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# Courtly Love and Its Counterparts in the Medieval Mediterranean

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Courtly Love and Its Counterparts in the Medieval Mediterranean

by

Robin William Girard

A dissertation presented to  
The Graduate School  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

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*Washington University, St. Louis*

*December 2016*

To William and Rosalie Girard

*sine qua non.*

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Courtly Love and Its Counterparts in the Medieval Mediterranean

by

Robin William Girard

Doctor of Philosophy in French Language and Literature

Washington University in St. Louis, 2016

Professor Julie Singer, Chair

At least since Stendhal's *De l'Amour*, scholars have argued that the theories of courtly love expressed in the Old French literature of the High Middle Ages were inspired by or drew upon elements of Islamicate culture. In this dissertation, I explore the theories of love represented in works of literature, lover's manuals and medical treatises composed in and around the late twelfth-century court of Marie de Champagne, which I read in conjunction with contemporaneous works from the Islamicate world, ranging from Al-Andalus to Persia, in order to show how these works reflect the common cultural orientation of the medieval Mediterranean.

By showing that the theories of amatory practice described in Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* cannot be accounted for exclusively from within the Ovidian tradition, I posit that by viewing the Old French theories of courtly love as a synthesis of the earlier Ovidian and Islamicate traditions, as represented by Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*, we can better understand the place of courtly love within the constellation of medieval Mediterranean cultures. This conclusion serves as the point of



departure for my subsequent analyses as I endeavor to show that the Tristan legend drew heavily upon the Persianate epic, *Vīs u Rāmīn*, a claim I substantiate through a comparison between those two works and Chrétien de Troyes's anti-Tristan, *Cligès*. Further, I maintain that the act of literary appropriation, whether through inspiration or translation, remained an active process that sought to recontextualize and adapt content to the needs of its new cultural milieu. I then focus on the routes of pilgrimage and trade that spanned and linked the fragmented spaces of Christian and Islamic Mediterraneans and that made such cultural and literary exchanges possible accross political, cultural, religion and linguistic borders. I do this through a study of the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" from the *Alf Layla wa Layla* and its old French adaptation, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* by Robert d'Orbigny. There were, however, limits to the influence of Islamicate thought on the representation of love in Old French literature as is evinced in medical discourse: although theoretical medicine was revolutionized by the translation of medical treatises sich as Constantinus Africanus's eleventh-century *Viaticum peregrinantis*, literary love-discourse resisted change. Even as theories of love and lovesickness were redefined in light of this new medical knowledge, I demonstrate that the literary representation of love medicine continued to cleave to older, Ovidian tropes through the middle of the thirteenth century.

By focusing on theories of love, which intersect with as disparate domains as theology and law, politics and science, I am able to show the ways in which Old French literature engages with and extends contemporaneous cultural and literary trends within the Islamicate world, thereby resituating it in its Mediterranean context.

## Preface

"All scholarship is situated." Such was Dr. Sharon Kinoshita's constant refrain at the 2015 National Endowment for the Humanities "Negotiating Identities: Expression and Representation in the Christian-Jewish-Muslim Mediterranean" Summer Institute in Barcelona. For her work, that meant that the foot of her intellectual compass, an expression repurposed from Djelal Kadir's post-colonial critique of literary studies, rests in medieval French literature and in the post-Braudel world. My own scholarship, the most sustained example of which is this dissertation project, is situated in the post-2001 world. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 exerted a profound influence on me, my world and my scholarship: at fourteen, I was old enough to understand that the world was indelibly altered that day but too young to have any true knowledge the world that had been lost. On September 11, 2001, I was forced to engage with the world outside of the safety of Berkshire County, Massachusetts for the first time. Not particularly adept at interpersonal relations, I learned to use travel and scholarship to see beyond the stark divisions that the world seemed intent on erecting between people. The world was "us" versus an ominous "them." Somehow, in a year and a half, we went from

"Nous sommes tous américains" on September 12, 2001 to "Freedom Fries" on March 11, 2003. How? Why? From Trijicon to Dā'ish, the rise of Crusader rhetoric to justify a clash of civilizations became pervasive as hate crimes and Islamophobia escalated to unparalleled levels in the US and in France. I set out on this project to do my part in contesting this worldview, to find evidence that there was nothing self-evident about this situation.

Of course, the danger of looking for something is that you run the risk of finding it.

“Amor qui est eros dicitur morbus est cerebro contiguus.”

– Constantinus Africanus

## Introduction

### WHAT IS LOVE?

Any definition of love will be situated historically, culturally, and politically. Even a definition rooted in the purely physiological or psychological response is politically, culturally and historically specific precisely because its potential is limited by historical contexts, inflected by cultural practices and activated by political forces; such a definition is, by its very rationality, contextualized. This is because love is not simply a psycho-physical response in humans but an organizing principle of social interaction that both limits and is limited by practice. Thus, beyond its psycho-physical reality, love is a construct and a given moment's definition of love not only limits and defines who one can and cannot love and be loved by as well as the contexts in which that love is deemed appropriate, but it also informs debates about the role of science and religion in the public sphere, governs access to economic and political structures and defines the roles, both public and private, of gendered individuals in the home and in society. Precisely because of these intersections, exploring the representation of amatory practice as well as of theories of love in literature offers insights into the structuring principles of the time and place that produced them. Mapping changes in these

representations therefore can provide access to the cultural and intellectual landscape of their particular moment. This in turn can illuminate vectors of cultural influence that might otherwise be obscured by historical distance.

In this project, I explore the affinities between theories of love espoused in twelfth-century Old French literature and its contemporaneous counterparts in the Islamic world, thereby revealing the extensive networks of literary and cultural exchange that underpinned the medieval Mediterranean. Love serves as a lens to approach the cultural orientation of Old French literature produced in and around the court of Marie de Champagne during the second half of the twelfth century. Cultural orientation, a term borrowed from Brian Catlos's 2015 series of lectures at the 2015 "Negotiating Identities: Expression and Representation in the Christian–Jewish–Muslim Mediterranean" National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute in Barcelona, Spain, is the ensemble of shared postures that similarly inform the cultures of disparate societies. Although he does not use the term in his *Muslims in Medieval Latin Christendom*, Catlos's meaning can be gleaned from the following discussion:

Latin Christian society was also an arena for social and economic interaction that crossed communal lines, and the locus of powerful and multivalent currents of acculturation. For all that separated them, Muslims and Christians (and Jews), spoke the same languages, held many of the same social values, ate many of the same foods, and even shared much by the way of folk tradition, religious belief, and theological orientation. Their cultures and actions were characterized by a “mutual intelligibility” that emerged from the broad socio-cultural *habitus*—originating with common sources, but refracted distinctly through the specific traditions of each ethno-religious culture—within which Christians, Muslims, and Jews all lived their lives and pursued their agendas, whether individual or communal. Even as they worked to maintain their particular religio-cultural identities, they borrowed freely from each other's

traditions, did business with each other, and socialized with each other.  
(Catlos *Muslims* 509)

The "common sources" that underpin the shared cultural orientation of the medieval Mediterranean include, for example, Ibn Sīnā's commentaries on Aristotle, which were read and debated by Christian scholastics in Paris, Jewish philosophers in Cairo and Muslim physicians from Cordoba to Baghdad.

The choice of time and place is by no means arbitrary: Marie de Champagne's late twelfth-century court constitutes an invaluable site for the study of the confluence of erotological discourses because it sits at an important nexus of Occitan, Breton, French, and Latin thought. It constitutes an epicenter for the activity of the early *trouvères*, the *langue d'oïl* inheritors of the Occitan lyric tradition and its theories of *fin'amor*, as well as for the burgeoning of the *matière de Bretagne* in Chrétien de Troyes's chivalric romances. Simultaneously, this cultural milieu is home to Andreas Capellanus and his treatise on courtly love in the Ovidian tradition, the *De amore*. However, beyond these easily recognizable sources of inspiration, this study aims to show how twelfth-century France participates in the larger networks of Mediterranean cultures that extend well into the Middle Sea's hinterlands, including the British Isles in the west and Persia in the east. This project of "Mediterraneanizing" Old French literature, announced and defined by Sharon Kinoshita in her 2009 *PMLA* essay, "Medieval Mediterranean Literature," demands:

seeking new congeners for Old French texts [...]; exploring lesser-known texts structured by Mediterranean themes like commerce and connectivity [...]; recognizing the impact of Mediterranean events on French literary history [...]; and] acknowledging the significance of French as a Mediterranean language.  
(Kinoshita "Medieval Mediterranean" 602)

Using theories of love and their representations in literature as an organizing principle for this project,

I deploy a Mediterraneanized critical framework in order to explore the relationship between Old French and contemporaneous Arabic literatures.

The twelfth century is of particular interest because it can be characterized by two seemingly contradictory historical realities, realities within which any cultural or literary borrowing must be contextualized. One way of viewing the twelfth century is through the lens of the Crusades, the first of which comes to an end just as the century dawns with the conquest of Jerusalem on the fifteenth of July, 1099. However even the twelfth century, which has come to be seen as synonymous with the binary us–against–them clash of civilizations popularized by Samuel P. Huntington, is far more complex than it first appears, as Sharon Kinoshita's insightful rereading of the *Chanson de Roland* in her *Medieval Boundaries* makes clear. As Kinoshita explains, "rather than casting the *Roland* as a fixed expression of medieval proto–national and proto–Orientalist ideologies, [she argues] that the crusading ethos presumed to permeate the poem from the outset is, instead, produced during the course of it" (Kinoshita *Medieval Boundaries* 15). This slight readjustment of paradigm allows her to reveal that even "beneath the stark simplicity of Roland's declaration that 'Pagans are wrong and Christians are right' lies a complex nexus of historical ambiguities, literary conventions, and ideological reformulations" that justify *a priori* military engagement in the Levant (Kinoshita *Medieval Boundaries* 16).

The twelfth century can also be viewed as a period of intense cultural and intellectual borrowing that appears at odds with the clash of civilizations model of the crusades that, historically, has predominated in literary studies, as Sahar Amer claims in her 2015 article "Reading Medieval



French Literature from a Global Perspective," which serves as something of an update to Kinoshita's earlier essay:

Even though French medievalists readily acknowledge the central role that Muslim scholars played in the expansion of Greek sciences such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and agriculture and in their transmission to Western Europe, there is still a working assumption that literature and culture were somehow segregated from the other goods and knowledge that traveled from Eastern to Western markets. And the lingering belief that the Crusades were primarily a political and religious conflict, a "clash of civilizations," underscores a scholarly investment in keeping empires separate, borders fixed, languages distinct, and cultures disconnected. [...] Throughout the Middle Ages, religious difference and political, geographical, cultural, sexual and linguistic boundaries were not insurmountable. Such borders were not elements of separation and division but rather fluid spaces of cross-cultural exchanges, of collaboration and adaptation. (Amer "Reading" 369)

The shared cultural orientations of the Old French and Islamicate worlds that underpin their respective theories of love help to reveal both the porosity of these borders and their limits, highlighting both the similarities and differences in approaches to love and their literary representations as a text is appropriated into a new cultural and linguistic context.<sup>1</sup> The limits of inter-confessional transactions, whether political, mercantile or cultural, remained important and colored the possibility of exchange, especially when they carried high levels of ritual content or value because, as Catlos notes "to engage in such transactions outside of the framework of domination was to challenge the established order and the privilege of the majority, and would invite visceral and violent reaction" (Catlos *Muslims* 511). Adaptation, therefore, often occurred within these frameworks

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[1] Coined by the historian Marshall Hodgson, Islamicate "refer[s] not directly to the religion, Islam itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims" (59). To cite a canonical example, the *khamriyyat* or wine poetry of Abu Nuwas might be Islamicate, but it is decidedly not Islamic.

of domination as Hayrettin Yücesoy shows in his "Translation as Self-Consciousness: Ancient Sciences, Antedeluvian Wisdom, and the 'Abbāsīd Translation Movement," whose thesis Amer summarizes admirably:

Hayrettin Yücesoy's work on the Abbasid translation movement of the eighth to tenth centuries has reminded us that medieval translation is far from "a mechanical transfer of meaning from one language to another." Such a perspective, he argues, removes medieval translations from their historical, political and cultural contexts and overlooks contemporary theoretical debates about translation. He invites us, instead, to examine the ways in which the social and intellectual discourses of the target language and culture are embedded in the translated work. Translation, he reminds us, is never done in a vacuum but must render the reconstructed text harmonious with the culture of the target language. The goal of translation is not simply to transmit knowledge but also to contextualize it, to appropriate meaning, to assert or validate one's beliefs, and to construct imperial authority. [...] Rather than mimesis we find hybridization, cross-fertilization, and at times censorship. (Amer "Reading" 371)

We may then understand the translation and adaptation of science and literature within the context of political and cultural hegemonic projects, thereby syncretizing the two vectors of Christian-Muslim relations during the twelfth century. Still, we should recall that:

to say that French authors crossed borders between Arabic and French does not mean that they translated, or copied verbatim, available Arabic tales. Rather, they culled some of their elements and wove them into a literary fabric to suit their audience's sensibilities and expectations and to conform to their period's literary conventions. (Amer "Reading" 372)

Mapping the nodes of a literary Mediterranean is therefore less the search for a single smoking gun that definitively proves that early Old French authors had some specific text in hand as they composed their works, not only because such a definitive edition of the Arabic original is unlikely to have ever existed as such, but also because the literary landscape of the medieval Mediterranean functioned more like the Tolkienian cauldron of fairy-stories from which disparate common elements

were combined to fit the needs of a particular cultural and political moment.<sup>2</sup>

There is little novelty in the claim that early Old French literary culture owes something to the literary traditions of the Islamicate world. Stendhal assumes as much in his 1822 *De l'Amour*, when writing about the origins of the amorous ethics—"une législation établie pour les rapports des deux sexes en amour" [*a legislation established for relations between the two sexes in love*] (Stendhal 186)—of the troubadours' Provençal poetry, which he ascribes explicitly to Andalusian neighbors to the southwest.<sup>3</sup> In addition to identifying "la tente noirâtre de l'Arabe-Bédouin" as "le modèle et la patrie du véritable amour" [*the model and the motherland of true love*], Stendhal, in the briefest of footnotes on the rhymes that so torment the Provençal language, claims that the lyric poetry of the troubadours was "née à Narbonne ; mélange de latin et d'arabe" [*born at Narbonne; a mix of Latin and Arabic*] (Stendhal 187, 189).<sup>4</sup> Thus in Stendhal's mind, Occitan culture and literature was the product of the mixing of Latin and Islamicate culture, a culture snuffed out in the south with the Albigensian crusade but which endured in the literary circles of the north, such as at the court of Marie de

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[2] See in particular, "On Fairy-Stories," pp.125-8.

[3] All translations are my own unless otherwise cited.

[4] The sentence containing this aside appears concerned with an entirely different question, namely the penetration of courtly values into the lower echelons of society:

Quoique cette jolie langue provençale, si remplie de délicatesse de si tourmentée par la rime, ne fût pas probablement celle du peuple, les mœurs de la haute classe avient passé aux classes inférieures très peu grossières alors en Provence, parce qu'elles avient beaucoup d'aisance." (Stendhal 189)

*Even though this pretty Provençal language, so full of delicacy and so tormented by rhyme, was probably not that of the people, the mores of the high class had passed onto the lower classes, which were not lacking in refinement in Provence because they were quite well off.*

The word "rime," in this case, carries the footnote, not the phrase "cette jolie langue provençale," indicating the conviction that rhymed poetry was adopted by the Troubadours from Andalusian models.

Champagne, which emulated the literary culture of the south. For this mixing he offers no proof, as the brevity of the footnote indicates, and instead implies, through its relegation to a footnote and its lack of substantiation, that the claim was relatively uncontroversial.

More recently, however, María Rosa Menocal renewed interest in this subject in her aptly titled *Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (1987). Due to the persistent absence of manuscript evidence for direct influence from Arabic during the early years of vernacular romance literatures, particularly in relation to the poetry of Guilhèm de Peitieux, duke of Aquitaine, who is hailed as the first troubadour, scholars have found it difficult to point to a particular text as a definitive source of inspiration. To resolve this deficit of songbooks, complete or fragmentary, either in Arabic or in translation into Latin or a Romance vernacular, circulated north of the Pyrenees, Menocal turns to other sources and other stories to illuminate the borders of this prehistory—in this instance, the likely presence of Arabic-speaking slave-women throughout Christian Europe:

Even as a young man he [Guilhèm IX] could hardly have avoided knowing the songs of the women of Barbastro, because the Arabic singing-slaves taken by Guillaume de Montreuil were dutifully presented by that William to his commander in chief, William VI of Poitiers, father of the man whose own songs would for many centuries be known as the first songs of Europe. (Menocal 30)

Menocal is here referring to the 1064 sacking of the city of Barbastro in the *tā'ifa* of Zaragoza, which resulted in over 50,000 deaths and the enslavement of thousands of women, who were then dispersed throughout the Christian courts of Western Europe. These women, whose bodies could circulate extensively throughout Christian Europe while bringing with them their cultural conventions and knowledge, constituted the background in front of which unfolded the great events of the Christian

Middle Ages. The question that remains, then, is: was this backdrop silent? While it is perhaps impossible to know for certain, Menocal here wagers that they were not. The assumption in Menocal's narrative is that Guilhèm IX would have been exposed as a child to the Arabic poetic tradition, perhaps passively, perhaps actively, by slaves working in and around the Duke's familial home and that, when he, himself turned to composing poetry, was through his own genius able to forge from this exposure a new literary tradition in his own vernacular.

Similarly, Menocal points to the earliest known poetry composed in a Romance vernacular: the *muwashshahāt*. The *mūwashshahāt* are amatory poems written in Arabic and usually composed of five stanzas with four to six rhymed verses that alternate with an equal number of refrain, which all share a single rhyme. The last of these refrains, the *kharja* or *envoi*, as practiced in Al-Andalus, was traditionally written in Mozarabic, a Romance vernacular written in Arabic characters. These *kharjas* appear not to have been an original composition by the poet but rather found objects from the vernacular folk tradition, speaking to a profound blending of a minor literary tradition into the cultural and politically dominant Arabic tradition. These and other points of contact and exchange, such as the cosmopolitan court of Roger II of Sicily, where poetic composition in Latin, Sicilian and Old French would have occurred in a milieu saturated with Arabophone émigrés, many with literary pretensions of their own and who were afforded positions of prominence and honor within the Norman court's bureaucracy, together form the nodes of a complex cultural and literary network that contributed to the shared cultural orientation of the medieval Mediterranean and the cultural, political and historical moments during which Old French literature began to flower.

