Book Reviews

MICKEL'S *GANELON, TREASON AND THE "CHANSON DE ROLAND"*

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Emanuel J. Mickel. *Ganelon, Treason, and the "Chanson de Roland."* University Park and London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989. Pp. vii + 184.

This study attempts to guide our understanding of the crime, the trial, and the punishment of Ganelon by citing the pertinent provisions of legal documents and judicial custom regarding treason from the fifth to the fourteenth centuries. It is clear that the author has performed a valuable service in making this material— mostly French and Anglo-Norman— available in a succinct and, for the most part, coherent manner. But after all of his conscientious survey, it remains enthrallingly unclear to what extent these sources can help us understand what goes on in the trial scene, and how— and whether— one ought to apply them to an interpretation of the poem.

Mickel argues that one's understanding of this scene affects one's interpretation of the entire work. He studies closely, in the light of "normal medieval trial conditions and practices," the stages of the procedure by which Ganelon is brought to justice— from his arrest to his tellingly grisly execution— in order to show how the trial "may have been perceived by contemporaries" (14), and how it fits into the narrative. Is Ganelon's defense legitimate, judging by the laws that prevailed in the time of the Oxford *Roland*'s audience? By the answer to this question Mickel seeks to answer the others.

The first crucial question is raised in the Introduction: how old is the trial scene? Ruggieri maintained that it is one of the oldest elements of the poem, dating from the eighth or ninth century and still revealing, after many presumed *remaniements*, the Germanic basis of the judicial procedure. In this view, the historical reference of the scene is the transformation of Germanic society as tribal authority was succeeded by monarchical centrality. Others, for example Mireau and Bender, argue that it reflects the circumstances of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially the manifold tensions between the barons and the crown. But

these and other theories point to an even more fundamental question: is the trial based on the practices of any particular historic period, or is it rather mythic, figural; or is it both, or neither?

The Introduction deals with certain fundamental issues in a way that establishes the approach of the entire study. Among the most perceptive pages in the book are those concerned with the influence of earlier recent thought on the interpretation of medieval literature, especially the moral Darwinism which has led many— for example, Ruggieri— to assume that the cruder and crueler the custom depicted in a work of literature, the earlier the period it reflects.

On the other hand, Mickel's discussion of the medieval view of the past strikes me as perfunctory. This is a daunting and endlessly ramifying issue, and it is understandable that the author does not want to become entangled in a battle that he did not come to fight. Nevertheless, what he says in this regard is essential in justifying his method. Oral societies, Mickel remarks, "without being aware of it," look back on the past in a way that is projective and recreative, transforming both subject-matter and ideas "to fit the needs of contemporary reality," (21). "To the medieval writer of the *Chanson de Roland*, it would have been natural to recast the legal conditions into those he knew in his own time" (21). We thus have, in Mickel's view, a lettered poet with an oral point of view, perceiving the laws and customs of his own time as ancestral, timeless, continuous. But if the *writer* is "recasting" the oral material he has received— leaving aside the boggy question of his necessarily complex "awareness"— is he not thereby encountering and responding to the reality of human differences in time and circumstance, and the processes of change? If so, does this literate, sequential view of time and history leave no traces in the poem? In any case, the author does not specify these "needs," and I cannot say for sure what he is referring to. Most scholars who, like Mickel, date the composition of the poem in the latter half of the twelfth century, accept the existence of a continental French model for the Oxford *Roland* and detect in the text of the poem evidence of the tension between the barons and the crown that arose with the drive toward royal centralization in France and England (see, for example, the work of Hans-Erich Keller). Since Mickel rejects all of these notions— signs of a French original, or the presence of tension in the trial scene, or any reflection there of the contemporary political struggle— it is hard to say how, in his view, the

poem "fit[s] the needs" of its time. As it turns out, he seems to believe that the poet has recast *only the legal procedure*; but that position brings up new problems, to be considered later.

On the other hand, if, as Mickel lucidly puts it, Charlemagne and Godefroi de Bouillon were perceived as facing the same issues and decisions, does this melding of time in the mind of the poet and his audience not undermine the very basis of the questions that Mickel proposes to examine, that is, make the terms "early" and "late" inadequate and imprecise for defining the issues raised by the trial? If the poet is recasting the "laws, customs and memory of history" contained in his *matière*, does not the material that he is recasting reflect the time, or times, through which it passed in its oral course? Does his recasting infallibly and completely eliminate the reflections of the concerns of previous ages contained in the received material; and does he automatically and globally regard all the concerns of a recent age as wholly irrelevant and incomprehensible in his own?

In the first chapter, "The Arrest of Ganelon," Mickel argues that Ganelon's seizure and subsequent treatment are carried out in accordance with the established legal principle of *the clear presumption of guilt*, whereby the critical basis of judicial decisions lay in what was known to be true among law-abiding citizens or adherents of the court. Ganelon's actions amount to a legitimate case of "guilt by notoriety" (32), precluding the need for a formal trial. Thus, as Mickel says in the following chapter, when Charlemagne demands of the barons, "car me jugez *le dreit*," he is not asking them to determine Ganelon's guilt, which is already presumed, but to fix the sentence. (Ganelon disrupts this long-precedented procedure by designating his act as something other than treason.) The principle of the strong presumption of guilt was in common use from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries, disappearing only with the rise of literacy and the establishment of conditions suitable for the evaluation of rational proof, and with the growing interest, especially in the thirteenth century, in *intent* as of greater importance in determining guilt than evidence of the commission of the deed.

Chapter Two deals with the next stage in the judicial procedure, "Accusation and Defense." Mickel makes a valuable point here regarding Charlemagne's assertion that it was *for money* that Ganelon betrayed him and the army. The charge serves to connect Ganelon with

Judas, but has no legal importance since, as just noted, questions of motive were (until much later in the Middle Ages) considered irrelevant, and since the facts in the case are not in dispute.

Ganelon's defense brings up the question of the right of vengeance and its place in the poem. Mickel examines the position held by most scholars, who tend to accept Ganelon's argument as an appeal to the custom law of the Germanic people, which was founded in the clan- and lineage-based familial structure of society— a law and a structure opposed to "the Roman, centralizing tendencies" of the Carolingian and Capetian monarchies (49). These scholars consider that the conflict between the two systems is reflected in the relation between Charlemagne and the barons in the trial scene.

Mickel does not accept this view. He argues that there is but sparse and ambiguous evidence to support the belief that vengeance was part of the legal framework of the early Germanic people. Most of the texts that he cites to support his position— from the passage in Tacitus onwards— either limit the right of revenge in certain circumstances or forbid it outright in others. Both these texts are hardly convincing evidence of Mickel's view, for their restrictions and prohibitions seem to indicate rather that vengeance was a legally perceived and all too ready response to wrongs that demand redress.

Although strong arguments against the majority view have been advanced, I find Mickel's train of thought in this chapter difficult to follow. He begins by noting that "the cornerstone of Germanic custom law and the cement which welded Germanic civilization together was the oath" (50). With its wording meticulously prescribed, the oath was offered by the accused at his trial and supported by compurgators (oath-helpers). Next, Mickel suggests that the importance of the oath in the feudal bond between lord and vassal can be seen in the legal provisions for redress in case of the lord's or vassal's failure to live up to the obligations sworn to: the lord could enforce their terms of the agreement, the vassal could "make formal and public defiance" and so avoid the charge of treason or betrayal (51). Ganelon uses these provisions in his defense: he had defied Roland in open court, and so his vengeance was legal and Roland should have been prepared. But here Mickel rejects both this defense and the views of scholars who have bought it (e.g. Ruggieri, Bender), on the grounds that since Ganelon and Roland are not

lord and vassal and had no "formal feudal tie," the *diffidatio* has no legal bearing in the case and the medieval nobility, whether of the ninth or eleventh century, would have turned Ganelon's argument down. (Mickel makes this point twice, on pp. 51 and 58f.)

