no other sources of revenue,
it would do him little harm

665 if we took some of his property.
That’s where we’ll go, if it pleases you.”
The king thought silently to himself
that, if this was the case,
stealing there would be all right.

670 Even if his sister caught him in the act,
she would hardly have him hanged.
And so they agreed
to ride there together
in order to steal Eggeric’s treasure.

675 The king did not betray himself:
They arrived at a field
on their fine horses.
They saw a plough standing there.
The king quickly dismounted

680 and Elegast rode on
in the direction they had chosen.
The king took the ploughshare in his hand,
that he found attached to the plough.
He thought to himself:

685 “This is a good tool.
Anyone wishing to dig his way into castles
must take care to obtain
all that he needs for the job.”
Then he quickly mounted again

690 and followed Elegast
at full speed,
who was riding a little in front.
Listen and hear what happened!
When they arrived before the fortress,
which was the fairest and the best
found anywhere along the Rhine,
Elegast said: “This is where I want to be.
Now look,” he said, “Adelbrecht,
what do you think can best be done?
I shall act on your advice.
I would be sorry if you were harmed,
and that people would then say:
‘It was all this man’s fault.’”
The king answered after these words:
“I have never been in the hall,
nor in the courtyard, as far as I know.
It would lead to difficulties for me
if I were to enter it now.
It must be entirely your doing.”
Elegast said: “It makes no difference to me.
Whether you are a skilful thief
I shall find out before long.
Let us start making a hole
in the wall without delay,
that we may crawl through it.”
To this the two men agreed.
They quickly tethered their horses
and went to the wall without making any noise.
Elegast produced a crowbar
with which he could hack at the wall.
Then the king started to produce
the ploughshare from the plough.
Then Elegast burst out laughing
and asked where he had it made.

725 “If I could go to the master smith’s house,  
I would have him make me one just like that.  
I have never seen the like  
used for such a purpose  
as hacking through walls with it.”

730 The king said: “That may be so.  
I was riding along the Rhine  
—this is three days ago,  
when I was on the lookout for booty—  
when I had to leave my crowbar behind.

735 I dropped it in the road,  
while they were chasing me.  
Fearing dishonour, I did not dare turn back.  
That is how I lost my crowbar  
and I picked up this in the moonlight,  
where I found it on a plough.”

740 Elegast said: “It is good enough,  
it will serve to get us in there in good time.  
Have another made afterwards.”  
They stopped talking, they made the hole.

745 Elegast was more accustomed to using  
his limbs when applying himself to the work  
than King Charles.  
Even though the king was big and strong,  
he was not used to this kind of work.

750 When they had made  
the hole right through the wall  
and were about to crawl in through it,  
Elegast said: “You are to receive  
out here all that I shall bring to you.”

755 He was unwilling to allow  
the king to come inside;
that was how much he feared a disaster.
He did not think him a skilful thief.
All the same he meant, in good times and bad,
to share his winnings with him.
The king stayed outside, Elegast went in.
Elegast knew a magic trick,
that he had already used in many places;
it was harmless and simple.

He pulled a herb from a bag
and put it into his mouth.
Whoever had one of these, understood
what cocks crow and dogs bark.
Then he heard at once

a cock and a dog,
that said in their Latin
that the king was standing outside the courtyard.
Elegast said: “How can this be?
Could the king be near here?

I fear that great trouble is in store for me.
I have been betrayed, it seems to me,
or I am led astray by a delusion.”

Elegast went to where he had left the king,
back to the place where he had parted from him,
and told him what he had heard
—if his senses had not betrayed him—
both from cocks and dogs
that in their Latin had stated
that the king was to be found near there.

But he did not know how near!
Then said Charles, that noble man:
“Who has told you this then?
What would the king be doing here?
If you believe a chicken,
or what a dog barks,
you cannot be very confident.
I think you are telling me a tall story.
What is the good of distressing me?
You cannot be very confident.”

“Now listen,” said Elegast.
He put into the king’s mouth
a herb that grew before him
and said: “Now you will hear
what I heard earlier.”

Then the cock crowed again and said,
just as he had done earlier,
that the king was there.
Elegast said: “Listen,
friend, what the cock crows.

They may string me up
if the king is not around somewhere here.”
Then Charles said: “Fie,
friend, are you afraid?
I would have thought you braver than that.

Do what you said, let us go in,
even if they catch us today.”
Elegast said: “I will do that.
Let’s see what you may win there.”
Elegast asked for his herb back.

The king searched for it up and down,
and from one side to the other in his mouth,
but that very moment he lost it.
He could not find it.
The king said: “What has happened to me?

I fear that I have lost my herb
that I had earlier here
tight between my teeth.

Olifant
By my faith, that annoys me.”
Then Elegast laughed again
and said: “Are you really a thief?
How come you are not caught
every time you go out stealing?
It is a major miracle that you’re alive
and have not been dead a long while.

Friend,” he said openly,
“I have stolen your herb.
You don’t know the first thing about stealing.”
The king thought: “You speak the truth.”
Then they stopped talking.

Elegast prayed to God ardently
that He might protect him.
He was rather worried.
However, he knew a trick
by means of which he put to sleep
everyone in the hall
and unlocked all the locks
that were locked with keys,
whether they were small or large,
and he went to where the treasure was kept
before anyone heard or saw it,
and brought out
as much of it as he deemed right.
Then Charles wished to ride away from there.
Elegast told him to wait.

He wanted to fetch a saddle
that was standing in the chamber
where Eggeric and his wife lay,
the finest ever seen by man.
There is no one alive who can describe to you
the splendour of that saddle.
And also of the breast strap
there is enough to say in its praise.
A hundred large bells hang on it,
all of which are of red gold
and jingle when Eggeric rides.
“Friend, be so kind and wait.
I intend to steal his saddle from him,
even if I have to hang for it.”
This made the king uncomfortable.
He would sooner have dispensed with the acquisition
of the saddle and the booty
than have Elegast go back inside.
When Elegast reached the breast strap
that I mentioned just now,
and was going to carry it away,
the bells that hung on it
rang so loudly
that as a result Eggeric woke with a start
from his sleep and said:
“Who is there touching my tack?”
He would have drawn his sword,
if his wife had not stopped him,
who asked him
what it was that he was after;
whether evil spirits were bothering him.
She took the sword with the scabbard
and said: “No one can have
come in here, not in any way.
It is something else that troubles you.”
She begged and coaxed him
to tell her what was on his mind,
why he had not been able
to sleep for the last three nights,

Olifant
as she had noticed,

890 nor had eaten in three days.
That she began to ask him.
Women’s tricks are many and various,
whether they be young or old.
So long did she press him

895 that he began to tell her
that he had sworn the king’s death.
And those who had been chosen to do this
would shortly get together.
He began to list them by name,

900 what they were called, who they were,
who meant to harm the king.
    All this Elegast heard
and he kept it in his heart.
He intended to bring to light

905 the evil deed and the treacherous murder.
When the wife heard this,
she responded to these words
and said: “I would much rather
have them hang you

910 than allow such a deed!”
And Eggeric hit the woman straightaway
on her nose and mouth,
causing the blood to burst forth
at once from her nose and mouth.

915 She sat up and bent
her face over the edge of the bed.
Elegast was there and saw it
and softly crept nearer.
In his right glove

920 he caught the woman’s blood,
as he wanted to show it
to the person who would tell the king  
so that he might be on his guard.  
Then Elegast pronounced a magic formula  
925 by means of which he caused  
Eggeric and his wife to fall asleep  
and he said his words carefully  
so that both of them fell into a deep sleep.  
Then Elegast stole from him  
930 his saddle and his sword,  
which Eggeric loved and valued so much  
and made his way  
out of the courtyard to his horse  
and to the king, who was much annoyed.  
935 Not for all the spoils that Elegast brought  
would he have stood there any longer,  
if it had been up to him,  
that is how cross he was.  
He asked where he had been so long.  
940 Elegast said: “I could not help it,  
by all that God has created.  
It is a miracle that my heart does not break  
from the distress that it contains.  
If it does not break now,  
945 from sorrow and distress,  
it never will, I am sure of that;  
it is so greatly troubled.  
Friend,” he said, “this is the tack  
I told you of today.  
950 Take it. I shall go  
and strike off Eggeric’s head  
or kill him with a knife,  
where he lies next to his wife.  
I will not be stopped for all the gold
Karel ende Elegast

955 that is found in the world.  
I will soon be back.”
Then the king implored him  
to tell him what the reason was  
that he was so very troubled.

960 “Are you not quite unharmed  
and haven’t you at least a thousand pounds  
as well as the tack that you went for?”
“Ah lord, it is something quite different  
that oppresses my heart  
and preys on my miserable mind.
I have lost my lord.
Earlier I was confident  
that I might regain my property  
and overcome my poverty.

965 My lord will die tomorrow morning.  
I can tell you how:  
Eggeric has sworn to kill him.”
Then Charles realized  
that God had ordered him to steal  
to protect him from death.
He humbly thanked  
God in heaven.

970 Then the king answered at once:
“How do you propose to escape  
if you stab him with a knife  
where he lies next to his wife?  
The entire court will be in an uproar.
Unless you had more than good luck,  
you would soon pay dearly for it  
and would have brought an end to your life.
Do you want to expose yourself to such danger?  
If the king dies, he is dead.
What more is there to say about it?
You would get over your distress.”

He said this by way of a ruse,
to test Elegast with it.
However, there was something else:
he was keen to be away from there.
He found the long wait annoying.

Elegast answered at once:
“All that God gave life,
if you weren’t my friend,
it would not remain unavenged tonight
that you have spoken so ill
of King Charles, my lord,
who is worthy of all respect.
By the Lord who created me,
I shall carry out my intention
and avenge my anger
— the king’s death has been sworn—
before I leave this castle,
whatever may befall me, good or ill.”
The king thought: “This is my friend,
although I have hardly deserved it from him.

I will make amends, if I stay alive.
He will overcome all his misery.
“Friend, I shall recommend to you a better way
of how you may catch him in your net,
Eggerick of Eggermonde.

Ride tomorrow at dawn
to where you will find the king.
Tell him all and reveal
the wicked plan and the murder.
When he hears your story,
you will be reconciled as a result.
Your reward will not be small.
You will be allowed to ride by his side
all the days of your life,
as if you were his brother,
as long as God spares you.”

Elegast said: “Whatever happens to me,
I will not appear before the king.
The king is very angry with me,
because I once took from him
so much of his treasure
that two horses could hardly carry it.
I will not go where he can see me,
whether by night or by day.
It would be a waste of effort.”

“Shall I tell you what to do?”
said Charles, the noble man.
“Ride off to your hideaway,
where you left your companions behind.
Now listen to what I shall tell you:
Take our booty with you
until tomorrow.
Then we will share it at our leisure.
I shall be the messenger in this case
to where I know the king to be.
If they should kill him, I would be sorry.”

With these words they parted.
Elegast rode to his men,
where he had left them in their hideaway.
And Charles, the noble man,
rode to his castle at Ingelheim.
There was little joy in his heart
as the very person who intended to betray him
should stand by him,
if all was as it should be by rights.

1055 Still the gate was open
    and all the people slept.
    He tethered his horse in the stables
    and went back to his bedchamber,
    before anyone heard or saw him.

1060 He had taken off his armour,
    when the guard mounted the high rampart
    and sounded the new day
    which could be seen breaking.
    Then were awakened many of the men

1065 whom God had sent to sleep
    when the king went out stealing.
    That suited the king well!
    Then Charles the king sent
    one of his chamberlains

1070 to convene his secret council
    and announced what his situation was:
    that he knew for a fact
    that his death had been sworn
    by Eggeric of Eggermonde,

1075 who would arrive before long
    with all the lords of the land
    to cause him outrage
    and to take his life;
    they should counsel him wisely

1080 so that he might keep his honour
    as they would their rightful lord.

    Then said the duke of Bavaria:
    “Let them come, they’ll find us here.
    It will cost many of them their lives.

1085 I will give you sound advice.
    There are many strong Frenchmen here

Olifant
from France and Blois,
many knights, many squires,
who came with you into this country.

1090 They will all arm themselves
and assemble in the main hall.
And you yourself, lord king,
will stand, in your armour, in the middle.
Whoever intends to kill or harm you there,

1095 we shall fend off vigorously.
Their blood will run down to their spurs,
and Eggeric’s will run first.”
This advice he considered to be right.

They armed themselves with all speed,

1100 all those who were able
and were allowed to carry arms,
whether big men or small.
They feared heavy opposition.
Eggeric was very powerful

1105 and all who wielded power
up and down the Rhine
would come to his aid.
Sixty men were stationed at the gate,
armed and dressed in hauberks.

1110 When Eggeric’s men arrived
at the king’s court in groups,
they opened the gate wide
and let them all pass through.
When they entered the courtyard,

1115 they stripped them of their clothes.
On their bodies they found
shining hauberks, sharp knives.
The crime had been revealed.
Each group was taken captive there,
one by one as they came in,
until all had been taken.
With the last group
Eggeric made his appearance
who was the instigator of the murder.

When he had dismounted
and thought to go into the hall,
the gates were closed at once.
They fettered him, as they had the others.
They found him better armed
than any one present there.
They led him to the hall
before the king his lord.
He had every reason to be ashamed of it.
The king accused him of a great deal.

He would have nothing of it.
He denied the crime
and said: “Lord king, take better counsel.
If you were to disgrace me undeservedly,
you would lose many friends.

You surely would not be so rash,
nor any of your barons,
that you would dare maintain to me
that I have betrayed you.
If anybody were to assert this,
I would make him retract it with my sword
or with the point of my lance.
Now step forward, whoever wishes to assert this.”

When the king heard this,
he was pleased in his mind

and sent for Elegast
one swift messenger after another,
to where he was in the wood,
and summoned him to come with all speed
and forgave him all he had done wrong.

1155 If he dared take upon himself the fight
with Eggeric,
he would make him rich.
The messengers did not delay,
they did as the king had ordered.

1160 They rode until the time
that they found Elegast.
What the king had told them,
they said it all to Elegast,
who was overjoyed at these words,
when he heard the news.
Without a moment’s hesitation he gave orders
to prepare his horse with the riding gear
that he had stolen from Eggeric.
This he declared solemnly:

1170 if the king would grant him a safe conduct,
he would ensure Eggeric’s disgrace.
He swore on his Christian faith,
that if God were to grant him one prayer,
he desired nothing else

1175 than that he might engage in single combat
for his rightful lord
in order to safeguard the king’s honour.
They rode away at great speed.
When Elegast, the noble knight,

1180 entered the king’s hall,
—now you will hear his words—
he said: “May God keep safe this court,
the king and all I find here.
But Eggeric I do not greet.

1185 God, who had himself crucified
for our sake and has great power,
and also Mary, that maiden sweet,
let me see on this day
that Eggeric of Eggermonde
will be made to sway in the wind.
If God could sin,
He has sinned
in that Eggeric has escaped the gallows,
because he has sworn my lord’s death
without pressure or necessity.”
When Elegast had said this,
Eggeric would gladly have punished him for it,
but he did not have the power.
There were many there who deserted him.
The king replied to this:
“Be welcome at my court.
Now I urge you, by all
who turn to God for their sins,
that you will tell and reveal
the crime and the conspiracy
by Eggeric, whom you see here.
Do not be prevented by anyone,
but you must tell nothing but the truth
of how all this came about.”
Elegast said: “With pleasure,
I cannot shirk this duty.
I am absolutely certain
that Eggeric has sworn your death.
I heard him say it when he lay in bed
and hit his wife
because she dared to express her disapproval,
causing the blood to burst forth
from her teeth, her nose and her mouth.
She sat up and bent her face over the edge of the bed. I was there and saw it and softly crept up towards her. In my right glove I caught the woman’s blood.”

Then he showed it to the king and to all who wanted to see it. “If Eggeric should dare to deny it, I will force him to admit the crime before the sun goes down through a single combat between us both, unless prevented by adverse circumstances.”

Eggeric answered at once: “That disgrace will not take place in my lifetime, nor the wretchedness of having to risk my neck against a banished thief. It is also not fitting for you to engage me in single combat.”

And Elegast answered: “Why, even though I am not a duke like you, and was banished for a time, during which the king confiscated my property because he was angry with me, I have never been a murderer.

And even though I have now and then robbed the rich of their goods, I only did it from dire need. But you are a murderer and you cannot refuse a challenge to fight from whoever it is in all the world who accuses you of this.”
Then the king answered:
“By my faith, you are right.
If I were to treat him according to the law,
I would have him dragged away
by a menial and hanged.”
Then the game was up for Eggeric
and he turned over in his mind
how matters stood.
“A fight is better than a broken neck.”
At court there was no one
who dared speak up in his favour.
So it was decided to hold the combat
a little after three o’clock.
The king ordered his barons
to be present fully armed in the field.
He did not wish to miss any of the fight.
He had the lists prepared
and prayed God to decide
the outcome of the fight
as is just and reasonable.
The king wished Elegast courage
and said that, if the fight went well
and he stayed alive,
he would give him his sister,
who earlier had been Eggeric’s,
who now had sworn his death.
The field, where many fully armed men
were standing, was roped off
a little before the time for vespers.
Elegast was the first to enter the lists
as he was the challenger.
He dismounted onto the grass
and kneeled down to pray

Olifant
and said: “God, through your benevolence
I pray today to you for mercy
for all the trespasses
I have committed.
I know well how sinful I am.
Merciful God, although you have the might,
do not punish me today
for my sins.
By your five holy wounds
inflicted upon you for our sins,
stand by me today,
so that I do not die
or perish in the combat.
If my sins do not defeat me,
I expect to leave here unhurt.
Almighty God, through your benevolence
I pray that you may grant me joy.
And Mary, sweet lady,
I wish to serve you with true loyalty.
And in the future I shall never again
be a thief or a robber
in wildernesses and in woods,
if I may here stay alive.”
When he had ended his prayer,
he made the sign of the cross above all his limbs.
As is proper, with his right hand
he made the sign of the cross over his coat of mail
and over the horse that stood before him
and humbly begged God
that it might carry him with honour
and let him return from the fight.
With these words
he mounted into his saddle
and hung the shield on his left side.
Now a great fight is about to start.

1320 He took the lance in his hand.
And spoiling for the fight, Eggeric entered
the lists, well armed;
he was in a very violent mood.
He offered up

1325 no prayer to God.
He sharply dug in his spurs
and rode towards Elegast
and Elegast towards him,
who hit Eggeric through the leather

1330 of the cuirass with great force,
so that he fell down
off his horse onto the earth.
Eggeric drew his sword
which he pulled from the scabbard,

1335 and said: “Now I shall kill both of you,
Elegast, you and your horse,
unless you dismount
at once onto the earth.
Only then will your horse survive.

1340 It is so strong and so big,
it would be a shame to kill it.
Many would regret it.
If you should get away alive,
you may keep your horse.”

1345 Elegast said at once:
“If you were not on foot
I would make an end of this fight.
I do not wish to kill you on foot,
I wish to gain renown through you,

1350 even if it were to turn out badly for me.

Olifant
Now get back upon your horse.
Let us fight like proper knights.
I had rather be praised
than defeat you in a shameful manner,
even if I should lose my life in the fight.”

King Charles regretted it
that Elegast hesitated so long
and spared Eggeric.
Eggeric at once caught his horse.

While Elegast spoke like this,
he mounted into his saddle.
Then a fight arose there
until long past the time for vespers.
There was nobody there who had ever seen
such a fierce fight
as these two had.
That is no lie!

Then the king of France said:

“God, as truly
as you have the power here,
so must you end this fight
and this long combat
as is right and just.”

Elegast had a sword,
it was worth its weight
in red golddust
to any man in need.
The king had given it him.

Elegast raised it
and delivered a blow with such force
with the help of our Lord
and because of King Charles’s prayer
that he had said on Elegast’s behalf,

1385 that he robbed Eggeric
of the larger part of his head,
so that he fell dead out of the saddle.
This the king saw and he said:
“Righteous God, you are in heaven.

1390 It is appropriate that I should praise you
who grants me so much honour.
Whoever serves you, is sensible and wise.
You may be relied on for help and advice
for those who turn to you for mercy.”

1395 Now I wish to end this story.
They dragged Eggeric away and hanged
him and all the other traitors too.
Treasure nor supplication was any help.
Elegast retained his honourable position.

1400 For this he thanked our Lord.
The king gave him Eggeric’s wife.
They were together all their life.
So may God put right all our affairs
before our death.

1405 May the heavenly father grant us that.
Now say “Amen” all together.
NOTES

1-2 The very short prologue suggests that a group of listeners is going to hear a story that really happened. With this prologue the text aligns itself with the genre of the *chanson de geste* that had historiographic pretensions. Originally such *chansons* were intended for performance before audiences.

5 At Ingelheim, between Mainz and Bingen on the Rhine, there was an imperial *palts* or “palace.” Charlemagne did not have a permanent residence at his disposal; instead he travelled ceaselessly from *palts* to *palts* to govern his empire. The reason why the name “Ingelheim” was chosen may very likely be connected with the appearance of the angel in line 16.

7 Charles was king of the Franks from 768. On 25 December 800 he was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome. This meant that for the first time since the fall of the Western Roman empire in 476, western Europe had an emperor again. Charles’s realm extended from northern Spain to far into Germany and from Italy to Frisia. In 843 this enormous area was distributed among his grandsons, which ultimately led to the rise of France with a king and Germany with an emperor. It is an attractive idea to interpret line 7 as a reference to the thirteenth-century situation: Charles united in his person the power wielded by the German emperor and the French king.

8 After the short prologue in line 8, the narrator once again addresses his audience directly. Here, at the beginning of the story, the import of his words may still be interpreted in various ways: “wonderful matters and historical truth,” “wonders that really happened,” or “a curious, wonderful and historical tale.” Having heard or read the entire story, one may conclude that
Karel ende Elegast is a story about God’s wonderful ways that is presented as truth (Winkelman, 1990).

To hold court or a court day meant that a group of noblemen and lords assembled, led by the (itinerant) sovereign. It was convened for official meetings and the administration of justice. Romances often begin during a court day.

Messengers from God to Charles repeatedly make their appearance in the chansons de geste. It is remarkable that in this case Charles is told to do wrong, i.e. to go out stealing. This paradox is given extra force by the fact that the reader is well aware from the start (l. 16) that it is God’s angel who is speaking to the emperor. Charles himself wonders who (l. 51) is telling him to go stealing and why (ll. 54-55). As a result of the reader’s prior knowledge, attention is focused on Charles’s reaction.

The limits of Charles’s empire mentioned here—Cologne, Rome, the Danube, and the Atlantic Ocean—largely correspond with historical reality. Although after his victory over the Saxons Charles ruled over a large area in northern Germany, at that time Cologne was still the largest town in the North.