Alone, like any silk thread of a tapestry, these examples are nothing but isolated instances of cross-cultural collaboration, if not simply instances in which cross-cultural collaboration was likely possible. When mapped together, however, thread next to thread, the larger tapestry of medieval Mediterranean culture comes into sharper focus. Much of this project of identifying describing the nodes and networks of trade, pilgrimage and cultural and intellectual exchange spanning the medieval Mediterranean has been completed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, who, in their influential *The Corrupting Sea* built upon the earlier work of the historian Fernand Braudel, who found that "La Méditerranée n'a d'unité que par le mouvement des hommes, les liaisons qu'il implique, les routes qui le conduisent" [*The mediterranean has no unity except by the movement of men, the links that it implies, the routes that drive it*] (Braudel I: 253). The centrality of these networks, comprised of what Horden and Purcell refer to as "short distances" and "definite spaces," is rooted in their vision of the Mediterranean as a space of intense fragmentation and connectivity: "The distinctiveness of Mediterranean history results [...] from the paradoxical coexistence of a milieu of relatively easy seaborne communications with a quite unusually fragmented topography of microregions in the sea's coastlands and islands" (Horden and Purcell 5). These "microecologies," literal—and literary—and figurative, are linked by systems of cabotage that relay, through small steps, people, goods and ideas across the breadth and width of the medieval Mediterranean and its hinterlands. From E. Jane Burns's work on silks in French literature to Karla Mallette's study of Aristotle's *Poetics*, literary scholars interested in resituating Old French literature within its larger Mediterranean context have done so by mapping their readings onto these very networks.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE DISSERTATION

Broadly speaking, this project seeks to contextualize the literary production of late twelfth-century France in general, and theories of courtly love in particular, within the larger literary and cultural landscape of the medieval Mediterranean, thereby revealing how this literature engages with and extends contemporaneous literary trends extant from the Islamic world. Effectively, I historicize this production to show that courtly love as it was expressed in the late twelfth century was the product of a convergence of literary traditions that included Old French, Latin, Occitan, Breton and Arabic literatures. To highlight the extent to which such literary borrowings occurred, each of my chapters will explore a different generic group. Thus chapter one will engage with theoretical treatises that present themselves as destined to instruct the reader in how to successfully and correctly pursue their beloved. In chapter two, my interest will turn to the genres of epic and romance with their courtly audience and privileged subjects: princes, knights and queens. Chapter three, on the other hand, will engage with the merchants and slaves of the Arabic folk tradition. These multiple registers suggest the multiple routes by which texts would travel and penetrate Old French literature. Chapter four will focus on the medical tradition to show the ways in which theories of medicalized love shaped the medieval worldviews and influenced literary production. By reading through this wide range of sources, I aim to overcome the preponderance of lacunae that otherwise limits the scope of selective subjects.

## Chapter 1: Arts of Love from Ovid and Ibn Ḥazm to Andreas Capellanus

Much of medieval Old French erotological knowledge was inherited from the Romans. In particular, whether in his *Ars amatoria* and the *Remedia amoris*, the *Heroides* or the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid loomed large within the medieval imagination. Chapter One builds from the premise that the simple trajectory from Ovid's *Ars amatoria* to Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* is not sufficient to explain courtly love as it is described at the court of Champagne at the close of the twelfth century. By reading this latter amatory treatise in parallel with an Islamicate intertext, the eleventh-century Andalusī treatise by Ibn Ḥazm, the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*, I show that by viewing the Old French tradition as a synthesis of the earlier Ovidian and Islamicate traditions we can better understand the place of the Old French courtly tradition within the constellation of medieval Mediterranean cultures. Further, I posit that by skipping over the troubadour period in favor of focusing on the inheritors of that Occitan amatory ethic, that is by taking a more *longue durée* approach, we can better see the mechanisms that were at work crossing the multiple borders that existed within the fragmented space that was the medieval Mediterranean. Finally, my analyses in this chapter of the many striking similarities and differences between the Old French and Islamicate traditions, as represented in these two works, form the baseline of my reading of various works in my subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 2: The Courtly Loves of Tristan and Yseult and Vīs and Rāmīn and Cligès and Fenice

The cultural space of the medieval Mediterranean is vast and, when its hinterlands are taken into account, extends from the British Isles in the Northwest to the Niger river valley in the South and



Persia in the East. And yet, despite these great distances, there is evidence that certain works of literature were able to circulate from one end of this zone to another. One such work is the Persianate epic, *Vīs u Rāmīn*, a medieval version of which was penned by Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī in the eleventh century. This tale has long been posited as the possible source of the Tristan legend despite the tales being something of mirror opposites. In Chapter Two, I read these two texts with a second anti-Tristan, Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, to show that a number of the divergences between the early *Romans de Tristan* and their Persianate counterpart reconverge when this third text is added, thereby untroubling much of the analysis and objections that previous scholars have made. Simultaneously, this chapter explores the intricacies of adaption across both linguistic and cultural borders, showing that the process is never passive but, instead, that texts are constantly readapted to respond to the needs of their receiving cultural milieu. Thus, again, by taking a more *longue durée* approach, looking not just at the trajectory from *Vīs u Rāmīn* to the *Romans de Tristan* by Bérout and Thomas d'Angleterre, but by continuing that line on through to *Cligès*, we are better able to situate the works in relation to other contemporary works from around the medieval Mediterranean.

### Chapter 3: The *Alf Layla wa Layla* in France

One of the major limitations for understanding the transmission of literature in and around the medieval Mediterranean is the lack of evidence concerning the routes along which these works traveled: even for texts that we know were adapted from Arabic into Old French, we seldom know how the author of the Old French version came to know of the Arabic tale. Chapter Three attempts to

explore those routes by looking a pair of tales in Old French and Arabic, namely, the Old French *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* by Robert d'Orbigny and the older "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" from the *Alf Layla wa Layla*, the Arabic folk compendium known today as the *Arabian Nights*. In this chapter, I argue that Robert d'Orbigny's *Conte* transposes the Arabic tale into a new Christian cultural context while keeping much of the Islamicate setting and worldview intact. These two texts are ideal for comparison, I suggest, because the concepts and spaces of pilgrimage and exchange are central to both the plot and the form of the Old French *conte*, thereby highlighting the very mechanisms that rendered such literary transmission possible. More than that, I show that Robert d'Orbigny does not just borrow the premise of the tale but also its concept of the marvelous, which is central to the entire work of the *Alf Layla wa Layla*. This has the effect of collapsing foreign and local space while also preparing the audience for future encounters with the foreign along the very routes the tale reproduces. Finally, this chapter explores the ways that theory of love and theories of genre intersect to facilitate literary borrowings between disparate cultures.

#### **Chapter 4: Love, Arabic Medicine and the Twelfth–Century Romance**

It would be difficult to overstate the profound effect that the introduction of Islamicate medical sciences had on the development of medical theory in Europe during from the eleventh century onward. Chapter Four explores this process, which, in many ways, began with the translation of a collection of medical compendia from Arabic by Constantinus Africanus. Among these works, was the *Viaticum peregrinantis*, a translation of Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-Musāfir*, which would ultimately

reshape the medieval understanding of love as an embodied process and lovesickness as a medicalized condition. While this process of transformation was fully underway by the closing decades of the twelfth century in France, the literary representation of love, of love medicine and of lovesickness did not reflect this new understanding and instead continued to describe it in decidedly Ovidian terms, as can be seen in works such the *Roman d'Eneas*. In fact, I show that while some works, such as Raimbaut d'Aurenga's "Un vers ferai de tal mena," reveal a somewhat more evolved concept of lovesickness, other later works, like Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès* appear to actively reject it. I therefore deploy the concept of medicalized lovesickness in order to illuminate the limits of transmission and acculturation in the twelfth century even as medicine remains one of the best documented examples of significant cultural and intellectual exchange during the Middle Ages.

The courtly culture of twelfth-century Champagne and its literary production in Old French is, as we will see, best viewed within its Mediterranean context. By reading these works of literature alongside a generically and geographically diverse corpus of texts including lyric poetry composed in Occitania, epics from Seljuk Anatolia and medical treatises translated at Monte Cassino, we will see that Old French literature did indeed participate in the common cultural orientation of the medieval Mediterranean. The works that we will study were not composed in a vacuum, without knowledge of the world outside, but instead wrote back to it, reacting to the intellectual and cultural movements that swept the region. Courtly love and its counterparts in the medieval Mediterranean, as we will see, provide a useful lens for examining the routes that permitted literature and culture to travel

throughout the Mediterranean basin and in its hinterlands.

## Chapter 1: Arts of Love from Ovid and Ibn Ḥazm to Andreas Capellanus

### THE 1277 CONDEMNATION OF PARIS: CAPELLANUS AND IBN RUSHD

On March 7, 1277, after less than a month of inquiry by no fewer than 16 theologians, Étienne Tempier, Bishop of Paris (d. 1279), issued a syllabus of 219 philosophical and theological theses deemed heterodox and contrary to Christian faith (Piché 152).<sup>5</sup> Further, Tempier claimed in his prefatory letter to “la plus grave condamnation du moyen âge” [*the most severe condemnation of the Middle Ages*] that these theses were circulating freely among clerics at the scholastic center of Western Europe, the

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[5] The 1277 condemnation of Paris was preceded, in 1270, by a lesser condemnation of only 13 articles that

offrent un condensé des principaux thèmes qui, formulé de manière beaucoup plus précise et jouté à de nouvelles problématiques, seront tous, sans exception, repris 7 ans plus tard dans la plus retentissante condamnation doctrinale de l'autoritaire évêque de Paris” (Piché 159).

[*They*] offer a condensed version of the principal themes, which, formulated much more precisely and adjoined to new issues, will all be, without exception, taken back up 7 years later in the most resounding doctrinal condemnation of the authoritarian bishop of Paris.

The 1277 condemnation was followed, in 1278, by a similar condemnation by the archbishop of Canterbury. For more information on the context and meaning of the 1277 condemnation, see David Piché's *la Condamnation parisienne de 1277*. For a study of its articles, see Roland Hissette's *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277*.

University of Paris (qtd. *Enquête* 8). Worse, Tempier alleged, these heresies were being actively taught in the classroom:

nonnulli Parisius studentes in artibus proprie facultatis limites excedentes quosdam manifestos et execrabiles errores, immo potius vanitates et insanias falsas [...] in scolis tractare et disputare presumunt. (qtd. *Enquête* 13)

*certain students of the arts in Paris, exceeding the limits of their own faculties dare to discuss and to dispute in school certain obvious and execrable errors, indeed lies and false insanity.*

The condemnation of 1277 sought to prevent the spread of these heresies through the threat of excommunication for

omnes illos qui dictos errores vel aliquem de eisdem dogmatizaverint aut defendere seu sustinere presumpserint quoquomodo. (qtd. *Enquête* 14)

*all those who speak errors or anyone who might propound a dogma about or might dare to defend or sustain in any way one of them.*

Further, their *auditores* [*pupils*] were to be proclaimed anathema as well for their tacit participation in the dissemination and the perpetuation of the heresy unless they confessed their errors within seven days to Tempier, his associates or the Chancellor [*cancellario Parisiensi*] of the University. Appended to the end of this letter, Tempier dressed a list of various clearly problematic categories of texts, all of which, being against *fidæ orthodoxæ*, he unequivocally condemned:

libros, rotulos seu quaternos nigromanticos aut continentes experimenta sortilegiorum, invocationes demonum, sive coniurationes in periculum animarum. (qtd. *Enquête* 14)

*books, scrolls and quartos about Necromancy or containing sorcerous experiments, demonic invocations, or conjurations in peril to soul.*

At the very head of this supplement to the condemnation, however, Tempier condemns explicitly, along side a work on geomancy, the following work:

Librum etiam 'De amore,' sive 'De deo amoris,' qui sic incipit: 'Cogit me

multam, etc.,’ et sic terminatur: ‘Cave igitur, Galtere, amoris exercere mandata, etc.’ (qtd. *Enquête* 14)

*Furthermore, the book, On Love or On the God of Love, which starts thus: “Cogit me multam, etc.” and ends thus: “Cave igitur, galtere, amoris exercere mandata.”*

This book is the *De amore*, the treatise on courtly love written around 1186 by Andreas Capellanus, or André le Chapelain in the French tradition, at the court of Marie de Champagne (1145 – 1198).<sup>6</sup> In this chapter, I will explore the ways in which the Old French tradition of courtly love, elaborated and codified by Capellanus in the *De amore*, participates in the larger cultural complex of the Mediterranean. A reading of the *De amore* in parallel with its important antecedent, Ovid's *Ars amatoria* demonstrates that the *De amore* should not be considered purely in the light of a *translatio studii* of the Classical tradition, as scholars have often read it. Instead, by pairing it with an important intertext from the Arabic literary tradition, Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*, I will show that these two seemingly disparate erotic traditions demonstrate considerable cultural affinity and speak to the shared cultural orientation of the Old French and Islamicate worlds.

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[6] The exact date of composition for the *De amore* is unknown. Internally, the *De amore* dates itself to 1174 through the inclusion of a letter purportedly by the hand of Marie herself, dated May 1 1174. The connection of May 1 to all things amorous, coupled with the year of the composition of *le Chevalier de la charrette* by Chrétien de Troyes, suggest that this date is entirely fictitious. It does, however, speak to a general moment in which to date its composition. Otherwise the date of composition could range from 1164, when Marie married the Duke of Champagne, to 1238, when the work was clearly known by Albertano of Brescia. Internal references to the marriage of Marie's half-sister Princess Marguerite to the king of Hungary, Bela III, in 1186 seem of pertinence for their actuality, hence the proposed date of 1186. For more information, see Trojel's introduction (cf. II-XII). This date is confirmed by the period in which Andreas was known to be active at the court of Champagne in Troyes, where seven charters dating from 1182 and 1186, bear his name as a witness (Parry 17). Apart these few facts, little is known about the historical chaplain; some scholars link Capellanus not with the court of Champagne but with the royal court at Blois.

Although they can be divided into a number of various classifications, the 219 articles prohibited by Tempier in his 1277 syllabus stem from a particular vein of philosophy attributed to the twelfth-century Andalusī philosopher, Ibn Rushd, better known by his Latinized name, Averroes or Averroës.<sup>7</sup> Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Rushd al-Ḥafīd (1126 – 1198), was a prominent jurist from Cordoba, the center of religious and political power in al-Andalus as the longtime seat of the Umayyad Caliphate (756 – 1031), where, in 1182, he attained the position of chief judge, or *qaḍī*.<sup>8</sup> Schooled in traditional Quranic theology, medicine and law, Ibn Rushd came into philosophical preeminence during the reign of the Almohad Caliph, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf (1135 – 1184, r. 1163 – 1184), who, in 1169, commissioned Ibn Rushd to produce a commentary on the complete works of Aristotle,

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[7] In 1908, Pierre Mandonnet classified the articles into 10 categories, of which Roland Hissette provides the following summary:

Il distingue d’abord 179 erreurs philosophiques : 7 concernant la nature de la philosophie, 25 relatives à Dieu, 31 aux Intelligences séparées, 49 au monde corporel, 57 à l’homme et à son activité spirituelle, 10 à l’éthique ; viennent ensuite 40 erreurs théologiques : 5 visent la religion chrétienne, 15 les dogmes, 13 les vertus chrétiennes et 7 les fins dernières. (*Enquête* 8)

*He first distinguished 179 philosophical errors: 7 concerning the nature of philosophy, 25 relative to God, 31 to separate Intelligences, 49 to the corporeal world, 57 to men and their spiritual activity, 10 to ethics; then come 40 theological errors: 5 target the Christian religion, 15 the dogmas, 13 the Christian virtues and 7 the end of things.*

[8] Coopting Shī‘ī revolutionary unrest in the eastern provinces of the empire, Abū al-‘Abbās ‘Abd Allah (721 - 754, r. 750 - 754), grandson of the prophet Muḥammad's youngest uncle, al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (c. 566 - c. 653) successfully otherthrew the last of the Levantine Umayyad caliphs, Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān b. al-Ḥakīm, in 750, when he founded the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, which would continue rule the *dār al-Islām*, the Muslim empire, until the fall of Bagdad at the hands of Hulagu Khan in 1258. Writing of the ‘Abbāsīd revolution, Hugh Kennedy asserts that "it was no *coup d’état* or palace intrigue but a massive social and political upheaval whose objective went beyond the setting up of a new dynasty to the reforming and purifying of society according to the laws of Islam" (Kennedy 35). The entire Umayyad bloodline was massacred with the exception of the fourteen year old Umayyad prince, ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Mu‘āwiya b. Hishām, who fled the court of Damascus for the frontier territory of al-Andalus, where he established a Caliphate in exile at Cordoba.



the work for which Ibn Rushd is best remembered in the Latin West. Yet, despite his initial successes at the court of fundamentalist Almohad Caliphs, Ibn Rushd's philosophy proved too controversial and he ultimately fell out of favor with Caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf son and successor, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qub al-Manṣūr (c. 1160 – 1199, r. 1184 – 1199), on whose orders “a prohibition against his studies was issued, his books were burned, and he was insulted by a mob” (Kurtz 30). After two years of exile in Lucena, he was returned to favor and finally summoned to Marrakesh, where he died.

As scholars are apt to point out, as “Ibn Rushd's influence declined in the Islamic world, it rose in the Western Christian world, where he became recognized as the great authority on Aristotle's philosophy” (Bullough 44). Thus, while Aristotle was known simply by the epithet of “the Philosopher” by his medieval Christian readers, Ibn Rushd came to be known as “the Commentator” in the European tradition. Regardless of this success, however, Ibn Rushd's philosophical opinions remained largely misrepresented in the philosophical circles of Latin Europe. As Bullough asserts, “sometimes it is not so important what a person actually says as what he is believed to have said, and this is particularly true of Western ideas about Ibn Rushd” (Bullough 43). Whatever he actually believed, medieval Christian scholars perceived in Ibn Rushd's Aristotelian commentaries a number of tenets antithetical to core Christian doctrines: they believed he denied free will in both man and God and rejected the agency of God in creation and the eternity of the human soul, to name but a few of the many charges leveled against him (Bullough 44-5). Worse still, however, Ibn Rushd was imputed to have espoused the doctrine of the “double truth,” by which there were purported to exist two separate truths: the truth in philosophy, accessible only to the learned, and the truth of religion for the masses.

