

The Curse of Courtly Love in *Galien Restoré*

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This paper uses textual evidence from the Cheltenham *Galien restoré* to refute the traditional reputation of this text as having been profoundly influenced by medieval courtly romance. Occurrences of courtly discourse are shown to replace, rather than to enhance, actual romantic relationships between Roland and Aude and Olivier and Jacqueline. These premarital romantic relationships are clearly subordinated to the bonds of marriage and kinship, which are logically essential to the larger *Geste de Monglane* within which this text appears.

A number of modern critics have expressed the opinion that *Galien restoré* should be read as a romance. In another session at this congress, François Suard described it as a *roman d'initiation*, which I think is entirely appropriate; on the other hand, I do not believe that it makes sense to think of it as a *roman courtois*. The *Galien* text I will discuss today, the rhymed version contained in the Cheltenham manuscript of the *Geste de Monglane*, has been alleged to introduce romantic love and courtly discourse into the Roncevaux story to an unusual degree. Central to this argument is a passage from the text in which Roland encourages his fellow warriors at Roncevaux by telling them to fight out of love both for God and for their ladies:

“Aions fiance en Dieu, le pere royamans!
Car ceulx qui hui mouront sur la gent nonsachant,
Il vivront lassus au trone suffisant.
De rien qui soit au monde, ne vous voit remembrant,
Fors d'acquerir l'amour qui sans fin est durant!
Olivier, beau compaigns, venés avant,
Tenés vous pres de moy, ne m'alés eslongnant,
Et pensés a l'amour que vous desirés tant,
Jacqueline la belle qui a le doulz semblant,
Monstrés pour son amour a paiens fier semblant,
Et j'en monstreyray pour vostre seur autant,
Car ja homs n'est hardis s'il n'a vray ceur d'amant.” (ll. 1717-28)¹

¹ All citations from the text are taken from the Dougherty and Barnes edition. In spite of its well-known problems, this edition is the most recent and accessible, and was prepared with the intention of remaining faithful to the text included in the medieval manuscript.

One of the few truly well-known lines from *Galien restoré* is the one with which Roland ends this speech: “No man is brave if he does not have a true lover’s heart.” A startling sentiment, to be sure, if we were to hear it from the lips of the Roland of the Oxford version. This implicit comparison lies behind Peter Dembowski’s statement that, in the Cheltenham *Galien restoré*, “l’esprit raffiné du roman absorbe la rude atmosphère de la geste. Roland lui-même n’est plus seulement guerrier, mais soupirant” (“Continuation ou restoration?”, p. 443). In Jules Horrent’s comments about this same passage, he implied that this example of courtly discourse is typical of the portrayal of both Roland and Galien throughout the narrative: “L’amour, qui depuis le Roland rimé commençait à se glisser dans le coeur du héros, y règne maintenant en maître, y est devenu le signe de la vaillance. Les sages amours de Galien et de Guimarde, qui illumineront tout le dénouement, sont empreintes du même idéal” (*La Chanson de Roland*, p. 402). Roland considers love to be “the sign of bravery” in this particular speech, but it seems to me exaggerated to claim that love is the “master” of his heart in the narrative as a whole, especially because this is one of the Roncevaux texts in which Roland’s personality changes the most between the beginning and the later episodes. The love he favors most strongly even in this speech is “love that is without end everlasting,” an idea that makes a bridge in his speech between devotion to God and to one’s lady. Romantic love is ennobled here by comparison with the eternal love of God, but that very rhetoric calls into question the notion that it is the courtly ideal that dominates: instead, as usual, devotion to God comes first in Roland’s mind, as it does in the structure of his speech. Horrent’s use of the term “sages amours” to describe the relationship between Galien and his wife Guimarde fits their portrayal in the Cheltenham *Galien* far less well than their expanded portrayal in other Galien texts. In Cheltenham, the consummation of their marriage is the only interaction between them: the text does not recount any of their conversations or any other details about their relationship. Yet it is significant that Galien and Guimarde have the opportunity to spend time together at all, because the text’s other two couples, Roland and Aude and Olivier and Jacqueline, the daughter of the emperor of Constantinople, are not so fortunate. In fact, the audience learns about these characters’ romantic relationships solely through the language with which these relationships are described, by a third party or from a distance. Thus courtly discourse in the Cheltenham *Galien* actually replaces romantic interactions between couples rather than enhancing them. I have no wish to quibble with Dembowski, Horrent, and others who have rightly emphasized that speeches about love in this text violate the expectations of some modern audiences concerning medieval epic texts. I think it is important, however, to clarify that the courtly language of the Cheltenham *Galien* is not so much out of place within the medieval epic tradition in general as it is within the fictional universe of the Cheltenham *Galien* itself. In this text, discourse about love functions as a kind of curse in the sense that it is never successfully transmitted between the lovers and does nothing to change the lovers’ actions or circumstances. Meanwhile, the members of the one successful couple in this text exchange not one directly cited word with one another.