In reality Charles’s power in Spain was limited to the Spanish marches, a narrow strip of land along the southern edge of the Pyrenees. Galicia, in the northwest of Spain, never belonged to the Frankish realm. The notion that Charles had conquered all of Spain (especially including Galicia with Santiago de Compostela, a major place of pilgrimage) rests primarily on the presentation of the empire in the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle (c. 1140).
Charles’s sudden obedience, after having given reasons twice for refusing to act on what he had been ordered to do, may be explained with reference to the (divine) symbolism of the number three.

It may seem odd that Charles should get dressed in his expensive clothes to go stealing. However, the information serves to emphasize that in actual fact Charles is a sovereign, not a thief. These lines also point forward to lines 308-21, in which Elegast wonders where, in the middle of the night and the forest, such a richly clad knight has sprung from.

A bridge gives access to the central section of the *palts* where the *palas* (“palace,” ll. 139, 1131) with the representative *sale* (“hall,” ll. 118, 124, 1091, 1126) is situated. The entire building is encircled by a moat. Having crossed the bridge, Charles arrives in the walled *hof* (“courtyard,” l. 1114) where the *stalle* (“stables,” ll. 151, 1057) and the guard house (ll. 156, 1055, 1108, 1112) are found. (Classen, 1964; Grewe, 1999).

The prayer is directed at God, who, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, is at the same time father, son and holy spirit (l. 170). Charles refers emphatically to the life of Christ, the son who became man (Luke 2:1-21) and to the miracles wrought by him. By his death on the cross (l. 174; Matt. 27:50) Christ redeemed mankind who had lived in sin since the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise (l. 172, Genesis 3). Prior to the crucifixion, Christ had been taken prisoner in the garden of Gethsemane by the traitor Judas accompanied by a great multitude, sent by the chief priests and the elders of the people (l. 175; Matt. 26:47). After the interrogation by the high priest, these people spat in Christ’s face, punched and struck him (l. 177; Matt. 26:67). According to John 19:34, a Roman
soldier pierced Christ’s side with a lance to ensure that he had really died. In the legendary tradition of the Middle Ages, this soldier is transformed into a Jew named Longinus (l.176). Line 180 contains a reference to the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, in particular to the story of Christ’s descent into hell after his death on the cross. This was done to free from the devil’s power the righteous who had died between Adam’s fall and Christ’s redemption. In lines 181-84 Charles refers in his prayer to the story of Lazarus who is raised from the dead by Christ (John 11:1-44). The assertion that Christ made bread from stones, as is said in line 185, is not correct. Although the devil challenged him to do this, Christ refused (Matt. 4:3-4). The same incorrect version of these verses is also found in other medieval texts (Walewein, l. 15; Cantar de Mio Cid, l. 345). Finally Charles refers to the marriage at Cana where, according to John 2:1-12, Christ changed water into wine (l.186) (Winkelman, 1990).

The word *ghereyde* is used in the text to denote both all the equipment needed to ride a horse, i.e. “tack,” but also specific parts, like the saddle. Here, and in all other occurrences of *ghereyde*, the translation depends on the context.

It seems as if Charles primarily wants to give an indication of his mood by referring to the dark night. In line 126 he had already mentioned that the night was “dark” (*duyster*), but in lines 199-201 the narrator remarks that it is, in fact, very clear weather.

Elegast’s activities as a robber, and particularly his choice of victim, are entirely in accordance with the *topos* of the “noble robber.” Found in medieval to twentieth-century narratives, and ranging from Robin Hood to Billy the Kid and Jesse James,
such stories portray the outlaw hero as stealing from those in power (the clergy; bankers) and sparing the working classes. (Hobsbawm, 1969, pp.46-62). See also lines 504-30 and Charlemagne’s efforts at outdoing Elegast as a robber by his supposedly ruthless behaviour in lines 571-81.

308-21 See the note to lines 132-33.

380-84 In the second half of the twelfth century it became customary to depict heraldic signs on the shield, which made it possible to identify heavily armed knights (Bumke, 1986, p. 219).

474-75 In Incunabulum A, the base text of this edition, Elegast does not name himself until the very similar lines 500-501. However, we here follow sources BR, H and K, as we consider them to contain a more logical structure of the conversation.

504-30 Elegast’s words strongly resemble Charles’s thoughts in lines 244-65. Repetitions of this kind are a well known stylistic feature of medieval narratives. In this case the repetition enhances the positive picture of Elegast that is painted here. Elegast’s exaggerated comment in line 510 should not be taken literally. He means to suggest that he has been providing for himself in this way for a long time.

570 Charles is lying, as he had announced in line 554, but he also speaks the truth, as Adelbrecht means “bright by noble birth.”

602 In the case of a division of goods between two partners, ancient custom ruled that one party made the division into two portions, while the other had first choice. In this way cheating was prevented.
The name Eggermonde is probably based on Aigremont near Liège. It is odd in this connection that line 696 states that Eggeric’s castle is situated on the Rhine (opten Rijn).

Ploughshares were regularly used in burglaries into ordinary (wattle and daub) houses. However, they were not suitable for making holes in the stone walls of a castle. This explains the ironic remarks by Elegast, the experienced thief (Janssens, 1987).

This line stresses that Elegast’s magic has nothing to do with evil black magic, but was quite harmless white magic.

It is remarkable that Elegast picks the herb that grows in the earth in front of him, whereas he took it from a bag in line 765. The variant in K reads that Elegast put the herb in the king’s mouth as he stood before him (“da hey vur eme stoent”). Although the reading of Incunabulum A is correct in itself, it would seem that the text has been incorrectly transmitted here.

This passage by the narrator bears a strong resemblance to Elegast’s own account of what happened in lines 1214-25. It is remarkable that in the redaction of Incunabulum A in line 917 (Ic) and in line 919 (minen) the first person is used erroneously. There seems to be a connection between these lines and lines 1221 and 1223, but the exact relation is obscure.

Elegast acts as if the murder has already been committed. This shows how badly he has been shocked by what he has heard and how loyal he is to Charles. See also lines 615-29, where Elegast indignantly refuses to go and steal from the king.
Here Elegast reveals why he has fallen from grace: he stole so much from Charles that two horses could barely carry it. Compare Charles’s opinion that he exiled Elegast because of some small affair (om cleyne sake, l. 218) with this statement. It would seem that the king considers the theft of a treasure that two horses can scarcely carry of but little importance. However, see also lines 621-22, where Elegast states that Charles banned him from his lands as a result of false counsel. Evil counsellors are often used in the *chansons de geste* to excuse Charles’s wrong decisions.

The description of Charles’s return to Ingelheim contains virtually the same elements as the story of his departure in lines 130-271: we are told about his thoughts, the open castle gate, the sleeping servants, the horse and the stable, the fact that no one sees him walk through his palace, his coat of mail, the guard. The two descriptions of the king’s passage through his *palts* mark the beginning and the end of Charles’s nocturnal adventure.

The phrase *verholen raet* refers to the *colloquium secretum*. This was a closed meeting during which decisions were prepared that were later taken in public gatherings (Althoff, 1997, p. 157-84).

Naimes, the duke of Bavaria, often has the role of wise counsellor in Charlemagne epics. His advice in the *Chanson de Roland* (ll. 230-43) to start negotiations with the Saracens is particularly well known.

Clearly *Vrancrijc* does not refer here to the whole of the Frankish realm (as in l. 1369) but to the heart of the area governed by (later) French kings, the *Ile de France* (Paris and
environ) (Schneidmüller, 1987). The county of Blois was south of this area. The text suggests a contrast between Charles’s “French” supporters and Eggeric’s followers from the Rhineland (ll. 1076, 1104-07).

1144-47 The organisation of the single combat between Elegast and Eggeric is in accordance with the procedures of criminal law in Flanders prior to the twelfth century, even in minor details. When in the legal debate between plaintiff and accused a solution could not be found, a trial by ordeal could be the next step. If the dispute concerned two knights, the trial by ordeal took the form of a single combat. It was firmly believed that God would show which of the two contestants was guilty by making him lose the fight. (van Caenegem, 1956, pp.139-47). In other words, Eggeric takes a great risk here. He probably assumes that no one will dare to charge him.

1155-57 The condition to accept the single combat is coupled with Charles’s promise of riches to Elegast. The condition may also be connected with the forgiveness of crimes (l. 1154). In that case line 1157 is an independent sentence.

1191 As God is incapable of committing a sin, He cannot possibly want Eggeric, who is plotting a murder, to live. By means of this statement Elegast emphasises the criminal nature of Eggeric’s plan.

1229 In a judicial single combat it is the rule that the accused has proven his innocence if he has not been beaten by sunset (van Caenegem, 1956, p.140).

1255-56 Death by hanging was considered extremely ignominious. It was the usual punishment for thieves and traitors. Often the
condemned person was dragged to the gallows by horses (van Caenegem, 1954, pp.161-63).

1264 *Noen*, English *nones*, is an indication of time, derived from the sixth of the fixed times for prayer in which the Christian day was divided, i.e. around three in the afternoon.

1280 *Vesper*, like *noen* (l. 1264), is one of the fixed times of prayer of the Divine Office in which the Christian day was divided, i.e. around six in the afternoon. This late starting time means that Elegast has only little time to defeat Eggeric before sunset (see note to l. 1229).

1293 Christ suffered five wounds during the crucifixion, four in his hands and feet and one in his side (see note to ll. 168-91).

1396-97 After Eggeric has been killed as a knight in single combat (l. 1387), he is humiliated even further by being dragged to the gallows and hanged (see note to ll. 1255-56).

1406 The story is concluded by the narrator’s request to say a communal *Amen*. This is reminiscent of the oral tradition of the Charlemagne epics. Fragment M has the word *Amen* written after this line. Exactly the same situation is found at the original ending of the fourteenth-century drama *Esmoreit* (line 1006).
Works Cited

[Note to the reader: Because the author/date system has been used for citations in the present article, multiple works by the same author(s) are listed chronologically in ascending order.]


Olifant


*Olifant*


*Olifant*
In her 1993 annotated bibliography to the medieval Charlemagne tradition, Susan Farrier notes that critics outside of Belgium and the Netherlands have generally neglected the medieval Dutch Charlemagne romances in spite of their importance for the international Charlemagne tradition (Farrier, 1993, p. xvii). Although obviously the language barrier plays a part, Low Countries’ scholarship must also be held responsible for the lack of knowledge about Middle Dutch Charlemagne literature among the international academic community. Having acknowledged their negligence, a group of Dutch chansons de geste specialists decided some time ago to publish a series of essays on Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances in *Olifant*. These contributions were meant to complement a number of general non-Dutch articles on the tradition which have appeared in recent years, including Evert van den Berg and Bart Besamusca’s “Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances and the oral tradition of the chansons de geste” (1994), Hans van Dijk’s “Das Bild Karls des Großen in den Niederlanden” (2004), and two subsequent contributions by van Dijk: “Des originaux français perdu à la transmission orale” (2008) and “Die Chanson de geste im Niederländischen zwischen dem Französischen und dem Deutschen” (2010). In previous issues of *Olifant*, the following articles, which were mostly structured according to an identical pattern, have been published:

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1 For an overview in Dutch, thematically organized, see van den Berg and Besamusca, 1992.


5. “Gheraert van Viane” (Irene Spijker, vol. 23.1 [2004], pp. 63-78)

6. “Huge van Bordeeus” (Mieke Lens, vol. 23.1 [2004], pp. 79-93)

7. “Madelgijs” (Bob Duijvestijn, vol. 23.1 [2004], pp. 95-110)


This fifteenth, and final, essay provides a concise overview of all the medieval Dutch Charlemagne romances. Succinctly incorporating the texts which were presented in the preceding articles, I will discuss the

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2 In the introduction, “Middle Dutch Charlemagne Romances in *Olifant,*” eighteen articles were announced (p. 10). Owing to circumstances beyond our control, however, three pieces have never been completed.
whole corpus, which consists of around 27 texts. My point of departure is the relation between a Middle Dutch romance and its French source, if any. Translations of French texts will be studied first, followed by a discussion of the adaptations of French (written and oral) sources, and by an analysis of the texts which may be (the remains of) indigenous romances. Supplementary to this tripartite division, I will pay attention to the date of composition of the texts, to their authors’ geographical origins and to the results of recent research.

**Middle Dutch translations**

As critics have noted, the number of extant Middle Dutch translations of French *chansons de geste* is limited to three. The so-called Limburg *Aiol* is the oldest of these faithful renditions. While the French source dates from c. 1160, the surviving fragments of the Limburg translation were copied around 1200 according to new paleographical observations (Klein, 1995, p. 13, no. 3). Consequently, the Limburg text came into being shortly after the composition of the “primitive” version of the *Chanson d’Aiol* (Finet-van der Schaaf, 2006, p. 507). This early date is in accordance with the current general view among Dutch critics that the cradle of Middle Dutch literature was not situated in Flanders, as was
assumed for a very long time, but more to the east, in the area between the rivers Rhine and Meuse.⁸

Around 930 lines of the Limburg Aiol survive (Gysseling, 1980, pp. 311-32). Although almost half of these are incomplete because the manuscript fragments are severely damaged, enough of the text remains to facilitate an analysis of the translation technique of the Limburg author (Finet-van der Schaaf, 1987, vol. 1, pp. 26-113). His rendition of the French text, which relates the story of the knight Aiol and his beloved Mirabel, who become the parents of twins and are threatened with death by the traitor Makaire, follows the French model quite closely. The position of the initials, for example, corresponds with the beginnings of the French laisses, indicating that the structure of the original was preserved in the translation. In addition, it may be noted that the Limburg author often used two Dutch lines to translate a single line in French, omitting along the way small details and repetitions that were present in his source.

As is well known, Middle Dutch verses usually consist of lines with three to five (but generally four) stressed syllables separated by one to three unstressed syllables. The Limburg Aiol, however, deviates remarkably from this tradition, because it is written in four iambic feet (Goossens, 2002). The use of this meter is quite unique. One of the very few other examples of a Middle Dutch iambic text is the so-called Copenhagen Leven van Lutgart (c. 1270), a Middle Dutch saint’s life based on Thomas of Cantimpré’s Vita Lutgardis (Zonneveld, 2000). It has been suggested that the author of the Limburg Aiol’s use of iambic feet was due to the influence of his knowledge of medieval Latin poetry (Goossens, 2002; van Oostrom, 2006, p. 181).

The second extant Middle Dutch translation of a chanson de geste is the first part of the Roman der Lorreinen, often referred to as Lorreinen

⁸ See for example van Oostrom, 2006, pp. 117-213.
Two Old French texts which are always found together in the manuscripts, Garin le Lorrain and Gerbert de Metz, were the source for Lorreinen I, which probably dates from the middle of the thirteenth century (van der Have, 2007). A number of dialectical features of the couplets point to Brabant as the author’s origin (van den Berg, 1985, p. 23). The c. 1000 surviving Middle Dutch lines of his text show that the translator aimed at a faithful rendition of his French source, which relates the feud between the Loherains and the Bordelais in the reign of King Pepin. His work resulted in a translation that is slightly longer than his model (van der Have, 2007; van der Have, 2005, pp. 82-83).

The third Middle Dutch translation of a French original is a fairly recent discovery. In 1993, two Dutch critics demonstrated that the unidentified text of a fragment that had been known since 1925 could be connected to the tradition of the Chanson d’Aspremont (Kienhorst & Mulder, 1993, pp. 69-70). Unfortunately, only 97 lines of the Middle Dutch Aspremont have come down to us (Kienhorst & Mulder, 1998). From these poor remnants of the tale, which relates, among other things, how the young Roland wins his sword Durendal, his horse Viellantif, and the horn Olifant, it can be deduced that the translator followed his twelfth-century original closely. However, when and where he worked cannot be determined. All we know is that the fragment dates from around 1300 and that the surviving lines were copied by a Flemish scribe (Klein, 1995, p. 14, no. 17; Kienhorst & Mulder, 1998, pp. 301-02).

**Middle Dutch adaptations**

The great majority of the Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances are adaptations of Old French chansons de geste. Where this is the case, the Middle Dutch authors aimed at their own version of their French source by omitting passages, adding story elements, and changing the story line. I will present these adaptations by first discussing the Middle Dutch texts

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9 For Lorreinen II, see below (Indigenous romances).
that, in spite of their deviations, clearly resemble their French models, and will continue by describing the Middle Dutch texts that radically differ from their French written and oral sources. I will conclude this section of the overview by discussing two texts that are probably based on a French source that is lost.

The oldest Middle Dutch adaptation of a *chanson de geste* is a rendition of the most famous of all medieval French texts, the *Chanson de Roland*. The versification of the *Roelantslied* points to a date in the twelfth century, and the dialectical features of its couplets show that its author was a Fleming (van Dijk, 2011; van den Berg, 1985, p. 23). The surviving c. 2000 lines have come down to us in manuscript fragments and as part of a printed edition, entitled *Den droefliken strijt van Roncevale* (*The Grievous Battle of Roncevaux*), published by the Antwerp printers Willem Vorsterman (around 1520) and Jan van Ghelen (in 1576). Remarkably enough, the extant verses belong to a single episode of the story, relating the defeat of the French rearguard, including Roland and the other peers, at Roncevaux. It may well be that this surprising feature of the textual tradition implies that only the second of the *Chanson de Roland*’s four episodes was rendered into Middle Dutch. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the Flemish author aimed at a small-scale adaptation of his source. While following the story line closely, he shortened the text by omitting details, and he accentuated the theme of the Christian battle against the infidels (van Dijk, 2011).

Like the *Roelantslied*, the second extant Middle Dutch rendition of the *Chanson d’Aiol* was written by a Flemish author (van den Berg, 1985, p. 21). It has been argued that this poet was active around 1240 (Finet-van der Schaaf, 1987, vol. 1, pp. 311-17). This date is mainly based on the passage in the so-called Flemish *Aiol* that states that Aiol’s beloved Mirabel was called “Johane” when she was christened (Verdam, 1882, l. 509). The name is taken as a reference to the text’s supposed patroness: Jeanne of Constantinople, countess of Flanders between 1205 and 1244.
While it cannot be determined, unfortunately, whether the Flemish author made use of the Limburg Aiol or the French text as his model, it is certain that he presented an abridged version of the story (Finet-van der Schaaf, 1987, vol. 1, pp. 114-283). The extant 1200 lines of the Flemish text correspond, after all, to around 2300 French lines. These Middle Dutch lines include, moreover, a passage of 240 lines missing in the Chanson d’Aiol, relating an attempt of the treacherous Herijn to poison his brother-in-law, King Gratien (ll. 960-1200). Whereas the Flemish adapter shortened the numerous accounts of battles and duels, he incidentally added lines to accentuate religious story elements. For instance, he incorporated almost thirty lines to explain how God prevented Makaire from drowning Aiol’s twins by sending an angel to the fisherman Tierijn, ordering him to go fishing at night (ll. 651-80).

Another example of an abridged Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance is provided by Willem van Oringen. This text is based on the long version of the Moniage Guillaume, in which Guillaume d’Orange becomes a monk after Guibourc’s death, retires to a hermitage by order of an angel, and is imprisoned by the Saracen Synagon. Its author may have been a certain Clays of Haerlem who is mentioned by Jacob van Maerlant in his Spiegel historiael as the translator of French stories about Guillaume. It has been argued that he was a member of the court of Willem II, count of Holland between 1234 and 1256 (Broers, 2004). Although it is difficult to study the author’s translation technique, as only 429 lines of Willem van Oringen survive, one gets the impression that the author aimed at a somewhat shortened account of Willem’s adventures (Broers, 2004).

In the French manuscript tradition, the Moniage Guillaume is always part of a cycle of Guillaume texts. That this was also true for Willem van Oringen is suggested by the parchment bifolium containing the text’s remaining lines, since the verses were copied in three columns per page. This mise-en-page strongly indicates that a number of texts other than Willem van Oringen were also present in the codex (van der Have, 2005, p. 84). In this context, it is important to note the recent discovery of a
very small, fourteenth-century fragment containing just 58 badly dam-
aged lines. Although not one of them is complete, a number of names,
like “willem” (Guillaume), “oringhen” (Orange), and “harleblane” (Arle
le blanc), prove that at least one other Middle Dutch Guillaume romance
once existed (Kienhorst, 1998). Unfortunately, the incomplete lines do
not allow us to identify the text, referred to with the provisional title
Willem van Oringen II, or his French model.

Among the Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances that present an
abridged version of their source text, there is one adaptation that is ex-
ceptional in a number of aspects. Whereas the Roelantslied, the Flemish
Aiol, and Willem van Oringen are based on French models, Sibilla is an
adaptation of a Spanish text, the Hystoria de la reyna Sevilla (c. 1500).
The Dutch text is, moreover, a prose adaptation, written hundreds of
years after the composition of the verse renditions just mentioned. The
printed edition was published in Antwerp by Willem Vorsterman around
1538. The most remarkable aspect of this adaption concerns the way in
which the author abridged his Spanish model (Besamusca, Kuiper, and
Resoort, 1988, pp. 34-37). The further the story progresses, the more the
Dutch adapter omits. At the beginning of the tale about the repudiated
wife of Charlemagne, who overcomes her enormous problems with the
aid of the peasant Baroquel and her son Loys, Sibilla deviates only little
from the Hystoria. But while the abridgements begin to increase consid-
erably as the story progresses, for example by the removal of characters
from the tale, the second half of the Spanish narrative is reduced to a bare
minimum. Curiously enough, this remarkable increase in the number of
excisions as the adaptation progresses runs parallel to the unbalanced
distribution of the edition’s woodcuts. Unevenly spread over the text,
they occur especially in the first part of the story. This makes it conceiv-
able that the Dutch author abridged his source in order to meet the pub-
lisher’s condition that his text should not encompass more than a fixed
number of leaves. Vorsterman may well have feared that his Sibilla edi-
tion would become too voluminous and, therefore, too expensive (Be-
samusca, 1992).
Like the *Roelantslied*, the *Flovent* is both one of the oldest Middle Dutch texts, dating from around 1200, and written by a Flemish poet (van den Berg, 1983, pp. 148, 152, 179-80; van den Berg, 2007). However, whereas the author of the *Roelantslied* abridged his source, the *Flovent* poet expanded the story. Circa 640 lines of his tale about the eldest son of the Merovingian king Clovis and his companion Richier survive (Pfeijffer & Wielaard, 1994). A comparison between the Middle Dutch text and the corresponding episodes of the French *Floovant*, presumably written at the end of the twelfth century, reveals that the Flemish author amplified the story spectacularly. He multiplied the number of lines by at least a factor of four (Pfeijffer & Wielaard, 1994, pp. 86-90; van der Have, 2005, p. 82).