It was on this doctrine of double truth that the Bishop of Paris drew the party lines in 1277 for his condemnation that pitted radical Aristotelians, and thus Averroists, against the more traditionalist Augustinians, in whose camp Tempier was firmly seated. Tempier makes this explicit in his prefatory epistle:

Dicunt enim ea esse vera secundum philosophiam, sed non secundum fidem catholicam, quasi sint due contrarie veritatis, et quasi contra veritatem sacre Scripture sit veritas in dictis gentilium dampnatorum. (qtd. *Enquête* 13)

*Indeed they say that is true according to philosophy but not according to the Catholic faith, as if there were two contradictory truths and as if there were truth in the words of damned pagans against the truth of the holy scripture.*

Despite Tempier's condemnation, at no point does Ibn Rushd elaborate in the entire corpus of his works a doctrine of the "double truth." In fact, Ibn Rushd explicitly rejects such a stance when he argues in his *Decisive Treatise* (c. 1190) that "Truth does not contradict truth but rather is consistent with it and bears witness to it" (qtd. Taylor 185). Similarly among the Latins, the doctrine has most often been imputed to Siger de Brabant (c. 1240 – 1280) and Boethius of Dacia (d. c. 1284), the leaders of Latin Averroists or radical Aristotelians at the Parisian faculty of arts, both of whom were explicitly condemned in Tempier's syllabus. Examining the extant writings of these two scholars, Richard Dales finds no evidence of the existence of such a doctrine during the 13<sup>th</sup> century:

It seems safe to say that there never was such a doctrine [of the double truth]. The position on which it was based – namely that to deny that a thing can occur naturally does not contradict the assertion that it can occur supernaturally – was first introduced into Latin thought not the sneering and subversive Averroists on the Parisian arts faculty, but by a highly respected and orthodox Franciscan on the theological faculty. (Dales 178)

In fact, the doctrine was exploited by orthodox clerics to make room for evolving notions of science in Medieval Christendom that would have otherwise appeared to contradict certain important questions

of faith. Rather than undermining the validity of faith-claims by the Church, it was deployed in order to give further support to religious doctrine. Regardless, the theory originated not from Ibn Rushd's philosophy but from the writings of his contemporary, Moses Maimonides (1135 – 1204), an influential Jewish philosopher of Andalusian origin (Dales 178).<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between the 219 theses and the condemnation of the *De amore* is, however, quite suspect as the condemnation appears appended to the epistle without any causal relationship between them explicitly elaborated. Commenting on the possible readings of this juxtaposition, Roland Hissette proposes that:

le prologue lui-même suggère trois hypothèses, qui ne s'excluent pas et que des historiens ont défendues: 1) le Chapelain [Capellanus] aurait inspiré l'un ou l'autre des 219 articles censurés; 2) il aurait encouragé des désordres moraux fustigés également par l'évêque; 3) il aurait soutenu la théorie de la double vérité ("Une 'duplex sententia'" 249).

*The prologue itself suggests three hypotheses, which are not mutually exclusive and which various historians have supported: 1) the Chaplain would have inspired one or the other of the 217 censured articles; 2) he would have encouraged the moral disorder equally denounced by the bishop; 3) he would have supported the theory of the double truth.*

Of these three hypotheses, only the third would imply resonance between perceptions of Ibn Rushd's philosophy and his contemporary, Capellanus.<sup>10</sup> Should the scholar choose to consider the second of

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[9] On the relationship of these two important Andalusian philosophers, see Shlomo Pines' "Translator's Introduction" to Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*.

[10] Of the 219 articles, only eight can be reasonably be attributed to errors arising in Andreas Capellanus's *De amore*: articles 136 (in the text of Tempier's condemnation; 168 in Hissette, following Mandonnet's numeration), 163 (163), 165 (167), 166 (206), 168 (208), 170 (212), 181 (209), and 183 (205) (*Enquête* 315 n.41). This is in comparison to the 30 with certitude and the 14 tentatively that "paraissent viser directement Siger de Brabant" [*seem to directly target Siger de Brabant*], whose work is the most systematically condemned by Tempier (*Enquête* 314). Given this fact and the fact that none of the other authors who seem to be targeted by the bishop of Paris are mentioned in the prefatory letter—

these hypotheses as the most probable, one need look no further than Capellanus's remarks about clerical celibacy, which had only been codified in the previous century by Pope Gregory VII, to form a defensible argument. Although, as Capellanus informs his reader, the cleric "amare non posse" ["cannot love"] due to his special relationship with and proximity to God, he can all the same choose to pursue amorous and erotic relations because:

quia vix tamen unquam aliquis sine carnis crimine vivit. (Capellanus 210)

[because], however there is scarcely a man who ever lived without sinning in the flesh. (Walsh 211)

Simply for admitting the inherent weakness of man and the inevitability of sin, Capellanus's stance could be condemned as heretical, even before his treatise could be construed as encouraging clerics to seek erotic encounters and therefore flouting papal decree. In fact, article 127 (207) of the condemnation seems to expressly condemn the moral disorder that results from sexual activity:

Quod delectatio in actibus venereis non impedit actum seu usum intellectus.  
(qtd. *Enquête* 297)

*That the pleasure in sexual acts does not impede the act or the use of the intellect.*

If it is patently false according to Christian dogma of the thirteenth century that, as this thesis holds, passion does not preclude reason, then the pursuit of the passions loses much of its inherently problematic status. Anything encouraging sexual practice could be construed as encouraging both sexual and moral disorder, including the *De amore*. Therefore if the first and the third of these hypotheses are to be rejected, the second amply suffices to justify its exceptionally explicit condemnation in the eyes of the conservative Bishop of Paris.

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not Boethius of Dacia, not Thomas Aquinas—, it might be wise to forgo the attribution of these otherwise un-attributed articles to Capellanus, as Hissette suggests (*Enquête* 315).

It is unclear, as we shall see, that Tempier perceived the *De amore* as participating in the same genealogical trajectory as Siger de Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. What is clear, however, is that Tempier was fully aware of an important movement within Christian philosophy, important enough to require censure, that was aware of and working with elements of philosophical thought of Andalusian origin. By 1277, the circulation of philosophical texts of Islamic origin had already been underway in the Latin West for at least a century and half (Renan 202). Writing in 1852, Ernst Renan testifies to the extreme porosity of cultural and linguistic barriers in the Middle Ages, borders that have since been construed as absolute:

Un des phénomènes les plus singuliers de l'histoire littéraire du moyen âge, c'est l'activité du commerce intellectuel et la rapidité avec laquelle les livres se répandaient d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe. La philosophie d'Abélard, de son vivant, avait pénétré jusqu'au fond de l'Italie. La poésie française des trouvères, en moins d'un siècle, comptait des traductions allemandes, suédoises, norwégiennes, islandaises, flamandes, hollandaises, bohêmes, italiennes, espagnoles. Tel ouvrage, composé à Maroc ou au Caire, était connu à Paris et à Cologne en moins de temps qu'il ne faut de nos jours à un livre capital de l'Allemagne pour passer le Rhin. (Renan 202)

*One of the most singular phenomena of the literary history of the Middle Ages is the activity of intellectual commerce and the speed with which books spread from one end of Europe to the other. The philosophy of Abelard, during his lifetime, had penetrated the full extent of Italy. The French poetry of the trouvères, in less than a century, counted translations in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Flemish, Dutch, Bohemian, Italian and Spanish. A work, composed in Morocco or in Cairo, was known in Paris or at Cologne in less time than it takes in our day for an important book from Germany to pass the Rhine.*

Forgetting or at least minimizing the effects of this pervasive porosity, scholars have a tendency to date interest in a particular author or text forward from the date of translation. Thus, if Ibn Rushd's works were first translated from Arabic into Latin in the beginning in 1220, primarily by Michael Scot

(1175 – c. 1232) and William of Luna, interest in and knowledge of his works is dated to that moment.<sup>11</sup>

This thinking obscures the very impetus for the translation; as no translation is undertaken without prior knowledge of or interest in its contents, which justify *a priori* the cost, in time and material, of its translation. Therefore it would not be unreasonable to expect that Ibn Rushd's philosophy had already been circulating in some albeit insufficient form within the Christian intelligentsia in the decades surrounding the turn of the twelfth century.

I am not claiming that clerics at the court of Champagne would have been intimately aware of contemporary philosophical production in al-Andalus; nor am I arguing that, in Champagne, there was a particularly strong investment in Islamicate and Andalusian culture. In fact, the translation history of Ibn Rushd's commentaries seem to indicate a general ambivalence to Islamic culture as Michael Scot's translations, "combining the *verbum de verbo* method with abbreviation," include "several omissions that concern topics of Islamic culture and Arabic language," a move that Dag Hasse attributes to an attempt to conform to Scot's own cultural context (Hasse 38; 35). Instead, I argue that spanning both Islamicate and Christian cultures, there existed during the Middle Ages a cultural complex that represents a critical investment in a large number of shared cultural interests and concerns, not to mention significant shared heritage. A number of overlapping affinities have already been touched upon here that testify to their common cultural orientation: the important influence of Aristotle in the shaping of Medieval Islamic, Jewish and Christian thought; the heretical notion of the

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[11] For more information on the progeny of early translations of Ibn Rushd's Aristotelian commentaries, see Dag Nikolaus Hasse's *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century*.

eternity of creation and the need to censure it, clearly felt by both Bishop Tempier and Imam al-Ghazālī; the perceived influence of Islamic philosophy on Christian theology. To this list, we can add an interest in elaborating and codifying theories of erotic love in the form of arts of love, in particular Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* and Ibn Ḥazm's *Ring of the Dove*. Analysis of these two arts of love will permit me to explore the shared affinities and cultural preoccupations of these two cultures as they pertain to theories of erotic love.

#### THE ART OF LOVE: CAPELLANUS AND OVID

Regardless of any claims made on his behalf by subsequent readers, it is manifestly evident that Andreas Capellanus conceived of his love treatise as descending not from Ibn Rushd's metaphysics but from Ovid's (Publius Ovidius Naso; 43 BCE – c. 17 CE) older and loftier parentage. Not only does Capellanus cite directly much of Ovid's poetry<sup>12</sup> throughout his treatise, but also, and more indicative of his own conceptualization of the project, the preface of the *De amore* draws heavily upon metaphors used by Ovid in the opening verses of the *Ars Amatoria* (1 BCE). Both Capellanus and Ovid refer to the new lover as a recruit in the army of love:

Ovid:            Principio, quod amare velis, reperire labora,

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[12] Including examples with minor variations from the original, Capellanus cites Ovid's works on 13 occasions, although, due to repetitions, these correspond to only 9 individual quotations: one from the *Metamorphoses* (2.846) repeated twice, one from the *Amores* (3.4.17) repeated twice, one from the *Remedia Amoris* (749) repeated twice, three from the *Heroides* (1.12, 4.75f., 4.154), one from the *Ars amatoria* (1.349f.), one from the *Tristia* (1.9.5f.) repeated twice and one from the *Fasti* (1.419). Variations range from changes in word order ["Nitimur in vetitum cupimus semperque negatum" (42, 314) for Ovid's "Nitimur in vetitum semper cupimusque negata" (*Amores* 3.4.17)] to full substitutions [Capellanus replaces the first clause of Ovid's "Donec eris sospes, multos numerabis amicos / Tempora quum fuerint nubila, solus eris" (*Tristia* 1.9.5f.) with "Quum fueris felix" (230, 290.)].

Qui nove nunc primum miles in arma venis. (1.35-6)

*First, strive to find an object for your love, you who now for the first time come to fight in warfare new. (Mozley 15)*

Capellanus: Asseris te namque novum amoris militem. (30)

*You claim that you are Love's new recruit (Walsh 31)*

Further, both liken the act of pursuing women to that of hunting:

Ovid: Scit bene venator, cervis ubi retia tendat.  
Scit bene, qua frendens valle moretur aper,  
Aucupibus noti frutices; qui sustinet hamos,  
Novit quae multo pisce natentur aquae. (1.45-8)

*Well knows the hunter where to spread his nets for the stag, well knows he in what glen the boar with gnashing teeth abides; familiar are the copses to fowlers, and he who holds the hook is aware in what waters many fish are swimming. (Mozley 15)*

Capellanus: Nec decet quemquam prudentem huiusmodi reus venatibus.(30)

*And though the man of sense shows impropriety in making time for such hunting as this. (Walsh 31)*

Finally, both associate learning the ways of love with mastering the art of horsemanship:

Ovid: Arte leves currus: arte regendus amor. (1.4)

*By skill nimble chariots are driven: by skill must Love be guided. (Mozley 13)*

Capellanus: Nescire apte gubernare frena caballi. (30)

*You cannot properly control the reins of the horse you ride. (Walsh 30)*

These parallels in martial, predatory imagery accumulate to augment an even more important commonality between these two texts: their structure and explicit goals.<sup>13</sup> The *accessus ad amoris*

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[13] Let us note immediately, lest it appear an inadvertence, the important disparities between these two sets of images, particularly in relation to those involving hunting and horses. Capellanus is,



*tractatum*, or introduction to Capellanus's *De amore*, can be usefully compared to a general summary of the major movements of the first two books of the *Ars amatoria* to highlight these similarities. In the most general terms, the *Ars amatoria* treats three subjects in its first two books<sup>14</sup>: where a man should look for a lover (I.41-262), how he should seduce her (1.263-770) and finally how to keep her interest (I-97-744). Put poetically, Ovid reads thus:

Principio, quod amare velis, reperire labora,  
Qui nova nunc primum miles in arma veni.  
Proximus huic labor est placitam exorare puellam:  
Tertius, ut longo tempore duret amor.  
Hic modus, haec nostro signabitur area curru :  
Haec erit admissa meta terenda rota. (vv. 35-40)

*First, strive to find an object for your love, you who now for the first time come to fight in warfare new. The next task is, to win the girl that takes your fancy; the third, to make love long endure. This is my limit, this the field whose bounds my chariot shall mark, this the goal my flying wheel shall graze. (Mozley 15)*

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according to the fiction of his text, writing in response to a bewildered friend's request. This friend, the young Walter (Gualteri in the Latin), should not be seeking an amatory, let alone erotic relationship, due to his status as a cleric. These two factors inform the opening remarks of the *De amore* and explain their negativity, which is otherwise absent in the Ovid.

[14] Missing entirely from Capellanus and the *De amore* is book III of the *Ars amatoria*, which addresses the woman seeking a male lover. This is important as it marks a first major divergence between Ovidian and courtly theories of love. Old French translations of *Ars amatoria* reflect medieval phallocentrism and hetero-normativity in love-practice. Marilyn Desmond summarizes the engagement of the various thirteenth-century translations of the *Ars amatoria* with discussions of active female participation in sexuality:

The verse translations of the *Ars amatoria* include little or nothing of *Ars amatoria* 3, and in the case of the *Art d'amours* [prose], as we have noted, the third book was translated much later than the first two books. Thus, the vernacular tradition of the *Ars amatoria* constructs heterosexual desire around masculine agency, a gendered assumption that the flat prose of the *Art d'amours* reiterated and explicitly endorses in glosses. (Desmond 113)

She later states: "If the *Art d'amours* equates heterosexual performance and predatory masculinity, the French translations of the *Heroides* reify longing as the constitutive feature of female heteroerotic desire" (Desmond 120).

Read alongside the *De amore's accessus*, the similarity cannot be mistaken:

Est igitur primo videre quid sit amor, et unde dicatur amor, et quia sit effectus amoris, et interquos possit esse amor, quater acquiratur amor, retineatur, augmentetur, minuatur, finiatur; et de notitia amoris mutui, et quid unus amantium agere debeat altero fidem fallente. (32)

*First we must see what love is, why it is so called, and its effects; between what persons it can exist, how it can be obtained, kept, increased, diminished, and ended; how reciprocated love is recognized and what one lover should do if the other is untrue.* (Walsh 33)

While Capellanus is strikingly more detailed in accounting for the minutiae of his treatise, the overall didactic program follows the same steps, with one exception: the end of the affair. This, of course, is the subject of Ovid's *Remedia amoris* (1 BCE):

Ad mea, decepti iuvenes, praecepta venite,  
Quos suus ex omni parte fefellit amor.  
Discite sanari, per quem didicistis amare :  
Una manus vobis vulnus opemque feret. (vv. 41-4)

*Come, harken to my precepts, slighted youths, ye whom your own love has utterly betrayed. Learn healing from him through whom ye learnt to love: one hand alike will wound and succour.* (Mozley 181)

The introductory remarks of both the *De Amore* and the *Ars amatoria*, and the *Remedia amoris* with it, make it evident that Andreas Capellanus sought explicitly to inscribe himself within the Ovidian tradition as a second master initiating the younger generation in the ways of love.

It would be hard to overstate the influence exerted by Ovid's writings on the medieval European *Weltanschauung*. As James Clark claims in his introduction to *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, a collection of critical essays exploring the various facets of medieval interaction with the corpus of

Ovid's poetic works, Ovid became the point of reference from Antiquity among medieval Europeans:

It was not the sober sages of the republic and empire – Virgil, Seneca, Cicero – who proved for medieval audiences the most popular and resonant voices of

the pre-Christian past. Arguably, it was another and altogether unorthodox Augustan, Ovid, who provided the greatest number and diversity of Europeans with their most memorable encounter with the classical world. (Clark 1)

That Ovid's work would ultimately receive such ubiquitous status among the great Roman litterateurs was by no means foreshadowed by its early manuscript history, which ends abruptly with a single 25-line fragment of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* dating from mid fifth-century Italy (Clark 6). It is not until after a four-century hiatus that the next earliest extant copy of Ovid's works can be dated: a ninth-century Irish manuscript of the *Metamorphoses*. There appears, however, to have been a somewhat earlier tradition, dating from last quarter of the eighth century, hypothesized by Sigmund Tafel, much of whose insight into the genealogy of the manuscript tradition of Ovid's amatory poetry has come to be accepted and corroborated by subsequent scholars (McKie 219). According to this theory, "the archetype of Ovid's amatory works was of Spanish or African origins, and it was taken to France by Theodulf of Orléans by the end of the eighth century"<sup>15</sup> Born to an aristocratic family of Visigothic descent towards the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Theodulf (d. 821) left his native Spain for neighboring France, fleeing the all-too-recent invasion by Arab and Berber armies. In France, his erudition earned him the commission of composing the *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* for the Frank King, Charlemagne, a service for which he was later appointed bishop of Orléans and abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Fleury around 798 (Freeman 125).

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[15] Cristóbal's essay and Clark's introduction both make somewhat more of Tafel's "African thesis" than Tafel himself.

Unser ganze heutige Ueberlieferung des Gedichte verdanken wir Spanien (beziehungsweise Afrika?). (Tafel 73)

*Our entire modern transmission of the poems we owe to Spain (or Africa?).*

This of course does not obviate in any way the eventual corollaries of such a claim.

This possible Iberian or North African connection is of particular interest to the present study because of the role that Orléans would play in the dissemination of Ovid's amatory poems throughout France in particular and Europe in general beginning in the third quarter of the twelfth century, the very period in which Capellanus was active. Further Orleans is also of interest for its relative geographical proximity to Champagne, Andreas Capellanus, and the early flowering of courtly literature in Old French. Orléans was to become a major center for the study of Ovid, largely due to the school masters Arnulf of Orléans, William of Orléans, and Fulco of Orléans, who beginning around 1180, began to write commentaries of individual amatory poems (Coulson 49). This tradition would continue at least through the mid thirteenth century, as the city would become, around 1250, the site of the composition of "perhaps the most authoritative and widely disseminated commentary on the *Metamorphoses* in Europe during the high Middle Ages," the so-called "Vulgate commentaries" (Coulson 49). Interest in Ovid's amatory works flourished in the scholastic milieu, burgeoning "not only at the major monastic centers but now also affiliated with secular cathedrals and even imperial or royal courts" (Clark 8). In the scholastic context, Ovid's amatory poetry was deployed "for their rich repository of grammatical, metrical and rhetorical lore" before eventually giving rise in the thirteenth century to allegorical readings (Clark 8). Allegorical readings of the *Metamorphoses*, beginning with John of Garland's *Integumenta Ovidii*, composed around 1234, were particularly prized (Coulson 59).

