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ANSEÏS DE CARTHAGE AT THE INTERSECTION OF GENRES: THE PATH OF AN EPIC HERO

ANSEÏS DE CARTHAGE À LA CROISÉE DES GENRES: LE PARCOURS D'UN HÉROS ÉPIQUE

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ABSTRACT: This article presents an analysis of *Anseis de Carthage*, a *chanson de geste* composed of rhymed ten-syllable stanzas, that dates from the first half of the 13th century. This epic poem belongs to the *King's Cycle* to which it is directly linked as a narrative continuum of the *Chanson de Roland.* It tells the story of Anseis, Charlemagne's nephew, and how he obtained the crown of Spain after the emperor's victory over the Saracens and the liberation of the Iberian Peninsula. *Anseis de Carthage* clearly belongs to the Carolingian branch of medieval epics; however, like many of the second generation *chansons de geste,* it is partly influenced by another medieval literary genre: the romance. Through its assimilation of some of the features of the romance into the narrative structure of a *chanson de geste,* quest for the legitimacy of the eponymous character is what is truly at stake in *Anseis de Carthage*. We will show that, instead of being presented as a hero at the outset, Anseis becomes a problematic character whose relationships with the political and chivalrous community, evolve. The quest for legitimacy of the eponymous character seems then the stake of *Anseïs de Carthage*.
Keywords: *Anseis de Carthage; chanson de geste ;* romance.

RÉSUMÉ: Cet article propose une analyse d'*Anseïs de Carthage*, une chanson de geste en laisses de décasyllabes rimés, qui date de la première moitié du XIIIe siècle. Ce poème épique appartient au *Cycle du Roi*, auquel il se rattache directement en tant que *continuum* narratif de la *Chanson de Roland*. Y est en effet racontée l'histoire d'Anseïs, le neveu de Charlemagne, et la manière dont il obtint la couronne d'Espagne après la victoire de l'empereur sur les Sarrasins et la libération de la péninsule ibérique. *Anseïs de Carthage* se place clairement dans la branche carolingienne de l'épopée médiévale; cependant, comme beaucoup de chansons de geste de la deuxième génération, c'est un texte en partie influencé par

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un autre genre littéraire médiéval: le roman. Or, par cette assimilation, dans la structure narrative d'une chanson de geste, de traits romanesques, le récit se donne les moyens de penser un contenu inédit. Nous montrerons que, loin de le présenter d'emblée comme un héros, il fait d'Anseïs un personnage problématique, dont les rapports à la communauté chrétienne comme à ses responsabilités politiques et chevaleresques évoluent. La quête de légitimité du personnage éponyme semble alors l'enjeu propre d'*Anseïs de Carthage*.
Mots-clés : *Anseis de Carthage; chanson de geste ;* romance.

Introduction

In this contribution, I offer an initial reflection on the narrative *Anseïs of Carthage*, the Franco-Italian version of which is the object of my doctoral dissertation (an edition and philological study of ms. Paris, BnF, fr. 1598).

Anseïs de Carthage is a *chanson de geste* of the first half of the 13th century[2] belonging to the *Cycle du Roi*. It tells the story of Anseïs, the nephew of Charlemagne and the new king of Spain. From a formal point of view, the text displays typical characteristics of the *chanson de geste* genre, such as, for example, a structure based on rhyming decasyllabic *laisses* (stanzas of irregular length marked by assonance). In terms of content, the *Chanson d'Anseïs* shows a clear continuity with this (French) sub-genre of medieval epic, and especially with its Carolingian branch, as it describes the conflict that breaks out over control of the Iberian Peninsula – and the defense of the *juste foi* – between the Christian army of Anseïs and the Saracen army of Marsile. However, *Anseïs de Carthage*, a work that goes back to the second generation of *chansons de geste*, is influenced by another medieval literary genre: courtly romance.

I will attempt to demonstrate that, by assimilating traits of courtly romance into the narrative structure of a *chanson de geste*, the story traces the individual evolution of the hero (the protagonist Anseïs) within a community in conflict. In this specific case, the epic is a result of a mixture between the chivalrous - and therefore public - dimension of the *souverain* Anseïs, and the romantic - and therefore private - dimension of Anseïs the man.

Summary

The emperor Charlemagne has defeated the Saracens and reconquered all of Spain, thus avenging the defeat and loss of Roland and his twelve peers. Yet here, unlike in the story of the *Song of Roland*, King Marsile escapes death and takes refuge overseas, in Morinde.

Charlemagne, tired from several years of conflict and now very old, wishes to return to *douce France* with his barons and his army. He must therefore name a new King for Spain and

[2] SUBRENAT, 1973, p. 821-5.

Carthage (standing here for Cartagena, a city representing the remotest corners of the kingdom). Amid the *baronie* of the emperor, only the young Anseïs, son of Rispeu of Brittany and of a sister of Charlemagne, offers to bear the crown. Acclaimed by the whole council, he is crowned at Saint Fagon and sets up his court at Morligane, surrounded by his barons and his faithful adviser Ysoré.

It is the latter who suggests to the king that he should wed Gaudisse, the daughter of Marsile, in order to seal the peace between their two peoples. Anseïs sends Ysoré and Raymond, his first knight, to Morinde, in order to present his marriage proposal to Marsile. During the two barons' absence, Anseïs, falling victim to a ruse, lets himself be seduced by Ysoré's daughter Leutisse, whom he deflowers. Unawares, the king thus breaks the oath he made to the baron to respect and defend the girl's honor.

Meanwhile, the overseas embassy has gained Gaudisse's approval, but she cannot give herself to Anseis as she is already promised to the Saracen king Agoulans. The fate of the beautiful princess will be decided in a duel between Agoulans and Raymond. When the latter wins, Marsile accepts Anseïs' request and entrusts his daughter to the ambassadors.