Among the plot elements which are not present in the French text is the intriguing story of Rigant. This rich burgher comes to the aid of the besieged king Clovis, offering him assistance in exchange for the knighting of himself and his sixteen sons. Armed with a gigantic club, Rigant confronts the Saracens and is eventually killed by a French traitor. In recent research it has been suggested that the story of Rigant in the *Flovent* may serve as a clue to the text’s primary audience (van Oostrom, 2005). If the portrayal of Rigant was not meant as comedy—which could well be the case, so it seems—it may have been intended to appeal to prosperous Flemish patricians living in cities like Ghent and Bruges. Such a conclusion would be in accordance with the current critical opinion that Middle Dutch narrative literature, including Charlemagne romances, Arthurian tales, and the masterly beast epic *Van den vos Reynaerde*, was not aimed in the first instance at the court aristocracy but at the Flemish-speaking urban elite.10

The poet of the *Flovent* is not the only author of a Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance to amplify his model. The same holds true for the

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10 See for example van Oostrom, 2006, pp. 227-33. See also Bouwman and Besamusca, 2009, pp. 28-33.
Bart Besamusca

poet of *Gheraert van Viane*. Originating in Holland or Flanders, this thirteenth-century author adapted a French version of *Girart de Vienne*, possibly at the request of one of the lords of Viane (a village in East Flanders) who was called Gerard (Spijker, 2004a, pp. 68-69). The French story features a hero who rebels against Charlemagne. The hero, Girart, is assisted by his nephew Olivier, who acts as his champion against the king’s champion Roland. The Middle Dutch text is based on a *Girart* version in which the cause of Girart’s rebellion is his humiliation by the king’s wife, who has made him unknowingly kiss her foot. We find this motif in the tale composed around 1200 by Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube, who seems to have introduced it in the tradition, and in a late medieval version. A comparison of the 192 extant lines of *Gheraert van Viane* with the French versions shows that the Middle Dutch author composed a very free rendition of his model, for instance by adding narrative elements to the story. An example concerns Gheraert’s nephew Aymerijn, who during a meeting delivers a speech of seventy lines which is not found in the French versions (Spijker, 2004a, pp. 69-76).

Another amplified Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance is *Beerte metten breden voeten*, which is based on *Berte aus grans piés*, written by Adenet le Roi at the Flemish court of Gui de Dampierre around 1275. The tale is about Berte, who is supplanted as King Pepin’s bride by an imposter, is received by the forester Simon as his daughter, and is rehabilitated when the king, who has lost his way in the woods, finds her. Due to the poor remnants of the Middle Dutch story—around 400 often-damaged lines survive—we do not know where the thirteenth or fourteenth-century adapter originated (van den Berg, 1985, pp. 21-22). The extant lines show that the poet needed about twice as many lines as Adenet to tell the same story, albeit with small changes meant to improve the logic of the narrative (Besamusca, 2004).

Both *Beerte metten breden voeten* and *Aubri de Borgengoen* situate their narrative in the time of King Pepin. According to the mid-thirteenth-century *chanson de geste Auberi le Bourgoing*, the young titular hero and his nephew Gaselin are the great-uncle and father, re-
spectively, of Charlemagne’s adviser Naimon de Bavière (Farrier, 1993, pp. 493-94). The voluminous French text, numbering c. 30,000 lines, begins by telling how Auberi and Gaselin save Bavaria from the Saracens. In the second part it relates how Auberi incorrectly suspects his wife Guiborc of infidelity and is rescued from his attacking enemies by Gaselin. It concludes in the final part with the story of how Auberi is accidentally killed by Gaselin. The extant 350 lines of the Middle Dutch adaptation correspond to the end of the French first part (Kalff, 1885-86, pp. 138-52). While the author’s geographical origin is unclear (van den Berg, 1985, p. 21), it is certain that he worked before the middle of the fourteenth century since the remaining fragments date from that period (Klein, 1995, p. 15, no. 76; Kienhorst, 1998, p. 17). A comparison between the Middle Dutch verses and the corresponding French lines reveals that the adapter slightly amplified his model (Kalff, pp. 140-45, 147-52, notes).

The author of Huge van Bordeeus was doubtlessly a Fleming (van den Berg, 1985, p. 22). Writing at the beginning of the fourteenth century, he adapted Huon de Bordeaux, including a number of episodes which were part of the French text’s sequels (Lens, 2004a, pp. 82-83; Lens, 2004b, pp. 100-01). The French story recounts the adventures of Huon, who unknowingly kills Charlemagne’s son Charlot. A reconciliation with the king will be possible only if Huon performs seemingly impossible tasks in the Orient. However, assisted by the fairy king Auberon and his messenger Malabron, Huon successfully accomplishes all he needs to do. Around 1500 lines of the Middle Dutch rendition, which originally seems to have numbered around 15,000 lines (Lens, 2004b, pp. 269-70), are extant. This verse text and the printed prose edition of the story, published by the Antwerp printers Willem Vorsterman (around 1540) and Jan van Ghelen (in 1584), both derive from a common, now lost, Middle Dutch verse text (Lens, 2004b, pp. 103-92, 240-46). The extant lines show that the adapter adhered to the main events of the story yet changed their order and their contents (the sultan Gaudisse, for example, is not killed as in the French Huon, but taken prisoner). Further-
more, he elaborates on narrative elements which had received a concise
treatment in his source and amplified his model by adding characters and
episodes (Lens, 2004a; Lens, 2004b, pp. 46-102).

Whether they are abridged or amplified versions of their models, the
Middle Dutch adaptations so far discussed in this section of the overview
all are based on written sources. However, there are indications that this
is not the case for the four texts which I am about to present. The poets of
these texts did not seem to work on the basis of a written (or printed)
copy but on the basis of their recollection of performances of French
tales. The chief witness for this use of oral sources is Renout van
Montalbaen. This is the story of the four sons of Aymijn, the four
“Heemskinderen,” who rebel against Charlemagne for many years, as-
sisted by their cousin Malagijs, who has magical powers, and Renout’s
tremendously strong horse Beyaert, who can carry all four brothers to-
gether on his back. The Middle Dutch version was written by a Flemish
author who was active presumably before 1225 (Spijker, 2004b, p. 31).
Although his text has come down to us incompletely—around 2650 lines
have survived—we can get a reliable impression of the whole work by
studying the faithful, late-fifteenth-century Rhine-Franconian rendition of
the Middle Dutch text as well as the printed prose edition published by
the printer Jan Seversoen in 1508 (De historie vanden vier Heemskin-
deren). The Flemish adapter seldom followed his French source closely.
A number of the numerous Middle Dutch deviations from the French are
clearly intentional, but the frequent changes in the order of narrative
elements and, in particular, the attribution of actions to characters that
differ from the French model cannot be explained in this way. They can
be understood only if we assume that the Flemish poet had heard the
Renaut de Montauban being recited (as a whole or, more probably, in
episodes) and composed his text on the basis of his (partly transformed)
recollections of the recitation(s) of the French story. As a result of the
deviations, the Middle Dutch adaptation is less serious and more focused
on action than Renaut de Montauban (Spijker, 2004b, pp. 34-41).

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Critics have assumed that like *Renout van Montalbaen*, *Madelgijs* was based on an oral delivery of its French model. That source was *Maugis d’Aigremont*, which deals with the youth of Renaut’s cousin, the magician Maugis, who is raised by the fairy Oriande, and his twin brother, Vivien, whom he meets long after they were separated at birth. The Middle Dutch adaptation, which was made by a Flemish author around 1300, has survived in fragments and in a complete, late-fifteenth-century Rhine-Franconian rendition of the text. Another fourteenth-century Flemish author copied this text and added new episodes. This long version of the *Madelgijs* is extant in fragments and in a printed prose edition published by the Antwerp printer Jan van Ghelen in 1556 (Duijvestijn, 2004, pp. 99-100). The short version of the Middle Dutch *Madelgijs* differs profoundly from its French model. The c. 3280 surviving lines and the faithful Rhine-Franconian rendition show that the Flemish adapter wrote a tale that does not follow the narrative structure of the *Maugis* and is, moreover, twice as long as its model. It contains many episodes that are not found in the French text. Taking into account, too, that the verbatim resemblances between *Madelgijs* and *Maugis* are extremely rare, it is conceivable that the Flemish author did not have a manuscript of the French tale at his disposal but knew its broad outline from oral recitation or at second hand from someone who had heard the *chanson the geste* and retold the story for him (Duijvestijn, 2004, pp. 101-07; Duijvestijn, 2002).

The third Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance that has been associated with the oral transmission of a French tale is *Ogier van Dene- marken*. Its French source, the *Chevalerie Ogier*, relates first the story of the heroic deeds of the young Ogier the Dane, who is staying as a hostage at Charlemagne’s court, and secondly the feud between the adult Ogier and the king, whose son Charlot has killed Ogier’s son Baudouin. Around the middle of the thirteenth century, two Flemish authors independently wrote tales about Ogier’s youth and about his adult life, including the story of his journey to the Orient, which shows resemblances to the Orient continuation in the *Roman d’Ogier*. Their texts have sur-
vived in Middle Dutch fragments—around 630 lines are extant—and were combined in a late-fifteenth-century Rhine-Franconian text that gives a faithful rendition of the Middle Dutch romances, albeit that the German translator abridged the final part of the story (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 27-32). Although the general outline of *Ogier van Denemarken* corresponds to the most important French Ogier tales, there are no verbal correspondences between the texts. Moreover, the Middle Dutch story presents the episodes in a different order and introduces characters, like Willem van Oringen, who seem to be absent in the French tradition. This state of affairs makes it likely, according to Dutch scholarship, that the two Flemish poets composed their texts on the basis of their knowledge of narrative material that was transmitted orally (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 32-34).

Another Flemish author composed *Jourdein van Blaves*, which has come down to us in fragments that preserve around 440 lines (Kuiper & Biemans, 2004). The poet, who probably worked in the first half of the fourteenth century, adapted *Jourdain de Blaye*, which relates the feud between Jourdain, assisted by his foster father Renier, and Fromont, who has treacherously killed the hero’s father. The Middle Dutch text diverges markedly from the French text, most strikingly in its use of proper names. Except for the names of the main protagonists, all other characters have names which do not occur in the French model but were borrowed from other French *chansons de geste*. This feature can be explained most convincingly by assuming that the Flemish author adapted his source from memory (Kuiper & Biemans, 2004, pp. 213-19).

All the Middle Dutch adaptations discussed so far can be compared to an extant French model. However, there are also cases in which we assume that a Middle Dutch author based himself on a (written or oral) source even though that French text is lost. This concerns, for example, *Loyhier ende Malaert*. Around 800 lines, half of them damaged, of this fourteenth-century Middle Dutch text have come down to us (Iwema, 1986). Its author, who worked before the middle of the fourteenth century (Klein, 1995, p. 15, nos. 64, 81), originated from Flanders (van den Olifant).
Medieval Dutch Charlemagne Romances

Since *Lohier et Maller* is not extant (with the exception of a fifteenth-century fragment), we have to rely on a German intermediary when comparing the Middle Dutch tale and its French source. This German prose translation, *Loher und Maller*, of the French story was supposedly made by Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken around 1430-40 (Bastert, 2010, pp. 108-12). It presents the story of Charlemagne’s son Loher, who, banished from court because of his amorous exploits, fights against the Saracens, assisted by his companion Maller, whom he unknowingly kills later on in the story. The remnants of the Middle Dutch text show that *Loyhier ende Malaert*’s narrative style was more elaborate than that of *Loher und Maller* (Iwema, 1986, pp. 438-39). However, this observation does not apply to the relation between the Middle Dutch text and *Lohier et Maller*, because we know that the German author freely adapted his/her French source (von Bloh et al., 2002).

Besides *Loyhier ende Malaert*, there is one other Middle Dutch Charlemagne romance which seems to be based on a lost French model. Some critics have assumed that this text, *Karel ende Elegast*, was an indigenous composition about Charlemagne, who goes out stealing in the company of the magician-thief Elegast and, as a result, learns of a plot on his life. However, other scholars have argued, more convincingly, that the lost *Chanson de Basin* was the source of the Middle Dutch author (Besamusca & van Dijk, 2011, pp. 53-54). References to this *chanson* in other French texts and the existence of an analogous episode about Charlemagne and the thief Basin at the beginning of the mid-thirteenth-century *Karlamagnús saga*, which contains a number of Norse adaptations of French texts, allow us to reconstruct the tale about Basin. If this story was indeed the source for *Karel ende Elegast*, its Flemish author, who presumably worked in the first half of the thirteenth century, aimed at a very free adaptation of his French model (Besamusca & van Dijk, 2011, p. 54). In his version of c. 1400 lines, the portrayal of Elegast, for example, is strikingly different from that of Basin. Other deviations include the portrayal of Charlemagne (the Middle Dutch king is not young, as in the Norse version, but at the height of his powers) and the discovery of the plot (whereas the Norse king is present when the traitor Renfrei
tells his wife about the plan to kill his lord, the Middle Dutch king is informed about this by Elegast, who enters the castle of the treacherous Eggeric alone).

For the sake of completeness, I should finally mention Garijn van Montglavie. Just around 150 lines of this text, still unedited, have come down to us, preserved in fragments which date from c. 1325 (Klein, 1995, p. 14, no. 35). Both the scribe and the author appear to be Flemings (Kienhorst, 1988, p. 59). The names of the main characters, like Garijn van Montglavie and his wife Mabilette, point to two French texts, Garin de Monglane and Gaufrey, but critics have been unable to find a corresponding episode in these chansons (van der Have, 2005, p. 86).

Indigenous romances

In addition to the translations and adaptations, the corpus of Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances features original tales, viz. texts which are not based on a (French) model. Lorreinen II takes pride of place among these indigenous romances. This text is the work of a Brabantine poet who was active in the second half of the thirteenth century and may have been commissioned by the duke of Brabant (van der Have, 2007, p. 40). The surviving 10,300 lines of his impressive continuation, which originally added probably around 110,000 lines to Lorreinen I, show that he went his own way, independent of the French Loherain tradition. The main theme is still the feud between the Loherains and the Bordelais, but at the beginning of his continuation King Pepin has been succeeded by his son Charlemagne. Surprisingly enough, the arch-traitor Ganelon (here called Gelloen) is introduced as the new leader of the Bordelais. Freely borrowing from texts like Vincent of Beauvais’s Speculum historiale and the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle, the author of Lorreinen II devoted large parts of his continuation to Gelloen’s low deeds. By introducing an interlace structure, the poet was able to alternate the traitor’s narrative thread with the stories of other characters like the Saracen king Agulant, Gelloen’s sons Beligant and Marcilijs, and the leader of the Loherains, King Yoen, who falls in love with Helene, the wife of his cousin Otte, and has Olifant
to defend himself against Gelloen’s daughter Yrene, empress of Greece (van der Have, 2007, pp. 37-40). As a result of this enormous expansion, *Lorreinen II* occupies a unique position in the tradition of the Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances.

Unique, too, albeit in a different way, is *Van den bere Wisselau*. This indigenous story about a bear, Wisselau, is an unusual Charlemagne tale. According to the extant fragment, Wisselau fights Eeric, the champion of Espriæn, king of the giants, as the champion of Charlemagne and his companions. Dressed up in human clothes, the bear then throws Espriæn’s favorite cook in a cauldron with boiling water. It is true that Charlemagne is mentioned as one of the characters who arrive in the hostile land of the giants, but the story about the bear and his clever tamer, Geernout, shares, above all, characteristics with Germanic texts like the *Thidrekssaga* and *König Rother* (Brandsma, 2005, pp. 16-18). However, a German model cannot be traced. It has been argued that the twelfth-century poet, who originated from the border area between Flanders and Brabant, wrote his tale for the court of the duke of Brabant (Brandsma, 2005, pp. 15, 17). Whatever the case may be, the surviving 720 lines show that *Van den bere Wisselau* was an entertaining story, full of comedy and exciting adventures.

In a number of cases, critics have been unable to connect the text of an extant Middle Dutch fragment to a *chanson de geste*. It is conceivable that these episodes were part of adaptations of French texts, but that their fragmentary nature prevents us from identifying these models. It could also be that these fragments preserve the remnants of Middle Dutch renditions of lost French texts. However, it is at least as convincing to assume that these episodes were part of indigenous Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances (Besamusca, 2008). A case in point is *Pepijn die naen*. The extant 384 lines of this text feature a dwarf, Charlemagne’s bastard son Pepin the Hunchback. He is a traitor who rebels against his father and has captured the town of Charlemagne’s loyal vasal, Florant, allowing his men to rape all the women (Verdam, 1897). Since the scholarly quest for a French source has failed, one may assume that the author
did not base his tale on a French model (Verdam, 1897, p. 295; van Oostrom, 1987). As the extant fragments date from the middle of the fourteenth century (Kienhorst, 1988, p. 232; Klein, 1995, p. 15, no. 88), the story was composed before that period.

Another mid-fourteenth-century Middle Dutch fragment probably originates from the same codex as the *Pepijn* fragments (Kienhorst, 1988, pp. 68-69; Klein, 1995, p. 15, no. 80). It contains 198 lines of a text critics have given the title *Gwidekijn van Sassen*, since this name appears in the last lines (Kalff, 1885-86, pp. 159-67). A king called Gwidekijn obviously points to Jean Bodel’s *Chanson des Saisnes*, which relates Charlemagne’s war against the Saxon king Guitaclin after the battle of Roncevaux. However, in the Middle Dutch text Roland and Olivier are still alive. They have, in the company of the sons of Girart de Vienne and many others, fought against the Saxons under the leadership of the giant Fledric and have slain them with the help of a magician in a black suit of armour (possibly called Elegast: the scribe’s abbreviation is unclear). These events do not have a parallel in the French tradition (Besamusca, 2008, pp. 26, 28-29). This state of affairs makes it likely that *Gwidekijn van Sassen*, probably composed by a Flemish poet (van den Berg, 1985, p. 22), was an indigenous romance.

The last Middle Dutch romance to be discussed here is known under the title *Fierabras*. It is significant, however, that in the past other titles (*Doon de Mayence* and *Jan van Lecviden*) were proposed as well. After all, the incomplete Middle Dutch text, copied on a mid-fourteenth-century fragment (Klein, 1995, p. 15, no. 77) and numbering 372 lines, relates events that are unparalleled in the French tradition (Besamusca, 2008, pp. 27-28, 29-30). The main protagonists are the young Fierabras, who rides a dromedary, and Elegast and Roland’s future father, Mile. They meet three Saracen kings who recall that the three heroes played pranks on them earlier by using magic and a clever trick (they pretended to bring a message from Mohammed). Later, Fierabras, Elegast, and Mile fight against superior Saracen forces (Kalff, 1885-86, pp. 168-79). The current state of Dutch scholarship certainly does not exclude the possibil-

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ity that *Fierabras*, written by a Flemish or Brabantine author (van den Berg, 1985, p. 22), like *Pepijn die naen* and *Gwidekijn van Sassen*, was an indigenous romance.

This concise overview of all the extant Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances has made it clear that we are dealing with a considerable corpus of texts. It should be added, however, that almost all of these romances have come down to us in fragments. While *Karel ende Elegast*, thanks to the printed verse editions of this text, and *Sibilla* are the exceptions to the rule, other romances are completely extant in an adapted form only. This concerns, for example, the three faithful Rhine-Franconian renditions of *Renout van Montalbaen*, *Madelgijs*, and *Ogier van Dene marken*. These texts came into being around 1460 in a literary milieu connected with the Heidelberg court and the countess palatine Mechtild of Rottenburg (Beckers, 1987; Duijvestijn, 1987). The printed prose editions of *Huge van Bordeus*, *Madelgijs*, and *Renout van Montalbaen* are adapted versions, too. Most of them were published by the Antwerp printers Willem Vorsterman and Jan van Ghelen.

The Middle Dutch Charlemagne romances were written over a long period of time. Texts like *Van den bere Wisselau*, the Limburg *Aiol*, *Flovent*, and the *Roelantslied* were composed before or around 1200. While the majority of the works date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *Sibilla* came into being in the sixteenth century. The vast majority of the authors made use of written models. Some of them, however, seem to have worked on the basis of their recollection of performances of French tales.

Middle Dutch literature first came into being in the area between the rivers Rhine and Meuse. The Limburg *Aiol* testifies to this. Most of the Charlemagne romances, however, were written by Flemish poets.¹¹ According to recent research, they did not compose their works for the (bi-

¹¹ See also van den Berg, 1987.
lingual?) court aristocracy but for the Flemish-speaking urban elite consisting of both patricians and noblemen.\footnote{I would like to thank Bernd Bastert, Frank Brandsma, Hans van Dijk, and Thea Summerfield for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.}
Works Cited

[Note to the reader: Because the author/date system has been used for citations in the present article, multiple works by the same author(s) are listed chronologically in ascending order.]


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Review Article:
“A New Look at the Biblioteca Marciana’s Early French Manuscripts and their Histories”

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With his new work Il fondo francese della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 2008), Sebastiano Bisson revisits the process of cataloguing the early French manuscripts housed in Venice’s Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, an endeavour previously carried out over a century ago by Domenico Ciàmpoli.¹ In his 1897 catalogue, Ciàmpoli compiled descriptions of an impressive 79 manuscripts residing among the Marciana’s treasures that were either classified as French or that, in his estimation, should have been classified as French.² These include: the 25 manuscripts described in the French section of Anton Maria Zanetti’s 1741 catalogue Latina et italica D. Marci Bibliotheca codicum manuscriptorum per titulos digesta, which constitute what is now known as the old fonds of French manuscripts (Fondo Francese Antico); one manuscript described in Zanetti’s Latin

¹ Giorgio E. Ferrari also prepared a very brief series of descriptions and bibliographies relative to 13 of the Marciana’s 25 manuscripts in the old French collection (those characterized as “Carolingian”) for the catalogue of an exhibition organized to correspond with the second congress of the Société Rencesvals in Venice in 1961 (1961a, pp. 3-5), but nothing to the scale of Ciàmpoli’s or of Bisson’s works.
² Except for two (by the author’s own admission)—one in German, one in Spanish—that were catalogued among the French manuscripts for a lack of a more appropriate location. Bisson also notes in a previous article that Codex XXV of the Fondo is composed largely of text in Catalan and Latin (2002, p. 741, n. 5).
section (Fondo Latino Antico); the 39 manuscripts that in 1897 comprised the Appendice. Codici francesi e stranieri (French and Western European codices that entered into possession of the Marciana after the publication of Zanetti’s catalogue); four among those listed in the post-Zanetti appendix of Latin manuscripts; nine from the post-Zanetti Italian manuscripts; and one conserved in the so-called Archivio Morelliano.\(^3\) Due to its breadth (one finds an account in Ciàmpoli’s

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\(^3\) In 1741, Anton Maria Zanetti published two volumes cataloguing the manuscripts residing in the Marciana at the time. The first documents the Greek manuscripts (Graeca D. Marci Bibliotheca codicum manv scriptorum per titulos digesta. Praeside et moderatore Lavrentio Thevpolo. Eqvite ac D. Marci Proc. ivssv senatvs. [Ab] Antonii M. Zanetti et Antonii Bongiovanni. [Venice]: Apud Simonem Occhi, 1740); the second documents the Latin, Italian, and French ones (Latina et italica D. Marci Bibliotheca codicum manu scriptorum per titulos digesta. Praeside et Moderatore Laurentio Theupolo Equte ac D. Marci Proc. Iussu Senatus. [Venice]: Simonem Occhi Bibliopolam, 1741). The second volume is divided into three sections: 1) “Bibliothecae D. Marci Codices latini”; 2) “Biblioteca de’ manuscritti italiani”; 3) “Appendice d’alunci manuscritti in lingua francese antica.” The manuscripts described in these three sections make up, respectively, the Fondo Latino Antico, Fondo Italiano Antico, and Fondo Francese Antico. The manuscripts that have come into possession of the Marciana since 1741 are listed in the various “appendices.” These appendices are likewise divided by language, though manuscripts composed in something other than Greek, Latin, or Italian have mostly been catalogued as either “Codices Orientales” or “Codici francesi e stranieri.” This classification of manuscripts can be rather confusing due to the fact that some scholars have referred to the whole set of post-Zanetti appendices as the “Appendice al catalogo Zanetti” (as if there were only one appendix and one Zanetti catalogue!) while the section in Zanetti documenting the first 25 Gallo-Romance manuscripts—which is not part of the so-called appendice or appendici—actually contains the word “appendice” in its title: “Appendice d’alunci manuscritti in lingua francese antica.” What is more, the post-Zanetti manuscripts composed in a Gallo-Romance variety are catalogued in the Appendice. Codici francesi e stranieri (according to what is written inside the codex’s cover), though many

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volume of every known French manuscript that was in the Marciana’s possession at the time), this work remains the most comprehensive inventory of the Marciana’s French manuscript patrimony. Bisson has opted instead to concentrate on a more limited set of 35 manuscripts, i.e., those containing Gallo-Romance-language texts composed before the year 1500, for these represent, in his words, “i testimoni di maggior interesse filologico” (2008, p. IX). The 35 manuscripts considered in this catalogue are all part of either the Marciana’s Fondo Franceso Antico or its newer collection of “Codici francesi e stranieri.”