Contemporary to this first flowering of scholastic interest in Ovid's amatory poetry in France is the birth of the secular, vernacular tradition equally interested in Ovid's works but for different reasons. Where scholastics saw a model for formal imitation, the romance tradition found inspiration

for a highly stylized representation of love. Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* exists at the crux of these two movements as "a transitional text, which conveyed schoolroom Ovidianism to an extra-mural audience" (Clark 12). In this way, it would have functioned much like Chrétien de Troyes' no-longer extant translation of Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, to which he refers in the preamble to his Arthurian romance

*Cligès*, composed c. 1176:

Cil qui fist d'Erec et d'Enide,  
Et les comandemenz d'Ovide  
Et l'art d'amors en romanz mist,  
[... ]  
.I. novel conte recomence. (vv. 1-8)

*He who made Eric and Enide,  
And put the commandments of Ovid  
And the Art of Love in romance,  
[... ]  
A new tale begins.*

This lost translation was most likely commissioned, like so many of Chrétien's works, by Marie de France, countess of Champagne.

Although Ovid was read in the Scholastic tradition primarily for his language and rhetoric, nowhere is Ovid's influence more apparent than in the formation of medieval erotology. As Marilyn Desmond argues, Ovid provided the model for a new literary tradition centered around a culture of the erotic:

The reception and translation of Ovid's texts made available a language of desire that contributed to the emergence of a heteroerotic ethic in medieval literary cultures. While Ovid's *Metamorphoses* provides a storehouse of anecdotes that vividly depict sexual escapades, it is Ovid's amatory works that develop and elaborate on the structures of desire. The medieval reception of two Ovidian texts – the *Ars amatoria* and the *Heroides* – was critical in the development of an erotic discourse in medieval textual traditions. (Desmond 108)

This twelfth-century reception of Ovid's amatory poetry, in particular the *Ars amatoria*, the poem that we are most interested in here, must have differed greatly from what we can safely assume to have been its original reception among its Roman audience, for whom *Ars amatoria*'s "pedantic lessons of the *praeceptor* on the gestures, attitudes and rhetorics of *amor* treat heterosexual *eros* as a performance that does not come easily or naturally to the uninitiated" (Desmond 112). Scholars debate today as how to correctly read Capellanus's *De amore*: is this second Ovid's art of love meant to be taken seriously or is it meant to be read as a "ironic commentary on [contemporary] politics and literary values," as Ovid's had been (Desmond 109)?<sup>16</sup> Literary irony depends entirely upon the specific social context in which it is created. Some historical indications do exist to help guide our understanding of Capellanus's early and subsequent reception. Chrétien de Troyes asserts that he translated the *Ars amatoria* into Old French, most likely for Marie de Champagne, in the first half of the 1180s. Given Marie's patronage of both early courtly romances and *trouvère* lyrics as well as her particular interest in the *Ars amatoria*, it is unlikely that Capellanus would have written an openly critical commentary about the court in which he circulated. At the same time, its composition in Latin, rather than Old French, might have facilitated such a disguised satire as there is no reason to believe that Marie de Champagne read Latin.<sup>17</sup> In fact, her commission of texts in the vernacular and

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[16] This very question can and must be extended to the concept and practice of courtly love in general. Roger Boase provides a useful history of the various critical apparatuses engaged in discussing the history of the concept in his study of courtly love scholarship, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love*.

[17] Many details of the *De amore* seem to indicate a clerical rather than a courtly audience. In addition to citing the use of Latin rather than the vernacular, one can suggest, among other examples, Capellanus's remarks regarding the nobility of the clergy:

Quoniam igitur in superioribus de tribus hominum gradibus, scilicet plebeiorum,

the very need for a translation of Ovid seem to indicate otherwise.

The following century brings no greater clarification to the *De amore's* reception. As we have seen, it was summarily denounced and condemned on pain of excommunication by the Bishop of Paris in 1277, a step that would not have been necessary were the text read as a critique of courtly culture and its erotic preoccupations. This, however, appears to contrast with the opinion expressed a decade later, when in 1290 Drouart la Vache writes *Li livres d'amours*, the first translation of the *De amore* into a vernacular. In his prologue, Drouart explains how he came upon the task of transposing

Capellanus's Latin prose into Old French verse:

[...] Quant je l'oi veü  
Et il en ot .I. poi leü,  
La matere trop durement  
Me plot, sachiez, certainement,  
Tant, que j'en commençai a rire  
Et mes comapinz me prist a dire :  
« Compainz, je vous pris et commans  
Que le tranlatés en rommans,  
Se ferez trop grant cortoisie,  
Car la matere est renvoisie  
Et assés de biaux mos i a. »

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nobilium et nobiliorum, tractatum constat haberi, et inter ipsius tractatus initia de nobilissimorum id est clericorum gradu mentionem recolimus habuisse. (208)

*In the preceding dialogues the discussion has clearly been centered on the three ranks of society, commoners, nobles and higher nobles. At the outset of the treatise I recall that I mentioned the rank of the highest of nobles, the clergy.* (Walsh 209)

Further, his remarks concerning their pursuit of love are otherwise out of place in a treatise destined to be read by a lay audience. At the same time, the text's investiture in topics of particular interest to the high nobility cannot be denied. In addition to the constant praise of Marie, countess of Champagne and her family, in particular her mother, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, and her half-sister, Marguerite, we cite both the romance interlude in the chivalric tradition describing the recovery of the rules of love in book III and the relative lengths of the didactic seduction dialogues from book I, in which the dialogue between higher nobles is over seven times longer than that between peasants and a full four times longer than that between regular nobles.

Li autres compains m'en pria,  
De cui deseur parlet vous ai,  
Tant que je refuser n'osai  
Leur proiere ne lor requeste,  
Car elle fu assez honeste. (vv. 47-62)

[...] *When I saw it  
And read a little of it,  
The subject, I tell you,  
Pleased me so much  
That I started to laugh  
And my friend prayed me tell:  
"Friend, I beg and command you  
To translate it into romance,  
You will do a great courtesy,  
For the subject is charming  
And many beautiful words are in it."  
My other friend begged me,  
Of whom above I spoke to you,  
So much that I did not dare refuse  
Their prayer nor their request,  
Because it was honest enough.*

The authorial stance taken here by Drouart la Vache vis-à-vis his translation is interesting on a number of counts, and not least because, by placing the request in the voice of two anonymous friends, he minimizes his own responsibility in the production of the translation, a motive highlighted by the insistence on the honesty, or innocence, of the friends' request.<sup>18</sup> As a cleric himself, Drouart's response in reading the *De amore* can be used to gauge how the text was received within the clerical circles for which it appears to have been, at least in part, destined.<sup>19</sup> Drouart identifies first and

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[18] It is of note that many of the more salacious sections of Capellanus's *De amore* do not find their way into the vernacular translation, changes that can be safely imputed to its composition in the wake of the 1277 censure.

[19] For more information on the history of the circulation of manuscripts of the *De amore*, see "Un art d'aimer : pour qui ?" in Bruno Roy's *Une culture de l'équivoque*.



foremost the pleasure of reading the text, which resulted ultimately in laughter, a move that might suggest an ironic reception of the text. At the same time, he finds the subject charming [*renvoisie*] and the writing beautiful [*assés de biaux mos*]. Such sentimentalism reinforces, however, the problematic seduction of the treatise. Thus the insistence on the honest and innocent nature of the friends' request serves a double role of exonerating both author and would-be reader alike. In any case, we know vernacular translations began to flourish after the thirteenth century, giving rise to three separate versions in Middle High German (all 15<sup>th</sup> century), two Florentine (both 14<sup>th</sup> century), as well as one in Catalan (14<sup>th</sup> century), not to mention a second translation into French (15<sup>th</sup> century), indicating wide continued interest in Capellanus's *De amore*.<sup>20</sup>

Ultimately, we know that in the centuries following its composition the *De amore* was taken seriously, at least by some. This is evinced by the formal establishment of a High Court of Love, or the *Cour amoureuse*, in Paris on St Valentine's day, 1400, by Charles VI of France (1368 – 1422, r. 1380 – 1422) (Goodrich 1).<sup>21</sup> The court, modeled of the *cours d'amour* depicted in the twenty-one examples of *iudicia amoris* [*judgments on love*] that constitute the seventh chapter of book II of Capellanus's *De Amore*, represents the embodiment of a still older literary tradition dating back to the troubadour lyric, in which unresolved questions of love debated in the *partimen* were addressed via *tornada* to a

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[20] Capellanus's *De amore* is attested in 37 manuscripts, including three fragments. Its various medieval translations are extant in an additional 18 manuscripts across the five translations in three languages. Drouart la Vache's Old French translation is extant in only one manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal, 3122), penned around the turn of the fourteenth century.

[21] For more on the High Court of Love, see Carla Bozzolo and Hélène Loyau's critical three-volume edition of *La Cour amoureuse dite de Charles VI*.

patron, often an eminent lady, for adjudication.<sup>22</sup> Capellanus, possibly building on this Occitan connection to garner favor at Marie de Champagne's court, attributes an earlier court of love to Aliénor d'Aquitaine (1122 – 1204), Marie's mother, who was also the granddaughter of Guillaume IX (1071 – 1126), the first troubadour. However, in what amounts to its single greatest impact, the *De amore* was minutiously read by both Guillaume de Lorris (c. 1200 – c. 1240), author of the medieval bestseller, *le Roman de la Rose* (c. 1230), and, more importantly still, its more celebrated continuator, Jean de Meun (c. 1240 – c. 1305).

While Andreas Capellanus drew much of his inspiration for the *De amore* from the amatory poetry of Ovid and indeed actively cast himself in the light of a second Ovid, the theories of courtly love espoused in France in the final decades of the twelfth century are not purely a *translatio studii* of Roman erotology. Instead, courtly love, as a set of erotic principles, differs strongly from the amatory theories and practices of Antiquity. It will therefore prove productive to compare it with the contemporary literary tradition of neighboring al-Andalus. This tradition, attested in Ibn Ḥazm's *Tawq al-Hamāma*, shares many of the courtly tradition's erotological concerns.

#### ANDALUSI INTERTEXTS: CAPELLANUS AND IBN ḤAZM

Like many of the principle figures seen here, Ibn Ḥazm (994 – 1064) lived a much-storied life, full of the vicissitudes and travails that mark the carriers of those authors that come to stamp their influence on an era. By the age of 18, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. 'Aḥmad b. Sa'īd bin Ḥazm b. Ghālib b.

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[22] In a significant convergence of literary traditions, an example from the *partimen* tradition is embedded in the dialogue between higher nobles in the book II of the *De amore*.

Ṣālīḥ b. Khalaf b. Ma'dān b. Sufyān b. Yazīd al-Fārisī al-Qurṭubī had gone from being the son of the vizier to Amirid rulers of Cordoba, Ibn Abī 'Āmir al-Manṣūr (Almanzor; c. 938 – 1002, r. c. 980 – 1002) and his son 'Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar (974 – 1008, r. 1002 – 1008), and living in the posh Cordovan suburb of al-Mughīra to being an orphan living in exile. Either in this period of exile and political scheming or in the brief period of political favor that followed, Ibn Ḥazm penned his much-celebrated *Ṭawq al-Hamāma fī al-Ulafa wa-al-Ullāf*, or *The Ring of the Dove*.<sup>23</sup> This first period of brief political favor began in early December 1023 when Ibn Ḥazm and his circle were appointed viziers to the newly appointed Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mustaẓhir, and ended abruptly only a month and a half later with the Caliph's execution in January. Giving up his ambitions as an aesthete following "the failures he suffered in his public life," Ibn Ḥazm finally dedicated himself to the juridico-theological work that would occupy him for the rest of his controversial life (Puerta Vílchez "A Bibliographical Sketch" 12). Therefore, apart from a handful of little-studied poems, the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* represents the only thoroughly literary work to have come down to us of the nearly "400 volumes, contained in nearly 80,000 pages" that Ibn Ḥazm's son, Abū Rāfi' al-Faḍl, claims his father wrote (qtd. Puerta Vílchez *Inventory* 683). Of these only some 8000 pages of 143 titles are extant today. In fact, the only extant manuscript of the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* is a single 1338 epitome by a copyist who was by all accounts "rather careless" (Giffen 24). The quality of the epitome and the lack of an integral manuscript leaves the form and contents of Ibn Ḥazm's original text shrouded in uncertainty. For this reason, certain

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[23] It has generally been asserted that the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* was composed in 1022, while in exile at Jativa. This, for example, is the date given by A. R. Nykl (LVIII) as well as García Gómez (Wasserstein 73 n. 11). Others however place the date in 1027, among them A. J. Arberry (9) and the eminent *Ṭawq* scholar, Iḥsān 'Abbās (Wasserstein 73 n. 11).

types of analyses, close reading in particular, can bear little fruit apart from conjecture. The present reading will focus primarily on an analysis of the theoretical structures deployed in the text to organize and propound its unique theory of love. These theories of love will then be compared with those developed by Andreas Capellanus at the court of Champagne some century and a half later as evidence of the extent to which erotological theory from both Al-Andalus and Champagne participate in a larger cultural complex spanning the Mediterranean basin.

The points of contact that are available between the French and the Andalusī traditions of erotic love are numerous. While they do not necessarily imply any causal relationship between the two traditions, they do speak to shared values and preoccupations that must not be trivialized. One could point to the supreme sovereignty and dominion of love, which has a tradition extending as far back as Ancient Greece where Plato's *Symposium* explored the subject, and which is present in both

Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* and in Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*:

Capellanus: Novi enim et manifesto experimento percepī quod qui Veneris est servituti obnoxius nil valet perpensius cogitare nisi ut aliquid semper valeat suis actibus operari, quo magis possit ipsius illaqueari catenis. (30)

*I know by clear evidence of personal experience that the man subject to Venus's slavery can give really earnest thought to nothing except the perpetual attempt to achieve by his actions the possibility of being further enchained in her fetters. (Walsh 31)*

Ibn Ḥazm: واعلم أعزك الله أن للحُب حكماً على النفوس ماضياً، وسلطاناً فاضياً، وأمراً لا يخالف، وحداً لا يعصى، وملكاً لا يتعدى، وطاعة لا تُصرف، ونفاذاً لا يُردُّ. (129)

*Know now – may God exalt you! – that Love exercises an effective authority, a decisive sovereignty over the soul; its commands cannot be opposed, its ordinances may not be flouted, its rule is not to be transgressed; it demands unwavering obedience, and against its dominion there is no appeal. (Arberry 60)*

Capellanus: Quod si tali amor libramine uteretur ut nautas suos post multarum procellarum inundationem in quietis semper portum deduceret, me suae servitutis perpetro vinculis obligarem. (38)

*If Love's scales were so balanced as always to guide his sailors into the haven of peace after being drenched by many storms, I would bind myself for ever in the bonds of his slavery. (Walsh 39)*

Ibn Ḥazm: فأعجب لهذا التغلب الشديد والتسلط العظيم. (132)

*Marvelous indeed is the mighty domination, the splendid tyranny of the human passion. (Arberry 63)*

Likewise, one could point to the rules of monogamy imposed by both traditions, a similarity that might be surprising given the acceptance of polygamy among Muslims:

Capellanus: Nemo duplici potest amore ligari. (282)

*No one can be bound by two loves. (Walsh 283)*

Ibn Ḥazm: ومن هذا دخل الغلط على من يزعم أنه بحب اثنين ويعشق شخصين متغايرين، فإنما هذا من جهة الشهوة التي ذكرناها آنفاً، وهي على المجاز تسمى محبة لا على التحقيق. (127)

*Herein lies the root of the error, which misleads a man into asserting that he loves two persons, or individuals. All this is to be explained as springing out of carnal desire, as we have just described; it is called love only metaphorically, and not in the true meaning of the term. (Arberry 58)*

Capellanus: Si quidem vir fuit ille, qui fregit, et hoc novi peregit amoris intuitu, prioris efficitur penitus indignus amore atque frustrandus amplexu, quia in eo prioris spiritus deficit amoris. (238)

*If it was the man who broke faith, and he did this with an eye on a fresh love, he becomes utterly unworthy of the love of his partner, and is to be denied her embrace because the spirit of his earlier love has died in him. (Walsh 239)*

Ibn Ḥazm: كَذِبَ الْمُدَّعِي هُوَ اثْنَيْنِ حَتْمًا      مَثَلٌ مَا فِي الْأَصُولِ أُكْذِبَ مَانِي. (127)

*He lies, and perjures all that's true,  
Who swears he is in love with two:  
He shares in falsehood equally  
With that damned miscreant, Manichee. (Arberry 58)*

Three points of commonality of particular importance in structuring the nature of love and the amorous relationship will constitute the basis of our investigation here. First, we will examine the cause and origin of love and the role of the eye in it. Second, we will look at the ways in which the amatory state makes sex an imperative. Third, we will explore the role of the messenger in the establishment and maintenance of love. In so doing, we will show that there is considerably more cultural affinity between these two traditions than is immediately apparent.

#### INNAMORATIO

At first glance, the respective positions of Ibn Ḥazm and Andreas Capellanus appear largely divergent in many of their fundamental stances on the nature and practice of love. This is the case for the definitions of love proffered by Capellanus and Ibn Ḥazm and their respective theories of how love begins. As we shall see, however, their positions show remarkably more similarity than difference.

For Capellanus love is, first and foremost, a suffering caused by the beauty of others:

*Amor est passio quaedam innata procedens ex visione et immoderata cogitatione formae alterius sexus. (Capellanus 32)*

*Love is an inborn suffering which results from the sight of, and uncontrolled thinking about, the beauty of the other sex. (Walsh 33)*

The sight of the shape and form of a desirable other leads to disorderly, because excessive, thought,

the principal symptom of love. As such love is construed as a primarily mental disorder with physical symptoms by which the disorder could be identified.<sup>24</sup> This appears to contrast with Ibn Ḥazm, who rejects the notion that the physical beauty of an individual is the true cause of love.

ولو كان علة الحب حُسن الصورة الجسديّة لوجب ألا يُستَحسَن الأتقُصُ في الصورة،  
ونحن نجد كثيراً ممن يُثِرُ الأدنى ويعلم فَضْلَ غيره ولا يجد محيداً لقلبه عنه. (Ibn  
(Ḥazm 94-5)

*If the cause of Love were physical beauty, the consequence would be that no body defective in any way would attract admiration; yet we know of many a man actually preferring the inferior article, though well aware that another is superior, and quite unable to turn his heart away from it. (Arberry 24)*

Moving beyond a cursory reading, however, a number of important affinities begin to appear. This should not be surprising because, as we will show, the Andalusī model of love is heavily couched in the framework of Platonic philosophy. Further, if the Tafel thesis of an Iberian or African origin for the medieval manuscript tradition of Ovid's amatory poetry is indeed correct, it would be reasonable to expect a certain amount of cultural transmission to have occurred from the Ovidian tradition into the Arab tradition, as well as from residual Visigothic traditions that must have continued to circulate among recent converts to Islam as well as at the neighboring Christian courts of Northern Iberia. Thus, showing his Platonic stripes, Ibn Ḥazm asserts that love is the result of the conjunction of two separated souls:

وقد اختلف الناس في ماهيته [الحب] وقالوا وأطالوا والذي أذهب إليه أنه اتصال بين

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[24] These symptoms remain remarkably stable across the erotological cultures presented here. Each underline the distraction, change in color, loss of appetite, and loss of speech in the presence of the beloved. Further, both traditions, following Ovid, underscore certain performative markers that result from love, among them increased generosity to impress the beloved.