In the section of the narrative recounting Galien’s quest to find Olivier and reunite his parents, Galien repeatedly describes the unswerving devotion of his mother, Jacqueline, to Olivier; other characters respond by claiming that Olivier feels the same way about her. Roland acknowledges Olivier’s love for Jacqueline in

a comment he makes during the battle of Roncevaux, and Jacqueline is in Olivier's thoughts at the moment of his death. Yet there is no communication between the lovers: in fact, Jacqueline's attempt to communicate with Olivier is silenced by her chosen messenger, none other than Galien himself. When Galien first leaves home, Jacqueline gives him a ring which she asks him to give to Olivier, yet this ring never again appears in the narrative. This would seem an inadvertent omission, were it not for the fact that Galien also suppresses a message from Aude to Roland. When Galien leaves Aude's house on his way to Roncevaux, Aude specifically asks him to send Roland her love, and Galien agrees:

A Galien a dit: "Beau nepveu, entendez!
 Roulant m'a fiancee, se le me saluez,
 Luy souviengne de moy et de noz amitez,
 Et que le ceur de moy s'est a lui affichez
 En ausi bonne amour, c'est fine veritez,
 Que le jour proprement [que] fut de moy seurez."
 "Ante," dist Galien, "je lui diray assez." (ll. 878-84)

When Galien meets Roland at Roncevaux, they have time for several conversations, yet in none of them does Galien transmit this loving message from Aude. Moreover, it is not only the women whose efforts at communication are frustrated by their messengers. As in several other Roncevaux texts, just before Roland's death, he attempts to send a final message to Aude which is never delivered. Roland's message is worded as one meant equally for Aude and for Charlemagne (though, in my opinion, the "par amours" with which Roland begins the message could refer equally well to the messenger [a close friend of Roland]), to Aude or to Charlemagne):

"Gondebreuf," dit Roulant, "par amours je vous pry,
 Salués moy Bell[e] Aude, que long temps a ne vy,
 Et lui dictes qu'elle n'a point d'ami!
 Salués moi Charlon et lui dictes ainsi,
 Que du fel Guanelon vengeance je lui pri." (ll. 2022-26)

Nevertheless, Aude is not even mentioned in the later transmission of the message to Charlemagne, nor does the messenger make any visible effort to carry Aude's message to her personally. Although she does eventually learn that Roland died, which was the content of his message to her, Aude never learns that Roland was thinking of her in his final moments. Furthermore, the Cheltenham author diminishes considerably the crucial role played by Aude in the rhymed *Rolands*. The purpose of this change is to encourage the audience's sympathy for grieving male family members instead, in accordance with this text's systematic emphasis on marriage and lineage at the expense of romantic love for its own sake.

Aude has no prophetic dream in this version to warn her in advance about Roland's death, although critics have agreed that *Galien restoré* was influenced in other ways by the rhymed *Rolands*, of which the scene of Aude's dream is one of the characteristic elements. In several earlier rhymed texts, Aude's grief is depicted as the mirror of Charlemagne's own grief, and her death therefore serves as a signal to Charlemagne that he needs to overcome his grief. This mirroring function for Aude emerges with particular clarity in Ronsasvals, where Charlemagne exclaims after witnessing Aude's death, "'Now I see my grief double!'" ["'ar vey mon dol doblie'"'] (Gouiran and Lafont, l. 1792). In the Cheltenham *Galien*, however, it is the grieving uncle Girart who becomes the perfect double for the grieving uncle Charlemagne when the emperor arrives at Blaye, while Aude becomes a superfluous third term:

Et ainsi que le roy va Bleves aprouchant,
A encontré Girart, [qui] Vienne [est] tenant,
A l'aprouchier se vont sus les chevaux pasmant,
Et puis, au relever, se vont escriant:
"France, perdu avés et Olivier et Roulant!"