But who said anything about the breaking of a "formal feudal tie?" The words that Ganelon spoke in council and to which he refers in the trial are explicit regarding his intent and his understanding of the action that he takes:

> "Jo t'en muvra un si grante contraire
> Ki durerat a trestut ton edage . . . ."
> "Sire," dist Guenes, "ço ad tut fait Rollant!
> Ni l'amerai a trestut mun vivant,
> Ne Oliver, por ço qu'il est si cumpainz,
> Li duze per, por qu'il l'aiment tant.
> Desfi les ci, sire, vostre veiant."
> (ed. Brault, vv. 290-91; 322-326)

It is true that the vendetta, as a legal institution, derived from international feudal law (see Herbert Asmus, *Rechtsprobleme des mittelalterlichen Fehdewesens*, Diss. Göttingen 1951, p. 21; Hans Fehr, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* [Berlin, 1962], p. 89; cited in Anna-Susanna Mattias, "Yvains Rechtsbrüche," in *Beiträge zum romanischen Mittelalter*, ed. Kurt Baldinger [Tübingen, 1977], pp. 156-192, esp. pp. 165ff); but in the scene before us one thing has nothing to do with the other. Ganelon claims that he followed the prescriptions— including the *desfiance* and the citing of grounds— that justify and legalize the starting of a *feud*. Mickel himself makes this clear later (on pp. 71 and 80, for example), but here he seems to be replying to an argument that was never advanced, either by Ganelon or by the scholars who claim that his argument, whatever his motives, has the force of legal and historical precedent and rests on a systematic right that was a cultural fact in the world of the poem— and of the audience.

Here again, with regard to Mickel's approach a question arises that is not considered in the study: how far must we assume that a medieval literary work limited itself, in its representation of judicial action, to the exact prescriptions of contemporary law— that is, the prescriptions in force at the time of its composition, even when the story is of an earlier

age? Mickel himself cites instances in the text of the Oxford *Roland* where the narrative alters, or conflates, or departs from the provisions of the law (see below, discussions of Chapters 5 and 7). In Chrétien's *Yvain*, Esclados reviews the rules that Yvain violated— the *desfiance*, the allowance of time for restitution, etc.— and thus recognizes revenge as an established and ready form of redress in the world that he and Yvain share— the world of a literary narrative. At a time when the option of revenge was presumably even more strictly limited or prohibited than in the period of the *Chanson*, one character berates another for failing to follow the steps required before taking revenge, *not* for taking an action unrecognized or prohibited by their law. It is therefore of little or no importance that revenge may have been perceived in the feudal age "in terms of the lawless condition of the period," rather than "as a legal option," as Mickel suggests— a distinction without much of a difference. Mickel's argument requires a consensus of medieval legal texts so widespread and unambiguous as to make it clear that the audience would at once have recognized Ganelon's defense as an obvious sham. But with his diligent study and honest appraisal of the sources, he cannot so characterize the legal or popular perception of revenge in the day of the Oxford *Roland*. The crucial point is that Ganelon presents a legal position that is represented as serious and traditional *in literature*.

Chapter Three, "The Council's Judgment," holds that Charlemagne's conduct at the trial— his apparent helplessness before the council's disinclination to act, his desperate dependence on one of the barons to challenge Ganelon's defense— is not to be explained as a reflection of the political weakness of the later Carolingians and early Capetians, or by the traditional Germanic idea of kingship (according to which decisions are made by the barons: the king does not create the law but carries out its provisions). Rather, Charlemagne's inaction is held to be due to two legal conditions that involve him: his position as accuser and plaintiff, which disqualifies him from acting as judge; and his position as king, which, according to the law, effectively prevents him from issuing a challenge (though the text Mickel cites— Bracton— only forbids *others* from challenging the *king*). Though Mickel here, as throughout the book, seems to assume that one explanation necessarily excludes all others, his point is valuable because it illustrates how Ganelon makes strict use of established law to pursue his subversive course.

In this chapter Mickel provides a succinct and useful discussion of the transformation of the Germanic concept of kingship under the influence of the Church: the king changes from *primus inter pares*, elected by magnates, to God's elected and anointed representative, a figure set above the people, who become his subjects. But in this chapter there are also some interpretations of the text that are unsupported by the survey of the legal documents and inadequately argued. I shall take these up below.

Chapter Four, "The Case for Treason," arrives, after a circuitous course (extensive consideration of Roman law finally acknowledged to be of doubtful relevance) at a clear, and familiar, assessment: Thierry rejects Ganelon's defense on the grounds that Roland should have been safe from harm because he was in the King's service at the time that Ganelon plotted his death. A medieval audience would have identified Ganelon as a traitor on three grounds: his plotting an ambush and thus not giving Roland an opportunity to defend himself; the kinship of Roland and Ganelon, which makes Ganelon's deed treason "in the oldest sense of the term" (87); Ganelon's conspiring to do harm to the King's army and to a man protected by the King's peace and service. For each of these points Mickel cites pertinent texts from legal codes and from chronicles that document custom.

The following chapter (Five) considers whether the trial by combat points to an early period of origin for the Oxford *Roland*. Mickel concludes that the judicial combat, which remained the prevalent last resort throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, not only is not a sign of the poem's antiquity but may very well reflect conditions of the twelfth century.

In the course of his discussion Mickel takes up an important question: why is it Pinabel who fights, and not Ganelon himself? His answer is typical of his approach to the poem. A witness had to be "falsed" before the accused could be cleared of his damaging testimony, and combat was an available means for this purpose. There was also a practical need on the part of the defendant to present a strong physical threat, which led to the use of champions. But there are problems with this explanation: Pinabel does not appear as a champion, he is rather one of the *pleges* supporting Ganelon's position; nor does Ganelon fall within the category of persons eligible to use champions. To this one might add

that for all his grand physique and fearful reputation Pinabel is not needed for the purpose of combat or intimidation: the repeated description of Ganelon's mighty body and of the awed response of the others to his heroic appearance makes it clear that he is capable— legally and physically— both of defending himself and scaring the judges— that is, the barons in the trial scene, who have all come later and have no veteran knowledge of the seven years in Spain, or of the council that make the wrong decision, or of Ganelon's embassy, or of the fighting in which Roland and the others perished.

Mickel's solution to the legal problem that he sees here is this: either "it was assumed" (97) that Pinabel could take the role of champion (so that, even in Mickel's stringent approach, it is conceded that the action of the poem could depart from strict, authenticated legal practice); or Ganelon's "ploy" makes the *pleges*, along with himself, the object of Thierry's challenge and thus brings Pinabel into play. Now this solution, at best, accounts for the existence of a narrative possibility but cannot explain why the poem has chosen it rather than its practical alternative (Ganelon fights for himself), or other possibilities. To know the legal background, which Mickel ably provides, is to learn something about the repertory of strategies and the range of choices available at the composition of the *Chanson de Roland*. But it does not answer the crucial question concerning the choice exercised, the arrangement settled upon, so that in some cases the legal background would be misappropriated if used as the dominant or final authority for a literary interpretation.