Returning from his embassy, Ysoré becomes aware of the outrage suffered by Leutisse: after a violent dispute with Anseïs, he pretends to forgive him, masking his anger. Under the pretext of fetching the young king's beautiful Saracen bride from their ship, Ysoré sails immediately for Africa. Renouncing the Christian faith and allying himself with Marsile, he intends to wage war on the Kingdom of Spain to avenge the shame that Anseïs has made him suffer.

An immense Saracen army invades Spain and a long conflict breaks out, a conflict in which Anseïs gradually loses the cities that Charlemagne conquered at the cost of great effort: Luiserne, Estorges and Castesoris. Between two battles, Anseïs manages to kidnap Gaudisse, who secretly reciprocates his love. The beautiful princess is baptized and Anseïs marries her. Finally, heavily outnumbered and afflicted by famine, Anseïs asks Charlemagne for help. An angel visits the emperor and sovereign defender of Christendom in a dream in order to inform him that God has agreed to grant him his former strength and vigor for one last time.

The Emperor joins Anseïs. Together, they finally defeat the Saracens. Anseïs returns to Spain, Ysoré is decapitated, and Marsile is taken to France. However, as he firmly refuses to convert to the Christian faith, he is put to death at Laon. Charlemagne returns to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he dies.

A medieval epic

The *Chanson d'Anseïs de Carthage* represents a narrative continuation of the *Song of Roland*, to which it is connected mainly thanks to the technique of amplification. In addition, the privileged link that Charlemagne's character has with the Christian God recalls the importance of the supernatural in the epic genre.

1. An "amplification" of the *Song of Roland*

According to Michael Heintze's definition[3], amplification is «l'agrandissement d'un cycle légendaire par l'ajout systématique de nouvelles chansons ou de parties de chansons» (HEINTZE, 1994, p. 25). *Anseïs de Carthage* tells the story of what happens after Roncevaux, in a Spain conquered by Charlemagne. This poem is therefore another episode of the Carolingian cycle.

If we refer to François Suard's typology of the three "cyclizations" that he identified in *chansons de geste*[4], we may notice that *Anseïs de Carthage* responds to each of these structures: Anseïs is the nephew of Charlemagne (cyclization by genealogy and kinship); the conflict between Anseïs and Marsile develops following Roncevaux (cyclisation by succession of events); the story of Anseïs represents a continuation of Roncevaux (thematic cyclization).

In addition, the continuation status of this poem is reinforced by means of a direct link, namely references to the *Song of Roland*. At the beginning of the text, even if there is no explicit mention of Roncevaux, it is understood that Charlemagne's "war in Spain" constitutes the implicit prologue of *Anseïs of Carthage*. The *jongleur* indicates the Spanish cities conquered by Charlemagne and specifies that «par toute Espaigne ala sa seignorie[5]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 1, v. 22).

The emperor and his army, tired by several years of conflict, desire to return to France. Charlemagne assembles his barony and holds a council at Saint-Fagon, during which he thanks his barons, whose chivalrous valor allowed him to succeed in conquering and subjugating Saracen Spain. The time has come to appoint a new king to vouch for the restored order and to protect Christendom. It is at this moment that Anseïs appears in the story as both a genealogical and an institutional heir to Charlemagne.

A little further on in the text, we find the first explicit mention of Roncevaux and the twelve peers of France. Marsile remembers the cruel battle in which he lost valiant and noble warriors. He recalls the scene before Ysoré and Raymond, sent by Anseïs as ambassadors:

[3] See also SUARD, 2011, p. 113-4.

[4] SUARD & FLORI, 1988, p. 65-8. See also the recovery of the same classification dans SUARD, 2011, p. 334-5: «groupe de chansons proposant des actions complémentaires et mettant en scène des personnages différents autour d'un personnage central, véritable pilier du cycle […], ensemble exposant les étapes successives d'une action guerrière […], ensemble identifiant un groupe de chansons à l'histoire d'une ou de plusieurs familles épiques».

[5] "His sovereignty extended over the whole of Spain".

«quant me souvient du dolereus martire / de Rainschevaus, la ou je fis occire / les .XII. pers, ainc n'i orent remire[6]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 36, v. 937-9).

The most important narrative link with Roncevaux is the presence of a thousand Frankish prisoners in the Saracen court: it is a tool of the narrative that renders "concrete" the continuity between the *Song of Roland* and *Anseïs de Carthage*. Marsile orders his daughter Gaudisse to join him in Spain with his allies. The beautiful princess obeys her father, but at the same time, with the help of her faithful valet Sinagloire, she frees the thousand Frankish prisoners of Roncesvalles, in order to bring them to Spain in support of Anseïs:

> Mil François a qui sont imperial,
> qui furent pris en l'ost de Rainsceval;
> cil liverront a paiens grant assal
> devant Esturges, cascuns est bon vassal[7] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 199, v. 5279-82)

Gaudisse arrives in Spain and Marsile, welcoming her, asks her the identity of the prisoners he sees under some hawthorns. Gaudisse answers: «Sire, dist ele, François et Angevin; / en Rainscevaux les prisent barbarin[8]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 217, v. 5747-8), and she pretends to have brought them to her father to execute them. But under cover of darkness, and again with the help of Sinagloire, Gaudisse organizes a plan to join Anseïs and deliver the thousand Frankish knights: «Home sont Karle, le fort empereor; / en Rainscevaus furent pris en l'estor[9]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 225, v. 5962-3).

Finally, in *laisse* CCXLVI, there is yet another explicit mention of Roland, Olivier and the twelve peers. The emperor, calling the Christian army to vengeance just before the last battle against the Saracens, says: «Vengier vaurrai mon chier neveu Rollant / Et Olivier au gent cors avenant / Les .XII. pers, que je amoie tant[10]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 350-351, v. 9340-2).