أجزاء النفوس المقسومة في هذه الخليقة في أصل عنصرها الرفيع. (Ibn Ḥazm 93)

*Concerning the nature of Love men have held various and divergent options, which they have debated at great length. For my part I consider Love as a conjunction between scattered parts of souls that have become divided in this physical universe, a union effected within the substance of their original sublime element. (Arberry 23)*

Were Ibn Ḥazm to leave his discussion here the French and Andalusī theories might not converge.

However, Ibn Ḥazm reconnects love with beauty as its primary motor:

وأما العلة التي توقع الحب أبداً في أكثر الأمر على الصورة الحسنة، فالظاهر أن النفس تولع بكل شيء حسن وتميل إلى التصاویر المتقنة. (Ibn Ḥazm 98)

*As for what causes Love in most case to choose a beautiful form to light upon, it is evident that the soul itself being beautiful, it is affected by all beautiful things and has a yearning for perfect symmetrical images. (Arberry 28)*

This desire for symmetry in physical and spiritual beauty provides the opportunity for love to become rooted in the soul of the lover, transforming simple carnal desire into true love. The perception of beauty thus constituted the critical prerequisite for love in both traditions.<sup>25</sup>

The sense of sight as the means by which beauty can be perceived is a critical faculty in the generation of love in both the French courtly and the Andalusī traditions. Without an initial sight, Capellanus maintains that love cannot exist.

Caecitas impedit amorem, quia caecus videre non potest unde suus possit

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[25] The Arabic trilateral root, “ح-س-ن” [*h-s-n*], has the distinction of denoting both beauty and goodness, and with it a certain degree of merit or value. All the same, both Nykl and Arberry concur in their translation:

*As regards the cause because of which love ever occurs in most cases, it is an outwardly beautiful form; because the soul is beautiful and passionately desires anything beautiful, and inclines towards perfect images. (Nykl 11)*

Further, this interpretation is shared in the French translation by Gabriel Martinez-Gros (cf. 36).



animus immoderatam suspicere cogitationem; ergo in eo amor non potest oriri, sicut plenarie supra constat esse probatum. Sed hoc verum esse in amore acquirendo profiteor ; nam amorem ante caecitatem hominis acquisitum non nego in caeco posse durare. (40)

*Blindness is a hindrance to love because a blind man has not the faculty of sight to provide his mind with objects provoking uncontrolled thought. So love cannot develop in the blind man, as has been clearly and fully shown earlier. But I claim only that this is true for winning love; I do not deny that love gained before a man goes blind can endure in his blindness. (Walsh 41)*

The primacy of sight in the emotive process of falling in love developed out of the medicalization of love in the High Middle Ages and love's resulting physiology. In her "prehistory of the love-imprint in the High Middle Ages," Julie Singer argues that despite lacking explicit medicalization of its processes, "Andreas's definition of love is firmly anchored in the body" (Singer *Blindness and Therapy* 27). This double movement of the embodiment and disembodiment of love leads Singer to reject all notions of a physiological interpretation of love in the *De amore*. Such a reading may well be warranted in comparison with the medical discourse of Late Medieval lyric but it seems unto recognize the important step that Capellanus takes towards developing a medicalized discourse of love in the last quarter of the twelfth century. It is clear from the *De amore* that the theory of love espoused by Capellanus was predicated upon contemporary paradigms of love that, at least since Constantine the African (c. 1020-1087) translated Ibn al-Jazzār's (899 – 979) *Zād al-Musāfir* as the *Viaticum* in the closing decades of the eleventh century, firmly couched love as the result of a physiological process that begins in the eyes. Singer provides a useful account of this process in the introduction to her

*Blindness and Therapy in Late Medieval French and Italian Poetry:*

The forms of sensible objects, after passing through the eyes (i.e., the external senses), are received by the internal sense, which is composed of a series of

five faculties. First, the common sense centralized and integrates information received from the external senses; then the imaginative faculty retains and preserves the information relayed to it by the common sense. The cognitive faculty combines or separates imaged so that the estimative faculty may contemplate and judge them, and finally the memory retains the information relayed to it by the estimative faculty. When sense perception leads to love, a sixth step is necessary: the *fantasia*, or phantasy, configures absent objects, making way for the imprint of the phantasm in the heart. Love arises from the contemplation of this internal image imprinted in the lover's body. (Singer *Blindness and Therapy* 15)

It is true that the *De amore* itself does not account for all of these steps in its discussion of the mechanics of love. The implicit acceptance of this physiological conception of love, in which the image of the love-object is inscribed into the lover, is apparent however in Capellanus's caveat concerning love gained prior to the onset of blindness. In such a case the eye is no longer necessary, as *fantasia* does not require the continued presence of an external object, a fact so masterfully exploited by Petrarch in the fourteenth century. Instead love is predicated solely on the admiration of an internal image of the love-object imprinted in the heart of the lover.

Contrary to Capellanus, who maintains sight as the unique entrance love can take into the lover's heart, Ibn Ḥazm offers four distinct routes by which love can enter the heart of the lover: in a dream [من أحبّ في النوم], by description [من أحبّ بالوصف], at first sight [من أحبّ من نظرةٍ واحدة] and after long acquaintance [من لا أحبّ إلا مع المطاولة].<sup>26</sup> Despite this greater variety, we shall see that sight remains the dominant mode of contagion for love, even in those modes that seemingly obviate the need for sight as its primary motor, such as in a dream or by description. In his chapter on falling in

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[26] A. R. Nykl translates this chapter-head somewhat differently: "About love coming only with long intercourse" (Nykl 34). This translation's ambivalence acknowledges the sexually explicit exemplum that closes the chapter and that is entirely absent from the A. J. Arberry's translation.

love during a dream, Ibn Ḥazm recounts the tale of a certain friend, Abū al-Sarī ‘Ammār b. Ziyād, who told him of the following experience:

رَأَيْتُ فِي نَوْمِي اللَّيْلَةَ جَارِيَةً فَاسْتَيْقِظْتُ وَقَدْ ذَهَبَ قَلْبِي فِيهَا وَهَمْتُ بِهَا، وَإِنِّي لَفِي أَصْعَبِ  
حَالٍ مِنْ حَبِّهَا. (Ibn Ḥazm 115)

*Last night [...] I saw in a dream a young maiden, and on awakening I found that I had completely lost my heart to her, and that I was madly in love with her. Now I am in the most difficult straits possible, with this passion I have conceived for her.*  
(Arberry 46)

Despite being entirely illusory in that Abū l-Sarī falls in love with woman who does not exist, this account justifies entirely the expression of tangible evidence of unrequited love's particular symptomology. In his sleep, Abū l-Sarī saw [رَأَى] the young woman, an action expressed with the same verb that would be used if it had been done with waking eyes. Real or imagined, the image of the young woman imprinted itself on Ibn Ḥazm's foolish friend because, even in a dream, the eye leads to the lover's heart.

While he views falling in love while asleep as the least likely way of becoming enamored with someone, Ibn Ḥazm considered falling in love because of a description among the strangest [“من غريب”] (Ibn Ḥazm 117). Of these four ways of falling in love detailed by Ibn Ḥazm, only the second, love by description, apprehended aurally, seems contrary to the stance taken by Capellanus in his treatise. As in the case of falling in love with a dream, love through description also results in the expression of real symptoms of erotic love:

وهذا امر يُتَرْقَى مِنْهُ إِلَى جَمِيعِ الْحُبِّ، فَتَكُونُ الْمِرَاسِلَةُ وَالْمَكَاتِبَةُ وَالْهَمُّ وَالْوَجْدُ وَالسَّهْرُ  
عَلَى غَيْزِ الْإِبْصَارِ. (Ibn Ḥazm 117)

*In such a case he will progress through the accustomed stages of love; there will be the sending to and fro of messengers, the exchange of letters, the anxiety, the deep emotion, the sleeplessness; and all this without actual sight of the object of affection. (Aberry 48)*

The manifestation of symptoms of love can result not only through description of a woman's beauty or other exemplary qualities, but also through hearing her voice or her singing.<sup>27</sup> In either case, these various qualities that become the point of attachment for the love impulse in the lover correspond with an identifiable trait that testifies, within Ibn Ḥazm's Platonic model, to the quality [حسنة] of the love-object's soul. The problem with such a love is that, as Ibn Ḥazm recognizes, is based entirely on mental fantasies without any reference in reality:

وذلك أن الذي أفرغ ذهنه في هوى من لم ير له إذ يخلو بفكره أن يُمثل لنفسه صورةً  
يتوهمها وعيناً يقيمها نُصب ضميره. (Ibn Ḥazm 117)

*If a man's thoughts are absorbed by passionate regard for one whom he has never seen, the inevitable result is that whenever he is alone with his own reflections, he will represent to himself a purely imaginary picture of the person whose identity he keeps constantly before his mind. (Arberry 48)*

This interior image corresponds quite closely to the model of *fantasia* so current in the Latin West and recalls the penultimate injunction of the rules of love that close book II of the *De amore*:

Verus amans assidua sine intermissione coamantis imaginatione detinetur.  
(Capellanus 284)

*The true lover is preoccupied by a constant and unbroken picture of his beloved.*  
(Walsh 285)

This picture is the mental image that the lover formed of this beloved during the process of becoming

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[27] Falling in love with women after having heard only their voices, particularly from behind a wall, is an important trope in the amatory tradition of Muslim world and speaks to the segregation of sexes practiced by elites in many parts of the Muslim world.

enamored. Such cogitation and imagination, however, are not sufficient in the Andalusí tradition represented by Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*. Love via description is still subject to the primacy of sight, which will ultimately decide if it is justified or not, that is, if the inner image corresponds with an external reality and thus if it has any future. This *a posteriori* justification or refutation of love further confirms the important similarity between these otherwise apparently disparate traditions precisely because both are predicated upon a shared theoretical apparatus of medicalized love.

Although falling in love with a dream or a description appears contrary to Andreas Capellanus's conception of love and its possible origins, these two means of falling in love were by no means absent from the Romance tradition. Being in love with an unknown lady of whom one has only heard the praise sung is an integral part of the troubadour lyric and persona. The *vida*, or poetic life, of Jaufré Rudel (d. c. 1147), composed during the thirteenth century, is the most exemplary model for the poetic tradition of *l'amor de lonh*, or distant love:

Jaufres Rudels de Blaia si fo mout gentils hom, princes de Blaia. Et enamoret se de la comtessa de Tripol, ses vezer, per lo ben qu'el n'auzi dire als pelerins que venguen d'Antiocha. E fez de leis mains vers ab bons sons, ab paubres motz. E per voluntat de leis vezer, el se croset e se mes en mar, e pres lo malautia en la nau, e fo condug a Tripol, en un alberc, per mort. E fo fait saber a la comtessa et ella venc ad el, al son leit, e pres lo entre sos pratz. E saup qu'ella era la comptessa, e mantenent recobret l'auzir e-l flairar, e lauzet Dieu que l'avia la vida sostenguda trop qu'el l'agues vista ; et enaissi el mori entre sos bratz. Et ella lo fez a gran honor sepellir en la maison del Temple; e pois, en aquel dia, ella se rendet morga, per la dolor qu'ella n'ac de la mort de lui. (qtd. Roubaud 99)

*Jaufré Rudel de Blaye was a very noble man, prince of Blaye. And he fell in love with the countess of Tripoli, without seeing her, for the good that he had heard from pilgrims who came from Antioch. And he composed for her many poems with good melodies and with poor words. And because of his desire to see her, he took the cross and took to sea. And he fell sick on the boat and was taken, almost*

*dead, to an abbey in Tripoli. And it was made known to the countess and she came to him, to his bed, and took him in her arms. And he knew that it was the countess and immediately recovered his hearing and his smell and he praised God that he have sustained his life so that he could see her and thus he died in her arms. She had him buried with great honor in the house of the Temples and then, the same day, she became a nun for the pain that she felt at his death.*

Inspired by one of his *cansos*, “La quand li jorn son lonc en mai,” written in the second quarter of the twelfth century, this *vida* reifies the trope of *l’amor de lonh* by identifying the historical poet with his subjective, poetic persona and by establishing an historical model for ideal, because impossible, courtly love. This *vida* is of interest also because it suggests a model of its own. Read historically, the countess of Tripoli could refer to Odierno, wife of Raimon I, count of Tripoli. However, read in light of the *canso*, the *vida* belies an important interest in the Islamic other:<sup>28</sup>

Tans es sos pretz verais e fis . Que lai el renh dels sarrazis . Fos eu per lieis chaitius clamatz ! (qtd. Roubaud 101)

*Her merit is so true and fine . That there in the realm of the Saracens . For her I want to be captive proclaimed!*

Similarly, falling in love while dreaming is the literary pretext for the narration of Guillaume de Lorris’s masterpiece, *le Roman de la Rose*, in which a young man falls in love with a “rose” in a dream.

Ibn Ḥazm further develops the primacy of sight among the senses for its effect on love in his chapter treating communication through eye signals [الأشارة بالعين]. After elaborating a version of

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[28] The tradition of Muslim princesses as love objects is well attested in the Old French literature. To name but some of the most salient example: the thirteenth-century *chante-fable*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, the (century) *chanson de geste*, *la Prise d’Orange*, and, to a certain degree, the twelfth-century *Conte de Floire et Blanchefleur* by Robert d’Orbigny. For critical studies see Sharon Kinoshita’s “The Politics of Courtly Love: *la Prise d’Orange* and the Conversion of the Saracen Queen” in *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* and Jacqueline de Weever’s *Sheba’s Daughter: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic*.

extramission theory—optics is understood in terms of rays of light traveling from the eye to the object—Ibn Ḥazm vaunts the superiority of the sense of sight over other senses. First, the eye is “the loftiest and the most sublime of all substances” [“جوهرها أرفعُ الجواهر وأعلاها”] because of its proximity to light and ability to discern colors (Arberry 70; Ibn Ḥazm 138). Second, it is the most acute of the senses as with it one can see even the most distant of stars despite “their tremendous elevation and remoteness” [“ارتفاعها وبُعدها”] (Arberry 70; Ibn Ḥazm 138). But finally, and most importantly, the eye is able to do this directly and without intermediary:

فهي تدركها وتصلُ إليها بالطفر، لا على قطع الأماكن والحلول في المواضع. (Ibn Ḥazm 138)

*It perceives those things, and reaches them as in a single bound, needing not to traverse the intervening distance by stages, or to alight at halting-places en route. (Arberry 70)*

Sight therefore allows the lover both direct and immediate access to the attractive qualities of the object of his love. It is the immediacy, that is the simultaneity of sight alone that raises it above sound, which is fractionally delayed:

ولو كان إدراكهما واحداً لَمَا تَفَدَّمت العينُ السمع. (Ibn Ḥazm 138)

*If ocular and aural perception were one and the same, the eye would not outstrip the ear. (Arberry 70)*

This provides yet further evidence from Ibn Ḥazm supporting the superior role and power of sight in the creation of love over that of description. Should these proofs seem insufficient, Ibn Ḥazm speaks explicitly to the superiority of sight over the other senses:

الحواسُّ الأربعة أبوابٌ إلى القلب ومنافذٌ نحو النفس، العينُ أبلغها وأصحُّها دلالةً وأوعاها عملاً. وهي رائدُ النفسِ الصادق، ودليلُها الهادي، ومرآتها المجلوة التي بها تقفُ على

الحقائق وتميُّز الصفات وتفهم المحسوسات . (Ibn Ḥazm 137)

*The four senses besides are also gateways of the heart, and passages giving admission to the soul; the eye is however the most eloquent, the most expressive, and the most efficient of them all. The eye is the true outrider and faithful guide of the soul; it is the souls' well-polished mirror, by means of which it comprehends all truths, attains all qualities, and understands all sensible phenomena.*  
(Arberry 69)

While this stance does not resolve the inherent contradiction between it and that of Andreas Capellanus, for whom only sight can truly give rise to love, it does underscore the fundamental affinity between the theoretical bases that organize these two arts of love and the critical role played by sight in both.

#### CONSOLATION

Having fallen in love, the lover begins expressing symptoms that extend well beyond obsessive reflection upon the beloved's desirable qualities, symptoms that both result from and justify the medicalization of love in medieval discourse. The lover ceases to eat and to sleep, grows pale and listless, distracted in conversation with all but the beloved, and subject to irascibility and mood-swings. These symptoms are coupled with performative markers to signify outwardly the lover's changed internal state. In this way love is transformative in that the lover seeks to persuade the beloved through visible signs of his quality:<sup>29</sup>

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[29] While women are not entirely bereft of agency by Ibn Ḥazm, both traditions studied here assume an active male lover. This is reflected in the gendered vocabulary used: the lover uses the masculine and active form of *amant* or *‘āshiq*, while the beloved takes the feminine and passive form of *aimée* or *ma’shūqa*.



ومنا أن يجودَ المرءُ ببذل كلِّ ما كان يقدر عليه مما كان يشحُّ به قبل ذلك، كأنه هو  
الموهوب له والمسعيُّ في حظه، كل ذلك ليُبيدِي محاسنه ويُرغِب في نفسه؛ فكم بخيل  
جاد، وقَطوبٍ تطلَّقت، وجبانٍ تشجَّع، وغليظِ الطبعِ تظَّرَف، وجاهلٍ تأدَّب، وتغلِّ تزَيَّن، وفقيرٍ  
تجمَّل، وذِي سنٍّ تفتَّى، وناسكٍ تفتَّك، ومَصُونٍ تهتَّك. (Ibn Hazm 105)

*A man in love will give prodigally to the limit of his capacity, in a way that formerly he would have refused; as if he were the one receiving the donation, he the one whose happiness is the object in view; all this in order that he may show his good points, and make himself desireable. How often has the miser opened his pursestrings, the scowler relaxed his frown, the coward leapt heroically into the fray, the clod suddenly sharp-witted, the boor turned into the perfect gentleman, the stinker transformed himself into the elegant dancy, the sloucher smartened up, the decrepit recaptured his lost youth, the godly gone wild, and self-kicked over the traces-and all because of love! (Arberry 34-5)*

The judgements of love [*judiciis amoris*] of the *De amore* feature two separate judgements that confirm the transformative powers of love. Judgment VI by Aliénor d'Aquitaine revolves around a young man who, through love, hopes to gain worthy manners:

Si postulatum fuerit conscutus amorex, ex tali posset igitur morum posse assumere, et si per eam ad morum probitatem improbitas reducat, laus esset mulieri non modica. (Capellanus 258)

*If he obtained the love he sought he could thereby gain worthy manners, and the woman would win outstanding praise if through her his wickedness was transformed into sterling worth. (Walsh 257)*

And although the ruling is not in the young man's favor, the judgement testifies to the corrective qualities of love, confirmed again in judgement XIII:

Quae domina in probis moribus propria taliter doctrina suum confirmat amantem, oscula etiam et lacertorum ei largiendo amplexu, quod amans iam dictus ad summam per eam est morum probitatem deductus et omni probitate laudandus. (Capellanus 260)

*This lady by her teaching so strengthened her lover in worthy manners, whilst*

*granting him kisses and embraces, that through her he attained the highest worth of character and deserved praise for general honesty.* (Walsh 261)

The performance of the state of being in love can be useful both when trying to win over the lady and in order to maintain her affections, as Capellanus makes clear in the first chapter of book II of the *De amore*. Should the lover's love remain unrequited, however, the consequences can prove dire as prolonged lovesickness results in severe depression, wasting, and death if left unchecked. While physicians would eventually prescribe baths and therapeutic sex with prostitutes, the only known and guaranteed cure was sex with the beloved (Wack *Lovesickness* xii, 39).