Chapter Six, "Thierry versus Pinabel," regards the *manner* of the combat— on horseback— as evidence of relatively late composition. Other elements— the religious formalism of the ceremony, the unrealistic, "literary" description of the arms and armor of the combatants— are inconclusive with respect to dating the poem. Mickel notes that in treason cases only the king could terminate a combat once begun. A combatant who became *recreant* would be severely punished. Thus Pinabel's offer to Thierry is impossible to accept, even were Thierry so inclined. But with regard to this combat Mickel says that "more is probably to be learned from a literary analysis" (111), and in the rest of the chapter reviews the pattern of recurrent *judicia dei* in the poem.

Chapter Seven deals with Ganelon's thirty *pleges*, in whose harsh punishment Mickel sees another indication of a later date for the

composition of the Oxford *Roland*. He doubts that the *pleges* are there merely as surety (their punishment exceeds all legal provisions, there is no delay in beginning the combat, they were not demanded at the time of Ganelon's arrest); he concludes that they act also as compurgators, or oath-helpers, who were in fact harshly punished if the defendant was found guilty, especially in treason cases in the later medieval period. The fact that Ganelon's *pleges* are his relatives is a further indication of their impending doom and of the poem's late composition, for in the later period a convicted traitor's heirs were treated severely— by the thirteenth century they could be executed, just as the penalty for treason itself became grislier with the advance of central authority. Thus the poem fuses the roles of *plege* and compurgator.

The last chapter, "The Punishment of Ganelon," argues that the traitor's gruesome punishment is further evidence of the later composition of the poem. While provisions for the execution of the traitor had existed since the sixth century, they were rarely exercised. In the earlier centuries, as treason was so often committed by kinsmen of the ruler, and as political conditions before the twelfth century made it fairly commonplace, it was usually treated with astonishing leniency. Thierry's judgment, in Mickel's view, reflects a world in which treason has little to do with *Treubruch* but is a crime against a sovereign state. In this respect Thierry expresses "the spirit of the final redactor," who fits the poem to the frame of mind of his twelfth-century audience. Commenting on the documented treatment of traitors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the author writes: "What was once perceived as a court of last resort, where a noble baron might challenge his lord before God in a kind of *judicium dei* combat to determine which man had failed to fulfill his feudal oath, now becomes a conflict between the sovereign crown and a baron who unlawfully and without justification resists his king" (146).

Although Mickel presents a strong argument in this chapter, it cannot, because of the nature of the evidence, reach more than a tentative conclusion. On the one hand, all of the evidence he cites comes from a period much later than that of the supposed composition of the poem (one instance of the dragging and hanging of a traitor is dated 1196; the rest come from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries). I do not see that he offers anything outside of the text to support his contention that "the Roman attitude toward treason begins to enter the

mind and spirit in the twelfth century"— especially since his twelfth-century cases exemplify leniency. On the other hand, while he demonstrates the trend toward the harsh treatment of traitors in the later Middle Ages, he also shows that there were provisions for such treatment and instances of their being carried out from the sixth century onward; so that the treatment of Ganelon might still represent a form of judicial behavior recognized in the earliest centuries. I say this even though Mickel's argument supports a view I strongly agree with, that in the trial scene we witness the birth of the sovereign state. But it seems to me that it is the contents of the scene that enable us to say that the historical legal trend is pertinent, not that the legal evidence authorizes this particular reading of the scene.

In the Conclusion Mickel recapitulates his main points: "Based on the evidence of the trial of Ganelon, one would have to conclude that there is very little specifically ancient Germanic law in the Oxford *Roland*: (154). Even if one should agree, it is essential to define the basis of this conclusion and the range of its consequence. Some of the elements of this scene— the arrest on the basis of the clear presumption of guilt, the charge of treason, the calling upon the judge to defend his judgment, the single combat— were recognized and acted upon in the earliest period, though they are, to be sure, also present in French and Anglo-Norman legal treatises and chronicles in the Middle Ages, beginning with the end of the twelfth century. Mickel also considers Ganelon's defense, the semi-formal procedure associated with the single combat, and the punishment of Ganelon to be clear signs of late composition, but these points are arguable. Less ambiguous signs of late date are the combat on horseback, and the punishment of the family members as *pleges* or compurgators. Adding all these things up, Mickel finds that there is no support for the assumption of an earlier version of the *Roland*— the "French original"— in the trial scene (155).

Mickel applies these conclusions to the prevalent view "that the Oxford *Roland* reflects the eleventh-century struggle between the crown and the feudal barons, between imperial ideas reflected in Roman law and the decentralized authority customary in Germanic legal tradition" (156); the council of barons is thus held to be opposed to Charlemagne and to support Ganelon's claim that he had defied Roland and had a right to take revenge. To this view Mickel replies as follows:

> However, if Ganelon is clearly guilty of treason, if he were not portrayed sympathetically or perceived by the audience to be justified in his claim, then one's understanding of the political climate of the text changes radically. If Ganelon's defense is not an appeal to a venerable tradition but a clever ruse designed to avoid justice, then the opposition between the crown and the barons in the epic fades away. (156; the same idea repeated on p.162) How then are we to understand the text? "Although the trial of Ganelon in the *Chanson de Roland* operates within a legal framework familiar to the twelfth-century writer, the text itself reflects less the politics of its own period than events of the past seen *sub specie eternitatis*." (164)

Whether or not one agrees with Mickel's reading of the text, there are two flaws in the argument presented here. First, his position now conflicts with the fundamental premise of the entire study:

> To the medieval writer of the *Chanson de Roland*, it would have been natural to recast the legal conditions into those he knew in his own time. He would not have done so consciously to disturb the conditions of the text, nor would he have been aware that the law in Charlemagne's day might have been different. In his mind he was providing a legal context which dated back to time immemorial, as far back as anyone could remember. (21)

Now if "twelfth-century immersion in its own philosophical and theological perspective caused writers to alter the shapes of materials and ideas," and if "a different and absolute view of history made them read multiple patterns into texts and events" (20), on what basis can Mickel— or anyone else— decide which aspects of the contemporary "context" were woven into the text, and which were cut off; how can one determine whether such a selection was made or was possible, even "unconsciously," especially since the medieval view of history was "absolute?" On what basis can one assume that "the last redactor" representing the trial according to the legal practices of his time but sifted out the political conflicts and realities which— as Mickel himself

shows so ably— provided the fundamental cause and context of those practices? (See, for example, his discussion of the increasing severity of the punishment of treason and the movement toward centralization of power.)