2 The character of Charlemagne and the supernatural

The very character of Charlemagne helps to strengthen the narrative *continuum* between the *Chanson de Roland* and *Anseïs de Carthage*. Although almost a marginal character at the beginning of the text, where his narrative function is limited to the coronation of Anseïs,

[6] "When I remember the cruel carnage / of Roncesvalles, where I lost / the twelve peers, for whom I remain inconsolate".
[7] "A thousand Franks who belong to the empire, / who were taken as prisoners in the battle of Roncevaux; /they will attack the pagans vigorously / before the city of Estourges: each of them is a good vassal".
[8] "Sire, she says, Franks and Angevins; / the pagans captured them at Roncevaux".
[9] "They are the men of Charlemagne, the mighty emperor; / they were taken as prisoners during the battle of Roncevaux".
[10] "I wish to avenge my dear nephew Roland / and noble, handsome Olivier, / the twelve peers whom I loved so much".

and totally absent in the central part, the emperor enters the scene in the final macro-sequence as a kind of *deus ex machina*, who will solve the conflict. His presence frames, so to speak, the story: it is Charlemagne who, after Roncevaux, gives Spain totally subject to Anseïs, and it is always he who intervenes to save it once again from the domination of Marsile.

In *Anseïs de Carthage*, the character of Charlemagne seems to be closely connected to the supernatural, reflecting a specific theme of the medieval epic[11]. In our *chanson*, the supernatural always manifests itself in "apparitions" and not in "visions"[12], that is, as the supernatural's descent into the world of humans rather than as the human soul's ascent to the beyond.

After receiving Anseïs's request for help, Charlemagne addresses God; the old and sick emperor does not know how to help his nephew. God answers him through an angel, who appears in a dream to the old ruler:

> Jhesus te mande, li rois de Paradis,
> que tu secoures le bon roi Anseïs
> et si aquite la terre et le païs
> et le chemin l'apostle beneïs
> sifaitement com tu l'as Dieu pramis.
> De servir Dieu ne soies alentis!
> Va si encache les paiens maleïs,
> car el voiage sera mains hom garis
> qui fust encore et dampnés et peris.
> Quant revenus eres, bien soies fis,
> k'un an aprés tu ne seras plus vis;
> ne pués tenir plus longues ton païs.
> Soies preudom com as esté tousdis![13] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 316-7, v. 8415-27)

The angel is Heaven's messenger: God manifests himself through his intermediary as a feudal lord might through his ambassador. The model of the angel / *nuncius*[14] comes back when Charlemagne, after routing Marsile in the great final battle of the poem, is about to deal the pagan king a fatal blow. An angel then descends from heaven and says to the emperor: «Jhesus

[11] Here I adopt the definition of COMBARIEU, 1979, t. II, p. 509, distinguishing the fantastical, which designates everything that «n'est pas justiciable d'une explication rationnelle à une époque donnée», from the supernatural that «concerne plus précisément le domaine religieux au sens strict du terme, c'est-à-dire, pour l'épopée médiévale française, les faits, événements, actions non rationnels qui rentrent dans un système chrétien de conception de Dieu, du monde, des hommes et de leurs rapports».

[12] According to the distinction made by DINZELBACHER, 1978, p. 116-28.

[13] "Jesus, the king of Paradise, commands you / to rescue the good king Anseïs / and also to liberate the land and the country of Spain / and the path of the blessed apostle / as you promised God. / Do not be tarry in the service of God! / Go pursue the cursed pagans, / for in this journey you will save many men / though they were condemned to damnation and death. / When you come back, be sure / that you will not live but a year more; / you will not be able to govern your country much longer. / Be a valiant man as you have always been!".

[14] VALLECALLE, 1997, p. 92-3.

vos mande que vos nel adesés / Prendés le vif, avoec vos l'enmenés! / Se Dieu velt croire molt ert bons eüres[15]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 371, v. 9894-6).

While the appearances of the angelic *nuncius* serve to communicate a message and to order a mission or disposition from on high, in another episode, the divine supernatural acts directly upon the character and completely alters his physical state. In all cases, these are interventions that serve the fulfillment of a celestial plan, revealed in part to a select few, whose execution depends on human prowess.

The Emperor, having answered Anseïs' call, finally arrives in Spain with his army. He asks God to find sufficient strength to ride horses, to take up arms, and to drive off the Saracens. God hears Charlemagne's prayer and performs a miracle:

> Diex a oï du roi le desirier,
> miracles fist qui bien font a nonchier:
> sa force sent li rois sans delaier,
> et s'aperçoit vertueus et legier;
> lors s'estent si qu'il fait croistre et froissier
> les flans du car et les arçons brisier;
> li rois s'escrie et commence a hucier:
> "Or tost as armes, franc baron chevalier!
> Mes armes vueil por moi apareillier."[16] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 344-5, v. 9171-9)

Two other episodes that also emerge from prayers by Charlemagne are related to the theme of the supernatural in *Anseïs de Carthage*. In both cases, it must be emphasized that divine intervention affects the environment of the Christian army in order to enable it to fulfill its military and religious task. The Emperor and his train are on the march toward Spain, but their progress is checked by the Gironde, which is impossible to cross. In the face of general despair, Charlemagne has mass celebrated by his chaplain, Englebert. The emperor then begins to pray to God and the Virgin. The result is immediate: «Diex a oïe du bon roi la proiiere, / l'iaue se part, ne cort avant n'arriere[17]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 325, v. 8645-6).

A white doe then appears before them to lead them across the riverbed.