Beyond the medical justification, the courtly tradition espoused a sexual imperative of its own. In the dialogue between two higher nobles [*nobilior nobiliori*], replicating the *partiment* of Sifre and Mir Bernart, "Mir Bernat, mas vos ay trobat," the lady asks her suitor to help her adjudicate the worthier of two pretendants for a fellow lady's regards: he who prefers her upper half or he who prefers the lower.<sup>30</sup> Her suitor asserts that surely he who choses the upper half of her body was the worthier as it is the consolation of the upper half that distinguishes man from the beasts:

Quantum enim ad partis pertinet inferioris solatia, a brutis in nullo sumus animalibus segregati, sed eis nos hac parte ipsa natura cojiungit. Superioris vero partis solatia tanquam propria humanae sunt attributa naturae et aliis animalibus universis ab ipsa natura negata. (Capellanus 200)

*So far as the consolations of the lower part is concerned, we are in no sense separated from the brute animals, nature herself having joined us to them in this respect. But that consolations of the upper part have been granted peculiarly to human nature and denied to all other animals by nature herself.* (Walsh 201)

The lady, who identifies the consolations of the nether parts superior to those of the more spiritual

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[30] For the text of this mid twelfth-century *partimen*, see Harvey and Paterson's *The Troubadour Tensos and the Partimens: A Critical Edition* in three volumes.

variety, summarily rejects her suitor's reasoning. His estimation of their relative worths with preference for the upper half would not only make available the benefit of the consolations of love to both homosexuals and old men who have lost the humoral impetus [*causa efficiente*] for arousal, but it would also deny the very purpose of love, as she asserts in no unclear terms (Capellanus 200):

Immo amplius dico quod quidquid agunt amantes ad hoc solummodo tendunt, ut inferioris partis valeant potiri solatiis; ibi enim totus amoris completur effectus, ad quem cuncti principaliter moventur amantes, et sine eo nil nisi quaedam amoris iudicantur habere praeludia. (Capellanus 202)

*I go further, and say that all that lovers do has the sole aim of obtaining the consolations of the lower parts. It is there that the total effect of love is achieved, and to this all lovers are chiefly drawn, and without it they are thought to have nothing but a sort of preliminary to love. (Walsh 203)*

For the lady, sex is not only the goal of love but the very means by which love achieves its full meaning. Sex within the context of love is therefore love's greatest expression. The suitor is only able to sway the lady to his opinion by showing that the consolations of the lower half, despite it being the very reason [*causa finalis*] for love, are only worthy in conjunction with the upper half (Capellanus 202). Such a judgement in no way diminishes the importance placed on sexual congress in the paradigm of courtly love. Instead it acknowledges fully sex as an amatory imperative.

In the Islamicate tradition, the act of coupling as the culmination of love has a long history as well. In the ninth century, Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī (d. 899) espoused a theory by which lovers, separated by their earthly shells, are unable to unite their souls, which is the fundamental aim of love. This supreme union can be approximated by the contact of skin pores resulting from embraces, surely a euphemism for the sex act, and through kissing. Because of the proximity of breath and the soul, “the soul seeks the beloved through the mouth, kissing and deriving through the nostrils the breath

coming from the beloved [...] so that the substances are united and the two powers be joined” (qtd. Giffen 7).<sup>31</sup> In a similar manner, Ibn Ḥazm maintains the necessity of physical contact for the full expression of love. While love is still a major function of the correspondence of two souls, it is not entirely sufficient:

إذا وقع وافق أخلاق النفس وولّد المحبة، إذ الأعضاء الحساسة مسنالك إلى النفوس  
ومؤديات نحوها. (Ibn Ḥazm 128)

*When a spiritual concord is once established, love is immediately engendered. Physical contact completes the circuit and thus enables the current to flow freely into the soul. (Arberry 59)*

It must be noted that this reading of Ibn Ḥazm by A. J. Arberry requires a deliberate misreading of the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* through the suppression of an important passage that explicitly relates the sex act to successful love. The passage in question relates the story of a certain wealthy young man who, through “his unusual dexterity in love-making” is able to induce passionate love in women who had previously held him in aversion (Arberry 59):

فكان لا يلبث إلا يسيراً ريشماً يصل إليها بالجماع ويعود ذلك الكره حُباً مُفراطاً وكلفاً  
زائداً واستهتاراً مكشوفاً، ويتحوّل الضجر لصخبته ضجراً لفراقه. صحبه هذا الأمر في  
عدّة منهن، فقال بعض أخواني، فسألته عن ذلك فتبسّم نحوي وقال : إذا والله أخبرك، أنا  
أبطأ الناس إنزالاً، تفضي المرأة شهوتها وربما تُنثّ وإنزالي وشهوتي لم ينقضيا بعد، وما  
فترت بعدها قط، وإني لأبقى بمنتي بعد انقضائها الحين الصالح، وما لاقى صدري صدر

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[31] Lois A. Giffen associates this theory with another condemned in the twelfth-century *Dhamm al-Hawā* by Ibn al-Jauzī, who attributed it to the Hellenistic tradition (Giffen 7). The proximity of “breath” and “soul” in the Indo-European linguistic tradition is widely attested. For a discussion of this common etymological tradition, see Owen Barfield’s *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning*.

امرأة قط عند الخلوة إلا عند تعمدي المعانقة، وبحسب ارتفاع صدري نزولٌ مؤخري.  
فمثل هذا وشبهه إذا وقع وافق أخلاق النفس وولّد المحبة، إذ الأعضاء الحساسة مسنالك  
إلى النفوس ومؤدياتٌ نحوها. (Ibn Ḥazm 127-8)

*But it was of short duration, until he approached her in sexual intercourse; then this aversion was changed into excessive love and great infatuation and manifest attachment, and the great anxiety against his companionship was metamorphoses into a great anguish at becoming separated from one's companion. This is true of many women. And a friend of mine whom I asked about this smiled at me and then fait: "By God, I shall tell you that I am the slowest of men in the ejaculation of semen by which woman satisfies her lust; and perhaps she is through and my ejaculation and lust are not finished after that, yet I never ejaculate the semen after she had finished, the right length of time; and my chest never was upon the chest of the woman when in intimate contact, except when I put my arms round her neck purposely, and in proportion as I was raising my chest I lowered my hindquarters; and (a thing) like that and similar, when it happens, agrees with a soul's character, and begets love: since organs of sensation are wires leading to the souls and transmitting sensations towards them." (Nykl 37)*

Reading this passage within the larger context of *'ishq*, or passionate love, a concept that corresponds closely with *eros* in the Latin tradition, is somewhat complicated as it appears to contradict the dictum that love taken under duress yields only sour fruit. Regardless, for Ibn Ḥazm, this coming together [الوَصْلُ] of two souls represents the apogee of human experience and the highest good:

ولولا أن الدنيا مَمَرٌ ومحنةٌ وكدر، والجنة دارٌ جزاءٍ وأمانٍ من المكاره، لقلنا إن وَصَلَ  
المحبوبِ هو الصفاءُ الذي لا كَدَرَ فيه، والفرحُ الذي لا شائبةٌ ولا حزنٌ معه، وكمالُ  
الأمانيِّ، ومنتهى الأراجي. (Ibn Ḥazm 180)

*Were it not that this world below is a transitory abode of trial and trouble, and Paradise a home where virtue receives its regard, secure from all annoyances, I would have said that union with the beloved is that pure happiness which is without alloy, and gladness unsullied by sorry, the perfect realization of hopes and the complete fulfillment of one's dreams. (Arberry 118)*

Within Ibn Ḥazm's model of Platonic love, in which love is the product of the souls seeking each other, sex becomes the means by which those souls, through their shared pleasure, are able to unite, if only temporarily. Sex is therefore a transformative act that allows access mediated by the body to the love-object's soul, which is ultimately the *causa finalis* of love in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*.

## MESSENGERS

Once *fantasia*, the seed of love, has inscribed itself within their hearts, the lovers must seek one another to assuage love's sufferings. Because of the religious and political realities of the European Middle Ages, purely sexual unions were rarely if ever sanctioned. Initiating and maintaining an illicit relationship therefore required the lovers to navigate a treacherous sea of impediments and dangers. For those who ran the risk of entertaining a clandestine affair, a number of precautions were required to maintain the secret because “*amor raro consuevit durare vulgatus*” [“*love does not usually survive being noised abroad*”] (Capellanus 282; Walsh 283). This, the thirteenth of the rules of love given at the close of book II, is further developed by Capellanus in both books I and II, where discusses the dangers of open knowledge of a necessarily extramarital love-affair. Once knowledge of the affair begins to circulate, it will become the object of negative gossip, which will reduce the honor of both the lover and the lady. Further, and more importantly:

Rumoris percepta suspicio custodiam exhibere puellae, et omnem loquendi opportunitatem excludit, et sollicitos attentosque reddit cognatos amantis. (Capellanus 42)

*Once the suspicion aroused by gossip is entertained it causes more careful watch to be kept over the girl, it removes all opportunity for conversation, and it makes the relatives of the lover alert and vigilant.* (Walsh 43)

The risk of gossip is thus multiple. First, revelation of the secret reveals also the shortcomings of the lover who is no longer worthy of love due to his lack of discretion and circumspection. Further, it damages what the lover is bound by honor to augment: the praise of his lady, which is here turned into malicious gossip. This again underscores the unworthiness of the lover in the eyes of the beloved, whose trust has been betrayed. Second, revelation organizes the enemies of love against the couple. Surveillance of the beloved increases and forces the lover to keep a greater distance. But it is not just the family, be they father, husband or brothers, the veritable wardens and jailors of the desirable and, exceptionally, the desiring lady, who becomes aware of the relationship but also other suitors, who, through their gossip, can undermine the status of the lover in the eyes of the lady, the dreaded *lauzengier* of the troubadour lyric. Third, revelation publicizes the relationship, rendering it non-exclusive and thus less valuable, cheap like that of a *meretrix* [*harlot*]. Publicity, the opposite of jealousy and a function of exclusivity, saps interest in the relationship on both the lover's and his lady's side because, should the relationship prove sustainable in spite of the revelation, public knowledge would necessarily negate the illicit and thus titillating nature of the love affair (cf. Capellanus II.2.1-5 228). In such soil, love cannot flourish but can only wither and die.

Despite the pressing need for secrecy in the maintenance of love, there are certain cases in which it becomes lawful or even desirable to reveal the secret. For Capellanus, only three individuals should ever become privy to a nascent or established relationship:

Dicimus enim quod coamantium personis exceptis tribus aliis amoris secretarium invenire idoneum, cum quo secrete valeat de suo solatiari amore, et qui ei, si contigerit, in amoris compatiatur adversis. Sed et amatrici similem conceditur secretarium postulare. Praeter istos internuntium fidem de communi possunt habere consensu, per quem amor occulte et recte semper

valeat gubernari. (Capellanus 248)

*Love can legitimately be revealed to three people, not counting the lovers themselves. A male lover can find a suitable confidant for his love, with whom to be able to seek verbal consolation [literally: to suffer with] about his love in private, and who can share his suffering in love's reverses should these happen. Likewise the female lover can demand a female confidant. In addition to these, they can by mutual agreement have a faithful go-between, through whom their love-affair can be conducted suitably in secret. (Walsh 249)*

While each lover can take his or her own confidant of a matching gender, they can mutually confide in a single intermediary. This messenger, like the confidant, must be both faithful and discreet so as to assure the intimacy of the relationship. The fourteenth judgment, which Capellanus attributes to the Countess of Champagne herself, addresses the difficulty of the choice of a messenger. In this case, Marie must judge whether a lady has license to take a new lover after two years of separation from her former lover while he is away at war. Her response finds that even when the lady has had no news from him and presumes the lover dead, she may not take the new lover, a response doubly justified. First, the lady should be exceedingly pleased that her lover is completing heroic exploits in her honor in distant lands among honorable men. Second, sending a messenger would be folly, Marie explains:

*Nam quod litterarum vel nuntiorum visitatione abstinuisse narratur, magne sibi potest prudentiae reputari, quum nulli extraneo ei liceat hoc aperire secretum. Nam, si litteras emisisset, quarum tenor esset portitori celatus, nuntii tamen pravitate vel eodem in itinere mortis eventu sublato facile possent amoris arcana diffundi. (Capellanus 262)*

*As for the statement that he refrained from sending letter or messengers, this can be accounted an act of great wisdom, for he can entrust this secret of his to no stranger. If he had sent a letter with the contents hidden from the bearer, the secrets of his love could easily have been spread abroad by the wickedness of the messenger or by his elimination by death on the way. (Walsh 263)*

The messenger, either through speech but especially through a written letter, becomes a weak point in



the chain of transmission from lover to beloved. This choice can be more perilous yet for the couple: unlike the confidants, who serve only as repositories for the secret, the messenger, bearing the words and the consolation to and fro, serves as a proxy, the mediating surface through which interaction must pass. The choice of the wrong messenger could ultimately result in the supplanting of the lover with the messenger.

More than Capellanus, Ibn Ḥazm is profoundly aware of the implications of revealing the secret of love [اذاعة السرّ] and the necessity of hiding it [طَيِّ السِّرّ], topics which the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* tackles explicitly. Revealing the secret even to the love-object is a dangerous undertaking. But, as Ibn Ḥazm points out, it is necessary since one has fallen in love, one must make it known to the beloved:

ولا بد لكلّ مطلوبٍ من مدخلٍ إليه، وسببٍ يتوصّلُ به نحوه. (Ibn Ḥazm 134)

*Whatever it may be that one is seeking after, one must inevitably contrive some means of coming to it, some expedient whereby one may achieve access to and attainment of it. (Arberry 65)*

First, one alludes to it by words, then with the eyes, which are the mirrors of the soul. Although the eyes are extremely expressive and have a vocabulary too extensive to catalogue, the glance, like the spoken word, is ephemeral, fleeting. The lover is left without a tangible reminder of the beloved, so he turns to the written word, the letter. As an embodiment of the loving persona, the letter can be composed, in extreme cases, with the blood as body, saliva as kisses, and tears as passion, in the place of or as a constituent of ink. Holding the letter becomes synonymous with holding the amorous body. As a proxy for this love, the letter can act as temporary substitute for the receipt of affection. It can be

kissed, caressed, and held to the heart.<sup>32</sup> Before citing the value and ideal form of the letter, however,

Ibn Ḥazm cites first its danger:

ولقد رأيتُ أهلَ هذا الشأنِ يُبادرونَ لقطعِ الكُتُبِ ولحلِّها في الماءِ وبمحوِ أثرها، فَرُبَّ  
فضيحةٍ كانت بسببِ كتابٍ. (Ibn Ḥazm 139)

*Some men I have seen, that were given to correspondence, who made all haste to tear their letters up, to dissolve them in water, and to rub out all trace of them. Many a shameful exposure has been occasioned by a letter. (Arberry 71)*

The letter, for all of the pleasure and consolation that it can bring to the lover, carries with it the risk of exposing the affair, which could result in its cessation. Further, in acting as a proxy for the lover's body, the writing of letters runs the risk of making that body public. Through its circulation the letter, once public, transmutes the lover's sacred and secret body into that of the *meretrix*.

Assuring the receipt of a letter or even an oral message in the context of Muslim al-Andalus poses a particular problem when compared to the Latin West. Although the chastity of women was of primary concern in Christian Europe and women's sexuality was heavily controlled by both political and religious strictures, the prescribed segregation of the sexes in medieval Islamic society makes the communication of amorous feelings all the more difficult. The role of the messenger then, in the

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[32] Ibn Ḥazm gives the account of a lover who fetishized the written words of his lover to such an extent that they become the receptacle for his sexual urges:

ولقد أُخبرت عن بعضِ السُّقَّاطِ الوُضْعاءِ أنه كان يضعُ كتابَ محبوبه على إحلِّيله، وإن هذا النوع  
من الاغتلامِ قَبِيحٌ وضرِبٌ من الشَّبَقِ فاحشٍ. (Ibn Hazm 140)

*I have also been told of a base and worthless fellow who put his sweetheart's letters to a particularly disgusting use, that was in fact a horrible sort of sensuality, a foul type of lechery. (Arberry 72)*

Here Arberry's translation glosses the explicit details provided by Ibn Ḥazm. Where Arberry translates "a particularly disgusting use," Ibn Ḥazm clearly states that the letters are applied to the deviant lover's penis [على إحلِّيله].

Andalusi context, is to overcome these obstacles on behalf of the lover:

فكم منيعٍ سُهِّلَ بهذا الأوصاف [السفير] ، وعسيرٍ يُسرّ ، وبعيدٍ قُرِّبَ ، وجموحٍ أُنْسِ ، وكم  
داهيةٍ دهتِ الحُبِّ المصونة ، والأستارَ الكثيفة ، والمقاصيرَ المحروسة ، والسدّد  
المضبوطة ، لأرباب هذه النعوت . (Ibn Ḥazm 142)

*How many an inaccessible maiden has proven by using messengers like these!  
How often have apparently insurmountable difficulties been easily overcome, and  
one who seemed so far off proved close at hand, the one most refractory being  
readily tamed! How many disagreeable surprises have befallen well-protected  
veils, thick curtains, close-guarded boudoirs, and stoutly fashioned doors, at the  
hands of suchlike persons. (Arberry 74)<sup>33</sup>*

In the Arabic literary tradition, women, particularly those "plying a trade or profession, which gives them ready access to people" ["ذوات صناعت يُقَرَّب بها من الأشخاص"], are particularly prized as go-betweens when one is not able to enlist the aid of one of the young lady's relatives (Arberry 74, Ibn Ḥazm 146). This remains the case in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*. The use of this female intermediary creates an interesting and significant contrast between the secret, sexual body of the desirable and thus protected young woman and that of the professional and thus already public 'ajūz or old woman, who is rendered innocuous, because asexual, in her old age. This role is further problematized by the regular deployment of the 'ajūz in the Arabic folk tradition as complicit in the perdition and rape of the concealed maiden on behalf of an illegitimate and undesired lover. In the later Old French tradition, the *vieille* takes on a similarly ambivalent role as intermediary and facilitator.

Through the faithful help of a go-between, whether a female messenger or a trusted friend [المساعد من الأخوان], the lover is able to overcome many obstacles. Among these obstacles worth

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[33] Disagreeable for those who erected the barriers but surely most agreeable for the lover.

noting are the spy [الرقيب] and the slanderer [الواشي], to whom Ibn Ḥazm dedicates a chapter each.