Grant deul mena Charlon, quant Girart a choisi,
Et aussi fist Girart, qui le ceur ot hardi.
"Bon roy," se dit Girart, "[Belle] Aude est avec moy
A Bleves la ferté. Que ferons nous de lui?" (ll. 4757-65)

Charlemagne and Girart ride toward each other and then express their grief simultaneously and identically, as if they were visual and auditory mirror images of each other. Having established Girart as Charlemagne's double, the question then becomes, "What will we do with Aude?" Girart is an equally logical choice as a double for Charlemagne here, but that choice sets aside Aude's romantic bond to Roland in favor of Girart's family relationship to Olivier. Aude's death scene remains, but the nature of it has changed. For one thing, Aude seems to accept her lover's death more easily than her brother's:

"Haä, sire Roulant! Dieu ait pitié de toy!
Heë, frere Olivier! tu as mon ceur meurdri!
Jamais ne veul menger ne boire aussi,
Ains veul aler a terre, la ou sont mi doulx ami!" (ll. 4784-87)

Aude says that it is Olivier's death that has broken her heart; moreover, the plural phrase "mi doulx ami" removes the traditional romantic charge from the term "ami." In fact, Aude, Olivier, and Roland become a consistent triad in the romantic speeches of this text: it seems impossible for any of them to talk about love without including both of the other two.

It is difficult to gauge Aude's feelings definitively from the few words she speaks here, but Olivier's dying words echo and strengthen Aude's privileging of familial love over romantic love. Olivier thinks of Jacqueline, but he lingers more lovingly over his memories of Aude:

Et le conte Olivier va souvent souppirant
 Et va sa belle amie mout souvent regretant,
 "Haä!" dit le conte, "beau pere tout puissant,
 Veuillés garder la dame par vostre doulx commant,
 De qui j'en[gen]dray ce gracieulx enffant,
 Jacqueline m'amie au gent corps advenant!
 Et le me pardonnés, damoiseil vaillant,
 Ce que ne vous ay pas tenu convenant,
 C'est par les faulx paiens, a qui Dieu soit nuisans.
 Adieu Regnier de Jennez, noble duc combatant,
 Mon doulx gracieulx pere qui fort m'aloit amant!
 Adieu ma doulce amie, Jhesus vous soit aidant!
 Belle Aude, douce seur, il [est] bien apparant
 Que vous aurés de ma mort doulleur grant.
 De vos beaulx yeulx tres clers qui sont forment riant,
 Vous en charront les larmes mout souvent degoutant,
 Et vos beaulx cheveux blons, comment fin or luisant,
 Irés, seur, de grant deul pour ma mort esrachant.
 Quant en bataille estoie ou en estour pesant,
 Ou les paiens aloie a m'espee occiant,
 Vostre ceur vous aloit de joie saudelant;
 Et quant de la bataile aloie retournant,
 Dessus ung pallefroy veniés au devant
 Et puis me baisiés deulx fois en ung tenant,
 Et Roulant vostre amy baisiés autretant.
 Or ne le ferés plus, tresdouce seur vaillant,
 Puisque la mort nous va tellement estraingnant,
 Plus ne me ferés feste, tresdouce seur plaisant!
 Or vous alés entre les vaillans hommes contenant
 Au mieulx que vous pourrés d'oresmes en avant.
 Car je ne seray point, m'en vois percevant,
 Aux neupce, belle seur, de vous ne de Roulant!" (ll. 2931-62)

At the start of this passage, the narrator introduces Olivier's emotions as being focused on Jacqueline, but in fact the majority of his speech is directed toward Aude. Olivier does use courtly discourse to address the absent Jacqueline, but only in one formulaic phrase ("m'amie au gent corps advenant"). It is Aude whose "beautiful smiling eyes" and "beautiful golden hair" are vividly present in Olivier's dying thoughts, and Olivier is confident in Aude's future grief over him, while he does not imagine what Jacqueline's feelings will be (nor does the audience ever see Jacqueline's reaction to Olivier's death).