Finally, after having reestablished order throughout Spain, Charlemagne resumes his way toward France. However, a messenger arrives and informes the emperor that the Saracens had taken back Luiserne. The pious sovereign knows that his army is exhausted by several years

[15] "Jesus commands you not to touch him / Take him alive, bring him with you! / If he wants to believe in God, it will be better for him".
[16] "God has heard the king's prayer, / he performed a miracle worthy of telling: / the king immediately perceives his strength, / and feels powerful and fast again; / so he stretches out so mightily that he breaks and sunders / the sides of the chariot and shatters the pommels; / the king cries out and begins to bellow: / "Quickly to arms now, noble knightly barons! / I wish to prepare my weapons".
[17] "God heard the prayer of the good king, / the water withdraws, it flows neither forward nor back".

of war; in the face of this bad news, the morale of men is at its lowest. Once again, Charlemagne prays to God, asking for pity for his valiant knights and for revenge against the infidel Saracens. Luiserne crumbles immediately before the eyes of the emperor and his barons:

> Diex oï Karle, bien savoit ses pensés:
> li murs, qui fu a droit ciment fondés,
> est desfroissiés et aval craventés,
> les tours caïrent contreval les fossés,
> les sales fondent et li palais pavés;
> jamais li liex ne sera restorés.[18] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 392, v. 10464-9)

The influence of romance

As J.-M. Paquette writes: «il n'est qu'une épopée par communauté linguistique ; mais la "matière épique" peut se prolonger pendant de longs siècles à travers une production appelée "cycles épiques". Ces cycles se trouvent contaminés par les traits spécifiques d'un autre genre littéraire, le plus souvent le roman» (PAQUETTE, 1988, p. 35).

We may consider *Anseïs de Carthage* to be just the kind of complement to medieval epic that Jean-Marcel Paquette has in mind, since the work does in fact add a new episode to the Carolingian material and to the *faits d'Espagne*. As we have seen, our poem belongs to the *Cycle du Roi* and to the medieval subgenre of epic. At the same time, it acquires traits characteristic of courtly romance. We should now analyze these traits in order to highlight the contribution of romance to the narrative structure of our poem.

1 The erotic/amorous theme

The first theme easily identifiable as derived from courtly romance is that of eroticism and love; François Suard has shown its importance in *Anseïs*[19], and we know moreover that it is a characteristic feature of courtly romance[20]. It invests the whole story and reveals itself through the poem's three female characters: Leutisse, Gaudisse and Bramimonde.

Each of these women embodies a different approach to sexuality. Leutisse represents the power of desire, which breaks social and moral prohibitions; Gaudisse represents the strength of pure and sincere love, which overcomes all obstacles; Bramimonde represents the

[18] "God heard Charlemagne, he knew his thoughts well: / the walls, which were rightly built of concrete, / were crushed and struck down, / the towers fell into the moat, / the halls and the paved palace collapsed; / never will this place be rebuilt".

[19] SUARD & FLORI, 1988, p. 62: «l'agencement des péripéties devient le centre d'intérêt majeur du poème, et la structure narrative, qui accorde aux amours du héros une place accrue, a pour principe l'alternance de la manifestation et de l'occultation du héros, du bonheur et du malheur amoureux dans la succession indéfinie des séparations et des retrouvailles».

[20] See AUERBACH, 1969, p. 133-52.

charm of seduction, which leads to the actualization of pleasure. These three female characters share the fact of experiencing an externally imposed erotic reality that they do not accept. Nevertheless, all three will manage to alter their situation and obtain satisfaction through ruses, trickery and dissimulation. For this reason, they are "active" characters in a story whose structure emerges in part from the close relationship between these three women's actions and the plot's development, that is to say from the "courtly" link between war and love, power and sex.

Listening to his father's description of the new King of Spain, Leutisse, Ysoré's young and beautiful daughter, immediately falls in love with Anseïs. Knowing that his degree of nobility is not enough to marry Anseïs, Leutisse weaves a trick to spend the night with him without revealing his identity. Its action provokes a series of consequences (refusal of Anseïs, desire of revenge of Ysoré, conflict with Marsile), which are the basis of the poem's plot.

In this way, far from being a passive and fixed character, a simple narrative tool to launch the plot, Leutisse serves as its driving force. It is thanks to her personal initiative that each element is put in place, and her actions are what prompts the ensuing military conflict itself. Leutisse's particular character reveals itself clearly in the following exemplary passage:

> L'amours le roi l'avoit molt embrasee,
> k'ele en est si esprise et alumee,
> toute autre chose en avoit oublïee,
> mais pour son pere est quanques puet celee.
> Tout coiement pensant s'est dementee,
> et jure Dieu et sa vertu nommee
> que, s'ele n'est a cel roi marïee,
> tant qu'ele vive n'ert d'autrui espousee,
> ains fera tant, s'ele puet a celee,
> k'ele sera sa drue et sa privee:
> de cel pensé ne puet estre tornee.[21] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 9-10, v. 229-39)

If the character of Leutisse gives the story its initial thrust, the characters of Gaudisse and Bramimonde take it back and develop it throughout the text. These three female characters show great autonomy; the text clearly emphasizes their initiative.

Thus Gaudisse, the Saracen princess and daughter of Marsile, is presented as a treasure - the greatest that Marsile can give to his allies – and seems at first only to need to embody pure beauty of body and soul, as witnessed in her first appearance:

[21] "The love of the king had so inflamed her, / she was so overtaken and inflamed, / that she had forgotten everything else, / but in front of her father she concealed it as much as possible. / In her tormented mind / she swears to God and on her renowned virtue / that if she is not married to that king, / she will not be married to anyone else as long as she lives, / but she will ensure that, if it is possible in secret, / she will become his lover and his intimate friend: / she cannot be diverted from this thought".

Gent ot le cors et grailles les costés,
les hansches basses et les bras bien mollés,
le col plus blanc quë yvoires planés,
menton bien fait, si ot traitis le nes.
Blanc ot le vis et bien fu coulorés
et les iex vairs, comme faucons müés.
Sorciex ot bruns, delïés, haut le nes,
le front plus blanc que cristaus n'est d'assés.
Par ses espaules avoit ses crins getés;
plus sont luisant que fins ors esmerés:
a .I. fil d'or les avoit galonnés.[22] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 38, v. 987-97)

But we soon discover that the noble princess has a mind of her own and she is acting to get what she really wants. On learning that her father will give her in marriage to Ysoré, Gaudisse reacts:

Gaudisse l'ot, a poi d'ire ne fent;
a Sinaglore a dit celeement:
"Or os," dist ele, "de cest viellart pullent,
com il pourcache son grant encombrement!"
Puis dist en haut, c'om l'oï clerement:
"Peres," dist ele, "n'i ait prolongement;
mandés vos homes sans nul atargement,
puis si ferés de nos l'ajoustement,
car je l'ai molt desiré longuement."[23] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 73, v. 1918-26)

Throughout her adventure, Gaudisse will pretend to await the day of her marriage to Ysoré with joy and impatience, but she actually will look after to put off the moment until she will be united with Anseïs. Far from being the passive character that one might think, she takes her destiny into her own hands.