Bisson’s stated purpose of re-proposing a study of these important manuscripts is to offer “una nuova e aggiornata panoramica sul fondo straniero” ([Fondo IX] in light of the many inadequacies of all previous attempts to catalogue the collection, including Ciàmpoli’s. Indeed this is a welcome venture: Zanetti’s four-page inventory is summary at best and incomplete and confused at worst; the whole of the so-called appendice of manuscripts accrued after 1741 is merely a compendium of handwritten pages documenting the bare essentials of each manuscript; and Ciàmpoli’s catalogue, though a colossal effort and the most wide-ranging work on the Marciana’s French manuscripts to date, is nevertheless laden with errors and lacunae and devoid of, as Bisson indicates, “una struttura fissa” and “uno schema preciso” (2008, p. IX).\footnote{Imperfect as Ciàmpoli’s monograph may be (and its imperfections must not be understated), it still has its merits; nevertheless, it received some harsh reviews upon its publication. Ferrari summarized some of the more authoritative reviews and criticisms, among which those of Adolfo Mussafia, Paul Meyer, and Pio Rajna (Ferrari 1961, p. 108, n. 7). In his review, Meyer was particularly severe in writing “Il me semble superflu de poursuivre l’examen d’un ouvrage qui […] est complètement inutile” while calling Ciàmpoli himself “mal préparé” (1897, p. 134).}

That said, it must be pointed out that Bisson does not endeavour to
address certain aspects that Ciàmpoli did, such as the transcription of lengthy incipits and explicits.

Bisson is sure to employ the lessons learned from others who have ventured into the world of manuscript cataloguing, noting in the section titled “Scheda di descrizione” (2008, pp. XXI-XXIII) that he was guided, in terms of the structure of the catalogue, by Armando Petrucci’s 1984 manual *La descrizione del manoscritto*, and that his terminology was informed by Marilena Maniaci’s 1996 work *Terminologia del libro manoscritto*. Each description begins with a generic title and, where possible, the work’s author together with data regarding material, format, layout, and date of composition or transcription. What follows for each manuscript is a systematic and exhaustive description of all relevant physical traits, including precise details on the handwriting, page colouration, binding style, eventual comments penned by the scribe, foliation/pagination (including successive numerations to the original), all external markings and writings, and all other indications regarding its *mise en page*. Subsequent in each entry—and what is perhaps most innovative about Bisson’s contribution to the cataloguing of the Marciana’s French manuscripts—is a thorough examination of the manuscript’s ornamentation, where applicable. The next section briefly relates the contents of each manuscript with bibliographical information on some of the most relevant works relative to the manuscript in question. The last paragraph in each entry traces the history of the manuscript and any references to it in known inventories compiled prior to its acquisition by the Marciana, as well as any reference to it in Zanetti’s own 1740 draft of his 1741 published catalogue. At the end there is a very brief bibliography that indicates other studies relative to the manuscript not included in the section regarding its contents.

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5 Bisson makes frequent reference to Francesca D’Arcais’s work on ornamentation in the Marciana’s French manuscripts once possessed by the Gonzagas of Mantua.

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I find a little incongruous the fact that Bisson has titled his catalogue *Il fondo francese della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia* while in a footnote on the first page of the introduction he states, “La denominazione ‘fondo straniero’ sarebbe più corretta rispetto a quella usuale di ‘francese’” because “al fondo appartengono infatti anche codici in lingue diverse dal francese” (2008, p. VII, no. 5). In fact, there is no one “fondo francese,” as already mentioned, but rather an old *fonds* of Gallo-Romance manuscripts and a collection of more recent acquisitions written in a variety of Western European languages, though predominantly in French. Those 25 manuscripts described in Zanetti can be more rightly defined as “francesi”; the post-Zanetti collection of *stranieri*, as pointed out, is not actually generically “foreign,” in that the languages represented therein are still rather limited, and nevertheless Bisson addresses only the pre-modern French ones. Perhaps a title referencing the “codici francesi” (as in Ciàmpoli’s title) or the “corpus francese,” rather than the “fondo francese,” would have been more appropriate given the actual organization of the Marciana’s manuscript collections.

An important part of each entry in Bisson is the history of the manuscript that he is describing. In most cases, it involves attestations drawn from inventories composed by past collectors, namely the 1407 catalogue of the Gonzaga collection (henceforth, “Gon.”), the register compiled in 1714 upon the Marciana’s receipt of part of Giacomo Contarini’s estate (henceforth, “Con.”), two inventories – from 1722

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6 The Zanetti manuscripts are “French” only in the broadest sense of the word, for represented among them are not only the *langue d’oil* but also Franco-Italian and Catalano-Occitan (though the Catalan of Cod. Marc. Fr. XXV dates to sometime after 1500 and so should probably be classified apart from the thirteenth-century Catalano-Occitan represented in Cod. Marc. Fr. I).

7 Published in Braghirolli 1880, pp. 505-14. Bisson employs simply “Braghirolli” to refer to the Gonzaga inventory.

8 Contarini commissioned his testament in 1595 and died the following year. In this will he instructed that his collection be bequeathed to the
and 1734 – commissioned by Giambattista Recanati (abbreviated “Rec.1” and “Rec.2” respectively),9 and the supposed final draft of Zanetti’s catalogue dated 1740 (hereinafter “Zan.1”).10 This last document is an important element in the study of the Marciana’s French manuscripts. In his introduction Bisson notes, “nel passaggio dal manoscritto [i.e. Zan.1] all’edizione a stampa, si introdussero a volte nuovi errori” (VIII). He is careful to highlight some discordances between the two Zanetti versions, including the fact that in the printed edition (here abbreviated “Zan.2”)11

Marciana “post propriae familiae extinctionem” (Valentinelli 1868, p. 68), which happened only upon the death of a certain Bertuzzi Contarini on 28 December 1713 (Zorzi, 1987, p. 247). The 1714 register is conserved in Cod. Marc. Lat., Classe XIV, 21, Catasticum Librorum Tam Editorum quam Manuscriptorum.

9 Published in Ciampoli’s chapter on “Due indici inediti de’ codici francesi nella Marciana” (1900 pp. 411-18), though Bisson cites the original manuscripts and not Ciampoli’s edition: the first inventory, attributed to Apostolo Zeno, is “Codices Gallici seu Livres Gaulois.” Miscellanea di varia erudizione. Cod. Marc. It., Classe XI, 63. Fols. 22v-23r (Bisson refers to this as “inv. Zeno,” whereas I prefer to employ “Rec.1”). The second, penned this time by Giannantonio Verdani, is “Codices galli, seu en gaulois.” Catalogus Codicum Mss. quorum amplius CC. a Ioanne Baptista Recanato Patricio Veneto Publicae Venetiarum Bibliothecae testamento reliciti sunt. Anno MDCCXXXVI, II Id. Iun. Cod. Lat., Classe XIII, 77. Fols. 57r-61r (Bisson refers to this with “inv. Verdani,” whereas I have employed “Rec.2”). The latter was actually composed in 1734, not in 1736 as the title would suggest.


11 Whereas I have adopted this series of abbreviations to refer to the various inventories and catalogues and to the specific descriptions therein (for example “Rec.1” refers to the first Recanati inventory, “Rec.1 no. 2” instead refers to that inventory’s second entry), to refer to the manuscripts themselves I use the longer indication representing their current fonds and their call number (Cod. Marc. Fr. XIV; Cod. Marc. Lat.)
there are no incipits and explicits, whereas in the handwritten draft there are. This is an important fact that few scholars in the field have noted or given much heed to;\(^{12}\) however, Bisson does not reveal the full breadth of the systematic discrepancies between the two catalogues. In fact, the only real commonalities between the descriptions contained in each—at least as regard the first 22 published in Zan.\(\text{2}\)—are the external descriptions (number of pages, format, etc.). The entries regarding Cods. Marc. Fr. XXIII and XXIV (as numbered in Zan.\(\text{2}\)) show more similarities between the two catalogues, while an account of Cod. Marc. Fr. XXV appears nowhere in Zan.\(\text{1}\); what is described in that primitive version’s French section, however, is what would end up being Codex X of the Fondo Latino Antico (Cod. Marc. Lat. X) in Zanetti’s published version. Ciàmpoli, for his part, was unaware of this last manuscript until after his catalogue had been prepared for the press, but he discovered it in time and managed to append a description of it to the end of the work before its printing. It is a fragment of the New Testament in Latin with French translations. Clearly Zanetti had initially intended to include it among the French manuscripts when he prepared the draft but decided to locate it elsewhere when publishing the final version. Though I recognize the validity of Bisson’s decision to treat only those manuscripts conserved in one of the two collections explicitly containing French texts, I would like to have seen him address manuscripts catalogued elsewhere that might also be rightly described as French and in particular X; Cod. Marc. App. Str. 8; Cod. Marc. Lat., Classe XIV, 21; etc.). The indication “Cod. Marc. Fr. VII” refers to the manuscript itself; the indication “Zan.\(\text{2}\) no. 7” refers to that manuscript’s description in the published Zanetti catalogue.

\(^{12}\) Giuseppe Valentinelli was convinced that the two Zanetti versions were equal: “La Marciana […] conserva in un suo codice ms. […] la stessa opera apparecchiata alla stampa” (1872, p. 167; my italics). Gino Levi was perhaps the first to note that the two Zanetti versions were not the same: “Un […] manoscritto (cod. Marciano Lat., XIV, 110) ci dà poi, con la data 1740, la redazione primitiva del catalogo, che è assai diversa dalla definitiva” (1906, p.108, no. 168).
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Cod. Marc. Lat. X, especially given its inclusion in Zan.¹ as well as in previous inventories that are relevant to the history of the Marciana’s French collection.¹³

I will take this opportunity to expand on the relevance of Zanetti’s draft and its contents (given that they are of central importance in Bisson’s accounts), some of which were included in the published version, but many of which were entirely neglected. In the preem to his edition of the Geste Francor, published in 1925, Pio Rajna highlighted a speech that Lorenzo Tiepolo, Librarian of the Marciana 1735-42, had delivered to the Senate of the Venetian Republic in December 1741 (a few weeks after the publication of Zanetti’s second volume on the manuscripts of the Marciana). In the speech Tiepolo announced that it had been necessary to copy exactly “d’ogni libro [of the Fondo Francese Antico] il principio ed il fine, e dirgerli in Francia a soggetto studioso de’ caratteri e idiomi antichi, diligenza che riuscì fruttuosa; mentre avendosi ritratta conoscenza de’ nomi degli autori e dei titoli de’ libri, ci ha dato il modo di farne nella stampa la ricercata descrizione” (Tiepolo, p. 217). Rajna posed the question in his essay: “Chi era mai il ‘soggetto studioso de’ caratteri e idiomi antichi,’ a cui si era ricorso per lume?,” suggesting then who he thought it might in fact be: “Mi sento tratto a sospettare che potesse essere [Jean-Baptiste de] La Curne de Sainte Palaye, conosciuto forse personalmente di fresco, posto che già nel primo suo viaggio di esplorazione letteraria in Italia, che è del 1739, egli visitasse Venezia” (Rajna, 1925, p. 5). Comparing the two Zanetti versions, one sees that in the draft the library’s then custode knew none of the authors’ names and few of the titles of the manuscripts that he was

¹³ My laments echo those expressed by Lino Leonardi in his 2009 review of Bisson: “in sostanza sono descritti tutti i codici marciani che interessano la letteratura galloromanza medievale, salvo quelli che sono collocati nel fondo latino, come ad esempio i frammenti di Aspremont (lat. X 200) e di Aye d’Avignon (lat. XI 129) o il testimone principale del Livre d’Attila pubblicato da V. Bertolini nel 1976 (lat. X 96), dei quali sarebbe stata desiderabile almeno una menzione” (p. 184).

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describing. Clearly, he employed someone else to help him complete his task. But was it Sainte-Palaye, as Rajna suggested? Another little-studied inventory relative to our Fondo Francese Antico suggests that it may have been: in codex 99 of the Marciana’s “Riservati” collection (Cod. Marc. Ris. 99), which contains a series of personal writings belonging to—and once presumed written by—the abbot and custode/director of the library from 1779-1819 Jacopo Morelli, one finds on folios 296-97 a handwritten inventory titled “Notices des Manuscrits françois de la Bibliothèque de St Marc à Venise” (henceforth “Mor.”). What is striking about this document is that it is a literal equivalent, though in French, of the section in Zanetti’s published catalogue relative to the Marciana’s French manuscripts. Aside from the fact that it appears a word-for-word translation, what is remarkable is that it is lacking descriptions precisely of the two manuscripts mentioned above (Cods. Marc. Fr. XXIII and XXIV) whose published descriptions in Zan.2 drew from more of the contents originally penned in Zan.1. This, it has been revealed, is because this French inventory was not Morelli’s creation and in fact pre-dates Zanetti’s published catalogue: the official Venetian cataloguer must have had it at his disposal when composing his final version and only after having translated it verbatim into Italian did he resort back to his original draft to supply material for some of the manuscripts not described in this French document. What’s more, this brief inventory does in fact appear to be the work of Sainte-Palaye, the French académicien whom Rajna named as the likely collaborator on the printed catalogue: the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris conserves a series of documents prepared by Sainte-Palaye, some of which concern medieval French manuscripts in Italian libraries which he discovered during his trip to Italy in 1739-40—not long before the publication of Zanetti’s catalogue. Manuscripts 1658 and 1670 of the “Collection Moreau” in Paris contain Sainte-Palaye’s descriptions of 22 French manuscripts housed at the Marciana,14 some of his comments in these documents,

14 The title of the entire series of manuscripts is “Notices de manuscrits
especially regarding scholarly references to related manuscripts, match exactly those that appear both in the little-known French inventory and in Zanetti’s published catalogue, and yet match none of the descriptions in the Venetian librarian’s original version. Rajna’s suspicions coupled with evidence that has recently come to light regarding the succession of versions of the Marciana’s catalogue— which Bisson begins to uncover in his monograph but of which he does not realize the full significance—require scholars in the field to revise the widely held belief, echoed here by Bisson, that “Il sistema di descrizione adottato nel 1741 da Zanetti, considerata la rapidità con cui il catalogo fu portato a termine, risulta abbastanza accurato, in particolare per quanto riguarda l’identificazione dei testi” (2008, p. VIII). I do not take exception with Bisson’s assertion, except that the system, with regard to the French manuscripts, but was adopted by Sainte-Palaye and not by Zanetti.

I would also like to take this opportunity to expand on the histories of a few of the manuscripts that Bisson has painstakingly undertaken to present. I will begin with those that have been attributed to Giacomo Contarini: as mentioned above, the Venetian nobleman’s estate was received by the Venetian Republic in 1713 and inventories of all the goods that came with it were created. The books were divided into two groups, the first of which, including the scientifi, scolastici, and dottrinali, were placed in the care of the Marciana and inventoried in the Catasticum Librorum of the Contarini bequest (“Con.”); the second, which included those of a historical-political nature, were deposited instead in the Cancelleria Secreta (Zorzi, p. 247). Bisson attributes three of the manuscripts that he describes in his catalogue to the Giacomo Contarini collection: Cods. Marc. Fr. I, App. Str. 1, and App. Str. 23; Ciàmpoli ascribed Cod. Marc. Lat. X to Contarini as well. But in the

relatifs à l’histoire de France, conservés dans les bibliothèques de France et d’Italie.”

15 See my 2009 article “A proposito di due inventari” for a more thorough examination of the connection between Sainte-Palaye and Zanetti’s 1741 catalogue of the Marciana’s Fondo Francese Antico.
1714 record of receipt of Contarini’s collection, only three descriptions appear that regard French manuscripts:

1. Fol. 54r: “Testamentus Novus ex Collectione B. Hieronymi cum Traductione Gallica. In pergamino”

In the right margin of Con., a more recent hand has attempted to match all the manuscripts listed therein with a physical manuscript presently in the Marciana’s possession. Next to “Testamentus Novus” on fol. 54r (#1 above) appears the simple letter “X,” which clearly alludes to Cod. Marc. Lat. X. Zanetti catalogued this among the Biblioteca’s French manuscripts in Zan.1 with the title “Versione francese [senza nome di Autore] del Testamento nuovo,” while when it came time to publish the catalogue he rather classified it among the Latin manuscripts. The title “Libro in Versi” on fol. 56v of Con. (#3 above) is followed by the words “Giunta ai Fr. XXIII,” clearly a reference to Cod. Marc. App. Str. 23, which Bisson confirms to be an accurate attribution. Bisson also associates Cod. Marc. App. Str. 1 with the Contarini collection, confessing that in Con. “dovrebbe dunque essere incluso anche lo Str. App. 1, tuttavia non è stato possibile identificarlo” (2008, p. 113); similarly, Cod. Marc. Fr. I is not attested to in Con., though the Giacomo Contarini ex libris does appear on the manuscript itself (Bisson, 2008, p. 5). Does either of these match the remaining description (#2) listed above? It would seem not: the fact that Cod. Marc. Fr. I contains “Sentenze in versi provenzali” likely precludes it from being the “Versi in Franc[es]e senza nome” listed on fol. 55r of Con.; furthermore, this description talks about a manuscript “In perg[amen]a” whereas Cod. Marc. Fr. I is paper. As for Cod. Marc. App. Str. 1, it is in prose so must also not be the “Versi in francese.” The modern hand attempted to match
this description instead with an *Elettra di Sofocle*, supposedly Cod. Marc. *It.* XXIV; clearly, however, this individual intended Cod. Marc. *Fr.* XXIV, in which there is a manuscript containing this story. Zanetti declared in his printed catalogue that this manuscript was not “fra la Raccolta del Recanati,” which may have been what led the modern hand to associate the manuscript with the description in Con. But it is not true that the *Elettra di Sofocle* does not come from Recanati, for it is clearly registered in both Rec.1 and Rec.2 (nos. 6 and 9 respectively). It does not appear in Gon., nor in Sainte-Palaye’s Mor., which may account for Zanetti’s confusion in not attributing it to Recanati. Whatever the case, we are left with one description in Con. that cannot be securely attributed to any manuscript presently housed in the Marciana.

Returning to the manuscripts catalogued in Bisson’s work, another traditionally assigned provenance seems to me dubious. Ciàmpoli suggested that Cod. Marc. Fr. XIV likely came from among the Recanati collection, following Zanetti’s lead, though he admitted to having absolutely no proof to back up his claim. Bisson suggests that the lack of documentation pertaining to XIV’s provenance may be due to its “scarsa qualità materiale” insofar as he labels it a “minstrel manuscript” (2008, p. 61), a historical manuscript genre about whose existence not all scholars are in agreement. Not only is XIV not indicated in either Rec.1 or Rec.2, it is similarly absent from Gon. I see no reason to assume, as Ciàmpoli did (Bisson takes no position on this issue), that this manuscript once belonged to Recanati. I might, however, advance an alternative theory, though I would in no way commit myself entirely to it: could this be the “Versi in Franc[es]e senza nome […] In perg[amen]a” listed on fol. 55r of Con. (#2 of the three descriptions discussed above)? Zanetti’s original examination of Cod. Marc. Fr. XIV resulted in the following description in Zan.1 no. 20: “Codice XX in carta pecora […] ROMANZO [in versi] senza nome di Autore”; and a direct reading of XIV reveals no clear
title. Naturally the generic nature of both these descriptions does not allow us to claim that they are referring to the same manuscript; however, the following should be taken into consideration: 1) the provenance of only one manuscript in the Fondo Francese Antico remains unknown to scholars, and that manuscript is composed of text in French verse, lacking a title and the name of its author, and written on parchment; 2) we have no knowledge of the actual manuscript that corresponds to the description in the Contarini inventory of a French manuscript in verse, with no title, and on parchment. It would be absurd to suggest this as a definitive solution to the problem, but it seems every bit as plausible as that advanced by Zanetti and seconded by Ciàmpoli.