This latter is of particular interest because he corresponds closely to the role of the Occitan *lauzengier*:

like him, the slanderer

يسعى للقطع بين المُحِبِّين لينفردَ بالمحبوب ويستأثر به، وهذا أشدَّ شيء وأفظعُه وأجزم

(لاجهاد الواشي واستفادته بجهدِه. (Hazm 172)

*labours to part the lovers in order that he may enjoy unique possession of the beloved, and have her for himself. This is the most difficult, dreaded and decisive kind of all, because of the strenuous efforts the slanderer will make in view of the personal advantage he looks to gain. (Arberry 109)*

The choice of a trustworthy and efficient messenger becomes in both the Andalusī and the courtly traditions a reliable, indeed critical, step in the successful establishment and continuation of a relationship. Where the wrong choice can lead to shame and the loss of love, the right choice leads to bliss and, ultimately to union, which is after all, the primary aim of love in both traditions.

## LOVE REJECTED

Certain texts have the dual honor of both reflecting the culture and milieu of their creation and providing that same culture and milieu with a novel discourse, which then comes to define it. Andreas Capellanus's *De Amore* is just such a text. It is, as argues Robert Bossuat, "one of those capital works which reflect the thought of a great epoch, which explain the secret of a civilization" (qtd. Parry 3). It reflects the intersection of scholastic and courtly interests, synthesizing antiquated Latin philosophy and rhetoric with the *Weltanschauung* of the nascent Romance lyric tradition. It is truly a text at the crossroads of medieval European history. The *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* by Ibn Ḥazm is similarly a

textual crossroads in a transitional space at a moment of important cultural and political change. These texts bear witness to the particular interest shown in both eleventh-century Al-Andalus and twelfth-century Champagne in the elaboration and codification of theories of erotic love in the form of arts of love, interests made manifest in Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* and Andreas Capellanus's *De amore*. At the same time, the same attempts required an effective denunciation of the very subjects treated by their authors. Like Ovid before them, both Capellanus and Ibn Ḥazm ultimately end their respective works with an denunciation of "the vileness of sinning" [قبیح المعصية] and an exaltation of "the virtue of continence" [فصل التعفف], to quote Ibn Ḥazm's final chapter headings (267, 295).

All of the authors of arts of love studied here met considerable opposition from the authorities of their day, beginning with Ovid, who died in exile for a "carmen et error" [*song and error*] as he put it in book II of his *Tristia* (Ovid 64). Whatever the real cause for Ovid's banishment to the margins of the empire, it appears to have been scapegoated upon the *Ars amatoria*, which was construed as flouting Roman laws against adultery and obscenity. Of Capellanus's life, we know very little apart from his presence at the court of Champagne. We know nevertheless that his treatise on love was summarily condemned in both Paris and Oxford within a century of its composition. In a far more vicissitudinous way, Ibn Ḥazm went from a comfortable childhood to life as a revolutionary in exile. Although he returned to favor for extremely short periods of time, he was also on several occasions imprisoned, before ultimately becoming a conservative theological scholar. Yet, Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* represents an integral aspect of the society and culture in which he circulated. It is an expression of the cultural interests and preoccupations of the court of Caliphate of Cordoba in the

eleventh century. Its very existence therefore is proof of a moment in which a prolonged meditation on love was not only possible but desirable. That it only is extant in a single, much later epitome, also speaks to its censorship, especially as the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* is widely regarded as the jewel of Andalusī literature. The same of course must be said of the *De amore*. Its existence bears witness to a paradoxical movement in the French culture of the High Middle Ages. Erotic love was a titillating subject for consumption at the court precisely for its taboo nature. This confluence of two separate cultural positions is an important site for the identification of affinities between the amatory cultures of al-Andalus and France. The subsequent condemnations of these texts are of equal importance in testifying to the cultural preoccupations of our authors' times. These were not texts that went unnoticed and unread. They were instead widely seen as possible threats to the political, theological, and philosophical establishment of their respective times and places. As such they had to be censored, silenced, and contained. The rest, as we know, is history.

## Chapter 2: The Courtly Loves of Tristan and Yseult and Vis and Rāmīn and Cligès and Fenice

In 1986, W. Ann Trindade heralded the end of the debate about the possible “oriental” origin of the legend of Tristan and Yseult. Her article, "Tristan and Wis and Ramin—the last word?," argued that the debate had run its course:

It seems then that there is little mileage left in the "oriental sources of Tristan" (or even oriental influences) until and unless someone comes up with new texts, specific proposals about transmission and new and relevant background information about the alleged sources themselves. There is nothing further to be gained from talking about psychology or motivation, "structures" and much less "oriental" versus "occidental" mentalities. Even thematic comparisons, while interesting and often useful in terms of literary history, genre study and so on, seem to have less to offer here. (Trindade 27-8)

Fundamentally, Trindade does not reject the possibility of literary borrowing or "migrations," as she says, between the legends. As part of a larger complex of oral literary traditions that circulated widely and in varied forms before becoming fixed in writing as part of an "repertoire of international tale-telling[,] the question of influences becomes a very blurred issue" (Trindade 27). The rekindling of this debate in recent decades by scholars of the medieval Mediterranean, such as Sharon Kinoshita, who,

without tackling the daunting question of origins or transmission, suggest the possible ripeness of the subject, requires that we reconsider both sides of the debate.<sup>1</sup>

On one side of this debate, L. Polak's 1974 "Tristan and Vis and Ramin" attempted to show what he considered important similarities between the Tristinian and Raminian traditions at an episodic or thematic level. In his argument, these points of contact become proof of shared cultural heritage spread via routes of transmission that can easily be imagined:

It would be surprising if songs about Vis and Ramin, that story so well loved of the Persians, were not among the repertoire they peddled from Baghdad to Andalusia. And if Oriental products of every description—silks, brocades, incense, balsam, Arabic gold coins, ivory from India, leather from Cordova, automata or descriptions of automata are to be found in France even before the First Crusade, why not tales of Vis and Ramin? We know for example that singers were among the booty brought back from the siege of Barbastre by Normans and Frenchmen, when they took it under the command of William of Aquitaine in 1064. And this, perhaps, is how Breri heard songs of Vis and Ramin and absorbed them into his repertoire of tales of Britain. (Polak 232)

These are the standard routes of transmission proposed by most literary scholars working on the influence of Arabic literature on Occitan lyrics and early Old French romances. María Rosa Menocal points to them in *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, although more recent scholarship has shown interest in exploring the more geographically eastern points of contact and exchange, as in Karla Mallette's *Kingdom of Sicily: 1100-1250*. Kinoshita makes use of these as well in

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[1] See in particular, Kinoshita's chapter, "Locating the Medieval Mediterranean," in *Locating the Middle Ages: The Spaces and Places of Medieval Culture*.



any number of her studies.<sup>2</sup> Regardless, these same paths for transmission remain extremely evocative and should not be rejected out of hand.

The other side of the debate, exemplified by Paul Kunitzsch's "Are There Oriental Elements in the Tristan Story?," simply rejects out of hand the value of the similarities proposed by Polak:

Simple similarities, more or less close, between the Tristan story and a Persain verse epic [*Vīs u Rāmīn*] of around A.D. 1050 have been taken as proof for the hypothesis that the Tristan story was formed in accordance with, or in dependence from that Persian epic. On the other hand, no single detail in the Tristan story could be shown as being specifically Oriental: no personal or geographical name, no elements of historical or social significance. (Kunitzsch 73)

This view is shared by the eminent *Vīs u Rāmīn* scholar, Victor Minorsky, who, in a seminal essay on the geopolitical background of the epic, argues dismissively that there exist "only two points of similarity with *Vīs-u-Rāmīn*: the episode of a maid (in our case the nurse) deputizing for her mistress on the marital couch, and the episode of the hero temporarily forgetting the heroine" (Minorski III 92). With such minimal incidental overlap identified, the question of influence or origins becomes moot. This does not prevent Kunitzsch from rejecting the various proposed sites of contact that could have produced a hybrid Tristan of mixed Celtic and Persain origins. Among those sites rejected are the usual suspects: Al-Andalus and the Crusader states of Jerusalem and Antioch.

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[2] Kinoshita's view of "cultural trajectories" is much expanded beyond that proposed by Menocal, having moved from merely positing the possibility of trans-Pyrenean exchange to a narrative framework encompassing the entire Mediterranean and beyond. "Translatio/n, empire and the worlding of medieval literature: the travels of *Kalila wa Dimna*," for example, ties a single narrative around the manuscript traditions of the *Panchatantra* in fourteenth-century Capetian France and Ilkhanid Persia. This does not prevent her, however, from retelling the story of Daniel of Morley's (c. 1140 – c. 1210) intellectual pilgrimage to Toledo in "Chrétien de Troye's *Cligés* in the Medieval Mediterranean" (Kinoshita "Translatio/n" 52) and again in "Medieval Mediterranean Literature," pointing to the central role that trans-Pyrenean cultural and literary migrations occupy in her thinking (Kinoshita "Medieval Mediterranean" 601).

Does this renewed interest by scholars of the medieval Mediterranean mean that we have arrived at the moment foretold by Trindade of "new texts, specific proposals about transmission and new and relevant background information"? In a word, no, but before exploring the question further, let us first propose a reorientation of the debate. The search for an *Ur-Tristan* in a Persian epic is surely misleading in the same ways that identifying Gūrgānī's eleventh-century version of the epic as definitive is misleading. Minorsky has convincingly shown in the series of articles referenced above that the *Vīs u Rāmīn* is above all a Parthian romance, dating from the two centuries preceeding or following the turn of our era. Subsequent scholars have largely accepted the ancient origins of the epic, although there remains some debate about attributing the tale to Arsacid Iran (247 BC – 224 AD) or to the later Sasanid period (226 – 651), which ended with the invasion of Persia by Muslim Arabs (Southgate 42). In his concluding article, Minorsky rejects Molé's reading of the *Vīs u Rāmīn* as a historiographical recasting of the contemporary rise of the Seljuk Sultanate, where historical and contemporary political organizations overlap and are mutually reinforced: the contemporary given credence through proximity to the historical and the historical bounded and mediated by the experience of contemporary. As Molé put it, "L'image est claire et ne laisse pas de doute. Le frère aîné à Marv, le cadet à Isfahan ; s'agit-il de Mobad et de Rāmīn ? Ou de Čaghri-bek et de Toghri-bek ? Des deux sans doute, et de l'histoire de ceux-ci explique ce que l'on raconte sur ceux-là" [*The image is clear and leaves no doubt. The older brother in Marv, the younger in Isfahan; are these Mūbad and Rāmīn? Or Chaghri Beg and Toghrel Beg? Surely both, and the story of the latter explains what is told about the*

former.] (qtd. Minorski IV 283). As much as Minorsky shows Molé's reading of the epic as a *roman à clé* to be problematic, the complete exclusion of contemporary political preoccupations from an epic composed at the court of the Seljuk Turks is equally problematic. Just as Thomas d'Angleterre's *Roman de Tristan* shows more interest in the burgeoning concept of courtly love that was becoming fashionable at the Norman court than does the older Béroul romance, so must one expect with *Vīs u Rāmīn*. Gūrgānī recognizes this evolution in his incipit to what amounts to a Persian translation of an anterior Pahlavi tradition, which he embellishes with his own eleventh-century flare. Further, the Islamification of a Parthian and heavily Zoroastrian epic speaks to the particular interests of the attendant audience, without these interests ever fully eclipsing its historical roots.

The impossibility of identifying the specific “migrated” content from a no-longer extant historical version of the legend of *Vīs* and *Rāmīn* makes the search for Tristanian sources positively hopeless. What then remains for the scholar struck by those similarities so downplayed by Minorsky and overplayed by Polak that clearly exist between these two textual traditions? As in my first chapter, where I explore cultural overlap rather than trying to identify a specific trajectory of influence, I propose a similar reorientation here: rather than seeking to identify the Persian roots of the Tristan legend, it seems more productive to put these various traditions into conversation with each other in order to explore the space opened by their common preoccupations and concerns. Further, by moving beyond a dialogue between these two literary traditions through the inclusion of a third pole of discussion, here Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, much of the apparent gulf between the various iterations of the *Romans de Tristan* with its ancillary traditions and *Vīs u Rāmīn* can be closed.<sup>3</sup>

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[3] A brief synopsis of the three texts discussed below should be sufficient to show both the reasons

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that so many critics have felt swayed to entertain theories of a common origin to the *Romans de Tristan* and *Vis u Rāmīn*—the relationship between the *Tristans* and the *Cligès* being far more certain—and indeed why many have claimed such analyses superficial. Because of the fragmentary nature of the manuscript traditions of the early Old French *Romans de Tristan* by Bérout and Thomas d'Angleterre, I base my summary on Joseph Bédier's reconstitution of *le Roman de Tristan et Iseut*, first published in 1900.

Tristan and Yseult: To distance King Marc from his beloved nephew, Tristan, and thus from succession, four felonious barons push the king to marry. The king resists and says that he will only marry the woman whose single golden hair was brought to him by a pair of swallows. Tristan recognizes the hair as Yseult la Blonde's, who had healed the mortal wound inflicted by the Morholt during their duel for the Cornwall's freedom. Pledging to return with her, Tristan sails for Ireland and slays a dragon, for which the bounty is Yseult's hand, but he is again wounded and a traitorous senechal seeks to claim her hand. Yseult heals him in time for him to prove his claim and win her hand for King Marc. On the return voyage, Tristan and Yseult both accidentally drink a philtre prepared by Yseult's mother to ensure a happy royal marriage and fall madly in love. Thus, beginning a series of dissimulations and substitutions to maintain Tristan and Yseult's affair, Brangien, Yseult's handmaiden takes Yseult's place in Marc's marital bed to dissimulate Yseult's lost virginity on her wedding night. Ultimately, through the constant machinations of the four barons, Tristan and Yseult's affair is discovered and they are sentenced to be burned at the stake for their adultery. Tristan escapes by jumping from a chapel window and so King Marc turns his wife over to be gangraped by a band of roving lepers but Tristan saves Yseult from her fate and they escape into the Morrois forest, where they live in relative peace until King Marc's men happen upon them. Realizing their situation is no longer tenable, and because the effects of the potion are beginning to wane, the couple seeks to normalize their relations with the king. Yseult succeeds through a ritual oath in making King Marc believe that her relationship with Tristan was chaste and Tristan leaves in exile, where, through his exploits, he wins the hand of Yseult aux Blanchés Mains, although he can give her neither his heart nor his body. In battle, Tristan is mortally injured a third time, and his brother-in-law is sent as a trusted messenger for Yseult la Blonde as she alone can cure his broken body. His wife overhears the instructions to return with white sails if Yseult la Blonde is aboard and black if she is not. Out of spite, Yseult aux Blanchés Mains lies to Tristan in the eleventh hour, claiming the sails are black even as Yseult la Blonde arrives. Tristan dies and, moments later, Yseult la Blonde succumbs by his side.

Cligès and Fenice: *Cligès* provides a somewhat more complicated narrative as it recounts the tale not just of Cligès and Fenice but also of his parents, Alexandre and Sordamors. Thus the first half of the romance has little bearing on the present study and can be summarized as follows: Alexandre, a Greek prince, travels from Constantinople to King Arthur's court, where through his exploits he wins the heart and hand of Queen Guinevere's lady-in-waiting, Soredamors, while reclaiming one of the King's castles fallen to his traitorous vassal, Angrès, and together they have a son named Cligès. Believing his brother to have died en route to Bretagne, Alexandre's brother, Alis, ascends to the Byzantine throne in his place. Pushed by his counselors to take a wife, Alis accepts an offer by the German Emperor for the hand of his daughter, Fenice, on condition that he escort her safely back to

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Constantinople. Cligès takes part in the escort when it is attacked by Duke of Saxony's men and Fenice is taken prisoner. Cligès saves Fenice, defeats the Duke of Saxony in single combat, and the couple falls in love before he leaves to earn his name abroad. In order to never consummate her marriage, Fenice has her nurse, Thessala, prepare a magic potion that convinces Alis nightly that he is having sex with his wife while he is dreaming. When the couple is reunited, they plot to escape together to a secret tower of their own design. To do this while protecting her lady's honor, Thessala prepares a second potion to simulate Fenice's death. The couple thus escapes only to be spotted in an enclosed garden. And while Cligès succeeds in cutting off the spy's leg, this latter is still able to return to report to Alis, causing the couple to flee abroad. Fortuitously, Alis dies and Cligès is able to marry Fenice and take his place on the throne of Byzantium.

Vīs and Rāmīn: The epic begins when the Shahinshah Mūbad is promised Vīs's hand in marriage while she is in the womb, but she is instead married to her brother, Vīrū, one of Mūbad's vassals. Feeling slighted, Mūbad sends his brother Zārd to demand that Vīs's mother's promise be kept but the embassy is rejected and Mūbad declares war against Vīrū. In the melee, Vīs's father is killed and she is abducted from her wedding celebrations. Rāmīn, Mūbad's younger brother, escorts Vīs back to the capital, Marv, but falls in love with her en route. Vīs is inconsolable over her abduction and the death of her father so she convinces her nurse, who had raised both her and Rāmīn, to make a magical talisman to render Mūbad impotent for a year but the talisman is washed away in a flood and so the couple is fated never to share the joys of married life. Meanwhile, Rāmīn pines for Vīs and is discovered by the nurse, to whom he reveals his secret. Pitying him, the nurse accepts to woo Vīs on his behalf and after three attempts, succeeds. When Mūbad eventually gets wind of their affair, he sends away Vīs, whom Rāmīn joins for seven months in exile. Eventually the royal couple is reconciled but, to prove her innocence, Mūbad demands that Vīs walk through a purifying fire. Fearing rightly for her life, she flees with Rāmīn and the nurse. After months of unsuccessful searching, Mūbad forgives Vīs and Rāmīn, who return to Marv with great fanfare. Following the banquet, Vīs leaves Mūbad's bed to join Rāmīn, leaving her nurse in her place in the bed. The substitution is almost discovered by the Shahinshah but Vīs, returning to bed just in time, is able to fool him in his drunken stupor with her voice. Later, Mūbad leaves with Rāmīn to fight the Greeks and has Vīs locked away in a castle under Zārd's watch. Rāmīn evades his brother's sight and goes to the castle, shooting an arrow onto its roof in order to contact Vīs, who, because the doors are sealed shut, escapes out the window into the garden to meet with Rāmīn. They are almost caught but Rāmīn escapes while Vīs claims a nightly visitation from astral beings. Unable to prove the couple's guilt, Mūbad takes his wife back to Marv, where, at a second banquet, a minstrel sings of Vīs and Rāmīn's affair with barely veiled words. Piqued, the Shahinshah flies into a rage and Rāmīn flees into exile, where he falls in love with Gul, whom he marries, although after a time their love begins to wane. Vīs, enraged by her lover's betrayal, writes a long letter to denounce Rāmīn's conduct. The latter leaves Gul and returns to Marv in a blizzard to seek reconciliation from Vīs, which, after much, spurning, he receives. Together, the lovers attempt to flee but are intercepted by Zārd, whom Rāmīn kills. Rāmīn raises an army to depose the Shahinshah but Mūbad dies in a hunting accident after having been gored by a wild boar. Rāmīn then ascends to the throne and takes Vīs as his wife.