Indeed, on the pretext of staying with her future husband, Ysoré, she manages to convince her father to let her join him in Spain. Marsile accepts her proposal and orders his daughter to bring over new troops in order to win the war against the Christians. As we have seen, even as she obeys these orders, Gaudisse arranges the liberation of the thousand Frankish prisoners of Roncevaux. Once she has landed in Spain, she sends a message to Anseïs, who manages to abduct her from the Saracen camp and rescue his thousand knights.

[22] "She had a graceful body and slender sides, / small hips and well shaped arms, / a neck whiter than smooth ivory, / her chin was well-formed, and her nose was well-drawn. / She had a white face and a beautiful complexion / and gray-blue eyes, like a moulted hawk. / She had brown, subtle eyebrows, an upturned nose, / a forehead whiter than any crystal. / Her hair fell spread upon her shoulders; / it was brighter than pure gold: / she had adorned it with gold thread".

[23] "Gaudisse hears this, and barely contains her anger; / she said to Sinagloire in secret: / "Hear, then," said she, "the words of this filthy old man, / He will not like what will come of this!" / Then she says aloud, so that it can be heard distinctly: / "Father," she says, "so that there be no delay; / send your men right away, / in this way you will assure our union, / since I have desired it for a long time".

In the same way, Bramimonde, the Saracen queen and wife of Marsile, is the agent of her own story. She clearly shows her interest in Raymond (and her disgust towards her husband), an interest born of the Christian knight's victory over Agoulant: «.I. en i a qui ele a forment chier, / qui l'autre an vint sa fille calengier[24]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 174, v. 4606-7).

Her passion is proportional to the knight's worth as a warrior and, when she arrives in Spain after having crossed the sea on Marsile's orders to bring him armies of reinforcements, she does not hesitate to summon her lover to her tent:

> "Di va!" fait ele, "il t'estuet esploitier.
> Quant tu verra anqui l'air espossier,
> laiens iras a Raimmon le guerrier,
> si li diras quë il ne soit lanier,
> mais viegne a moi as tres esbanoier;
> et si li porte ma mance, c'est premier.
> Miex en ferra assés du branc d'acier;
> et, s'il se doute noient de l'engignier,
> de moie part li porras fiancier
> que ains les membres me lairoie trenchier
> ke ja par moi i eüst encombrier;
> et, së il a avoec lui soldoier
> qui vuelle amie, mar s'en fera proier,
> mais viegne o lui, si pora dosnoier."[25] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 175, v. 4629-42)

Bramimonde and Raymond spend the night together: «Assés i ont baisié et conjoï, / li uns a l'autre tout son bon descouvri[26]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 179, v. 4741-2), but the next day, the knight will have to abandon the tent to return to the battle camp, bringing the narrative back to military exploits. However, the connection between the two will develop throughout the text, and the Raymond's exploits will become, to Bramimonde's eyes, a metaphor for his erotic power.

2. The trick

The second theme involves the presence of all kinds of vicissitudes, which reinforce the fabric of the plot and complicate its action to the point of giving it the density of a courtly romance narrative. These adventures display a common trait: the cleverness of the characters involved. One could probably formulate an objection to the effect that epic can also be full of

[24] "There is one that is dear to her, / who last year came to defend his daughter by force of arms".
[25] "Go on!" she said, "you have to hurry. / Today, when you see the air darken, / you will go to Raymond the warrior there, / and you will tell him not to be cowardly, / but let him come back to me and enjoy himself in the tent; / and bring him my sleeve too, this is important. / He will strike much better with his steel sword; / and, if he is a bit afraid of being fooled, / you can promise him for me / that I would let myself be cut to bits / rather than cause him grief; / and if there is a soldier with him / who wants a lover, let him not be coy, / but let him come along, so he will be able to play".
[26] "They kissed and took pleasure, / they revealed their whole desire to each other".

adventures, and even of unexpected turns of events that the characters' wiles engender: it is enough to think of Ulysses and the *Odyssey*. But precisely to the point, the *Odyssey* is undoubtedly the most "courtly" epic of all; after all, as Stead reminds us, and according to a point of view still shared by many critics, it has often been seen as a kind of novel before its time, and therefore as more than just an epic[27].

Anseïs de Carthage thus opens with Leutisse's ruse: «La damoisele pensa en son corage / grant derverie, grant doleur et grant rage[28]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 19, v. 503-4), which triggers Ysoré's anger and provokes his betrayal: «Traïson pense li viellars deputaire[29]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 60, v. 1589).

The characters use cunning to get something (or someone) that (or whom) they are unable to obtain otherwise; in order to reach this goal, they resort to lies, the concrete manifestation of their cunning. Thus, Leutisse falls silent before Anseïs, pretending to be a humble *camberiere* - a maid - under the cloak of darkness; Ysoré conceals his anger from Anseïs while pondering his revenge; Gaudisse feigns joy over her betrothal in front of Ysoré; Thierry hides his plan to give Conimbre's keys to his father Anseïs from his mother Leutisse.

Elsewhere in the text, ruses are put into action either through tactics or through disguise, the two being values antinomic to the pure valor of *chanson de geste*. Two episodes are tactical: Gaudisse's removal from the Saracen camp thanks to an expedition by Anseïs with two thousand knights, on the one hand, and Leutisse's son Thierry's delivery of the Conimbres' keys to Anseïs on the other.