Roland's last statement about Aude expresses his regret at having failed her, just as Olivier admitted that he had failed Jacqueline by not marrying her:

"Olivier, beau compaigns, Dieu qui toulx biens avoie,
Doint a toutes les femmes qui d'amer sont en voie
De leurs loiaulx amis recepvoir meilleur joie
Que de vous et de moy ne la vostre ne la moye!" (ll. 2990-93)

Horrent cited this passage as another example of Roland's enhanced courtly spirit in this text (*La Chanson de Roland*, p. 401) and certainly it does demonstrate that he took seriously his relationship to Aude. On the other hand, it also cautions the audience against viewing the Roland-Aude and Olivier-Jacqueline couples as models of romantic love, acknowledging that Aude and Jacqueline gained little in return for all their devotion. Roland's last thought of Aude emphasizes his unfulfilled responsibilities toward her rather than his feelings of love for her. Aude's differing roles in the two speeches by Olivier and Roland reinforce the notion that real love occurs between family members, whereas romantic love is only an abstract concept until it is actualized by marriage. What is most frustrating to Roland and Olivier about their unrealized marriages is not the happiness they will never know (as was the case for Roland in *Ronsasvals*, for example) but rather the new family ties they have failed to form. The scene of Aude's death, similarly, does not even address the previously crucial question of whether or not she would accept a future marriage to another man; instead, she merely expresses frustration at the impossibility of her marriage to Roland (ll. 4783-84). Behind the speeches of both the male and female lovers in *Galien restoré* lurks a combined guilt and regret about the unfulfilled responsibilities incurred when romantic relationships fail to evolve into family ties. This recurring pattern suggests that there is an inherent deficiency about relationships built on love alone rather than on marriage; furthermore, it raises in an interesting way the question of the reliability of verbal promises, an important theme in the medieval epic context. Here the promises of Olivier and Roland to Charlemagne prevent them from fulfilling their promises to Jacqueline and Aude, so that romantic love is explicitly subordinated to feudal loyalty. Galien exemplifies this text's ideal of unfailing loyalty on all fronts: he makes Guimarde his wife as soon as he meets her, and then he manages to continue fulfilling his responsibilities to her, to his other family members, to the Byzantine Empire, and to Charlemagne. This ideal of marital loyalty is clearly noncourtly, however, as is emphasized by the lack of expressed love between Galien and Guimarde and by their immediate move into marriage. The repeated use of courtly language in this text therefore does not

reflect a real influence of love within the fictional universe: rather, it emphasizes the irrelevance of romantic love to a fictional universe built upon family ties. In *Galien restoré*, Aude and Jacqueline are described by others in courtly language, but they exert none of the lady's customary power in courtly romance, either over their lovers' actions or over the direction of the narrative.

If Aude's grief is largely set aside in favor of Girart's, the role of Jacqueline in this text is even more clearly marginal. This is true in large part because of the striking reticence on the part of the Cheltenham author to refer back to the relationship between Olivier and Jacqueline in the source text, the *Pelerinage de Charlemagne*, a reticence noted several times by Hans-Erich Keller (see, for example, "Autour de *Galien le Restoré*," p. 82). And of course, a considerable portion of the comic value of the scenes between Olivier and Jacqueline in the *Pelerinage* resulted from the contrast between Olivier's ungentlemanly boasting about Jacqueline in her absence and then the courtly discourse that he used with her in person (*Voyage de Charlemagne*, ll. 716-25). Thus the Cheltenham author may have avoided any use of courtly discourse between Olivier and Jacqueline, if he perceived its use as a link to the embarrassing source text. The resulting effect, however, brings to mind a comment made by Sarah Kay about *Girart de Vienne*, a version of which precedes *Galien restoré* in the Cheltenham manuscript: "The desire of/for women introduces an excess which cannot be accommodated" (*The Chansons de Geste*, p. 135). During the scenes at Roncevaux, Olivier, Roland and Galien all finally acknowledge that neither Jacqueline's desire for Olivier nor Olivier's desire for Jacqueline will be accommodated by the marriage that Galien and the audience have been repeatedly encouraged to anticipate in several earlier scenes of *Galien restoré*. After Olivier's death at the battle of Roncevaux, we do not witness Jacqueline's grief over Olivier (which is included in other *Galien* texts), but we are reminded immediately that the unmarried Jacqueline continues to pay the price for her relationship to Olivier. A messenger summons Galien to defend Jacqueline in Constantinople against the false accusation that she killed her father by poisoning. This accusation against Jacqueline provides a vivid reminder of her precarious position as an unmarried woman living with her father: her brothers blame her for having poisoned their father and themselves, a scenario that is rendered believable because she does live at the palace. Of course, the real reason Jacqueline's brothers hate her is that their father, the emperor Hugues, has replaced them with Galien as his heir: thus Jacqueline's premarital sexuality, in the form of her father's acceptance of the child conceived by it, continues to endanger her in the present. Appropriately, then, the champion of her brothers' charge, Burgualant, claims that he knows Jacqueline is guilty because she tried to involve him in her plotting: "A moy en deubt ouvrir tout son ensient / Et dit qu'elle feroit mon bon et mon talent, / Et que je lui aidasse a ce fait bonnement" (ll. 3675-77). Jacqueline's denial of having made these propositions to Burgualant suggests that she understands that her desire is what she must refute most strenuously: "Se m'aït cellui Dieu qui ne fault ne ne ment, / Oncques n'en eus volenté ne talent!" (ll. 3679-80). Jacqueline's strong but open-ended protestation that she "never had the will nor the desire for it" might be seen to address all levels of her predicament. Her designation of the object of that denied desire with the ambiguous pronoun "it," allows her statement to express her more general frustration with the blame repeatedly assigned to her for the desires of others that have been projected onto her. Jacqueline did not want