The author has argued himself into a corner, and the reason stems from the other flaw in his procedure. Everyone who knows the poem will agree with Mickel that it seeks to present the past *sub specie eternitatis*, according to a timeless, immutable, providential pattern. But Mickel seems to assume that if this perception of the poem's intention is true, none other can be; that if, for example, the poem establishes a vital resemblance between Ganelon and Judas, then Ganelon can have no other function or meaning as a character; that the relation of the traitor to the central, radiant, preternaturally passive figure of goodness attended by a disparate group of followers who fail him in varying degrees would not also be repeated in the conflict between the emperor and a baron, or the barons, "*de ma marche*." This kind of single-reason positivism, though it does not diminish the value of Mickel's survey of the legal documents, subverts his attempt to apply it to an understanding of the poem. The extent to which he falls short in this regard can be seen in the quotation above, in which he says that our reading of the poem would be different from that of the "traditional" scholarly interpretation *if* Ganelon is "clearly guilty of treason" and therefore known to be cynical and deceitful in his claim. After this extensive survey of the law, we are now back where we started from, facing that enormous *if*. The author sets before us, in the form of drastic alternatives, one of the critical interpretive questions raised by the poem, and not one item in the legal background favors a choice.

The critical silence of the legal texts forces Mickel to make a crux of Ganelon's inscrutable motives. He argues to the effect that if Ganelon acts and speaks as he does only because he is insincere, or greedy for gold, or cowardly, or merely tricky, or simply evil, his defense is without merit. Now as Mickel shows us so clearly, the codes and customs of the law through the thirteenth century were focused on the commission of the deed and had no interest in the intent of the agent. If we take Mickel's approach, we ought to assume that the poem is as little interested in motives— especially unarticulated, vaguely suggested, or merely potential motives— as the legal system that it reflects. That means that we should forbear from all speculation regarding motives not

fully attested in the text; and from diminishing the evil of Ganelon by compulsively reducing the number of his possible reasons: it is a scheme and need of our own, not any authority in the text, that makes us feel we must choose whether Ganelon, in his defense, is a clever hypocrite, or a passionate believer in an older law, or an out-and-out scoundrel who has sold his companions for gold. The issue of the "real" motive of his actions and words is not only legally irrelevant and ultimately unfathomable, but also foreign to the concerns of the poem— an imposed, anachronous, unauthorized concept. We are left then only with his words and deeds, which articulate the point of view that he represents in his defense. He calls his action vengeance and awaits an answer— one that nearly does not come. Whatever his motives, the scene shows that his position has strength.

Let us even grant, for the moment, that Ganelon is the one-trait villain that Mickel posits; he nevertheless comes armed with an argument that gives the court plenty of trouble, and Mickel cannot, because of his approach, produce a better explanation than that the barons are cowardly, afraid of Pinabel: in other words, he bases his argument on their supposed motives. But the presence of Pinabel explains nothing. We have already seen that neither the provisions of the law nor the data of the poem (especially the representations of Ganelon's own prowess) can account for Pinabel's role in the trial and the combat. Why is he there? The law, for all of Mickel's careful canvassing of it, is silent on this question; all that we learn from the law is that it does not obstruct the possibility of the creation of Pinabel, who is, nevertheless, legally unnecessary. To account for his presence, we must seek the final cause in the poem. For example: Pinabel fights for Ganelon because Thierry fights for Charlemagne. Pinabel's presence, therefore, completes another of the symmetrical patterns by which the poem informs its actions and reveals its meaning. A judicial battle is fought by surrogates, each of whom represents a greater figure an cause. By this arrangement Ganelon is lined up against Charlemagne as a major enemy, occupies a position within the fold analogous to Marsilion's and Baligant's without. The presence of Pinabel exalts Ganelon in the stature of his evil, bestows upon him what Charlemagne already possesses in this scene, the inaction of monumentality.

Neither the text of the poem nor the legal texts will satisfy anyone who wants a single, definitive answer to each question and believes that

such an answer is possible, let alone desirable. In the end Mickel turns to the other versions of the story of Roland and discusses the trial scene in the Châteauroux manuscript, which he regards as "an important gloss on the implications of the Oxford *Roland*" (158). Though his reading is somewhat partial and tendinous, it is clear that the Ganelon of this version is much more readable as an unmitigated traitor and coward, and far more adequately covered by the provisions of the legal system, than the enigmatic Ganelon of the Oxford manuscript. But what does that prove? Without a careful critical argument (which would include a discussion of the stemma) justifying this procedure— that is, making the text talk with borrowed words wherever it is reticent— one cannot know whether one is presenting a legitimate gloss on the poem or demonstrating that the Oxford *Roland* is different.

The law is too frail a hook to draw out this grand leviathan. Let us take the combat on horseback and grant Mickel's point that it is a clear sign of late composition, a prescription of twelfth-century law (even though he shows that there is a ninth-century precedent for it). Even while thanking Mickel for emphasizing the significance of this detail, we cannot grant what he makes of it and of other such signs. Let us shut out every doubt and say that the Oxford *Roland* was written when he claims it was: we still have no basis on which to judge the "traditional" scholarly view. Underlying Mickel's conclusions regarding such details is an unexpressed assumption that I think should have been put on the table; for only if the Oxford *Roland* were composedly globally— all at once, the result of a radical beginning— could these details from a later period possibly determine the relation between Charlemagne and the barons and the entire political question of the trial scene. Otherwise, even if we are convinced by Mickel's evidence, we could believe nothing more than that certain details stem from the twelfth century, and we would be left with the big question still unanswered— that is, whether or not they were added to a narrative that had developed over a period of time through continual repetition and innovation, and that reflects, among other things, the power struggle of the eleventh century, still vitally significant in the twelfth. Mickel's approach thus tacitly assumes that the poem was written without predecessors. Maybe this part of it, at least, was; but, in any case, the legal references cannot be brought to bear on this question without begging it. On the other hand, this extreme individualist position, even though it conflicts with Mickel's belief in the existence of "the final redactor" (148) and an antecedent oral tradition, is

an absolutely essential condition for his interpretive application of the legal evidence.

Because he interprets the trial scene so stringently according to the provisions of medieval law, Mickel never gets to the essential conflict that animates this poem, or at least this part of it. No one— neither barons nor reader— doubts that Ganelon committed acts that fulfill the definition of treason; and most people (I think) will agree with Mickel when he points out that Ganelon was not intentionally disloyal to Charlemagne and did not mean to do him harm personally (82); nor can anyone doubt that Ganelon was provoked to take the action that proved monstrous. But the question that engages the audience is different from the ones that Mickel answers. Thierry says:

> Que que Rollant a Guenelun forsfesist,
> Vostre servise l'en doüst bien guarir!
> Guenes est fels d'içø qu'il le trait,
> Vers vos s'en est parjurez e malmis. (3827-30)

This is the first utterance in the poem declaring that the claims of the Emperor, and thus of the state, are supreme, taking precedence over other claims, including revenge, which is here recognized as an optional form of redress (*Que que Rollant a Guenelun forsfesist*). In the moment of this human utterance, and in the utterance of God discovered in the outcome of the combat, the world of the audience was born. The question that this scene engages is not: in what code or custom is the sovereignty of the ruler provided for— a question amply answered by Mickel (citing *both early and late texts* [84ff]), but of only secondary interest, since we all know that Ganelon is a traitor. (The evidence, in any case, is inconclusive regarding the issue of the Germanic versus the Roman concept of treason, since laws protecting a man in the king's service were on the books quite early.) The animating question is this: when did this moment take place, what was happening, what was it like? That question does not call for a specific year or document or fact, items of little oral resonance; it asks, rather, for the evocation of an experience lost in history but still witnessed communally in the imagination. The poem guides the imagination in a way that is sympathetic to the centralization of authority and power.