Only one example of peripety is tied to the use of disguise, but it is a element fundamental to the plot and to the resolution of the central conflict. Charlemagne and his army have arrived in the vicinity of Castesoris; Raymond and Madien, sent as ambassadors to the Emperor, approach the besieged city to announce the Charlemagne's arrival to Anseïs. At the same time, Matant and Macabré, two pagan kings, leave their camp to call for reinforcements. The four warriors meet and engage in a fight, which the Christians win before stealing their opponents' armor and horses and disguising themselves as Saracens: «Les armes ostent; es les vos adoubez / des armeüres a ciaus qu'il ont tüés![30]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 336, v. 8948-9).

All of these acts derive from courtly romance in that they help sketch certain characters' psychological portraits, which is not at all a feature of the medieval epic. These various

[27] This was notably the case in the eighteenth century. See STEAD, 2007, p. 127. This temptation to see the *Odyssey* as a novel can be found today, as for example in CITATI, 2004.
[28] "The damsel conceived in her mind / a great madness, an evil and outrageous act".
[29] "The bad old man thinks of betrayal".
[30] "They take away the weapons; now they are disguised / with the armor of those they have killed!".

adventures are narrative tools that accelerate the plot's rhythm and enrich the poem's structure.

Anseïs' epic and romantic journey: the conquest of full royalty

So far, we have seen how *Anseïs de Carthage*, a *chanson de geste* belonging to a medieval epic subgenre, additionally assimilated traits typical of courtly romance. In a story narrating a long struggle between Christians and Saracens for political and religious control of the Iberian Peninsula, we find inserted plot lines, drawn from courtly romance, which introduce themes of love and cunning. However, a true synthesis between these two literary genres is likely manifest in the evolution of the protagonist Anseïs. Based on studies by Jean-Marcel Paquette and Joël Grisward and following Georges Dumézil[31], I will try to identify the role of the epic and the role of courtly romance in Anseïs's journey.

1. An epic journey: the three levels of conflict

As J.-M Paquette writes: «il s'est avéré que cette structure [de l'épopée] se caractérisait par une configuration tripartite, chacun des trois volets de ce triptyque correspondant à un type particulier de "conflit" […], chaque niveau ayant pour fonction de faire apparaître un état de *tension* qui engendrera le suivant» (PAQUETTE, 1988, p. 29-30). This tripartition is absolutely found in *Anseïs de Carthage*.

On the first level of conflict, the antagonists are the Christians and the Saracens, according to a tradition also incarnated in the *Song of Roland*. The war, in turn, reveals the second level of conflict, the one that arises between Anseïs and Ysoré as a result of humiliation and the fury that ensues. This conflict is internalized in Anseïs, who is caught in a veritable crisis of conscience.

Here lies the first difference as compared to the *Song of Roland*: our poem features not a double-friend embodying a position complementary to that of the heroic protagonist, but a set of more or less secondary characters (Raymond de Navarre, Guis de Bourgogne, Yves de Bascle, Englebert) who interact with him. We do have the figure of the double, whose importance Paquette has demonstrated for this third level conflict. However, in a very interesting way, the role is held "collectively": the valiant knights around Anseïs incarnate what Olivier represents in the *Song of Roland*.

[31] DUMÉZIL, 1968-73; GRISWARD, 1981; PAQUETTE, 1988, p. 13-35.

Above these three levels of conflict, we find a tension between history and fiction[32]: behind the adventures of Anseïs, Ysoré and Gaudisse we can recognize the figures of the Visigothic king Rodrigo, his minister Julian and his daughter Florinda[33]. Quickly turning into legend, this historical basis in the eighth century, after undergoing several alterations, arrived in France and mixed with the Carolingian material, producing as a literary result the *Chanson d'Anseïs de Carthage*.

The claim of historical truthfulness is, moreover, quite present at the very beginning of the text[34] and vigorously reiterated a few *laisses* on:

> Huimais orrés canchon enluminee:
> onques par home ne fu mieudre cantee.
> Trop a esté lonc tans emprisonnee;
> bien ait de Dieu, qui si bien l'a gardee!
> Cil jougleour en font male oublïee
> qui la rime ont corrompue et faussee;
> mais je le rai a droit point ramenee.[35] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 11, v. 264-70)

Of interest to us here is the fact that the historical plane and the fictitious epic plane, interwoven in the character of Anseïs, offer the possibility of a real evolution, bringing him from irresponsible youthfulness to true kingship.

A nephew of Charlemagne (his father is King Rispeu of Brittany), he puts forth his candidacy to be the new king of Spain. In spite of his youth, he is already a valiant knight and a noble baron, and a unanimous Council invites the emperor to give him the crown. Charlemagne validates their proposal and, *inter alia*, tells Anseïs: «"Niés," dist li rois, "garde toi de folage! / Par legerie esmuevent maint outrage / dont on a honte et anui et damage"[36]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 5, v. 104-6).

These verses, highlighted by their position at the end of a *laisse*, anticipate the plot's trajectory: Anseïs will commit precisely an act of *folage* (madness) because of his *legerie* (breeziness). The consequences of such madness shape a climax in which their gravity is emphasized: *honte*, *anui*, *damage* (shame, sorrow, misfortune).

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[32] PAQUETTE, 1988, p. 28: «Le recours à l'histoire est si bien la marque à quoi se reconnaît en texte l'épopée que même les auteurs des sous-produits tardifs du genre, tout en ayant abandonné plus d'un caractère propre à l'épopée primitive, protesteront encore de la véracité de récits invraisemblables […]». See also MARTIN, 2015.

[33] The historical sources for *Anseïs de Carthage* are not our subject here. On this topic, see KERR, 1994, vol. 2, p. 498-536; HORRENT, 1980, p. 183-91; JORDAN, 1907, p. 372-82.

[34] KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 1-2: the first *laisse* contains the poem's prologue with its address to the audience, invocation of God, guarantee of the story's veracity, criticism of other *jongleurs* and summary of previous events.