The history of Cod. Marc. Fr. V, the Prise de Pampelune (or Continuazione dell’Entrée d’Espagne), presents some particular difficulties: it is generally known that what Zanetti described in his published catalogue does not correspond to what currently resides in the collection, though I am not entirely satisfied with Bisson’s account of this manuscript’s inventoried history. I have traced two parallel histories relating to the manuscript and its description, one terminating in the description published in Zan.2, the other apparently terminating in the description in Zan.1 (Appendices 2 and 3). What is described in the published version (“Codice V in 4° di carta pecora, di fogli 140. Carlo Magno, ovvero la Rotta di Roncisvalle, Romanzo in versi”) can be linked to Gon. no. 52 (“Rocevay. Incipit: Carle roys a le barbe grifagne. Et finit: auter iour de mort resusistenz. Continet cart. 125”); probably to Rec.1 no. 22 (“De Vita Caroli Magni Codex membr. in fol. undequaque pictus, et carminibus exaratus. Saeculi XIV”); and to Rec.2 no. 2 (“Roncisvalles. Incipit: Charle li rois a la barbe grifaigne Set ans tos

16 Though many have deduced from a superficial reading that our story deals with a “Dos de Maence” because this name appears on the first page of the text, in line 9, with an initial “D” that is larger than the other letters around it, but not larger than the one at the beginning of line 1.
17 It will be necessary to make frequent reference to the appendices at the end of this article in order to follow the detailed analysis that follows.
pleins a este en Espagne etc. Desinit: Et il vus beneie qu la crois fu penez 
Et au ters jors de mort resuscitez. Codex membranaceus saeculi XIV. in 
4o”; see Appendix 2). What is described in Zan.1 (“Codice XXI in carta 
pecora, di fogli 101 Romanzo [in versi] che tratta dei fatti di Carlo 
Magno come pensò persona studiosa che lasciò scritta una notarella nella 
parte interna del foglio primo [senza nome di Autore]. Incom: Cum fu la 
sbare overte le vailant Roi Lombart”) corresponds to Gon. no. 58 (“Liber 
secundus Ystoriarum Ispanie. Incipit: Con fu la sbare auerte le valaynt 
roy lombard. Et finit: e de strinte e man misse. Continet cart. 101”); to 
Rec.1 no. 2 (“Roncisual. Explicit Roncisvallis—Codex superiori 
similis”); and to Rec.2 no. 24 (“Caroli Magni [ut puto] Romanus. Incipit: 
Cum fu la sbare overte le vailant roi lombart Sen isi promener sou un 
detrier liart etc. Desinit: E la ville robbe, e detruite e manomise”; see 
Appendix 3). When one compares the descriptions in Mor. with those in 
Zan.2, it would appear that Sainte-Palaye never addressed the manuscript 
now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V, for no description in Mor. 
resembles the entry published as Zan.2 no. 5 (see Appendix 2); and the 
only description in Mor. that remotely resembles that of Zan.1 no. 21 is 
Mor. ms. r, which clearly corresponds to the entry Zan.2 no. 6 (my 
emphasis; Appendix 3). The thread that includes Zan.1 no. 21 is the one 
that describes the actual manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V: 
two of the descriptions in this line, including Zan.1 no. 21, mention a 
manuscript of 101 folios, and three of them reproduce the correct incipit; 
the description Zan.2 no. 5 (see Appendix 2) refers to the “Rotta di 
Roncisvalle,” which the story contained in this manuscript pre-dates 
(Zan.1’s description is more vague, referring simply to the “fatti di Carlo 
Magno”). There appear two cross symbols in Rec.2 no. 2 (Appendix 2)

18 As I will address further on, the formats (folio, quarto, etc.) given in 
these descriptions are not always reliable. In this thread one description 
refers to a manuscript in folio whereas two others refer to one in quarto. 
Though that may seem like suitable grounds to contest my assertion, the 
unreliability of the formats given (especially in Rec.1) will be more 
evident when I discuss Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI below.
that according to Ciàmpoli indicate that this manuscript was not present among Recanati’s possessions at the time of the composition of the inventory, and this description appears to respond to Gon. no. 52 insofar as it cites the same incipit (which resembles that of the Chanson de Roland of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII) as well as the same explicit. It is known that these two descriptions however do not lead to that of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII because Gon. no. 43 and Rec.2 no. 3 cite the same explicit of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII (Appendix 5), which differs from that of Gon. no. 52 and Rec.2 no. 2; rather, they correspond to the Chanson de Roland housed at the library in Châteauroux (Appendix 2). I am of the opinion, after Ciàmpoli, that Zanetti recognized that this thread of which he had no corresponding manuscript in hand was a Chanson de Roland, and so he simply used a generic description in Zan.2 similar to the one he applied to Cod. Marc. Fr. VII; however, that does not resolve the problem of what came of his description in Zan.1 no. 21 which at first glance would appear to have no follow-up description in Zan.2. Bisson touches on this issue stating that the “errore nella quantificazione dei fogli” in entry Zan.2 no. 5—140 folios—“è dovuto al fatto che si è confuso questo codice con il Fr. 7” (2008, p. 26). He associates the actual manuscript, i.e., the one described more accurately in Zan.1 no. 21 (the Prise or Continuazione dell’Entrée), to the correct descriptions in Gon. and in Rec.2 (nos. 58 and 24, respectively), though he expresses doubt as to whether it responds to no. 1 or 2 of Rec.1. In my mind there is no doubt that it is this latter number for reasons to which I will return when discussing Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI.

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19 Bibliothèque Municipale de Châteauroux, ms. B 225. Braghirolli (513, n. 52) already connects Gon. 52 with this manuscript but makes no reference to the Recanati descriptions; in his account of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII, however, Bisson (2008, p. 33) does relate these descriptions to the Châteauroux Chanson de Roland. This manuscript and Cod. Marc. Fr. VII have long been considered closely related (Rosellini, 1960 and Mortier, 1940-44, vols. 4-5 discuss their relationship).
In each section relating to the manuscripts’ histories, Bisson mentions the position of the description in Zan.1; however, he never addresses thoroughly the differences between the contents of the individual descriptions contained in the two Zanetti catalogues. As I have already demonstrated, the discrepancies are great precisely with regard to those manuscripts of which we have descriptions supplied by Sainte-Palaye; where Sainte-Palaye did not intervene, the descriptions in Zan.2 generally resemble more those of Zan.1. This rule does not apply in the case of Cod. Marc. Fr. V, for, as I mentioned in the previous paragraph, there would appear to be no account of either thread associated with this manuscript in Sainte-Palaye’s Mor. when comparing its descriptions with those of Zan.2, but the two Zanetti descriptions of this manuscript in Zan.1 and Zan.2 do nevertheless differ. This, I believe, is because of confusion on Zanetti’s part regarding the two different threads. Since there is no apparent mention of the manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V in Mor., what did Sainte-Palaye write about it in his Notices? Bisson’s supplementary bibliography relative to this particular codex refers the reader to Rosellini’s Codici marciani di epopea carolingia, pages 52-54: what makes Rosellini’s study on these manuscripts unique relative to the majority of other scholars’ works conducted on the Marciana’s French fonds is that he draws from Sainte-Palaye’s Parisian notices in his analyses. With reference to Cod. Marc. Fr. V, at first glance Rosellini seems to make an error: he says that Sainte-Palaye dedicates notice 2079 to this manuscript, but a direct reading of the Notices reveals that 2079 is labelled r, which in Mor. clearly corresponds to Zan.2 no. 6 and not to no. 5 (again, my emphasis). In fact, Rosellini quotes Sainte-Palaye as having written in this notice, “Venise—S. Marc ou le Roman V de Charlemagne en vers. Ms que j’ai marqué V” (my italics), and then further on, “Roman de Charlemagne en vers. Ms sur vélin à longues lignes. Esc. du 14e s. comcant. ff. chiff. 101.” But Sainte-Palaye clearly did not write “que j’ai marqué V”; he wrote “que j’ai marqué r”—there is no “v” in Sainte-Palaye’s work. But aside from his misreading of the letter assigned by Sainte-Palaye to this entry, in the end Rosellini is right!
In Sainte-Palaye’s *notice* 2079 actually labelled *r*, he is not referring at all to the manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI, but rather to the real Cod. Marc. Fr. V, and he gives a description that conforms to the reality of that manuscript and to the descriptions of previous inventories, including Zan.1 no. 21: he gives the correct number of folios—101; he reports the notes written in more recent times “Caroli magni Romanus ut puto” and “Seguitur Roncivaium”; and he transcribes the accurate incipit and explicit of the actual manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V. As a result, Sainte-Palaye’s abbreviated description in Mor. ms. *r* reads: “Roman de Charlemagne ou de la Deroutte des Roncevaux, en vers français, differend de celui ci dessus marqué p. et de celui ci après marqué t.” Sainte-Palaye’s Mor. ms. *p* corresponds to Cod. Marc. Fr. IV (*Aspremont* and *Chanson de Roland*, though he only writes about the latter) and Mor. ms. *t* corresponds to Cod. Marc. Fr. VII (*Chanson de Roland*); Mor. ms. *r* was clearly intended to be a description of what would come to be designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V, but Zanetti applied it instead to what is now Cod. Marc. Fr. VI (*La Passion du Christ* and an *Aspremont*), which explains why he gave the title “Carlo Magno, ovvero la Rotta di Roncisvalle” to a manuscript that has nothing to do with Charlemagne in Spain (see Appendix 3 and how Cod. Marc. Fr. V’s thread in fact ends in the description Zan.2 no. 6) (my emphasis). Having applied the description intended for what is now Cod. Marc. Fr. V instead to Cod. VI (and with Sainte-Palaye never having addressed what is in fact now Cod. Marc. Fr. VI), Zanetti had no other of Sainte-Palaye’s descriptions from Mor. to apply to this remaining manuscript (what is now Cod. Marc. Fr. V), so he appropriated for it a similar description to that which he had prepared for Cod. Marc. Fr. VII, a manuscript with clear ties to the *Chanson de Roland* of Châteauroux, which had been described in the Gonzaga and in both Recanati inventories (compare the threads in Appendices 2 and 5 and in particular the Zan.2 descriptions no. 5 in Appendix 2 and no. 7 in Appendix 5).

Zanetti’s published catalogue describes five manuscripts as regarding Charlemagne’s and Roland’s adventures in Spain: Cods. Marc.
Fr. IV, V, VI, VII, and XXI. As we have just seen, however, associating Cod. Marc. Fr. VI with their Spanish escapades was an error. Bisson seeks to clarify the confusion by publishing the comments of a nineteenth-century scholar, Paul Edme de Musset, inked onto some of the manuscripts in question in 1846. Regarding Cod. Marc. Fr. IV he wrote, “Ce manuscrit contient deux poèmes différents: 1° Angulant et Heumon ou la bataille d’Aspremont. 2° La Deroute de Roncevaux ou la mort de Rolland. Ce dernier poème commença au feuillet 69. Venise le 24 Avril 1846” (Bisson, 2008, p. 21). Regarding what is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V, Musset revealed that the story in fact pre-dates Rencesvals: “Le poème est intitulé par erreur Carlo-Magno ovvero la rotta di roncisvalle, puisqu’il se termine au moment où commence le poème de Roncevaux du Codex VII. Celui-ci pourrait s’appeler Charlemagne en Espagne ou les sièges de Pampelune, Storga et Saragosse. Cette note ecrite à la dernière page Sequitur ronisvaium prouve que ce poème est l’introduction au codex VII” (Bisson, 2008, p. 25). The French scholar then further clarified the content of what is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI: “Ce manuscrit ne traite point de Roncevaux (Roncisvalle) ni de la mort de Rolland; mais de la bataille d’aspremont et de l’histoire de Angulant et Heumon. C’est donc par erreur qu’on l’a porté sur le catalogue sous le titre de Carlo Magno ovvero la Rotta di Roncisvale. On devait plutôt lui donner ce titre: Angulante ed Heumone ovvero la battaglia di aspromonte. Paul de Musset” (Bisson, Fondo, p. 29). Appendix 4 illustrates how Cod. Marc. Fr. VI was for some reason neglected by Sainte-Palaye in Mor. and consequently never addressed accurately in Zan.2.

20 Quotations of Musset have been reproduced in all cases as they appeared in Bisson’s text. This includes spelling, diacritical marks, and capitalization.

21 It should be noted that this discussion surrounding Cod. Marc. Fr. V is a departure from what I published recently in Romania 127. 3-4, pp. 466-67. In that article, I do not make the connection between Zanetti’s final description of Cod. Marc. Fr. VI (together with Sainte-Palaye’s Mor. ms. Olifant
In reading the accounts published in Zan. 2, one might find the description of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII inconsistent with the composition of the catalogue up to that point. One reads, “Carlo Magno, ovvero la Rotta di Roncisvalle. È diverso dagli altri due descritti sopra” (italics mine), for as we have seen, the previous three—and not two—entries in Zan. 2 (nos. 4-6) supposedly regarded the “Rotta di Roncisvalle,” even though one was in fact an erroneous attribution. This is a further indication of Zanetti’s confusion and probably of the haste with which he finalized this catalogue, for he clearly just translated Sainte-Palaye’s entry in Mor. (ms. t) and removed his references to specific manuscripts described elsewhere: Mor. ms. t reads “Roman de Charlemagne ou de la Bataille des Roncevaux, en vers françois, differend des deux ci dessus marquez p. et r” (my italics) as opposed to Zanetti’s “È diverso dagli altri due descritti sopra.”

The other of the Marciana’s chansons that take place in Spain is Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI, the Entrée d’Espagne, of which the actual Cod. Marc. Fr. V is a continuation. Bisson’s history associates Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI with Gon. no. 53, Rec. 1 no. 22, Rec. 2 no. 16, and Zan. 1 no. 9. As mentioned above, I suspect that Rec. 1 no. 22 is rather part of the thread that terminates in the “phantom” cod. V (the one that Zanetti describes in Zan. 2 no. 5, deriving from Gon. no. 52, followed by Rec. 2 no. 2, and probably actually corresponding to the Chanson de Roland of Châteauroux; see Appendix 2). My reason for making this claim is not based so much on overwhelming positive evidence that this is the case, but rather on my belief that Rec. 1 no. 2 is part of the line of descriptions terminating in the “real” Cod. Marc. Fr. V (Prise de Pampelune or r) and the thread of descriptions in earlier inventories that clearly respond to the actual Cod. Marc. Fr. V. To summarize, a superfluous description exists in Zan. 2 (which has been applied to cod. V); the description that has been applied to cod. VI (Zan. 2 no. 6) actually describes the manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V; and there is no appropriate description in Zan. 2 of the actual manuscript designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI.
Continuazione dell’Entrée d’Espagne described in Zan.1 no. 21; see Appendix 3) and that Rec.1 no. 1 relates to Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI (Appendix 6). In fact, of this last one I am most convinced: I agree with Bisson that Gon. no. 53 and Rec.2 no. 16 relate to this manuscript, as they both give the manuscript’s accurate incipit. This latter description, however, also provides the following information: “Opus, ut ait Huetius, falso Turpino Archiepiscopo adscriptus, qui duobus saeculis posterior fuit,” which is almost identical to what is found in Rec.1 no. 1: “Huetius ait cet Roman est fort mal a propos attribue a l’Archeveque Tuyrpin qui fut postérieur de deux cents ans” (a detail that seems to have eluded Bisson). Bisson may have wanted to apply to Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI the description Rec.1 no. 22 because it describes a folio manuscript, as two other descriptions associated with this manuscript (Rec.2 no. 16 and Zan.2 no. 21) do, whereas Rec.1 no. 1—which the evidence I have provided I think clearly associates it with this manuscript (see the side-by-side description in Appendix 6)—describes a quarto. But so too does the description Zan.1 no. 9 which no one would dispute as the precursor to the description eventually published for this manuscript as it refers the same number of folios—304—and the manuscript’s actual incipit.22 In wanting to apply Rec.1 no. 22 to Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI, Bisson was not sure whether Rec.1 no. 1 or no. 2 was to be applied to the Prise manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V. If we accept my proposal as to the relation of Rec.1 no. 1 to Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI (Entrée), it would then make sense that Rec.1 no. 2, “Codex superiori similis,” would refer to the Entrée’s continuation. And then only by process of elimination would Rec.1 no. 22 fit in with the Châteauroux thread that has no relevance to what currently resides in the Marciana.

Thus do I see the histories of the Marciana’s manuscripts of Charlemagne’s adventures in Spain, the confusion surrounding which

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22 See note 18 above for the beginning of this discussion on the reliability of the format attestations in the various descriptions, and especially in Rec.1. 

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can be traced back, in some cases, to Zanetti’s very act of transposing Sainte-Palaye’s descriptions onto his own published catalogue. I am pleased to have had the opportunity in discussing Bisson’s worthy work to expand on some of his findings, to suggest alternative perspectives, and even to revise some of my own conclusions presented in other forums. Bisson’s effort fills an enormous void in the area of codicological studies relative to the Marciana’s early French manuscripts. His approach is unapologetically unphilological, and the bibliographies, by Bisson’s own admission, decidedly un-exhaustive (“La bibliografia […] non è da considerare esaustiva, essendo limitata alle edizioni principali e agli studi in cui sia privilegiata l’attenzione agli aspetti materiali del manoscritto” [2008, p. XXIII]); instead, the author demonstrates precision and concision in communicating the necessary information that such an endeavour demands. Methodologically superior to Ciàmpoli’s catalogue and with over a century more of common scholarship on which to build, Bisson’s volume is an excellent example of medieval manuscript description. It should not be viewed entirely as a “replacement” of the flawed but comprehensive 1897 catalogue, for that was never the author’s aim; however, it is an indispensable resource in its organization and in its reliability for those who seek to study the Marciana’s early French treasures as a “corpus codicologico.” I hope that my analyses will further the discussion that Bisson has reopened with his new work and that my appendices tracing the histories of the manuscripts regarding Charlemagne in Spain will be a useful tool for future study.
Works Cited

Manuscripts


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Review Article: Bisson and Biblioteca Marciana MSS 217


**Printed materials**

[Note to the reader: Because the author/date system has been used for citations in the present article, multiple works by the same author(s) are listed chronologically in ascending order.]


Abbreviations

Catalogues and Inventories

**App. Str.** = *Appendice. Codici francesi e stranieri* [also called *Appendice degli Stranieri* or *Catalogo dei codici “Stranieri”*]. [Located on the shelves of the manuscript and rare books room with no call number]. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.

**Con.** = “Manoscritti scolastici.” *Catasticum Librorum Tam Editorum quam Manuscriptorum. Ser: Reipublicae Legarorum a q: V. N. Domino Iacobo Contareno* [also called *Cattastico della biblioteca Contarini*]. Cod. Marc. Lat., Classe XIV, 21 (= 4553). Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice. 1714. Cc. 54r-57v.

**Gon.** = “Capitulum librorum in lingua francigena.” Archivio Gonzaga DV, 4.I. Archivio di Stato, Mantova. Published in Braghirolli 505-14.


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23 The document here indicated as “Mor.” is a part of a larger section labelled “Studj di Jacopo Morelli in N° 9 Schede a supplimento del già stampato dallo Zanetti nel 1741 sopra li Codd. Mss. Francesi” contained within Cod. Marc. Ris. 99 (folios 296-304).

24 There seems to be no agreement among scholars on appropriate abbreviations for the Recanati inventories. Bisson employs “inv. Zeno” for what I call “Rec.1,” because it is believed that Apostolo Zeno created the first inventory for Recanati in 1722 (2008, pp. XIII).
Marciana, Venice. 1722. Cc. 1r-23r. Published in Ciàmpoli, “Due indici” 411-12.


Codices from the Marciana:

Cod. Marc. App. Str. [+ Arabic numeral] = Codex of the Appendix of “Codici Francesi e Stranieri,” Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice (manuscripts written in French and other Western-European languages that entered the collection after 1741).

25 Bisson uses “inv. Verdani” for what I call “Rec.2” because it is believe that Giannantonio Verdani, a pupil of Zeno and personal librarian of Jacopo Soranzo, may have compiled the second (1734) of the two Recanati inventories that contain descriptions of the French codices once possessed by the Gonzagas (2008, pp. XIII-XIV). In order not to generate further confusion, I have decided to indicate the two inventories that regard the Recanati collection with the same abbreviation accompanied by the Arabic numerals 1 and 2 respectively in subscript.
**Cod. Marc. Fr. [+ Roman numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo Francese Antico, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, described in Zan.2.

**Cod. Marc. It. [+ Roman numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo Italiano Antico, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, described in Zan.2.

**Cod. Marc. It., Classe [+ Roman numeral], [+ Arabic numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo Italiano (divided into classes), Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, of manuscripts that entered the collection after 1741.

**Cod. Marc. Lat. [+ Roman numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo Latino Antico, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, described in Zan.2.

**Cod. Marc. Lat., Classe [+ Roman numeral], [+ Arabic numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo Latino (divided into classes), Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, of manuscripts that entered the collection after 1741.

**Cod. Marc. Ris. [+ Arabic numeral]** = Codex of the Fondo dei Riservati, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.
### Appendix 1: Chanson d'Aspremont and Chanson de Roland (V4)

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<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gon.</th>
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The descriptions presented in Appendix 1 all refer to the manuscript that is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. IV (Chanson d’Aspremont and Chanson de Roland).

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### Appendix 2: Chanson de Roland (Châteauroux)

<table>
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<th>Designation</th>
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<th>Rec.₂</th>
<th>Zan.₁</th>
<th>Mor.</th>
<th>Zan.₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The descriptions presented in Appendix 2 refer to a manuscript that was never in possession of the Marciana. The description that Zanetti published here in Zan.₂ is drawn from that which he applied to Cod. Marc. Fr. VII (Chanson de Roland; see Appendix 5 below). Zanetti was probably aware that there had existed another manuscript with the same *incipit* as that of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII among Recanati’s collection, as Rec.₂ no. 2 clearly attests; this latter description, however, poses a different *explicit* from that of Cod. Marc. Fr. VII. Zanetti probably felt obligated to improvise an entry for this manuscript since Sainte-Palaye had provided him with no description of what was catalogued in Rec.₂ and since Zanetti himself had prepared no description of this manuscript for his initial version (Zan.₁).