Mickel sees the poem reflecting another, more specific, but equally suppositious moment, a time in the twelfth century when the sovereignty of the ruler, the authority of the state, the national definition of treason, and the rejection of revenge were concepts so profoundly and ubiquitously established that no one— neither the barons in the poem nor the audience attending it— could take Ganelon's defense seriously, least of all Ganelon himself. For this view of the trial scene the book makes perhaps the strongest case that can be made on the basis of the legal evidence— which, through no fault of the author's and as his painstaking study makes clear, is weighed down, practically immobilized, by its ambiguousness.

It is useful and interesting to read the texts that prescribe the priority of the king's business over all other rights and customs. But undue reliance on such texts may well obscure the purpose of the scene, for it puts us in danger of viewing the trial of Ganelon as a narrative translation of established law, bound to the visions and provisions of codes and customs— as though the significance of the scene were not established by the language of the poem, the order of the narrative, the methods of its composition, and its genesis in history.

This is not to deny the importance of Mickel's undertaking. To know the mentality and the provisions of the legal systems that prevailed in the time that preceded the Oxford *Roland* is valuable, not because such knowledge would show us how the poem limits its presentations to the framework of a legal code, but because knowing these things will give us some idea of the repertory of possibilities out of which "the last poet" established the content and meaning of his work. With "the legal approach," for all its interest and illumination, the mountainous questions remain unscaled. Does Ganelon represent a legal and moral system at odds with a new system of centrality and the state, or is he simply a scoundrel who does harm, as an unfortunate accident does harm; or does he fit both roles and other roles as well? Does the struggle in the poem end in a world whose conditions and procedures are unchanged from those represented at the outset; if not, what are the nature and effect of the changes, and whose interests or pursuits do they favor?

This is a book worth reading for many reasons. Everyone will profit from its survey of medieval legal history regarding the questions raised

in the trial scene of the Oxford *Roland*. It make a valuable contribution as well in its exposure of the facile assumptions of earlier legal studies of the trial scene, most notably Ruggieri's. I believe that it adds some strength to the argument for the later dating of the Oxford *Roland*, though it often exaggerates the significance of its evidence. The manner in which it argues its interpretation of the trial scene is forthright and consistent and will provoke even those who find fault with it to define their ideas about the valid use of extra-textual evidence in the interpretation of literature.

"LABBÉ'S *L'ARCHITECTURE DES PALAIS ET DES JARDINS DANS LES CHANSONS DE GESTE*"

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Alain Labbé. ***L'architecture des palais et des jardins dans les chansons de geste: Essai sur le thème du roi en majesté.*** **Paris: Champion and Geneva: Slatkine, 1987. Pp. 608 + 40 pages of plates.**

This hefty volume is the reworking of a *thèse de Doctorat d'ètat* defended at Paris X-Nanterre in 1985, and combines judiciously the author's dual interests in literature and the fine arts. The first, and longer, part (19-354) is devoted to the image of kingship in four chansons de geste: *La Chanson de Roland*, *Girart de Roussillon*, *La Prise d'Orange*, and *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*. The second part (355-549) explores the origins of this imagery, through the architecture of the Holy Roman Empire and Ottonian and Carolingian miniatures, by way of late Roman medallions and architecture— notably Nero's *Domus Aurea* and the Villa Hadriana, to its earliest expression in Indo-European mythography. The volume is completed by a bibliography of over 660 items, an index of

modern authors cited, a general index, a detailed table of contents, and 40 pages of plates.[1]

Professor Labbé finds two dominant images of majesty in the chansons de geste: the king as warrior (on horseback, leading his troops), and the king as adjudicator (associated either with a tree in a garden, or with a vault in a palace). It is this second image of kingship that forms the basis of the present volume. In the *Roland* it is the image of the king, both Charlemagne and Marsile, in a garden that prevails; whereas in the other epics studied the palace clearly predominates. Labbé suggests that both images go back through early Christian notions of Paradise, either as a garden of sweet-smelling flowers with a tree in the center, or as a heavenly city with beautiful gates, to a more distant, pre-Christian past in which the king was the visible link between earth and the otherworld, assuring the fertility of the earth and propitiating the heavens. The tree is seen as a powerful image linking the chthonian earth forces through its roots to the ouranian celestial powers in the spreading of its branches. With the tree are associated the stone (*perron*) and the spring, which likewise put the king in contact with the primeval forces governing fertility, fecundity, and life. Palace scenes are confined to the great hall, the chapel, and the chamber, and to each room there corresponds a different aspect of royalty: earthly majesty in the hall, site of official audiences, plenary courts, trials, and the like; heavenly majesty in the chapel, were the king functions as God's representative on earth; and the king as provider in the vaulted chamber, where the king's treasure was kept. Within the palace, the king is invariably enclosed within a masonry vault whose heavy stones tie him to the earth, but whose soaring arch links him with the heavens. Again, we have the king as *cosmocrator*. This imagery is succinctly summarized by Labbé on pp. 214-15 as follows:

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[1]It would be wrong to tax such a beautifully edited and carefully prepared book for a few minor typographical errors; they are exceedingly rare. One, however, is particularly regrettable and needs to be signaled to potential readers: the omission on p. 508 of the marginal indication that there is an illustration to accompany the important discussion of Guy de Ponthieu in the garden (#XLV). (In a similar vein, the marginal reference on p. 434 should be to illustration #XXX, rather than #XX.)

> Les deux versions de l'image de majesté que dessinent la scène du jardin royal et son équivalent aulique se rattachent à un ample symbolisme cosmique, dont elles évoquent les deux faces opposées et complémentaires: la face chthonienne, reliée aux puissances obscures de la terre, génératrices de fécondité et de fertilité; l'autre, de nature essentiellement ouranienne, exprimant la part lumineuse et solaire de l'univers, accordée aux grands cycles planétaires qui sont la manifestation de l'ordre du monde.

Along with this rather metaphysical argument that underlies the entire book are numerous more pedestrian, but no less valuable, insights into the symbolism and architecture of the period. On p. 189, for example, one learns that the falcon on the wrist is another attribution of majesty, making reference to the hunt, reserved by law to nobles; or that, carried by an ambassador, it signifies a peaceful mission, since hunting with birds was not considered training for war. One learns the difference between a *vergier* (at some distance from the palance) and a *cortil* (within the walls); that *palais* might refer to the entire edifice in which a king resides, but could be limited to mean just the great hall, in which case it was synonymous with *salle*; that *perron* might on occasion refer to a throne carved from a solid block of stone; that the great hall is always conceived as a raised area, accessible generally by marble steps, while the throne was further raised by a dais. The book is rich in such details and the particular angle taken leads to often original interpretations of the scenes of majesty in the epics in question.

It is less easy to allow Professor Labbé, however, when he attempts to associate the descriptions of palaces and gardens in the epics with recollections of specific medieval or Roman constructions or parks. References to "Eis, em ma chapele" (*Roland 2917*) and "As bainz ads Ais" (*Roland* 3984) lead to the conclusion that "les deux éléments donnés dans la *Chanson de Roland* comme caractéristiques du palais d'Aix, sa chapelle et ses thermes, correspondent très exactement à ce qui en avait fait un édifice unique en son temps" (p. 121). Although this seems to be leaping to conclusions from meager evidence, one can with a little faith acknowledge the possibility; but when he goes on to propose that in his dreams Charlemagne is evoking the royal hunting preserve, or that the tower of Gloriette in the *Prise d'Orange* is a faithful description of medieval constructions on the Roman ruins of the city, one is forced to conclude that there is more conjecture here than proof. But in fairness to the author it is necessary to note that he regularly recognizes the often hypothetical nature of his conclusions in this domain. Similarly, the very

sketchy associations made in his concluding pages between the triple imagery of kingship and Indo-European trifunctionality as developed by Georges Dumézil in general and Joël Grisward for the medieval epic, are not convincing. But again in fairness, we must recognize that this is presented more as a subject for further research rather than as a conclusion.