[35] "Today you will listen to a dazzling song: / it was never better sung. / It has remained imprisoned for too long; / thanks to God, who has preserved it so well! / Unfortunately, those *jongleurs* have forgotten it, / they who have corrupted and falsified its rhyme; / but I have returned it to its true state".

[36] "Nephew," said the king, "beware of acts of madness! / Breeziness causes many outrages / which cause us shame, sorrow and misery".

The emperor will be even more explicit in the following *laisse*, adding:

> […]
> et Ysorés, qui vos conseillera,
> molt est loiaux. Une belle fille a;
> garde, biaux niés, ne le honnir tu ja.
> Se tu le fais, grans mals t'en avenrra:
> jamais nul jor mes cuers ne t'amera.[37] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 5, v. 113-7)

Thus the narrator uses a character incarnating authority *par excellence* to describe the situation negatively, as Ysoré will become a traitor, and Anseïs will fall into deep misery.

2. The three functions of a courtly character turning epic

The coronation of Anseïs represents the passage of power from one generation to another, and this event must guarantee the people's security in a continuity of power that ensures the kingdom's good management and protection. Anseïs ought to become the new Charlemagne, for three reasons: Anseis is naturally endowed with valor and beauty; he is of sufficiently noble origin to accept this role; he receives the emperor's blessing. Nature, blood and right confirm Anseïs' status.

Yet we soon realize that the young king is far from embodying from the outset the three functions that we ought to call "Dumézilian" and that Joel Grisward attributed to Aymeri in the *Narbonnais Cycle*[38]. As a result, he is far from being the new Charlemagne.

Indeed, before becoming a true king in the poem, Anseïs will have to trace a course seemingly composed of three successive phases: the Leutisse's erotic scheme, the war against Marsile, the ensuing famine and total scarcity of resources. The young hero always plays a role that can be defined as passive; he is the victim of Leutisse's trick, Marsile's military power, and the conditions of the siege. It is in this that his career is that of a novelistic character: as in a *Bildungsroman*, Anseïs does not appear as an epic hero from the outset, but must rather become one.

Leutisse represents a type of tricky female character who uses her skills to fulfill her own desire. She employs her charms to seduce the powerful by concealing her identity and hiding the truth; Leutisse chooses the cover of darkness, when the contours of things become more vague. Anseïs, lacking experience, falls into her trap.

[37] […] "and Ysoré, who will advise you, / is very loyal. He has a beautiful daughter; / beware, my good nephew, not to dishonor her. / If you do, you will suffer great pain: / never again will my heart love you".
[38] GRISWARD, 1981: Aymeri fits the Indo-European typology of a mythic king who possessess the three social functions and governs the world.

Marsile embodies the entire power, wealth and immensity of the Saracen world. It is he who dominates the conflict's military action and, despite some victories by the Christian army, forces Anseïs into continual retreat, as well as an almost constant state of siege. The Christians fall back on the battlefield and Anseïs gradually loses all of the cities that Charlemagne had conquered.

The peak of Anseïs' helplessness is manifested in the last siege, in Castesoris: the young king cannot retaliate against attacks or resist another day longer from inside the city, where resources are exhausted. Anseïs then goes through a moment of crisis, in the true etymological sense of the term. He manages to hit rock bottom, then resurface; what happens is a kind of descent into hell, which for an instant gives the hero an outside perspective, allowing him finally to see the crisis in which he finds himself. This is where the poem introduces an "individual" double of Anseïs: Gaudisse.

In each siege, there is a baron who begs Anseïs in vain to ask Charlemagne for help. On the level of the plot, the young king still refuses this advice, because he knows that he has betrayed the emperor's confidence and is afraid of his reaction. At the level of the psychological analysis that we are conducting, however, he refuses because he has not yet reached a state of full consciousness.

Gaudisse and her two sons have the narrative role of confronting Anseis with his personal crisis, his inner conflict. *Laisses* CCX, CCXI and CCXII open with similar lines, highlighting the Anseïs' anxiety and the suffering of Gaudisse and her children:

> Rois Anseïs fu dolans et pensis
> de sa moullier, de ses enfans petiz,
> quant voit qu'il ont les visages palis;
> pour la famine dolans est et maris,
> tenrrement pleure des biax iex de son vis.[39] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 293, v. 7775-9)

> Rois Anseïs souspire molt forment
> quant voit sa feme, qui si ot le cors gent,
> palir et taindre quant la famine sent;
> de ses .II. fiex molt grans pitiés li prent,
> qui a lour mere demandoient souvent:
> "Dame, a mengier, faim avons durement!"[40] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 294, v. 7808-13)

> Rois Anseïs commence a souspirer
> quant voit sa feme et ses enfans plourer;

[39] "King Anseïs was unhappy and worried / for his wife and his small children, / when he saw that their faces were pale; / because of the famine, he is afflicted and troubled, / From his beautiful eyes flow tears of pity".
[40] "King Anseïs sighs very deeply / when he sees his wife, whose body was so graceful, / become pale and change color when feeling hunger; / a powerful compassion for his two sons seizes him, / they who continually ask their mother: / "Lady, something to eat, we are so hungry!".

paile devinrrent que poi ont a disner.[41] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 295, v. 7829-31)

Before going further, I would like to reflect on the comparison between these three phases and the three social functions found in the epic.

The first comparison is the least obvious. I believe that the emphasis should be placed not on the erotic act itself, a simple narrative tool, but on the manner in which the ruse is deployed, and on its purpose. Leutisse is an expert in the art of concealment, creating an atmosphere that blurs everything and achieves her goal - which is not just sexual satisfaction, but something else. Her idea is to put Anseïs in a situation where he is forced to marry her; without this trick, she would not have any hope of becoming a king's wife. The sacred-magical and administrative-institutional pairs of the first function are present here in their second component: the figure of the enchantress overcomes the figure of the political leader.

The second and third comparisons are more immediate. The central part of *Anseïs de Carthage* is dedicated to the conflict between Christians and Saracens. In this case, Anseïs is faces his military and defensive functions. Finally, it is a total lack of resources that pushes the hero to react, that is to say a scarcity which reflects on his last function, which is that of a producer.