Gon. no. 52 registers a manuscript containing 125 folios; Rec.₂ speaks of a quarto manuscript. Zanetti reports the same number of folios, 140, for his entry Zan.₂ no. 5 as he does for Zan.₂ no. 7 (probably because there is no mention of the number of folios in Rec.₂ no. 2), but he does change the supposed format from octavo, attested in Zan.₂ no. 7, to quarto in no. 5 (probably because that information is present in Rec.₂ no. 2). Ultimately, it is known that this thread belongs to the *Chanson de Roland* of Châteauroux; Zanetti’s description is, therefore, based on this thread but was composed in the absence of any actual manuscript.
Appendix 3: *Prise de Pampelune* or *Continuazione dell’Entrée d’Espagne*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gon.</th>
<th>Rec.1</th>
<th>Rec.2</th>
<th>Zan.1</th>
<th>Mor.</th>
<th>Zan.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The descriptions presented in Appendix 3 all refer to the manuscript that is in fact designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V (*Prise de Pampelune* or *Continuazione dell’Entrée d’Espagne*), despite the fact that it appears as number VI in Zan.2. In other words, an appropriate description was made of what is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V but it was applied to the wrong manuscript, that which is consequently now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI (see Appendix 4 below).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gon.</th>
<th>Rec.₁</th>
<th>Rec.₂</th>
<th>Zan.₁</th>
<th>Mor.</th>
<th>Zan.₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incipit: <em>Apres le pasce, quando Jhesus dure payne</em>. Et finit: <em>Fini est le libre Jhesu merce en som</em>. Continet cart. 69.</td>
<td>In calce legitur: <em>E fu a XXVI de luni de scriver feni il son Fini est li libre yhu merci en son</em>. In MCCCLXXI exemple el son. Codex membran. in fol.</td>
<td>Incipit: <em>Apres le passe quand Jesus dure paine Oul [Doul e] travaille sol por la jens humaine etc.</em>.</td>
<td>Desinit: et si nos conduc aul regne celestins Celui de glorie chi confundi chains. Conseguitur Roncisvallis qui ut alii incipit: Qui voit entendre voyre çançon etc.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desinit: <em>E fu a XX. de Juni de scris [descrì] feni il son In M.CCCLXXI. exemple el son Fini est le libre jhu merci en son. Codex membranaceus saeculi XIV in fol magno.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dagli ultimi versi si comprende essere stato scritto questo Codice l’anno MCCCLXXI.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptions presented in Appendix 4 all refer to what is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI (*La Passion du Christ* and the *Chanson d’Aspremont*). Sainte-Palaye created no description of this manuscript and Zanetti, despite having done so for Zan.₁, provided no description of it in Zan.₂; instead, the description originally destined for the manuscript designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V (see Appendix 3 above) has been erroneously applied to the manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VI.
### Appendix 5: *Chanson de Roland* (V7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gon.</th>
<th>Rec.₁</th>
<th>Rec.₂</th>
<th>Zan.₁</th>
<th>Mor.</th>
<th>Zan.₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The descriptions presented in Appendix 5 all refer to the manuscript that is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. VII (*Chanson de Roland*). Though the description in Zan.₂ states that it is different from the above two entries described as “Carlo Magno, ovvero la rota di Roncesvalle,” there are indeed three such entries in Zan.₂. Zanetti, it turns out, used the exact same description (including number of pages) for two entries: the manuscript rightly described and designated as number VII, and the manuscript that was probably already absent when Zanetti published his catalogue (see Appendix 2 above). That description bears the number V, but in no way corresponds with the actual manuscript now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. V (the *Prise de Pampelune* or the continuation of the *Entrée d’Espagne*; see Appendix 3 above). For this latter manuscript, Zanetti did create an appropriate description, but that description became erroneously associated with the manuscript designated as number VI (see Appendix 4 above), for which Sainte-Palaye never supplied an account and for which no appropriate description appears in Zan.₂.
### Appendix 6: Entrée d’Espagne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gon.</th>
<th>Rec.₁</th>
<th>Rec.₂</th>
<th>Zan.₁</th>
<th>Mor.</th>
<th>Zan.₂</th>
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</table>

The descriptions presented in Appendix 6 all refer to the manuscript that is now designated as Cod. Marc. Fr. XXI (*Entrée d’Espagne*). The references to Pierre-Daniel Huet in Rec.₁ no. 1 and Rec.₂ no. 16 are a clear indication that these two descriptions are connected; the latter then gives the manuscript’s *incipit*, which also corresponds with entries Gon. no. 53 and Zan.₁ no. 9.
Book Review

Fierabras and Floripas: A French Epic Allegory


Michael A.H. Newth, who previously published a translation of *Aymeri of Narbonne* with Italica Press, has produced another volume of French epic rendered in English. In this case, he has chosen to publish as one continuous tale two separate works, *La Destruction de Rome* and *Fierabras*. Both are part of the popular French epic Charlemagne cycle, and *La Destruction* clearly precedes *Fierabras* in the connected narrative, although the composition of the latter may predate the former. As Newth explains in his introduction, both trace their origin to a lost epic commonly referred to as *La Chanson de Balan*. Thus, by combining two tales that have come down in separate manuscript traditions and recounting them as a single narrative, Newth offers an approximation of what one might surmise to be the older version of the story. Moreover, by giving it the title he does, he not only focuses on the legend of the fierce Saracen giant Fierabras who triumphantly seizes the holy relics of Christ’s passion from a vanquished and pillaged Rome, battles a wounded Oliver, and, once defeated by this champion of God, converts enthusiastically to Christianity, he also highlights the important secondary story of Fierabras’s beautiful and aggressive sister, Floripas, who falls ardently in love with Gui de Bourgogne and, with energy and an appreciable dose of violence, overcomes every obstacle in the path towards fulfillment of her passionate attachment.

Newth provides a twenty-four page introduction divided into sections entitled Genre, Authorship, Artistic Achievement, Sources and Influences, and Editorial Policy—standard divisions for introductions to American editions of medieval works. This is followed by a bibliography which unfortunately is not always clearly tied to the introduction. For example, Newth lists several studies of the motif of the Saracen princess

26.2
but makes no reference to them in his introduction aside from Crosland’s (although appropriately so as a negative example—he quotes her reference to Floripas as “one of a line of repulsive females” [p. xx]). It might have been helpful for him to explain on what basis he formulated his proffered Select Bibliography, which includes many works beyond those actually cited. Another quibble is an unfortunate slip whereby the full bibliographical citation for a parenthetical reference on page xxv of the introduction, “(Stimming, 550-88),” fails to appear in the bibliography.

When translating medieval works, there is always a choice to be made as to how literal a translation to produce. Even a translation clearly intended for scholars (and particularly a facing-page translation) which attempts to follow the original language as much as possible must veer from strict literality owing to the differences between one language and another. But poetic choices can range more widely in a translation removed from its original and intended for a more general audience. Newth gives us an adaptation that renders the liveliness and vigorous qualities of the original and plumbs the varieties of English poetic language to do so. He chooses to use approximate assonance in most of the lines of a laisse since it is impossible without excessive straining to provide rhymes throughout as in the original. He also adds numerous alliterations that add much to the pleasure of reading the text. Moreover he excels in maintaining the humor, the dynamic violence, and the dramatic tension of the tale. I particularly enjoyed his version of the episodes recounting the siege of the Muslim stronghold where a group of Christian knights along with Floripas and some of her maidens are enclosed in the Saracen keep. The knights sally forth to seize food supplies or to engage in battle the Saracen forces surrounding them, but at times, the ladies join in the battle, hurling rocks from on high on the enemy forces below.

Another feature of Newth’s translation is a happy use of English rhythms and imagistic vocabulary. For example, he renders l. 1263 “Li moustiers en poi d’houre fu des payens poeple[sic]” as “Till every aisle
was seething with Satan’s renegades” (p. 36).” In another instance, “Li fix Renier de Gennes” is rendered twice as “Geneva’s pride and joy” (p. 52)—far from literal, but providing a rhythm to fit the line and using an expressive English epithet for “son.”

On occasion, one might find the liveliness of the translation a bit excessive, as in the rendering of the following passage:

Rollans et Oliviers adonques s’atourna,
En une camber vint où Mahomet esta,
Apolins et Margos, ù l’ors reflambois.
Cascuns a prins le sien, à son col le carça,
Rollans tint Apolin, durement se hasta,
Ens en la gregneur presse de paiens le froissa.
Et Ogiers prinst Margot, après lui le lancha;
Oliviers, Tervagant, après aus le rua.

Count Olivier spun round as gallant Roland sprinted
To reach that vaulted room where false Mahoment’s figure
Was cast in shining gold, beside his evil kindred.
Each baron picked one up and piggy-backed an image,
With Roland in the lead—Apollo was his piggy!—
Then dropped them on the Moors wherever they were the thickest!
Duke Ogier hugged Margot—but not for long—he ditched him,
Then Olivier alike duped Tervagant as quickly! (p. 194)

To “piggy-back an image” is already a very colloquial way to say that each Christian hero loaded a statue on his back, even though it does transmit the idea that the knights have no respect for the “pagan” gods and adds another layer of disrespect in alluding to the animal flesh forbidden to Muslims. However, to add that Apollo was Roland’s piggy is perhaps taking a bigger liberty than even the humorous intent of the narrator, who is describing how these statues become missiles in the ongoing battle between the besieged Christians and the surrounding
Saracens, can justify; nor, at least to this reviewer’s knowledge, is it a common phrasing in English.

Another translation quibble—“amiral” is usually correctly translated as “emir,” but in one instance on page 9 it is translated as “admiral,” probably because it is translated as “emir” in the previous line and English style tends to demand avoidance of repetition of nouns. However, “admiral” in modern English always implies a sea commander, so the translation would have been better served by another variant like “commander” or simply “lord.” Overall the text is well proofed with only one error noted by this reviewer where “fiancée” appears instead of “fiancée” (p. 140), even though it clearly refers to Guy and not to Floripas.

One last criticism: to emphasize the unity of the two texts, the translator has chosen not only to create one continuous text, he has also divided the text into four divisions called “Gestes” (p. xxxi) which follow what he sees as the four stages of Fierabras’s “long personal journey to a state of grace,” namely Vanity, Submission, Desires, Deserts (p. xix). He sees Floripas’s conversion in similar terms (pp. xxi-xxii). While it might make sense simply to organize the text into logical chapters for the ease of modern readers, I find somewhat artificial and extraneous the imposition of such a thematic schema on a text which is in many ways polymorphic, indeed a motley of storylines concerning not only the adventures of Fierabras and Floripas, but also Charlemagne, Oliver, Roland, Guy de Bourgogne, Naimon, and others. It does not add to our understanding of the text or to the quality of what Newth has achieved here: a lively and entertaining rendering of a medieval classic that should please and serve the needs of general readers, students, and scholars alike.

SHIRA SCHWAM-BAIRD
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In her opening acknowledgements, Leslie Zarker Morgan thanks those who have followed her work on Franco-Italian texts over a period of more than thirty years. It behoves a reviewer at the outset of a review of this edition even more to thank Zarker Morgan for her unwavering commitment to the study and editing of these texts and for her constant desire to draw to the attention of new generations of students their too-often ignored literary merits and linguistic charms. The journey to the publication of these two volumes has indeed been a labor of love.

At the core of this publication there is the edition of the nine texts that make up Marc. Fr. XIII, commonly known as V^{13}: Enfances Bovo; Berta da li pe grant; Chevalerie Bovo; Karleto; Berta e Milone; Enfances Ogier le Danois; Orlandino; Chevalerie Ogier le Danois; Macario. These are seminal texts for the Italian tradition of the chansons de geste as it developed into the great genre of poemi cavallereschi in ottava rima, and equally are significant for their influence on the great prose compilations, such as those of Andrea da Barberino in the early fifteenth century. The story of Bovo remained popular into the Renaissance and indeed was one of the few such texts to spark off a dedicated series of illustrations for printed versions; while the undying enmity of the house of Maganza, which is recounted here from its beginnings in the early history of Berta da li pe grant right through to Macario, was to become a standard thematic topos of the Italian tradition, reaching its apogee in Luigi Pulci’s Morgante, in which Gano
di Maganza commands what amounts to an international criminal spy ring designed to disrupt and destroy the paladins.

Hitherto, in particular for students, and especially for those outside Italy, access to these texts in a clear and readable form, and in a single place has been problematic. The most recent, and virtually the only edition of the complete manuscript before Zarker Morgan’s, is that of Aldo Rosellini, which appeared in 1986. This is undoubtedly an important predecessor, as Zarker Morgan acknowledges, but it has also a number of defects. In publishing her edition, Zarker Morgan aims to supplement and enhance Rosellini’s edition, correcting errors, but also, as she indicates in the preface, drawing on “techniques not available at that time” (i.e., 1986), in particular the opportunities afforded by digitized texts for exhaustive and reliable linguistic statistics and analyses. This approach to linguistic and editorial work valuably informs a number of the sections of the Introduction, in volume 1.

Any discussion of Franco-Italian as a language is fraught with problems, starting with the still unresolved dispute between those scholars who view it as a full language (comparable for example to Provençal), those who view it as a hybrid or koiné (comparable to the linguistic mix of Norman England), and those who view it as an artificial literary construct. The situation is further complicated by the vagaries of orthography and the difficulties of assessing the sounds represented by any one phoneme. In section 2 (I, pp. 17-52) Zarker Morgan reviews the range of theories and approaches. She notes how dependent scholars remain on the philological studies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the problems that arise if one accepts the views of scholars such as Holtus that this is “une langue artificielle stylisée et très littéraire” when in many respects Franco-Italian texts are not very literary (in the accepted sense) at all. Zarker Morgan’s discussion here should prompt new research on these linguistic dilemmas.

Working on a digitized text and using computer concordancing, Zarker Morgan has been able to count the phoneme frequencies and to report these by type and token. She has thus not only been able to check

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the theories and decisions of previous editors and scholars but naturally also to use the coherent statistical counts yielded to inform the choices made in her own edition of these texts. The conclusions she draws, for example, on the presence/absence of diphthongs are very useful.

The discussion of certain phonological elements continues into the longer section on morphology (I, p. 30 ff.). Given the lack of any apparent standard, the morphology of Franco-Italian texts is especially problematic. Zarker Morgan surveys some of the most important aspects, including noun endings and the difficulties posed by the need to assess whether the writer is tending, in any one case, towards French or towards Italian usage, as well as the problem of judging word accents (and so, for example, verb forms) in texts which do not mark these. Verbs provoke indeed a range of morphological conundrums, given the sheer range of variations possible for the personal endings of the different tenses and the numerous inconsistencies of agreements. Working out the precise meaning and appropriate form constitutes for the editor of these texts a perpetual crux. In addition, verb forms (as continued to be the case into the sixteenth century for Italian) are frequently modified and manipulated to fit the rhyme or assonance ending required. Zarker Morgan has carried out a great deal of analysis on this aspect and reports very useful findings in a series of tables (section 3, I, pp. 53-71). Concluding her discussion of the language of these texts, Zarker Morgan suggests that what emerges above all is the ambiguity inherent in referring to the language of written texts like these as “Franco-Italian” implying phonological and morphological norms which often do not exist even within a single text. This would seem to militate against arguments for Franco-Italian as a literary language since in such a literary language one would expect to find fixed, accepted forms, but Zarker Morgan does not go on to stress here the much more important point, namely that the range of variants, the flexibility and dynamism of the language, are evidence of a vibrant oral tradition and even indeed of performance texts. The manuscript may indeed have been compiled for a princely patron (the Gonzaga), but the texts derive from the traditions of the giullare and the cantastorie.
The longest section of the Introduction (I, pp. 73-254) deals with the content of the narratives, including, for each individual text, a discussion of the general outline of the story, a presentation of the version found in V\textsuperscript{13}, other Italian and other European versions, considerations of similarities and differences, and in some cases tables of names of characters. The chief motive for this format is, as Zarker Morgan states (p. 73): “the chansons in V\textsuperscript{13} belong to European tradition,” and the approach taken aims to allow each text to be set in the wider European context and to underline the connections between the individual texts in this cyclic compilation. There is undoubtedly an enormous amount of useful and detailed information in this section on the literary dimensions, but this reviewer nevertheless felt a number of reservations about the incorporation here of so much material, reservations which relate, in part, to placing and format. Firstly, this section 4, “The Literary Contents of V\textsuperscript{13},” is unhappily placed between the linguistic, stylistic, and metrical sections (2 and 3) and the discussion of editing criteria and transcription norms (section 6). This would be less problematic if the section were relatively brief, but its sheer length detracts from and disrupts the more strictly philological and stylistic considerations which surely should form not just the core but the greater part of an introduction to a critical edition. The proportions devoted to these various sections seem out of balance. Secondly, for each text the same subheadings appear, even when there is no information to record. Zarker Morgan justifies this (p. 74) as allowing the reader “to follow a specific line of national interest,” but it does lead to rather pointless sections, such as on page 203: “Dutch versions. There are no Dutch versions.” Surely a simple statement would have sufficed, in the opening remarks of section 4, to the effect that where no mention is made of, e.g., Dutch versions, the reader should conclude that there are none? The format of always using the same headings smacks too much of the editor’s original working notes, which would have been better revised and edited down for publication. The most useful parts in this extended section are the discussion paragraphs which conclude the textual comparisons of each text. These make a

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number of good and very interesting observations of a comparative kind, but overall the discussion of the literary aspects of each of the texts would have been stronger if the focus had been only on the closest predecessors and parallels to the nine texts of \( V^{13} \), while confining mention of narratives only marginally relevant, either because the narrative content is very distant or because there is no evidence of dependence or influence on them, to the footnotes. This would have allowed a greater prominence to the editor’s own critical insights, which here are rather submerged in the preponderance of plot résumés and summaries of the views of previous critics, often on texts of little direct relevance to \( V^{13} \). It would also have created space for addressing fundamental questions for the Italian tradition, such as the source texts used by Andrea da Barberino (see p. 111) in compiling his prose versions. Indeed this section on the literary traditions might better have appeared in a companion volume devoted to the full range of literary and critical elements.

Section 4 is followed by the bibliography before we come to the presentation of the editorial norms in section 6. These are very clearly set out and touch again in many cases on the linguistic problems highlighted in the earlier sections. The main emphasis is on transcription norms, and it is perhaps disappointing to find here little reference to editions of other Franco-Italian texts and the solutions proposed in those editions, which might have supported (or indeed challenged) the approaches adopted by Zarker Morgan.

The text of the nine narratives is divided between volumes one and two. After the last of the narratives, there follow the endnotes (footnotes for each text relate only to other readings, especially in other critical editions). The endnotes provide much help and guidance relating to interpretation, and Zarker Morgan is admirably honest about the uncertainties of decipherment and of meaning consequent upon both the state of the manuscript and the complexities of the language. The endnotes also provide an exhaustive comparison of her readings with those of previous editors, but though all of the information is valuable, not all of it is equally useful here, and indeed some would gain greater
prominence in discrete publications. Volume two concludes with an extremely complete glossary and indexes of subjects and of titles.

The placing of the endnotes after all the nine texts brings me to my only really major reservation about this edition, one over which Zarker Morgan herself may have had little or no control, namely the ordering of the material and the issue of ease of use for the reader. For the texts contained in volume one, the ability to see the endnotes (in volume two) simultaneously with the text is a great boon, but this arrangement does not of course extend to the texts contained in volume two. Surely it would have been preferable to gather all the linguistic and critical material, including the glossary in one volume – of support materials – and print all of the texts in the other? The texts run to a total of approximately 630 pages; the support material (introduction, glossary, indices etc.) to approximately 850. Editing down section 4 would have brought the two to close on the same dimensions, and even if this had not been done, two volumes of slightly differing lengths is surely an option. As it stands, the logic of printing 400 pages of text in volume one and 220 in volume two defeats me.

My other practical concern is the sheer size and weight of these volumes. Ideally they should reach students, as suggested above and as, I am sure, Zarker Morgan would wish, but the format and bulk do not seem designed to favour this. It would be a great pity if these volumes only reached the shelves of major libraries and stayed there. Franco-Italian texts, and these in particular, are lively and, with a modicum of familiarity, delightful to read. Zarker Morgan knows how important they are for the serious study of the Italian chivalric tradition and has worked with immense dedication to bring these texts to a wider audience. She has made a major contribution to extending our knowledge of the many fascinating details of these narratives, both literary and linguistic, and her edition will, I sincerely hope, provoke new readings and new research. She is to be congratulated for all this, and for her tenacity in bringing such a complex and vital project to its published conclusion.

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Olifant
Violence was a way of life in medieval Spain, at least as depicted in the relevant historical chronicles, wisdom literature, Marian miracle stories, narrative poetry in Latin and in the vernacular, and most abundantly, epic poems, where heroic stature grows in close relation to victories on the field of combat. In general we may assume that strength and the courage of conviction, along with a clever battle plan, or, when that fails, divine intervention, will lead to success in combat and that success in turn will augment material wealth and eventually social stature. Fernán González and the youthful Rodrigo Díaz are two excellent examples of warriors whose unwillingness to bear the burden of service or to offer tribute to a higher authority forces them to take up the sword against extreme superior powers, to eventually prevail against their enemies, and in doing so, to win pride of place in the pantheon of Castilian warrior heroes.

The mature Rodrigo Díaz is assuredly the best known of the Castilian warriors. His real-life battlefield victories led him to become the undisputed prince of Valencia, the independent ruler of his own kingdom, although never a king. In the first narrative of his exploits, the Historia Roderici (c. 1110), put into Latin prose shortly after his death in 1099, Rodrigo is constantly engaged in fighting, at times against rival Christians but almost always against armies of Christians and Moors who have allied to fight him as a common menace and only a few times against Muslim invaders from North Africa. In fact, there is so much fighting in the narration that we learn almost nothing of Rodrigo’s personal life. Even so, reality seems to have been even more extreme, as the narrator informs us that “It would take too long—and perhaps would
tax the patience of readers—to narrate in order all the battles which Rodrigo and his companions fought and won, or to list all the lands and settlements which his strong right arm wasted and destroyed with the sword and other weapons. [...] While he lived in this world he always won a noble triumph over the enemies who fought him in battle. Never was he defeated by any man” (Barton and Fletcher, 2000, p. 176). From this evidence we can surely state that Rodrigo’s battlefield exploits seem to have met with approval by a well-placed Christian chronicler writing soon after his death.

Some one hundred years after the penning of the Historia Roderici, the vernacular Poema de mio Cid (c. 1207) was put to parchment. Here too, the narrator unequivocally celebrates Rodrigo’s victories on the field of battle, and describes in great detail the wealth that these victories bring, along with its attendant social status and prestige. This is, in essence, the message of the story. The Cid was unjustly exiled by his king, and his battle prowess and leadership of men in extremely difficult circumstances brought him enormous wealth, which he deftly deployed in pursuing a return to the king’s goodwill, ultimately winning for himself prestige in the king’s court. Subsequently, the Cid is shown to be fallible, allowing his eagerness to retain the kings’s good graces to cloud his judgment, as he agrees to the king’s request to marry his daughters to two miscreants, the Infantes of Carrión. The marriage ends in violence, as the Infantes take revenge for their own shortcomings against their wives, beating them mercilessly and leaving them for dead in the wild oak wood of Corpes. The king accepts responsibility for initiating the marriage proposal and accedes to the Cid’s demand for his day in court. In the proceedings the Cid ably defends his honor and that of his family, ultimately winning vindication over the haughty Infantes, who are forced to defend themselves in singular combat and as a result are humiliated by the Cid’s men and consequently stripped of their noble status.

Most seasoned readers of the poem would concur with the forgoing summary, although this reading is certainly put to the test in the new book by Julio F. Hernando, which is a sophisticated critical inquiry into Olifant
the role of violence in medieval Spanish culture in general and in the Spanish epic in particular, especially its role in the thematic development of the *Poem of the Cid*. Hernando is very clear and precise in the articulation of his ideas and brings a good deal of creative insight into refashioning familiar passages and themes from the poem. Violence is surely an important theme in the work and in the society it represents, and Hernando deploys an impressive arsenal of critical theory in making an intelligent case for the need to examine this aspect of the work directly.

More specifically, Hernando supports the interpretation that the use of violence in the poem leads to the acquisition of booty, which in turn brings heightened status to the Cid (p. 57), but only for the first half of the poem. For the second half, Hernando employs his considerable analytical skills and his refreshingly rich critical arsenal, most impressive in social theory, especially the work of Michael Harney (in particular Harney, 1993), to argue that the very violence that propelled the Cid to his conquest of the kingdom of Valencia and to new heights in social status is also responsible for the violence perpetrated on his daughters and the dishonor brought to him and his inner circle of loyal vassals.