The second part of the volume, which seeks through a study of the plastic arts, particularly monumental architecture, to discover the visual origins of the representations of majesty in the chansons de geste, remains prudently speculative, rather than pushing the analyses as far as earlier. Labbé is right, I think, to contend that the very visual character of the images of majesty in the chansons de geste may reflect iconographical sources, but he is also correct in not seeking to tie particular verbal pictures to specific plastic images or architectural remains. Nonetheless there is a striking and undeniable parallel between manuscript portraits of Charles the Bald on his throne, for example, and verbal descriptions of Charlemagne in majesty in the chansons de geste. A similar conception of kingship is surely evoked and the same symbolic elements are consistently employed. This conception of kingship goes back to late Roman times when the emperors began to consider themselves as gods and to express this progressive divinisation in the architecture of their palaces, so that their appearance in state became a sort of theophany. With the fall of the Roman Empire, this "architecture of majesty" was progressively appropriated by the great nobles, then revived notably in the ninth century by Charles the Bald.

The final chapter of this second part explores the images of kingship in the Bayeux tapestry where, as in the chansons other than the *Roland*, the "king under the vault" dominates. Labbé finds here the same mixture of objective observation of architectural reality (in, for example, the depictions of Dinan and Dol, or that of Westminster cathedral) and imaginative and symbolic representations that he found in the chansons de geste. Again it seems to me that the symbolic clearly predominates, even in the so-called "objective" descriptions, and that while Dinan and Dol are depicted as the "motte-and-bailey" castles they really were, to claim that these images are in any way "fidèlement reproduits" (p. 499 passim) rather than idealised statements is to stretch the point. My objections here are no doubt more of terminology and emphasis rather than fundamental disagreements. I believe Labbé sometimes gets caught

up in his own enthusiasm for some of the parallels he finds and tries to push his evidence a bit farther than it really wants to go. His key findings remain solid and the image of the king-*cosmocrator* is convincingly proven to be one of the fundamental constants of human thought, deeply rooted in the collective unconscious.

Professor Labbé's study is further evidence of a strong resurgence of interest in France in the chansons de geste, a resurgence that readers of *Olifant* can only hope will cross the Atlantic before too long.

HOMMAGES À MARGUERITE ROSSI ET PAUL BANCOURT: *DE L'ÉTRANGER À L'ÉTRANGE*

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De l'Etranger à l'étrange ou la conjointure de la merveille, en hommage à Marguerite Rossi et Paul Bancourt. **Senefiance 25. Aix-en-Provence: Publications du CUERMA, 1988. Pp. 493.**

Ce volume de 25 articles, dédié à Marguerite Rossi et Paul Bancourt par leurs collègues et amis, est une véritable fête organisée à leur intention. Outre une bibliographie des oeuvres de ces deux éminents chercheurs et une courte biographie des temps forts de leur carrière, le volume est émaillé de nombreuses références à leurs travaux et aux idées par lesquelles ils ont contribué à faire progresser les recherches dans leur domaine respectif. Qu'il me soit permis de m'associer à cet hommage en commençant ce compte-rendu par la description de leur contribution personnelle à ce volume.

Marguerite Rossi étudie «Les Eléments merveilleux dans Dieudonné de Hongrie» (431-448). Elle montre très bien comment le merveilleux des êtres «faés» et des objets magiques qui apparaissent dans le texte, a réussi un «amalgame entre chanson de geste et roman, dont le corpus de Huon de Bordeaux fournissait le modèle» (436). Cherchant comment ce merveilleux fonctionne au niveau de la narration (structure et signification), Mme Rossi conclut que la féerie ne change pas

fondamentalement la portée du message en faveur de la monarchie royale française mais qu'elle est créativement refondue par le poète «pour construire une intrigue compatible avec l'orientation politique et morale de son oeuvre» (446).

L'article de Paul Bancourt, «Le Visage de l'Autre: étude sur le sens de la Chanson d'Aspremont» (45-56), exemplifie la question de l'identité de «l'Autre» (un des thèmes de l'ouvrage), puisque dans ce cas, «l'Autre» sont les Francs. Il repère dans le déroulement de la chanson la mise en place d'une appréciation de plus en plus grande de la culture des Francs chrétiens par les Musulmans. Le mépris initial de ces derniers se transforme en admiration et respect pour les valeurs de culture, de technique et de religion de leurs ennemis, culminant dans la conversion du personnage de Balan. Paul Bancourt considère cette chanson contemporaine de la 3ème croisade, comme une oeuvre de propagande «s'adressant aux Francs» et qui «a pour fonction de rassurer les Francs sur eux-mêmes» (53).

Le bel article de Jean Arrouye, «L'Etrange songe des mages étrangers» (15-31), lie l'étranger au similaire, l'art à la religion, le cadre extérieur à la recherche intérieure dans une conjointure réussie des disciplines littéraires et artistiques. Dans l'analyse précise et graphique qu'il fait de la sculpture des rois mages figurant sur le chapiteau d'Autun, il part du concept d'«étranger» traditionnellement attribué aux rois mages et du concept d'«étrange» attribué aux songes, pour aboutir à leur jonction dans l'image modèle du croyant, à qui l'ange rappelle le but céleste de la vie.

Dans «Guillaume à Orange ou la quête de l'Autre Monde» (33-43), Jean-Claude Aubailly rattache, par le biais de C.G. Jung, tout le cycle de Guillaume aux étapes de la transformation du héros vers son individuation. Pour lui, *La Prise d'Orange* représente particulièrement la quête de l'Anima, premier pas du processus «par lequel chaque être devient ce que de toute éternité il était destiné à devenir» (37). Une telle interprétation aurait l'avantage, selon lui, de pouvoir peut-être expliquer les incohérences apparentes de la chanson, car la structure mythique impliquée en soutiendrait l'ensemble suivant une logique profonde.

François Suard, de son côté, nous montre comment «Le merveilleux et le religieux dans Ami et Amile» (449-462) s'associent sans se confondre

à travers le thème de la gémellité. Issu de la tradition folklorique, dont Suard retrace l'influence dans le texte, ce thème de la gémellité constitue un des points d'intersection favorable à l'étude des deux éléments en question. Les tensions qui s'y révèlent (à propos du motif du serment notamment), tendent à diriger les éléments de la structure narrative (la lèpre, par exemple) et servent ainsi à définir les limites respectives des deux univers.

Micheline de Combarieu du Grès passe «De l'étrange au merveilleux ou le recours aux forêts dans Renaut de Montauban (version du ms. La Vallière)» (127-155), à travers les études successives, d'abord, du mystérieux caractère «faé» du cheval Bayart, ensuite des «charmes» de Maugis, de l'«étrange» de la forêt d'Ardenne et du carrefour de Vaucouleurs pour aboutir au merveilleux chrétien qui se manifeste dans les «miracles» dont bénéficie Renaut et qui le désignent comme «saint». Elle met en relation ces différents types d'«autres mondes» avec un arrière-plan symbolique où peut se lire la modulation du duo «culture / nature» qui ici, dit-elle, se traduit dans l'opposition chrétien (christicola) / païen (silvaticus)» (150).