to kill her father (the projected desire of her brothers), she never made suggestive advances to Burgualant as he claimed, and for that matter she did not even attempt to elicit Olivier's desire for her when he had visited Constantinople in the source text: the affair was initiated entirely by Olivier, and she only agreed to it in order to save his life.

There is one other female character in *Galien restoré* whose portrayal helps to complete this picture of the text's negative use of courtly discourse. A brief flirtation between Ganelon and Marsile's wife during Ganelon's stay with Marsile is the only interaction in this text involving both physical proximity and courtly discourse, and it is both a negative and feeble version of courtliness. When Ganelon first arrives, he faithfully delivers Charlemagne's terms for Marsile's surrender; yet after he meets Marsile's wife, who is "resplendent with beauty" and who has Ganelon "well and courteously served" (ll. 1239-40), Ganelon suddenly declares that it is his intention to betray the Franks. Later, Marsile's wife slips Ganelon a potion that supposedly instills in him a desire to betray Roland (ll. 1327-31), even though he had already expressed that desire in two previous *laisses*. Therefore the real purpose of the brief flirtation between Ganelon and Marsile's wife probably was that of incriminating courtly discourse itself, since the two engage in a dinner conversation marked by courtly style:

La roienne ont assise par delés Ganelon,
 Qui biau semblant luy fait a recreacion,
 Et lui dit: "Chevalier, par mon dieu Baraton,
 A tous jours seray vostre pour acomplir vo bon."
 "Dame," se dist le traictre, "a Dieu beneïsson,
 Encore vous verray en consolacion,
 Mais c'om puist ordonner ceste destruction
 Et que le roy Marsilles si ait gens a foison,
 Car Roulant trouvera ausi fier que lyon." (ll. 1313-21)

This passage draws attention to its use of courtly forms of address ("Chevalier, ..." "Dame, ...") by using them to begin each character's speech to the other. The Saracen queen states her personal dedication to Ganelon in traditional courtly terms, but it is clear that she does so with a hidden agenda, having been seated next to Ganelon for this purpose, as the first line of the passage indicates. In fact, her offer to Ganelon to "accomplir son bon" resembles the alleged offer of Jacqueline to Burgualant, "that she would do my pleasure and my desire." The ploy of Marsile's wife is ineffective with Ganelon, however, because the traitor is already so completely obsessed with plotting Roland's death. This scene therefore emphasizes both that courtly discourse can be co-opted for evil purposes and that women who use it as a tool for the manipulation of men are not as personally powerful as they might appear in other medieval narratives. Marsile's wife speaks to Ganelon in this way because her husband and the other Saracens have put her up to it: thus the only depiction of a courtly exchange in this text reveals from the beginning that the speaking woman's desire and

discourse are inauthentic. Moreover, they are repulsive to the audience when presented in the context of the betrayal. In this text, the expression of desire in traditional courtly discourse is a source of stress rather than pleasure: it is either a malevolent lie or a sign of futility.

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