Remarkably, the best indicator of this paradoxical representation of violence in the poem is the lowly moneylenders Rachel and Vidas, who provide the Cid with a loan to fund his campaign of aggression against the Moorish settlements as he first leaves Castile and moves into exile. The Cid and his most trusted vassal, Martín Antolínez, trick the moneylenders into believing that a chest they have given to secure the loan is filled with a king’s ransom. By the time the moneylenders reappear, the Cid is at the height of his power, and his men ignore their pleas for repayment of the loan. Desperate to recover their money, they resort to verbal threats against the Cid, clearly not grasping the hilarity of their posturing. In Hernando’s formulation, the Cid’s slight of the moneylenders is morally equivalent to the Infantes’ violent beating and abandonment of their defenseless wives in the oak wood of Corpes. The defect of the Cid, then, is “la aceptación de los procesos de victimización,
del uso de la destrucción y del despojo del débil como fundamento de construcción social” (p. 102).

If the hero of the poem is not the model of right action for the poet and his audience, then where are we to turn? Hernando posits that the king is the real hero in that his role provides the social reform that the poet intended his work to propose. The Cid is a failed hero in that he is ultimately incapable of governing the society he inhabits. In order to resolve this situation, he is forced to call upon his king for justice. In this sense, the poem is a fable for political legitimacy, oriented towards the desirability of the subordination of the aristocracy to the crown (p. 154). As reinforcement of his reading of the poem, Hernando points to other texts of the period that propose a similar restructuring of the body politic, namely the Siete partidas and the Estoria de Espanna, both supervised by Alfonso X in the latter half of the thirteenth century.

Hernando proposes an audacious new reading of the poem, one that clearly rejects important aspects of a long-standing interpretative tradition of filtering all action through the prism of the Cid as hero of the poem, the model of success in a society geared for warfare. To some degree Hernando’s audacity reflects previous readings of the poem. Although the connection is not entirely clear in his book, Irene Zaderenko comes to mind as one who has suggested that all action in the poem leads to the dispensing of justice by the king in the Cortes episode (Zaderenko, 1998b) and that the narrative is guided by an overall literary conception and message (Zaderenko, 1998a). Hernandez certainly brings important theoretical resources to his reading of the poem, such as Curtius, Foucault, Girard, Rolena Adorno, Hayden White, etc., and with these resources refreshingly new interpretive insights. Yet others who have actually studied the poem and made meaningful contributions to our understanding of it and of the epic genre, such as Thomas Montgomery, Samuel Armistead, and Mercedes Vaquero, are simply not cited. Incorporating the work of these stellar scholars enriches any critical reading of the poem. If the author does not share their views, he needs to take the time to explain this to his readers.

Olifant
Overall the book is an exciting contribution to the field. It is well written and reveals a highly intelligent and thoughtful reader. This reviewer looks forward to future work by the author in what will surely be a productive and engaging scholarly career.

MATTHEW BAILEY
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Works Cited


Book Review
La Prise d’Orange


The Prise d’Orange, third and final poem in the kernel cycle of Guillelme Fierebrace, has been well served in the past half century. Dufournet (1968), Kibler (1974), Payen (1970), not to mention Lachet (1972), have made it clear that this telling of how William of Orange captured the city which gave him his name, by injecting a powerful dose of comedy into the hero’s biography, gives to the bloodthirsty heroics of epic a twist not only entertaining but (if we shake off some preconceptions about the period) very much in tune with the taste of our times. The text itself has been available in its multiplicity since Régnier’s editio maior of 1966 and then in its (probably) best telling, the A version, Régnier’s editio minor (1966; rev. ed. 1983), translated by Lachet and Tusseau (1972). Specialists will continue to refer to Régnier (1966; 1983), but this new, bilingual edition gives reason to hope that the poem will soon make frequent appearances in the classroom, undergraduate and graduate, and become a fixture in the home library.

For the Prise d’Orange is a masterpiece worthy of a prominent place in the cultural baggage of the educated public. Parody or slapstick, not only are William’s adventures as told in the A version of the two closely related poems, the Charroi de Nîmes and the Prise d’Orange, very much in tune with our contemporary taste, the telling of those adventures found in that version is extraordinarily clever. Although I would contest Lachet’s “sans conteste” (p. 59),¹ I can agree heartily with him that the A version of the two poems is brilliant.

¹ “Des trois chansons du triptyque, la Prise d’Orange offre sans conteste la structure la plus soignée et la plus cohérente […].” The contours of the
As he did for the *Charroi de Nîmes* (Lachet, 1999), Lachet uses a base manuscript other than the one already in print. For the *Charroi*, McMillan (1972) edited ms $A^2$ (BNF fr. 1449) and Lachet ms $A^1$ (BNF fr. 774); for the *Prise*, Régnier edited $A^1$ and Lachet edits $A^2$. The end of the *Prise* is truncated in both manuscripts, and for the end of the poem both editors resort to $A^3$ (BNF fr. 368), the only one of the four $A$ manuscripts to give the complete text. The differences between $A^1$ and $A^2$ are for the most part minor and certainly pale in comparison to the divergences in the $B$, $C(E)$, and $D$ versions (a sampling of which can be found at the end of the volume: *Choix de variantes*, pp. 221-31, and *Annexes*, pp. 233-37).

A few early divergences (other than spelling) between the two editions suffice to illustrate both the variants among the $A$ mss and the kind of detail, both usually minor, to which, however, the specialist will want to be alert when quoting the text. (See below for a significant divergence, resulting from minor variants, at the opening of laisse XXI.)

- IV 78 R. *lor fauconceaus au vent*, L. *l.f. volant*. $A^2A^4$ agree, and $A^2$ supports them but opposes *faucons reaus* to laisse in the *Prise* are distinctly crisper than in the *Charroi*, and *soigné* and *cohérent* would apply, but for the overall structure of the two poems, for the play of laisse, echo, and story line in them, *sans conteste*, the *Charroi* is the champion. A comparison of the two would be extremely instructive about the narrative and poetic possibilities of epic versification.

2 The two $B$ and the four $A$ mss of the so-called Vulgate bear enough resemblance in the kernel cycle to be grouped together; they do, however, differ enough that editors since Régnier have given their variants in separate paragraphs. In the synoptic edition of the *Enfances Vivien* the $A$ and $B$ versions receive equal status: the four columns aligned two to a page across facing pages, with variants at the foot of the page, give respectively the Boulogne ms (called $B$ in that edition, now given the siglum $C$), ms 1448 ($A$, now $D$), ms 1449 ($C^l$, now $A^2$), and British Library Royal 20 D XI ($D^l$, now $B^1$) (Wahlund and von Feilitzen, 1895).
fauconceus in the other three mss. $A^1$ misread the model but produced an intelligible reading, which R. retained. In his *Choix de variants* (p. 221) L. notes the two other $A$ readings as well as $B$ and $C$ 77 and $D$ 33, in the latter of which *lor falconcias volent* gives further support to *volant*.


- VI 156 R. *nos*, L. *me*. $A^2$ is the only $A$ ms to give the singular. The two $B$ mss, however, also give a singular (see R.).

- VIII 218 R. *ne m’en poi eschaper*, L. *n. me p.e*. $A^2$ is alone. $B$ gives *lor*.

An awkward difference between the Régnier and Lachet editions, however, occurs in laisse VIII and throws off line numbering for the rest of the poem. The escapee Guillebert is narrating his escape from prison in Orange and itinerary down the Rhône when suddenly he veers off rather unintelligibly into a description of Aragon, son of Tiebaut. The four $A$ mss agree on an incoherent reading:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ving a Beaucaire} & \quad \text{au port soz Oriflor} \ldots & 227 \\
\text{Tur et Persant} & \quad \text{et li rois d’Aragron} & 229 \\
\text{Li ainznez filz} & \quad \text{a Tiebaut l’Esclavon} \\
\text{Granz est et gros} & \quad \text{et parcreüz et lons}
\end{align*}
\]

3 The rhythm of the epic decasyllable is such an important component of meaning in the genre that, in quoting the texts, I separate hemistichs and suppress the editors’ modern punctuation.
In order to keep the line numbering found in Tobler-Lommatzsch, Régnier maintains the one-line lacuna in the text postulated by Jonckbloet (1854). Lachet, on the other hand, uses the reading found in the two B mss and provides an intelligible text:

\begin{itemize}
\item IX R. 251 \emph{planté}, L. 250 \emph{assez}. (Choix p. 222 \emph{A} stands alone.)
\item IX R. 253 \emph{a dant Tiebaut}, L. 252 \emph{au roi T}. (Choix p. 222 \emph{A} stands alone.)
\item IX R. 266 \emph{Se ge n’en ai}, L. 265 \emph{Se ge ne voi}. (Choix p. 222 \emph{A} stands alone.)
\end{itemize}

The inconvenience resulting from divergent line numbering is, in a way, an image of the delicate balance between audiences, the specialist wanting an accurate image of the facts in all their complexity, the general public needing an intelligible text.

Serving the latter, in a number of instances Lachet puts into the text an emendation (marking it with italics) which Régnier recommends in note, Régnier showing careful respect of his base ms and Lachet making the text more readily accessible but also providing an image, sometimes in the notes and sometimes in the \emph{Choix}, of the complexities.

\footnote{He puts in italics all emendations to the base manuscript.}
• X R. 270 fez a voltes et a lices, L. 269 fet a.v.e.a. listes. R. observes in note that listes in B and C is preferable, the palace being described as listé in A 407 (L. 406). L. (p. 107) adds that, while “palissades” (lices) can be understood, he has adopted “bordered with mosaics” (listes); Choix p. 222 gives the BC (f. a compas et a listes) and D (f. a vanes et a lites) readings.

• XV R. 405 Par Arragon, L. 404 P. Avignon. Keeping the reading found in all four A mss, R. notes that a reviser has expunctuated the g in A and written an m above it. He prefers Par Avignon (in D 240) as a more plausible itinerary than Aramon on the right bank. L. emends on the basis of D but without comment. The sequence of place names is in any case somewhat confused: the three men go to the Rhône at Beaucaire (400) and carry on carefully (401 Et a doutance l’ont il outre passé), rowing upstream (402 A l’aviron se nagierent soëf), and passing the Sorgue (403), which is upstream of both Aramon and Avignon in line 404.

• XXXI R. 983 madame de Valronne (lowercase in ed.maj., uppercase in ed.min.), L. 982 Madamen de Valtoune. (Each ms has its own version of the place name.) R. remarks in his notes and index of names that madame is likely to be a misreading of a name like Maudoine. Is it an oversight that L. gives no indication of having emended the text, or has he discerned a tilde in his ms?

• XL R. 1211 Onc nul estor ne fu si bien feni, L. 1210 O.n.e.n.f.s.b. fornis. R. observes in note that feni, found in the the four A mss, is used for the successful outcome of a battle and is therefore inappropriate here. L. emends
accordingly to fornis as found in B. He notes further (p. 227) that C omits the line.

- LII R. 1506 qui se fet li plus fins, L. 1505 Q.s.f.l.p. firs. In his note to this verse R. considers firs (D 1206) to be the earlier reading. The four A mss read fins, which, L. points out, carries the meaning “refined” in all of its uses and scarcely applies to a man who recommends tearing the captives limb from limb and tossing the queen into a bonfire (1506-15) and who will recommend the same treatment for the prisoners in LV 1590-98 (in 1589 the adjective describing him is fier). Choix p. 229 notes the BCD readings.

In laisse XX, the emendation serves the needs of the student learning to count syllables in epic verse. In XXX, for benefit of the student learning dialectal traits, he refrains from emending where R corrected.

- XX R. 624 Mielz ameroit... Sorbant de Venice, L. 623 M.a. [dant] S.d.V. Rather than leave the one-syllable lacuna in R. (found in A1A4) or keep the hypersyllabic Mielz ameroit ele found in A2, L. follows the suggestion in R.’s note and replaces ele with dant from B1. He admits in note, however, the possibility of Soribant (found in A3), which R. rejected on the grounds that A3 never offers the original reading in contrast to the other three A mss (note to l. 624 in the ed.maj.; in the ed.min. he does not explain the rejection). Choix p. 224 gives the B1, C, and D readings.

- XXX R. 951 corrects to la, found only in A3; L. 950 keeps le as a picardism (note p. 157). See also VIII 225 Par le fenestre (P. la f. in R.; no indication of variants in either edition).
Lachet does not, however, deny his readers the pleasure of seeing in
the text the imperfections and uncertainties inherent in every copy and
which are so characteristic of the texts with which we deal.

- XXV 799 Following the example of R. (800), L. keeps
  the A reading *si taint comme charbon* despite the
  awkward repetition of *charbon* at the rhyme in two
  successive verses. His note to this verse explains that the
  line in A is intelligible, and he mentions the preferable
  reading in B, *si tint le chief embronc*, confirmed by D 653.
  The *Choix* (p. 225) shows that B (*s. tint le chief embronc*),
  C 768 (*Guïelin l’ot si tint le cief enbron*), and D 653 (o.
  *s’an tint lou chief anbron*) all agree against A.

- XXXII R. 1000 *Brisent les lances*, L. 999 *Bessent l.l.* The
  A mss read *Bessent les lances* (A4 *Lessent*); B reads
  *Brisent ces l.*; C 918 *Brisent l.l.* Where R. emends to
  *Brisent*, L. retains the reading, observing (p. 161) that the
  change is not absolutely necessary because the lances will
  shatter as soon as the men lower them while descending a
  spiral stairwell.

This variability of the text, in which we can only occasionally
distinguish scribal inattention from poetic intervention, is particularly
central to this poem for which literary appreciation mixes inextricably
with textual criticism. Lachet observes in the first sentence (p. 45) of his
literary study that the *Prise* is “une œuvre pour le moins paradoxale,” for
in it the epic hero turns into a lovesick clown. *Guillelme Fièbrebrace*
becomes *Guillelme l’Amiable* (1561-62, R. 1562-63): he does not deliver
his famous punch to anyone while both Guillebert and little Gui manage
the exploit; it is his nephew Bertrand who kills the Saracen leader
Aragon; and through much of the poem the indomitable hero is absurdly

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5 The spelling of these two names varies in scholarly usage. Lachet uses
*Guïelin* and *Gilebert*; I refer to *Guïelin* as either little Gui or Gui and to
*Gillebert* as Guillebert.
timid. And yet this version of the poem seems at the same time to try to give back to William something of the lead role.

Situating our text in the literary tradition, Lachet refers to “des écarts et des contradictions à l’intérieur du Cycle” (p. 54). We can, and perhaps must, push this observation a bit further to incoherences and contradictions within the text itself, which Lachet highlights in the notes. Just how much does the *Prise d’Orange* (and which *Prise d’Orange*?) mock its hero? At the heart of the question is the behavior of William and his nephew in laisses XXV and XXVI when Salatré has revealed the true identity of the supposedly Saracen visitors, and specifically two verses: 803 (R. 804) and 824 (R. 825).

In laisse XXV, having discovered the identity of the three disguised Frenchmen, Aragon launches into a series of threats, and William blanches. The narrator then turns to Gui for the space of two lines before turning back to our hero.

... 

Guïelin voit que ne se celeront XXV 801
Detort ses poinz et ses cheveus deront
Dex dist Guillelmes par ton saintime non …

It is William who speaks the following *prière du plus grand péril* (804-16, R. 805-17) and who picks up the *bordon* in 817 (R. 818) to strike Salatré dead and shout the encouragement concluding the laisse. Then XXVI opens:

Guillelmes a le palés effraé XXVI 824
Devant le roi a le paien tué
Li quens Guillelmes (r)a choisi un tinel ...

And he picks it up to deliver a deadly blow to a certain Baitaime. Both editors keep the text as found in the *A* and *B* mss but argue that 803 (R. 804) should read *li enfes* and 824 (R. 825) *Guïelins.*

*Olifant*
In the *editio maior* Régnier explained the occurrence of *Guillelmes* in these two lines as either a mistaken reading of the abbreviation or the desire to accord the first blow to the hero. After Dufournet (1968) suggested that the substitution of the nephew for the uncle is a trait of discreet parody in the *Prise*, Régnier revised his note to these two lines in the *editio minor* to remark that the author of the *AB* version failed to grasp the humor of this detail. Lachet’s note (p. 147) points out the coherence of a text in which little Gui is the subject of these two lines, as in C (770 *Diex dist li enfes* and 788 *Guïelin voit les paiens effréé*) and D (658 *Dex fait il (= Gui)* and 679 *[G]uïelins out lou palais effraés*): after William’s distress in 799-800 (R. 800-01), it is Gui who wrings his hands, utters the prayer, picks up the staff, kills Salatré and terrifies everyone (824-25, R. 825-26). In 826 (R. 827), *Guillelmes (r)a* returns our attention to William, and the prefix expresses the shift of direction; Lachet indicates, by means of the parentheses suggesting that the prefix be suppressed, that, since William is the subject of the two preceding lines in the text he prints, the prefix is inappropriate in the printed text.

The *AB* version rehabilitates the hero at this critical moment, and Lachet’s note emphasizes the moving tradition, first the diminution of the hero and then his subsequent rehabilitation in the text which we read.

The note on page 147 treats a case where poetic intervention seems plausible. The note to lines 1206-07 (p. 175) refers to a series of variants, among them these two, in which the *A* version of the poem seems to emphasize William’s role. By and large, scribal inattention could easily explain the others:

  (R.’s variant apparatus, however, shows no variant readings for this line among the six *AB* mss.) The singular would highlight William among Aragon’s three guests, whether by inattention or intervention.
• XL R. 1207-08, L. 1206-07 Do these lines refer to William alone or to all three Frenchmen? In R. 1206 L. 1205 the Saracens hurl themselves against William (*Seure li corent*). \(A^2\) is the only ms of the Vulgate to give a singular in the next line (R. 1207, L. 1206): *Il se deffent*. L. p. 227 indicates that, in addition to the other three \(A\) and the two \(B\) mss, \(C\) 1176 (which concludes its laisse) gives a plural *deffendent* as well. In the second line, R. corrects the \(A\) reading, *done* (and *le* in all but \(A^3\)) to a plural (*Granz cops i donent li conte palazin*) following the example of \(B\) (c. i *fierent li c.p.; les contes de bon lin* in \(B^2\)). P. 227, L. notes the \(B\) reading: c. i *fierent li c.p. The \(A\) version, if we look only at the letter of the text, appears to refer to the three Frenchmen in the first of these two lines and to William in the second, and \(A^2\) alters the first to William alone; in the second line, however, meter requires that *conte* be a CS pl, and so *done* singular must be a mistake: the second line refers to all three. The text of \(A^2\) which L. prints is coherent (but at the price of an object form used for a subject), and L. sees it as a reflection of a tendency in the \(A\) version to restore the hero.

• XL R. 1214 *As mains les prennent paien et Sarrazin*, L. 1213. All four \(A\) mss give a singular; both R. and L. emend to a plural on the basis of the two corresponding lines in \(B\) (*Si les enchaudent paien et Sarr. / Pris ont les contes Diex les puis maleïr*) and the one in \(C\) 1195 (*Que leur mains loient estroit de fors samis*). On page 227 he notes six lines added in \(C\) 1187-92 and the suppression of 1213-17 in \(D\).
Review: *La Prise d’Orange*

- **LVI R. 1622** *A voix s’escrie prenez les Sarrazin*, L. 1621. R. and L. emend the singular in all four *A* mss to the plural in the two *B* mss. L. adds in note (p. 200) the plural in *C* 1834 *Prennès ces anemis*.

- **LVII R. 1670** *Or les regrete*, L. 1669. R. and L. emend the Vulgate’s singular to a plural *Or les regrete*, as found in 1706 (R. 1707): *Il les regrete*.

We may speculate about scribal inattention and poetic intervention, and the sequence of events after Salatré identifies William, combined with the evidence of *C* and *D*, invites us to do so, but the text(s) we read portray(s) varying degrees of mockery of and heroism in the hero. Inattention, *remaniement*, the text is fluid, and Lachet wants his readers to be aware of that slipperiness.

***

*Traduttore, traditore:* Lachet abandons the line-by-line approach of his earlier, collaborative translation in favor of a fairly smooth flowing prose. To a large extent his readable (I would say elegant although he states specifically, p. 83, that his aim is accuracy in preference to elegance) text avoids the stiffness that a close rendering would inevitably produce. To read only the right-hand page, however, would be to miss acquaintance with the masterpiece. The translation works as a foil to the poetry, for the language of the Old French decasyllable produces music from the play of syllables and of semantic patterns. Although the epic decasyllable and laisse can be cacophonous, in the *Charroi* and the *Prise* they reach extraordinary heights of beauty.

I open the *Prise* more or less at random and find William at the windows of Nîmes (pp. 90 and 91). The translation reads smoothly, an independent clause followed by a subordinate participial clause introducing two juxtaposed main clauses: “Il est allé s’appuyer aux grandes fenêtres; promenant ses regards sur tout le pays, il vit l’herbe
fraîche et les rosiers cultivés, entendit la grive et le merle chanter.” The grammatical relation between clauses varies from each to the next. The original text uses rather a repetition of the same relation, a succession of independent clauses, to emphasize variation of other patterns:

As granz fenestres s’est alez acoster III 48
Il regarda contreval le regné
Vit l’érbe fresche et les rosiers plantez
La mauviz ot et le melle chanter

The lines of verse simply sing. The first two construct a fairly unobtrusive chiasmus:

adverbial phrase (place) verbal core
verbal core adverbial phrase (place)

They scarcely draw attention, but they set the stage for William to look out over the countryside, and he sees in 50 and hears in 51 (Vit l’érbe fresche and La mauviz ot: chiasmus again verb + object, object + verb), and in both lines the second hemistich redoubles the first, agglutinating to it a second direct object. This parallelism of the second hemistichs (conjunction et, definite article, two-syllable noun) includes a slight variation: oxytone noun against paroxytone noun and past participle against infinitive. (We must applaud Lachet’s ellipsis of the subject in the fourth line, picking up some of the parallelism of the original.) The variations play on top of the recurrences, which emphasize the delay in the action: with each repetition, we turn back to linger over the view.

Readable modern usage is how we should understand Lachet when he writes that in his translation he prefers “l’exactitude à l’élégance” (p. 83). He nuances “exactitude” immediately: he avoids archaisms and words the meaning of which has changed, and he does not seek to reflect alternation of tu and vous or of narrative past and present tense. We have just seen that “exactitude” does not include the semantic rhythms.

Olifant
Readers may follow the action on the right-hand page, but they must return to the left-hand page to enjoy the telling of the story.

Lachet has long been familiar with the echoes in the *Prise* (see in particular Lachet, 1987), and his translation does reflect somewhat this aspect of the rhythms in the tale (see, for example, pp. 151 and 203, his translation of ll. 852-57 and 1642-47, the three Frenchmen driving hordes of Saracens out of the palace). The lack, however, of syllabic reinforcement, i.e., the division of sentences into two units of meaning, four syllables and six syllables long, precludes any possibility of reflecting accurately the complexity of echo in the poem. The remarkable play of laisse introductions, to take just one example, creates an intricate narrative rhythm with reminders, recurrences, delays, and accelerations. Let us follow William’s progress from Nîmes to Aragon’s palace and from there toward the beautiful princess Orable, laisses XV-XXI.