«Le fruit merveilleux d'Esclarmonde» (57-70) est la pomme dont Jeanne Baroin étudie l'utilisation et les implications. Elle la voit comme un puissant ressort dramatique qui commande au moins quatre épisodes du texte (la rencontre avec l'ange et trois miracles de rajeunissement). Mais elle divertit aussi, dit-elle, le personnage principal de son but initial, strictement temporel, (la reconquête de Bordeaux), vers une recherche de qualité plus spirituelle dans l'esprit de la Croisade contre les Infidèles. La pomme offre ainsi une solution ingénieuse pour passer d'un monde à l'autre et y faire évoluer le héros sans discordance.

Intrigué par «Un anneau nuptial pas comme les autres» (109-125), Denis Collomp examine l'utilisation littéraire de l'anneau depuis Platon, puis au travers des textes épiques et romanesques. Il se concentre ensuite sur Dieudonné de Hongrie où, lié au thème de l'épouse chaste, le thème de l'anneau se trouve renouvelé par l'amplification que lui donne l'auteur.

La pomme et l'anneau illustrent ainsi la manière dont un motif traditionnel, employé de façon nouvelle, permet aux auteurs épiques de

créer un élément de surprise chez leurs auditeurs tout en les gardant dans le confort de l'élément connu.

Le premier article de Régine Colliot, «Ambiguïté de l'aventure dans Le Chevalier aux deux épées: un monde étrange» (71-88), démontre le renouvellement opéré quant à l'action et certains personnages ou objets, nettement liés au Perceval de Chrétien de Troyes, par cette création romanesque de la 2ème moitié du 13ème siècle. Ici, la créativité se manifeste, dit-elle, par «un goût de logique et de clarté» (83), une sorte de purgation du merveilleux, qui envahit le récit et qui, par là, le confine à l'étrange.

Son second article, «L'étrange et les belles étrangères dans le Siège de Barbastre» (89-107), s'attache à la description des épisodes «relevant du monde de l'étrange ou de l'amour» (91): d'abord l'étrangeté des songes, où apparaissent des bêtes fabuleuses et sauvages; ensuit la description des autres merveilles qui y apparaissent; enfin l'étude du comportement des belles Sarrasines de la chanson, révélant une sorte de portrait-robot de la femme païenne dont rêvaient les Francs.

Autre portrait-robot que nous offre Jean-Marc Pastré à propos cette fois des «Etranges Sarrasins: le luxe et l'exotisme dans le Willehalm de Wolfram» (329-338). Passant en revue les différentes pièces de leur armement, de leur habillement, de leur luxe en général, il montre comment les Sarrasins sont «réduits à l'état de jouets, symboles d'inutilité, de frivolité» (336), tragiquement égarés pour l'amour de leur belle dans des combats sanguinaires, aux antipodes du monde habituel et raffiné de leurs cours.

Par contre, Gérard Gouiran dans «So dis la donna: 'Oy, bel sira Rollan / Mos maritz es en malaür lo gran.' Les Sarrasins et la Sarrasine dans Rollan a Saragossa» (221-244), oppose l'image traditionnelle des Sarrasins, dont Marsile est un épitomé, au beau personnage de la reine Braslimonde, sa femme, qui donne un exemple rare de fierté, de retenue et de rigueur morale, tout en rayonnant la douceur et la sensualité de la femme courtoise.

Les automates et autres jeux mécaniques ont fait l'objet de plusieurs communications. «D'étranges machines étrangères dans le cycle de Huon de Bordeaux. Les automates, gardiens de Dunostre» (463-480),

sont étudiés en détail par Jean Subrenat pour souligner le caractère purement mécanique, totalement dépourvu de magie, de ces gardiens de cuivre et de fer. A l'encontre des automates figurant dans l'ensemble des oeuvres épiques et romanesques des 12-13èmes siècles, et destinés généralement à émerveiller, effrayer les hôtes de marque ou à éprouver le héros, ceux de Dunostre restent placidement ce qu'ils sont, c'est-à-dire des machines qui ne disparaissent pas une fois remplie leur mission. Il est remarquable, souligne-t-il, que cette invention mécanique se soit transmise telle quelle dans le cycle de Huon de Bordeaux et ait résisté à la «tendance naturelle au merveilleux» des auteurs de l'époque (477).

D'autres automates surgissent d'un parcours épique où nous embarque Huguette Legros, qui nous décrit leurs différents types: de l'androïde à la création de phénomènes atmosphériques en passant par les arbres aux oiseaux et autres divertissements merveilleux du monde oriental («Les automates. Attirance, répulsion de l'étrange» [297-314]). Outre leur but évident d'impressionner ou d'effrayer le visiteur, ils expriment de façon emblématique, dit Legros, les pouvoirs cosmologiques et magiques des souverains orientaux. Ils assument ainsi une double fonction dans l'imaginaire du texte: montrer la force efficace des chevaliers francs contre ces mécaniques et souligner de manière symbolique la différence de nature et de fonctions dans le pouvoir des souverains orientaux et occidentaux.

C'est ce dernier point que «Les 'jeux étranges' de l'empereur byzantin dans Girard de Roussillon» (255-273) sont amenés à illustrer à partir de l'étude des vers 211-222 qu'Alain Labbé analyse en détail. La mise en oeuvre des «pouvoirs magiques» devant l'ambassade de Girard, dit-il, n'est déchiffrée dans son sens symbolique (roi-cosmocrator) ni par les hôtes de l'empereur de Byzance, frustrés par le retard apporté ainsi à leur mission, ni par le poète qui «a cherché à faire du rituel des audiences.... une classique scène de cour à l'occidentale» (269). C'est ainsi qu'en quelques vers se trahit «la distance psychologique séparant l'Orient de l'Occident, l'un à l'autre 'étrangers' non moins que l'un à l'autre 'étranges'» (269).

Les mots-clefs qui sont au centre des thèmes du colloque ont fait aussi l'object de plusieurs communications.

Michel-Marie Dufeil fait une étude fouillée des différents mots latins exprimant le concept «d'étranger» (*e.a. peregrinus*, *alienus*, *alter*) à partir d'un classement grammatical et morphématique de l'*Index thomisticus*, doublé d'une recherche sémique et sémiologique. Son graphique de la page 193 donne un très bon résumé visuel des complexités de l'analyse («Alter apud Tomam. Lexicologie du soi et de l'éveil à la merveille» [189-219]).

Jean Lacroix réfléchit quant à lui sur «L'Orient, sésame de l'aventure linguistique dans l'épopée italienne et hispanique» (275-296). Aventure linguistique qui renvoie, de l'Occident à l'Orient et vice-versa, aux séductions militaire, religieuse et sentimentale de l'aventure par la conquête et l'invasion. L'échange de contact conduit ainsi à «l'étrange,» attirant et agressif, mais fécondant dans sa réciprocité.