Must Anseïs go through these three stages to arrive at the point of crisis that will trigger his moment of awareness? It seems to me that the answer is yes. But we must take this reasoning and go further, in order to analyze and understand the final part of Anseïs' course.

Finally, seeing his wife and his pale and emaciated sons, Anseïs realizes that their current situation is a direct result of his night of *legerie* spent with Leutisse. He then assumes his responsibilities and becomes an "agent" character in the story: he agrees to send ambassadors to Charlemagne to ask for help, implicitly acknowledging his mistake before his figure of authority.

But abstract awareness is not enough: the hero must demonstrate concretely what he has learned. During the final battle, Anseïs displays all of his valor and courage: he kills a large number of Saracens and reaches the center of the enemy camp to overturn an image of Muhammad. Because of this act, Marsile grows so angry that he defies Charlemagne; the emperor wins the duel, but an angel asks him to spare the life of his adversary and to convert him. It is therefore thanks to Anseïs' prowess that Marsile is beaten.

[41] "King Anseïs begins to sigh / when he sees his wife and children crying; / they became pale, having very little to eat".

At the end of the battle, Anseïs is exhausted and seriously injured. However, he finds the strength to put his sword in the hands of the emperor and to admit his *legerie*, while waiting for his just punishment:

> "Sire," fait il, "por Dieu le roi Jhesu,
> car me caupés le chief desor le bu!
> Molt ai mal fait, mals m'en est avenu,
> mais anemis, bons rois, m'ot deceü."[42] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 376, v. 10027-30)

The hero has succeeded: it is not death that awaits him but, on the contrary, Charlemagne's forgiveness. After a death that is only evoked, Anseïs is reborn as the story's true protagonist, and he shows it by delivering the perjurer Ysoré to the emperor:

> "Drois empereres, par Dieu le creatour,
> je vos rendrai le cuivert traïtour,
> qui tant m'a fait et anui et dolor,
> car je le pris l'autrier en un estour;
> en ma chartre est ou il vit a dolour."[43] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 379, v. 10100-4)

Once he has regained the love and respect of Charlemagne, Anseïs can ride at his side as king of Spain. He helps the emperor reconquer the cities lost during the war and restore the order upset by the pagans. The narrative follows this reconquest in a backward movement, that is to say, along a path that allows Anseïs to show himself to be capable of reclaiming his legitimate power. We see a sort of inverse, positive *pena del contrappasso* that leads to Luiserne's capture thanks to the prowess of Thierry, son of Anseïs and Leutisse. Following his crisis, his moment of awareness, and his metaphorical death and rehabilitation, the hero must face the consequences of his act of *legerie*. Thierry, the incarnation of Anseïs's error, is like a mirror reflecting the whole path of the protagonist himself; once a young, naive king, he has now become a mature sovereign.

Thierry, Anseïs' son, born as if marked by original sin, immediately faces a test that he must overcome in order to demonstrate that he truly possesses the nature of a *preudon*, and succeeds. In the end, Charlemagne baptizes him, knights him and gives him Luiserne to govern. Earning the responsibility for the management of a city means that Thierry must advance from childhood to maturity; in the same way, Anseïs' reacquisition of his kingdom signifies his transition to a complete consciousness of his own role.

[42] "Sire," he said, "by King Jesus our God, / cut off my head above my chest! / I have behaved very evilly, I suffered misery, / the evil enemy, good king, had betrayed me".
[43] "Just emperor, by God the creator, / I will give you the vile traitor, / who caused me torment and affliction, / since I captured him the other day in battle; / he sits in my prison, where he lives in suffering".

With the following words, the *chanson* inform us that the initial state of order has been restored and that Anseïs is a worthy successor to Charlemagne:

> Rois Anseïs arriere s'en reva,
> ses .II. biaus fiex et sa feme en mena
> et le barnage que li rois li laissa;
> et tint sa terre, en pais la gouverna.[44] (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 395, v. 10531-4)

Anseïs finally manages to synthesize the three functions of a king and can now assure his people justice, defense and livelihood[45]. Therefore, he can assure peace. At the end of a plot reminiscent of courtly romance, he has become an epic hero.

Conclusions

Anseïs de Carthage is a *chanson de geste* whose narrative presents a specific way of integrating elements of courtly romance, creating a tripartite structure vertically and horizontally.

The vertical tripartition deals with three levels of conflict, linked together and moving from the external to the internal, from the collective to the individual: the war between Christians and Saracens, the confrontation between Anseïs and Ysoré, Anseïs' personal battle. The horizontal tripartition links three successive stages, with each touching one of three essential social functions in some way: Leutisse's cunning, military combat, famine. At the beginning of the text Anseïs «jovenes hom fu, n'ot barbe ne grenon[46]» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, p. 3, v. 72), but at the end of the text, he has become an adult, because he has become a leader (the first function), a warrior (the second function), and a father (the third function). The story's unfolding corresponds to an evolution of the protagonist, to a real growth, achieved through a shaping process, which itself derives largely from courtly romance.

Can we say, in the end, that the influence of courtly romance leads, here, to the creation of an early sort of "biography"[47] of the epic hero? I believe that this is not the case for *Anseïs de Carthage*. Nevertheless, its narrative is open to contributions from the realm of courtly romance, mixing an epic-historical and collective dimension with a dimension of fiction and individualism.

[44] "King Anseïs goes back, / he brings along his two handsome sons and his wife / and all the barons whom King Charlemagne left him; / and he keeps his land, he governs it in peace".
[45] The three fundamental needs of every community according to GRISWARD, 1981.
[46] "He was a young man, he had neither beard nor whiskers".
[47] SUARD, 2011, p. 339.

As the *jongleur* tells us, his song will tell of love, war and chivalry: «d'amours et d'armes et de chevalerie» (KERR, 1994, vol. 1, 1, v. 7).

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