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<td>Vet s’en Guillelmes</td>
<td>li marchis au vis fier</td>
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<td>Et Gilebert</td>
<td>et Guïelin le fier ...</td>
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<td>Or fu Guillelmes</td>
<td>en Orange leanz</td>
<td>XVI 449</td>
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<td>L’eve demandent</td>
<td>paien et Sarrazin ...</td>
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<td>a Guillelme apelé</td>
<td>XIX 568</td>
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<td>Dejoste li</td>
<td>l’asiet lez un piler ...</td>
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<td>en la sale perrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rois Arragon</td>
<td>li commença a dire ...</td>
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La Prise d’Orange

Del palés ist\(^6\) dan Guillelmes li frans XXI 634
Et Gilebert Guïelin le poissant ...

Four of the seven laisses begin with the hemistich *Or fu Guillelmes*; they situate the action of the new moment with a reference to the preceding one, and then the action resumes. Three of the seven prolong the initial narrative slowdown with a second, agglutinating verse, *Et Gilebert et Guïelin...* (note the chiasmus of Gui and Guillebert in the two successive laisses XV and XVI). Three (XV, XIX, XXI) begin abruptly with the action. The weave of these three patterns gives an elaborate ebb and flow to the story as each new moment gets under way.

| XV  | 396 ............................................................... action |
|     | 397 ............ *Et Gilebert* ......................... delay |
| XVI | 449 .................. *Or fu Guillelmes* ............. reminder |
|     | 450 .................. *Et Guïelin* ........................ delay |
| XVII| 509 ............. *Or fu Guillelmes* ............. reminder |
|     | 510 ........................................................ action |
| XVIII| 544 ............. *Or fu Guillelmes* ............. reminder |
|     | 545 ........................................................ action |
| XIX | 568 ............. *Rois Arragon* ................ action |
|     | 569 ........................................................ action |
| XX  | 614 ............. *Or fu Guillelmes* ............. reminder |
|     | 615 ............. *Rois Arragon* ................ action |
| XXI | 634 ........................................................ action |
|     | 635 ............ *Et Gilebert* ....................... delay |

Lachet captures a number of the effects in his translation (including the chiasmus of Gui and Guillebert, pp. 117 and 121), but others vanish.

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\(^6\) * A' El palés est
The inversion of *Vet s’en Guillelmes* and the almost punning (grammatical pun?) of subject in line 568 with the vocative of line 615 are simply impossible in modern French.

Guillaume, le marquis au fier visage, s’en va avec Gilbert et le fier Guiélin. (p. 117)

Guillaume était donc à l’intérieur d’Orange avec Guiélin et le noble Gilbert. (p. 121)

Guillaume était donc dans le palais au pied du donjon. Il interpelle ses deux compagnons ... (p. 125)

Guillaume était donc dans le palais seigneurial. Les païens et les Sarrasins demandent de l’eau ... (p. 129)

Le roi Aragon a appelé Guillaume; il l’a fait asseoir à côté de lui, près d’un pilier ... (p. 129)

Guillaume était donc dans la salle de pierre. “Roi Aragon, commença-t-il à lui dire ... (p. 133)

Messire Guillaume, le noble, sort du palais avec Gilebert et le puissant Guélin ... (p. 135)

And of course the prose does not measure out the length of the intonation at all, whereas the strong rhythms of the epic decasyllable impart a distinct acceleration to the narrative segments beginning at XVII.

Lachet has no reason to mention the $A^1$ variant to line 634 (R. 635), the first line of XXI, in which we can discern further influence of the laisse-opening pattern. It is easy enough to imagine how the two slips in spelling, *del* $>$ *el* and *ist* $>$ *est*, could have occurred through inattention; the resulting hemistich produces a line which functions as a variation on the base pattern, changing the tense and moving William to the second
hemistich. Lachet’s text is more coherent (William leaves the palace), and Régnier’s retains a probable scribal error, but one which shows the impact of echo in the transmission of the text and creates a perfectly plausible narrative flow.

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Throughout, Lachet treads a delicate balance between the interests of a general public and the requirements of a scholarly one, accessibility tempered by an image of the many realities which obscure that accessibility.

In the Introduction, sections I “Les Manuscrits” (pp. 11-14) and II “Établissement du texte” (pp. 15-18), fundamental for the specialist, may be mildly interesting for the curious reader. Section III “Langue du manuscrit de base” (pp. 19-40) is for the student intending to specialize although the fourth part (“Versification” pp. 36-40) touches on some of the technical points underlying the brilliance of the poem and deserving close attention. Section IV “Analyse de la chanson” (pp. 41-44) is the standard plot summary. Section V “Enjeux et desseins de la Prise d’Orange” (pp. 45-72) begins with some of the scholarly background (critical judgments, historical elements in the poem, possible earlier versions, concluding with the judicious suggestion, p. 54, that various tellings, each with its own slant, coexisted and resulted in the divergences and contradictions within the cycle). Then he treats two topics of considerable usefulness to the general reader: five pages situate the poem as the third panel in the triptych beginning with the

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7 The hemistich Or fu Guillelmes opens laisses IV, V, VI, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XX, XXII, XXIV (est), XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXIII, XLIII (G. fu), XLIV, LIV, LV, LVII. The narrative rhythms resulting from the play of laisse-opening lines are a subject in themselves. Note the intonations of the two final laisses: one of the rare occurrences of the semantically light Li cuens Guillelmes fu mout gentiz et ber (LXI) and its echo, carrying more weight Li cuens Guillelmes ot espouse(e) la dame (LXII).
Couronnement de Louis (pp. 55-59), and “Une composition signifiante” (pp. 59-63) examines the function of several echoes in the poem. The Introduction concludes with an examination of departures from the epic norm, “Tradition et renouvellement” (pp. 63-72), useful as a kind of general background but perhaps overstating the place of parody in the poem. I rather like his pointing out the incongruity of line 1821 (Que trop i ot de la françoise gent: three Frenchmen are in the process of routing a horde of Saracens, pp. 67-68), and it certainly should not be excluded that this line is a sly allusion to the many similar lines in other chansons de geste evoking the numeric superiority of the bad guys. I do not feel, however, that the humor of William in love is necessarily a matter of parody (pp. 68-69). Readers will judge for themselves, but they will be grateful to Lachet for pointing out so many humorous details in the poem.

A bibliography (pp. 73-82) and a statement of the principles underlying the edition and translation (pp. 83-84), both of general (albeit somewhat rarified) interest, round out the Introduction. Following the text and translation, a two-part appendix is of similar interest. The Choix de variantes (pp. 221-31) offers a selection: lexical ones in the A mss and readings in the B, C, D, and E versions where Lachet feels they may be of literary interest or help explain the reading in the base ms; in some places he summarizes lengthy passages. A series of Annexes (pp. 233-37) provide: a 26-line insertion to laisse LX in the B version expanding the arrival of Bertrand’s rescue force in Gloriette; laisses XXXIII-XXXV from ms C telling how Guillebert prefers to think of food while William and his nephew busy themselves with the ladies; the end of laisse LVII in D, expanding the wedding celebrations with a demonstration of Orable’s magic; laisses LXXXI and LXXXII from the siege of Orange in ms E, narrating single combat between William and Tiebaut (Régnier, 1966, pp. 253-55).

Entries marked with an asterisk in the Glossary (pp. 239-65) and in the Index of Proper Names (pp. 267-76), referring back to the notes, could be a bit clearer, for, while the comment appears in the note to the
first verse listed for most of the marked entries, it appears at the second occurrence of *aidier* (688), *galie* (1752), *guerredoner* (939), the Saracen king *Otran* (482) and the fourth occurrence of *nef* (1752). The place name *Aumarie*, occurring five times, receives a comment at the fourth occurrence (1266), *Fierebrace* at two (699, 1561) of its four occurrences. Among the many occurrences of *Orable*, I find a mention of the lady in the notes to lines 948 and 1373 but not a comment about her or her name. Through an oversight, the noun *chiere* is marked but not commented at any of its three occurrences.

A short list of proverbs or proverbial-sounding lines (p. 277) ends the apparatus.

Notes to the text, on the left-hand page, are of more interest to the specialist than the general reader; they explain emendations. The notes to the translation, on the right-hand page, run a wide gamut, from philology useful for preparing exams 8 through historical 9 and literary-cultural 10 background to interpretations of various sorts, 11 some of it drawing on the other versions of the poem. 12

Navigating the delicate zone between the scholar and the general public, Lachet has done splendid service to a hero well known in his fictional universe for his laugh as much as for the injury to his nose

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8 *E.g.* ll. 40 demonstrative of notoriety; 225, 950 dialectal feminine *le*; 603, 1117, 1490 enclisis; 634 etymology and meanings of *palés*.

9 *E.g.* ll. 185 Artois and Vermandois; 227-8 Beaucaire; 381 Saint Riquier; 1117 feu grégeois; 1266 and 1270 Aumarie and Auffrique.

10 *E.g.* ll. 48-51 the motif of the epic panorama; 213 *perron*; 289 d'estaindre and *justisier* in the lexicon of love; 337 *a la boce et au rire* two of William’s well-known features; 497-508 prière du plus grand péril; 826 *tinel*; et passim.

11 *E.g.* ll. 90 *donoiant*; 356 *Gloriète*; 489 punning *comment* and *commant*; 656 the meaning of *carroiges*; 732 quite a nice discernment of “un brin de nostalgie, une pointe de jalousie et un grain d’espoir” in *Orable*’s words; et passim.

12 *E.g.* ll. 774 the various ways in which Salatré unmasks William; 1100 contrast between the courtly vocabulary of the second hemistich and the military of the first (as opposed to *BCD* (texts given p. 227); 383 jailer.

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(Conoistront vos a la boce et au rire XIII 337) and familiar enough in thirteenth-century Europe to figure among the fighting saints in Dante’s fifth sphere of Paradise (Paradiso, xviii, 46). Willy Strongarms has a chance now, with this second bilingual edition of his core adventures, to take his place among the heroes of the twenty-first century, a hero for our times: valiant indeed, but impetuous and something of a buffoon.

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Works Cited


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Book Review

*Reception and Memory: A Cognitive Approach to the chansons de geste*


This ambitious study claims to be the first cognitive literary analysis not only for the *chansons de geste* but for the entire field of medieval French literature (p. 296). Adopting a “somewhat eclectic” approach (p. 13), it takes on board not only the cognitive literary theories of Mark Turner, Richard Gerrig, and others, as well as recent work on the epic by Edward Heinemann and Sarah Kay, but also the recent manuscript studies of Keith Busby and Andrew Taylor, research on medieval theory of memory by Mary Carruthers and Francis Yates, and the reception theory of Wolfgang Iser. It consists of seven chapters preceded by an introduction (pp. 13-21) which describes them briefly and outlines the general argument. Well-informed, well-written, innovative, and challenging, it breaks new ground and makes for stimulating reading.

The first two chapters are devoted to determining the audience of the *chansons de geste* using four types of available evidence. Chapter 1 (pp. 23-67) discusses “external” evidence from sources other than the poems and their manuscripts, as well as “internal” evidence from the *chansons de geste* and from other vernacular literary texts. Chapter 2 (pp. 69-105) is concerned with codicological evidence from the extant manuscripts, as well as evidence from the transmission history of the manuscripts. The main thrust of these chapters is to emphasize the monastic, ecclesiastical component of the epic audience and to combat the popular, marketplace audience imagined by earlier scholars (pp. 104, 132), notably calling into question the existence of performance *manuscrits de jongleur*. Romance references to the *chansons de geste* point to a courtly audience, however, as does the frequent aristocratic ownership of epic manuscripts, and the
conclusion recognizes a “multiplicity of audiences” (pp. 101, 293). The relevance to the overall argument of the case made here for a clerical audience will become evident only later.

In Chapter 3 (pp. 107-27) a “modern model” for reception of the chansons de geste is proposed combining reception theory and cognitive literary studies. Following a summary of the development of these two approaches, the focus narrows to two concepts used to describe the results of the reading process, receptionist Wolfgang Iser’s “integrated Gestalt” and cognitive critic Mark Turner’s “creative blending.” According to both these theories, whose similarities are emphasized, the aggregation in the memory of disparate recollections results in the creation of new information that surpasses them. It is further argued that these modern theories were anticipated in the discussion of memory by medieval writers such as St. Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor, the latter using the term collatio to describe a similar cognitive process.

Chapter 4 (pp. 129-73) discusses medieval theory of memory in greater detail with applications to the epic. Whether on not the epic audience had read Hugh of St. Victor, it is argued, medieval memory theory would have been part of the general culture of the substantially clerical audience delineated in the first two chapters and so would have informed its reception of the chansons de geste. To facilitate memorization, medieval rhetorical manuals recommend a strategy of division and collation: breaking the text up into smaller units, then gathering the pieces back together. The epic audience must be sensitive to pre-existing textual divisions, and for them the result of collation is not memorization but aesthetic effect. The manuals also recommend visualization as an aid to memory (the “picture-superiority effect” observed by cognitive scientists), which is reflected in the epic formula Qui veïst (“Whoever would have seen”), used especially to introduce graphic battle scenes. The chapter ends with a discussion of images from the mnemonic tradition found in the prologues of some chansons de geste.

Chapter 5 (pp. 175-200) explores two aspects of the epic audience’s Olifant
relationship to memory. The first part analyzes the role of memory in audience inscription in the prologue of *Renaut de Montauban*: through a process of parallel summaries, the insertion of a jongleur’s “performative voice,” and the “usurpation” of that voice by some of the characters, the audience is progressively drawn from past to present, from an overview of events to step-by-step narration, and from a position outside the poem to internal participation. Illustrated by passages from the *Song of Roland*, the last section discusses the problem of audience recognition of widely separated repetitions (Heinemann’s “disjunctive echoes”) in terms of Gerald Edelman’s theory of the brain, according to which perception and recognition involve a common process of categorization, with context playing a key role.

Chapter 6 (pp. 201-43) returns to the question of division, relating it to repetition and the epic style. The *chansons de geste* are divided into units of various sizes—laisse, episodes, performance units (*séances*)—with the divisions between units frequently announced by repetitions. The slower reading times registered by cognitive psychologists at episode boundaries are related to the repetition of the final verse of a laisse at the beginning of the following laisse (Rychner’s *enchaînement*). A distinction is made between “macro-units,” marked by addresses to the audience, recapitulations, and formulae of transition, and “micro-units,” the division into smaller units of Rychner’s *laisse composites*. Structural, thematic, and verbal repetition in a “discontinuous macro-unit” is examined in a sequence of long laisses in *Renaut de Montauban*: the Vaucouleurs ambush and the capture and planned hanging of Richart (laisse 160-207). Laisse 27 of *Elie de Saint Gille*, relating Elie’s escape from imprisonment on a Saracen ship, illustrates the use of repetition to divide a long laisse into “micro-units.”

The final chapter (pp. 245-91) is devoted to the aesthetic effect produced by epic repetition. A summary of Richard Gerrig’s “resonance” model of memory-based text processing describes a kind of memory network in which any element of a narrative can trigger a memory of another part of the narrative, of another narrative, or of experiences
relating to the narrative, resulting in the creation of new information through “elaborative inferences.” The bulk of the chapter presents close analyses of repetition effects in passages from three chansons de geste. In the bedroom accusation scenes of Ami et Amile (laisses 30, 100), the collation of verbal repetitions creates a psychological commentary on Lubias’s jealousy. A comparison of Renaut’s and Richart’s epic prayers (laisses 161, 196) in the parallel episodes of Renaut de Montauban previously analyzed reveals in the augmentations, additions, omissions, and displacements of the latter the anxiety and delaying strategy of a man about to be hanged. In the fighting that leads to Raoul’s death in Raoul de Cambrai, five series of “disjunctive echoes” are used to give shape to an otherwise chaotic battle scene. A short conclusion (pp. 293-96) is followed by a bibliography (pp. 297-324) and indices (pp. 325-38).

Contemporary cognitive science is a notoriously difficult and complex field embracing a multitude of sometimes radically diverse approaches and methods, and so the present study deserves high praise not only for its courage in tackling this daunting subject but also for the adroitness with which it finds its way in this arduous terrain. High on the list of its merits is the decision to concentrate on memory, which is undoubtedly central to human cognitive processes as well as to the chansons de geste. The theories of memory discussed, ancient and modern, are judiciously chosen, clearly explained, and convincingly related one to another and to more traditional literary approaches such as reception theory. The application of these theories to some of the most prominent features of the epic style is often illuminating, producing a number of subtle, perspicacious analyses. This pioneering work opens important new perspectives for the future study not only of the chansons de geste but of medieval literature generally.

Nevertheless, I must express a few reservations and regrets, beginning with the case for a clerical audience, which is not fully convincing owing to the ambiguity and limited probative value of some of the evidence. The “external evidence” invoked all comes from written, nonliterary texts such as sermons and penitentials, and so it is not

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surprising that it has a clerical cast, reflecting a clerical monopoly on writing. The earliest such evidence comes from the thirteenth century, much is from the fourteenth century or later, and this is even more the case for manuscript ownership, so there is real doubt as to how much either of these sources can tell us about conditions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In short, the question of audience cannot escape the central problem surrounding the epic in general, that of an apparently early, arguably oral poetry for which the only available evidence is relatively late and exclusively written.

As for the epic poems themselves, the frequent expressions of conventional piety (pp. 58-60) do not demonstrate a clerical connection because at the time such sentiments were shared by all segments of society. References in the *chansons de geste* to oral performance are dismissed as “a fiction of orality” (pp. 49-50), whereas epic references to written, ecclesiastical sources are taken at face value (pp. 54-58), hardly an evenhanded procedure. The formulaic style of epic poetry is mentioned often, usually to deny that it proves orality, but the alternative explanation proposed, that “the repetitions are part of a rhetorical strategy based on the audience’s memory” (p. 294), begs the question of the relationship between the frequent, often banal repetitions of the formulaic style and the more distant, potentially more significant repetitions of the “disjunctive echoes.”

Moreover, a clerical epic audience does not really seem necessary to the central argument of the study. Presumably, Wolfgang Iser and Mark Turner elaborated literary theories with similarities to medieval memory theory not because they had read St. Augustine or Hugh of St. Victor or were surrounded by clerical culture, but because, like their predecessors, they were describing human cognitive processes that have not changed significantly over thousands of years. Likewise, the “multiplicity of audiences” of the *chansons de geste* presumably drew primarily on their innate cognitive capacities for their understanding and appreciation of epic poetry rather than on clerical memory training or familiarity with medieval memory theory.
Although the study advocates “a multiplicity of approaches” (p. 296), it sometimes engages in unwarranted disparagement of alternative approaches, as when it describes “attempts to define authorship” as “anachronistic” and “futile” (p. 108) or claims that reception is “anchored in what we know,” whereas author-centered studies are “tangentially hypothesizing what we do not know” (p. 116). Medieval audiences are not intrinsically more knowable than authors, because our primary evidence is the same for both: the texts that the authors produced and the audiences consumed and what we know about the cognitive mechanisms that informed both processes. Literary texts contain not only Wolfgang Iser’s “implied reader” but also Wayne Booth’s “implied author.” Authors and audiences both use with regard to each other what cognitive science calls “Theory of Mind,” the uniquely human capacity to anticipate the thoughts of others. Authors use Theory of Mind to anticipate and guide the audience’s reception, audiences to grasp the author’s intentions and meanings. Of course, authors can never fully anticipate or determine their audience’s reactions, just as audiences can never definitively pin down authorial intentions, but the continuing efforts of both to negotiate a common understanding are crucial to the process of communication that is literature.

Nor do epic studies need to be “rescue[d] ... from formalism” (p. 294). The formal properties that authors impart to their texts are among the chief means by which they guide their audience’s reactions and by which audiences construct meaning. Not surprisingly, this study contains numerous fine examples of formal analysis based on the formal principles of division and repetition. In the early days of reception theory, some four decades ago, its proponents were reacting against a tradition of literary studies dominated by formalist criticism and concern for authorial intentions, and this is reflected in the sometimes excessive rhetoric of their polemics. Today, reception criticism is an established approach that requires no justification, however, and so it can be adopted serenely within the framework of a holistic view of literature that recognizes the complexity of the phenomenon and thus the validity of “a
multiplicity of approaches.”

Finally, in contrast with the clear, trenchant analyses deployed elsewhere, the final section of Chapter 7 (pp. 281-86) is problematic. Labeled *mise en abyme* because the characters are seen as engaging in the kind of collation of repetitions usually reserved for the audience, it contains an apparent misuse of the terms “diegetic” and “extra-diegetic,” here identified respectively with “the characters’ discourse” and “the narrative” (p. 281). In Ancient Greek, *diegesis* meant “narration,” and Plato (*Republic*, Book III) opposes it to dialogue, which he calls “imitation” (*mimesis*). Following Gérard Genette, “diegetic” and “extra-diegetic” (or “non-diegetic”) are used in modern narratology to refer respectively to story elements that are part of the narrated world and to those that are not (such as titles, film credits, background music, and narrator’s commentary). Thus, the narration of Roland’s actions is no less diegetic than the quotation of his words, whereas “Il est escrit en la geste Francor [...]” (l. 1443) and “Ci falt la geste que Turoldus declinet” (l. 4002) are examples of extra-diegetic discourse in the Oxford *Roland*. It may be that the distinction intended is between *collation* that is extra-diegetic (in the minds of the audience) and diegetic (in the minds of the characters), but if so, that is not clear from the ambiguous wording of the passage.

Beyond that, the first horn scene of the *Roland*, used as an illustration (p. 282), is misinterpreted. In lines 1058 and 1069, Roland asserts not that “the French are doomed to die” but that this fate awaits the Saracens, as is clear in each case from the preceding verse. In answering him at line 1072, Olivier states not that “the French will return home” but that if Roland sounds his horn, the main body of the French army will come back from the mountain pass to the Roncevaux battlefield. Olivier contradicts Roland only by implication: Roland implies that the Saracens can all be killed without Charlemagne’s help, whereas Olivier’s insistence on sounding the horn implies the contrary. Nor is there any justification in this scene for speaking of “Olivier’s coercion of Roland” (pp. 286-87).
The preceding complaints should not be seen as tarnishing the considerable merit of this generally excellent study. The section on *mise en abyme* is an apparent aberration. My comments on the validity of diverse approaches should not obscure the fact that the study deploys a wide array of methods, managing to a remarkable degree to forge them into a cogent demonstration. My remarks were intended rather as encouragement to the study’s author to push her argument further, exploring how the processes of human cognition inform not only the reception of literature but also its production. It is very much to be hoped that these first fruits of her labor will also inspire others to follow the path that she has so brilliantly blazed.

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