Christiane Deluz de son côté s'attache au sens du mot merveille (mirabilia, miracula) dont l'évolution, du Moyen Age à la Renaissance, semble correspondre à celle d'un changement de vision et d'équilibre dans l'approche de la connaissance du monde et de l'homme, de la nature et de la culture, du miracle et de la découverte («Des lointains merveilleux [d'après quelques textes géographiques et récits de voyage du Moyen Age]», 157-169). D'après elle, «on est passé peu à peu de la merveille, objet de meditation pour les clercs à la merveille, objet de découverte pour les voyageurs» (167).

Dans son article, «De l'étranger à l'étrange: dos paradigmas políticos, jurídicos y literarios en el pensamiento de Francesc d'Eiximenis (c. 1327-1409)» (341-353), Manuel J. Pelaez étudie les termes étranger et étrange dans l'oeuvre du polygraphe géronais. Après avoir montré la relativité politique et juridique du terme étranger suivant le point de vue de celui qui l'utilise, Pelaez passe à l'examen des positions d'Eiximenis vis-à-vis de l'étrange: astrologie, alchimie, prophétie, légende et superstition. Bien qu'Eiximenis critique ceux qui se fient exclusivement à ces procédés ou croyances, Pelaez ne croit pas qu'il faille ranger cet auteur, comme certains l'ont fait précédemment, parmi les esprits de la Renaissance. Il faut le considérer au contraire comme un représentant de la conception médiévale traditionnelle et «la última gran figura del medievelismo catalán» (350).

May Plouzeau étudie «Les sarrasins dans les 'Romances' du Moyen Anglais: sur quelques passages du Sowdone of Babylone» (355-392). Elle traque la source probable des traits particuliers de vocabulaire, de pratiques religieuses et alimentaires figurant dans ce texte à propos des Sarrasins, au récit de Chaucer ("Knight's Tale"). Mais il s'agit toujours, souligne-t-elle, d'un agglomérat d'emprunts puisque Chaucer «remodèle les vers sinueux et mélodieux de Boccace... qui lui-même refaçonne les hexamètres de Stace, lequel déjà etc...». (380).

Guilles Polizzi, dans «'Sens plastique': le spectacle des merveilles dans le Livre du Cuer d'Amours Espris» (393-430), montre que René d'Anjou semble à la fois innover dans la mise en scène du merveilleux «objectivé comme spectacle» (424) tout en lui gardant sa part de fantastique, de mystère échappant à l'esprit humain.

Avec «Outremer et outremonde dans Auberi le Bougoing» (481-493), Isabelle Weill passe en revue les différentes formes de «l'étranger» (Sarrasins, série de différentes peuplades et Satan) auquel se trouve confronté le héros de la chanson.

Le très bel article de Marie-Françoise Notz, «Le bestiaire fabuleux et l'imaginaire de la conquête dans la Chanson d'Aspremont» (315-327), rappelle d'abord le rôle symbolique du monstre en tant que «gardien du seuil» (317), avec sa voracité destructrice et son lien dans l'épreuve à subir. Il développe ensuite la relation entre le bestiaire d'Aspremont et sa fonction de signe comme tentation de démesure et d'illimité. En monde, et ses limites assignées par Dieu. Il réussit une conquête qui est en même temps une quête de soi. A l'encontre du monde païen qui refuse la soumission à ces règles de mesure, Naime, le héros de la chanson, signe à travers l'épreuve du sacrifice et du don, le triomphe du principe chrétien, symbolisé par la relique de la croix portée au sommet d'Aspremont.

Francis Dubost étudie une autre forme de monstre dans «L'autre guerrier: l'archer-cheval. Du Sagittaire du *Roman de Troie* aux Sagittaires de *La Mort Aymeri de Narbonne*» (171-184). Après avoir retracé l'évolution du Sagittaire, mi-homme, mi-bête, dans l'imaginaire médiéval et comparé sa représentation à travers les deux oeuvres citées, Dubost voit dans leur image en tant qu'«Autre guerrier» une illustration de la crainte et de la vulnérabilité ressenties collectivement par la société médiévale,

non seulement devant l'étranger, l'ennemi venu d'ailleurs, mais aussi devant l'étrangeté d'armes différentes (e.a. la flèche), utilisées pour un différent type d'affrontement dans un autre genre de stratégie. L'image du Sagittaire, descendant du Centaure, réalise aussi dans *La Mort Aymeri de Narbonne* un «déplacement du mythe vers l'histoire» (183) en ce sens qu'il anticipe le passage réel et historique à d'autres armes, d'autres combats. De plus, le Sagittaire offre peut-être, dit l'auteur, un commentaire de la part des auteurs médiévaux sur la composante la plus à craindre dans l'art de la guerre: l'homme ou la bête?

Michelle Houdeville dénonce l'utilisation d'«Une arme étrange dans la *Chanson de Roland*» (245-253). Elle parle, en effet, d'une des armes les plus répandues dans notre vie quotidienne: la propagande. Elle montre que si du côté chrétien comme du côté musulman, on utilise l'arme psychologique, les ruses de guerre ne sont pas tout à fait les mêmes chez les uns et chez les autres: trahison, mensonge, agents de recrutement et de pénétration sont généralement attribués aux Sarrasins. L'auteur de la chanson influence donc l'imaginaire collectif en faveur de l'armée, de la religion chrétienne et procède à une campagne de «désinformation» (251) c'est-à-dire de dévalorisation envers les Sarrasins. Le monde des Sarrasins que présente la chanson sert en effet de levier à une «idéologie guerrière» (250) qui répond bien aux buts politiques de l'Eglise et de l'Etat à l'époque (Croisades, orientation calculée des énergies). Le vocabulaire contemporain utilisé par Houdeville souligne bien les similarités d'attitudes et de réactions du monde médiéval avec les nôtres.

Quelques brèves remarques à propos de la présentation et de la typographie. L'utilisation des dactylogrammes fournis par les conférenciers, dont fait partiellement usage l'éditeur, conduit à un manque regrettable d'uniformisation dans le soin apporté à la présentation et aux corrections: corrections faites à la main de façon trop visible (159-167); manque de netteté dans l'impression (223, 225, 250, 272); lignes redoublées (35-36) etc. Certains articles sont très soignés, d'autres sont émaillés d'erreurs. J'en relève simplement quelques-unes: les mots pèlerinage, pèlerin, semblent avoir occasionné un problème d'accent à plusieurs participants (135, 146, 195); à remarquer aussi la valse-hésitation entre les graphies de phratrie / fratrie (137, 145), orphelin / orfelin (195), due sans doute aux incertitudes de la «nouvelle orthographe»; le nom de Paul Bancourt se trouve démuni de son «t» au long des pages 481-493; enfin, une erreur qui laisse les lecteurs intéressés

sur leur faim: l'article de Jean Lacroix renvoie occasionnellement à une bibliographie inexistante dans le présent article (292-293, notes 5, 22, 23, 27).

On souhaiterait également que le volume soit résistant à la manipulation. Il s'effrite littéralement après une première lecture.

Ces quelques remarques ne diminuent en rien la qualité des articles qui y sont contenus. Le sujet abordé est d'autant plus intéressant que les approches en sont variées. Elles contribuent toutes à son approfondissement et dégagent, au-delà du cadre médiéval assigné, des perspectives essentielles qui rejoignent nos comportements actuels face à «l'étranger» ou à «l'étrange». C'est que ce nouveau volume de la série réalise en effet, dans plus d'une direction, une «molt bele conjointure». Quiconque s'intéresse aux thèmes définis par ce colloque y trouvera de quoi alimenter ses recherches et sa réflexion.