The inclusion of *Cligès*, a text posterior to the composition of the *Roman de Tristan* by Thomas d'Angleterre—the later of the two Old French verse romances—in this analysis cannot go without further qualification or justification, although it is certainly not without precedent: Polak makes passing comparison of certain elements between the *Vīs u Rāmīn* and Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligès* (Polak 222-3, 230). It has become something of a banality to reduce *Cligès* to an anti- or super-*Tristan*, as has been done since its foundational readings by Foerster and Gaston Paris, or even to a neo-*Tristan* as in Frappier's reading (Fourrier 123). The points of overlap between these two romances, *Cligès* and *Tristan*, are legion and glaringly obvious. The main difference between these two traditions, equally conspicuous, is *Cligès*'s happy ending, a difference that incidentally corresponds with a longstanding point of contention in the comparative studies of the *Tristan* and *Vīs* and *Rāmīn* legends, which had previously required the intervention of a second legendary tradition for explanation, this time from Arabic: the seventh-century legend of *Qays and Lubnā* (Trindade 21-2). Chrétien's *Cligès* is not simply a recasting of the legend of *Tristan* and *Yseult* in a Byzantine milieu. As Anthime Fourrier argues in *Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen-Âge*, *Cligès* is unique among Chrétien de Troyes' chivalric romances for its complete eschewal of the many narrative conventions that dominate the *matière de Bretagne*. The most notable missing element is, of course, "la conception celtique de l'Autre Monde" [*the Celtic conception of the Other World*], parallel to and accessible from the mundane

world, leading the knight errant into fantastic adventures (Fourrier 112).<sup>4</sup> In fact, this striking absence is one of the most prominent features of the romance:

[O]n ne trouve dans le *Cligès* de Chrétien aucune recherche de l' « aventure » extraordinaire, à quoi s'adonnent avec prédilection les héros de ses autres romans arthuriens. [...] [P]oint de pucelle à délivrer, de géants à vaincre, de serpents à abattre, de châteaux mystérieux à visiter ou de ponts dangereux à franchir, aucun sortilège à redouter. Toute fantasmagorie demeure absente. Les événements se déroulent sur un plan uniquement humain. (Fourrier 156)

*We find in Chrétien's Cligès no search for extraordinary "adventure," to which the heroes of his other Arthurian romances give themselves with predilection. [...] Not one virgin to save, giant to overcome, serpent to defeat, mysterious castle to visit or dangerous bridge to cross, not a single spell to fear. All phantasmagoria remains absent. The action unfolds entirely on the human plane.*

Instead, the world of *Cligès* is fully inhabited by a medieval realism that replaces the mythic kingdoms of Gorre and Logres with the authentic, recognizable territories of England, Wales, and Brittany (Fourrier 154). Meanwhile, the action takes place in real geopolitical spaces that are easily represented on a map: "desoz Hantone" or Southampton (v. 273), "Guincestre" or Winchester (v. 291), "Guinesores" or Windsor (v. 431), "Dovre" or Dover (v. 1054), "Londres" or London (v. 1055) and "Quantorbire" or Canterbury (v. 1055) figure among the places mentioned by Chrétien in order to anchor his text to the

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[4] Fourrier does allow that one element of the text seems to buck this mold: the philtre. Fourrier minimizing this inconsistency, however, in arguing that its role is simply that of a "commode accessoire, qui permet à l'auteur de doubler à bon compte le cap des situations délicates" [*a useful accessory, that permits the author to easily overcome the hurdle of delicate situations*] (Fourrier 156). While such a reading of the function of the love potion is surely accurate, one need not go so far as to read its presence as a simple marker of the fantastic. Instead, contemporary medical discourse made significant room for the use of various potions in the manipulation of sexuality. Thus, to give one example, Petrus Hispanus (c. 1220 – 1277), later Pope Jean XXI (r. 1276 – 7), lists in his *Trésor des pauvres* no less than 116 recipes "relatives à la fécondité et à la sexualité" [*relating to fecundity and sexuality*] (Jacquart 128). Of these, 34 are aphrodisiac, 26 contraceptive and 56 presumably abortifacient through the inducement of menstruation. The use of medicines or even magic to induce love forms more the cultural backdrop of contemporary scientific understanding in the tale than anything else.

interests of his audience. Geopolitics is after all at the very heart of *Cligès's* plot: the eponymous hero, son of a Greek prince and a Scottish lady but raised in France, falls in love with a German princess.

This realism is not without import in the organization and indeed reception of *Cligès* at the court of Champagne. Setting the romance's principal intrigue at the court of Constantinople was surely "pas sans intention" [*not without intention*], as suggests Fourrier:

Manuel [Komnenos, Emperor of Constantinople (1118 – 1180, r. 1143 – 1180)] accueille fort aimablement les Français et c'est de lui que Henri de Champagne, alors comte de Meaux, aura reçu la chevalerie : ce qui le confirme, c'est qu'en 1180 ce fut encore l'empereur grec qui, en payant sa rançon, libéra le comte de Troyes tombé aux mains des Turcs. (Fourrier 165)

*Manuel [Komnenos, Emperor of Constantinople (1118 – 1180, r. 1143 – 1180)] welcomes the French very warmly and it was by him that Henri de Champagne, then the count of Meaux, would be knighted: what confirms this is that in 1180 it was again the Greek emperor who, in paying his ransom, liberated the count of Troyes, who had fallen into the hands of the Turks.*

Situating the narrative in the context of the Byzantine court would not simply have transplanted the flavor of the text from a fantastical locale to an exotic one. Rather the Byzantine elements would have been well-known and undoubtedly fondly remembered by the husband of Chrétien's patron, Marie de Champagne, among others at their court. Further, Marie's family had several ties to the Komnenos court of Constantinople stretching across several generations. Raimond de Poitiers (c. 1115 – 1149), the first Crusader Prince of Antioch and son to Guillaume IX de Poitiers, married his daughter, Marie of Antioch (1145 – 1182), to Manuel I Komnenos. Guillaume IX was Marie de Champagne's great-grandfather through her mother, Aliénor d'Aquitaine. Marie d'Antioch would then give birth to Alexios II Komnenos (1169 – 1183, r. 1180 – 1183), Manuel I's successor. Alexios II was married to Agnès de France (1171 – 1240), daughter of Adèle de Champagne (c. 1140 – 1206), who was simultaneously Marie



de Champagne's step-mother and sister-in-law.<sup>5</sup> Following the premature death of Alexios II, Agnès was remarried to her first husband's successor, Andronikos I Komnenos (c. 1118 – 1185, r. 1183 – 1185). Finally, Marie's own son, Henri II de Champagne (1166 – 1197) married Isabelle I of Jerusalem (1172 – 1205, r. 1192 – 1205), daughter of Amalric I (1136 – 1174, r. 1162 – 1174) and Marie Komnene (c. 1154 – c. 1217), daughter of the Komnenos patriarch, Jean (c. 1115 – 1167). Past or future, the sustained intertwining of these two families speaks to the continuous connection they shared.

These few historical details, however, do not represent the full interest of the realism of the text. The romance's plot of continental proportions would also have been of particular actuality, thanks to a political affair concerning proposed and reneged marriages that implicated as its major players "le roi de France, l'empereur d'Allemagne, l'empereur de Constantinople et le pape, sans compter, à l'arrière-plan, l'observateur, muet pour l'instant, que représentant le beau-père du duc de Saxe, c'est-à-dire Henri II d'Angleterre" [*the king of French, the emperor of Germany, the emperor of Constantinople and the pope, without counting, in the background, the observer, silent for the moment, that represented the step-father of the duke of Saxony, that is to say Henri II of England*] (Fourrier 171). If the cast of characters seems strangely familiar for its similarity to that of *Cligès*, it should.

Summarizing Fourrier's extensive study of the points of contact between the romance and the contemporary political climate, Laurence Harf-Lancner provides the following comments in her introduction to her translation of *Cligès*:

Alis, empereur de Constantinople, à été rapproché de Manuel Comnène, l'empereur d'Allemagne de Frédéric Barberousse et le duc de Saxe de Henri le

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[5] Marie de Champagne's father, Louis VII, took Adèle de Champagne as his third wife shortly following the death of his second wife, Constane de Castille (c. 1140 – 1160). Adèle, who gave Louis his only male heir, Philip II (1165 – 1173, r. 1223, r. 1180 – 1223, was also the sister of Marie's husband, Henri I.

Lion. Alis supplante son frère aîné Alexandre sur le trône. Manuel avait réussi par ses intrigues à monter sur le trône à la place de son frère aîné Isaac, qui dut se contenter du titre de « sebastocrator ». Alis épouse la fille de l'empereur d'Allemagne. Manuel était marié à la belle-sœur de Conrad III et entre 1153 et 1156 avaient eu lieu des négociations, qui n'aboutirent pas, en vue du mariage de Barberousse avec une princesse byzantine.<sup>6</sup> En 1171 Barberousse envisagea une nouvelle alliance entre l'un de ses fils et la fille de Manuel. Alis vient chercher sa fiancée à Cologne. Barberousse reçut les ambassadeurs de Byzance à Cologne. Quant au duc de Saxe qui menaçait l'empereur d'Allemagne, il devait rappeler aux contemporains de Chrétien Henri le Lion, duc de Saxe, en lutte contre Barberousse, qui séjourna à la cour de Champagne en 1173. En outre le comte Henri de Champagne négociait lui-même vers 1173 un mariage entre la fille de Louis VII, Agnès, et un fils de Barberousse. Toutes ces affaires devaient donc susciter un grand intérêt à la cour de Troyes. (Harf-Lancner 10-11)

*Alis, the emperor of Constantinople, has been compared with Manuel Komnenos, the emperor of Germany with Frederick Barbarossa and the duke of Saxony with Henry the Lion. Alis supplants his older brother, Alexander, on the throne. Manuel succeeded in his intrigues to ascend to the throne in the place of his other brother, Isaac, who was forced to content himself with the title of "Sebastokrator." Alis married the daughter of the German emperor, Manuel was married to the step-sister of Conrad III and between 1153 and 1156 there were negotiations, which never succeeded, for the marriage of Barbarossa with a Byzantine princess. In 1171, Barbarossa imagined a new union between one of his sons and the daughter of Manuel. Alis went to meet his fiancée in Cologne. Barbarossa received the ambassadors of Byzantium in Cologne. As for the duke of Saxony, who threatened the emperor of Germany, he must have reminded Chrétien's contemporaries of Henri the Lion, duke of Saxony, who was embroiled with Barbarossa, and who was residing at the court of Champagne in 1173. Further, Count Henri de Champagne himself negotiated around 1173 a marriage between the daughter of Louis VII, Agnès, and one of Barbarossa's sons. All of these affairs much have provoked great interest at the court of Troyes.*

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[6] Bertha of Sulzbach (c. 1110 – 1159) arrived in Constantinople in 1143 as part of an alliance between the Byzantine emperor Jean II Komnenos (1087 – 1143, r. 1118 – 1143) and Conrad III of Germany (1093 – 1152, r. 1138 – 1152) against Roger II of Sicily (1095 – 1154, r. 1130 – 1154). As Jean II had died before her arrival, she was married to his son and successor, Manuel I, in 1146, and renamed Irene. It was not until 1161, two years after her death that Manuel I married Marie of Antioch.

Despite these many similarities, certain important elements in the romance appear inverted in relation to historical fact. Kahane and Kahane propose resolving these inversions by identifying Cligès with the Seljuk sultan of Rûm, Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156 – 1192), and principal enemy of the Byzantine Basileus, Manuel I Komnenos (Kahane 120, 114). It was, after all, at the hands of Kılıç Arslan that Manuel I lost the interior of Anatolia following the battle of Myriokephalon in 1176, making it a problematic year for a romance depicting the triumph of a Seljuk-inspired hero over the Byzantine emperor. More problematic still, a number of Latin notables died on the battlefield, among them Baudouin of Antioch, Aliénor d'Aquitaine's cousin and thus relative to the count and countess of Champagne. This leads Krijnie Ciggaar to identify September 1176 as the *terminus ante quem* for Chrétien de Troyes's composition of *Cligès* (Ciggaar 268). Further tying this Seljuk connection to Chrétien's *Cligès* is the unsuccessful attempt by Kılıç to seek the hand of Frederick's daughter, either for his son or, following some accounts, himself (Kahane 117-8). This later version, therefore, "établit entre Kildj Arslan et Angès, fille de Barberosse, un rapport analogue à celui qui lie Cligès à Fénice" [*establishes between Kılıç Arslan and Agnès, daughter of Barbarossa, an analagous relationship to the one between Cligès and Fenice*] (Kahane 118).

With historical hindsight, it is easy simply to write off the Seljuk Turks and the Byzantine Greeks as enemies with little to share, just as it is easy to erect a superficial binary opposition between the Muslims of Al-Andalus and the Christians of France, especially during a period like the Reconquista. And while this might have been more of a reality following the battle of Myriokephalon, it had not been the case previously, when numerous Turks held important positions of power within the Byzantine court. In "The Turkish Element in Byzantium," Charles Brand outlines the roles and

positions occupied by Turkish foreigners and immigrants at various levels of Byzantine society. The most striking example is Axouch or John Axouchos, who was captured at the seige of Nikaia in 1097 at the age of ten and subsequently raised as companion to Jean II Komnenos (1087 – 1143, r. 1118 – 1143) (Brand 4). So beloved was he by Jean II that "when John [Jean II] acceded to the throne in 1118, Axouchos became grand domestikos or commander of the eastern and western armies. So great was his power that even the emperor's relatives, meeting him, would dismount from their horses to do him reverence" (Brand 4). During the reign of Manuel I, it was Axouch's son, Alexios, who was "the most prominent Turk, or half Turk," of Byzantine society (Brand 8). Most likely in honor of his father's loyalty, Alexios was married (c. 1141) to Marie Komnena, daughter of Alexios Komnenos (1106 – 1142, r. 1122 – 1142), the eldest son and co-emperor to Jean II (Brand 8).<sup>7</sup>

Brand, writing about the choice of Axouch as Jean II's childhood companion, notes some of the reasons that the presence of a Turk as court would have been desirable in the years leading into the twelfth century. Of them, one in particular retains our attention:

The future John II and John Axouchos were ten years old at the time the Turkish captive was made a companion for the future emperor. In this case, the choice was evidently purposeful: a Turk was chosen to grow up alongside a future emperor. [...] One reason for providing youthful Turks to Alexius and John Comnenus as companions may have been to give them some knowledge of Turkish. As a military commander, Alexius would constantly be in contact

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[7] The particular succession practices of the Byzantine Empire would not have excluded Alexios Axouchos from the throne nor would his marriage into the the royal family have given him access to it. Brand explains:

Alexius Acouchos would scarcely have been considered the eventual heir to the throne, as there was still hope that Alexius Comnenus might have a son and there were numerous other males among John II's direct descendants. Byzantium had no notion of primogeniture, or even of a hereditary throne, and females were considered only in case of default of male claimants from the imperail family; Zoe and Theodora, the last members of the Macedonian house, are the exemplary case. (Brand 8)

with Turkish mercenaries as well as Turkish opponents. His two elder brothers were at one time or another captured by the Turks. For John, as a future emperor, not to have to rely on interpreters was obviously important. (Brand 15)

Knowledge of the Turkish language, and to a certain degree familiarity with Turkish culture—Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw I (d. 1211, r. 1192-6 and 1205-11), son of Kılıç Arslan II, who spend several years between 1197 and 1203 at the court of Constantinople, was one of a number of notable Turkish refugees who began to arrive in the 1170s in the wake of Kılıç Arslan's advance—, would undoubtedly have been current among members of the Byzantine court and its circles (Brand 12). This is of great importance as, although *Vīs u Rāmīn* is, for all intents and purposes, a Persian epic, as Davis notes in his introduction to his translation of *Vis and Ramin*, it "was a cul-de-sac within Persian culture, a poem that led nowhere" as it quickly was forgotten or only remembered as a text that influenced later, more important authors (Davis xxxii). That said, outside of Persian, the story traveled well. In the ninth century, Abū Nuwās (756 – 814), a court poet of Persian origin at the ‘Abbāsīd court of Baghdad, mentions it in passing in a list of famous Persian romances, the oldest known reference to the legend. Likewise, the oldest known extant manuscript of the legend of *Vīs and Rāmīn* is the *Visramiani* from Christian Georgia, where it was composed for Queen Tamar (c. 1160 – 1213, r. 1184 – 1212), most likely by Sargis T’hmagveli, around 1200, from the no-longer extant Pahlavi version (Wardrop 496). In fact, *Vīs u Rāmīn* is more accurately a Seljuk text written in Persian. Fakhr al-Dīn As‘ad Gurgānī makes explicit in his exordium that his version of the poem was commissioned by the Seljuk Turk commander of the newly conquered city of Isfahan, ‘Amīd Abū l-Faṭḥ Muẓaffar. It is through this that we date the modern Persian branch of the legend to between 1050 and 1055, the years when Muẓaffar was in Isfahan. This is the extent to which we can link Gurgānī, of whom we know little else, to the court of

the then Seljuk sultan Abū Talib Tughrul Beg (c. 995 – 1063, r. 1037 – 1063). As a Seljuk and therefore Turkish text, it had far greater longevity, with most of the known manuscripts being of Ottoman or Mughal origin (Davis xxxiii).

The implications of the recasting of *Vīs u Rāmīn* as a Seljuk text written in Persian are numerous. As a Turkish text, it circulated from the Turkish courts of Istanbul in the West to the Mughal courts of Agra in the East. Speaking of the nature of the Seljuk court, Davis writes:

This court culture was highly polyglot, and was made up of Central Asian, Persian, and Arab elements. Although ethnically the Seljuks were central Asian Turks, much of their court culture was Persian; they had passed through Iran during their conquests, and taken on its culture and court language as their own, much as the Normans passed through western France and became culturally French before they conquered England in the eleventh century. The Syrian Seljuk court showed lively interest in literature in Persian (for example, the twelfth-century compendium of advice, *Bahr al-Fava'id*, was a product of their court's patronage). Politically, they were known as skilled negotiators (probably because of their familiarity with a number of ethnic and cultural traditions), and they tended to act as the diplomatic spokesmen of the Moslem world in its contacts with the crusaders of Outremer. (Davis xli-xliii)

It is in part for these reasons that Davis prefers Al-Shām to Al-Andalus as the theoretical point of transmission of *Vīs u Rāmīn* from the Islamic world to Christian Europe (Davis xli), a stance shared by Kinoshita ("Locating the Medieval Mediterranean" 46-8). The Persian interest of the text was not without appeal abroad and could easily have been disseminated throughout Anatolia, Al-Shām, and Persia.<sup>8</sup> Nor should we rule out the use of Persian as a hindrance: Gurgānī's translation of the Pahlavi was explicitly commissioned because that language was already in decline. Persian was therefore seen as a more efficient lingua-franca for the perpetuation of the tale. This is the historical backdrop for

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[8] For a brief primer on the place of Iranian culture in Islam and the cultural complex of the Middle East, see Barnard Lewis's 1999 lecture given at Tel Aviv University, "Iran in History."

these texts composition and circulation, a backdrop which too often has been poorly developed by critics studying the relationship between the *Roman de Tristan* and *Vīs u Rāmīn*.

Returning to Trindade's question cited above concerning the possibility of new historical background, etc., we must admit that little of the information exposed here is either new or novel. What has changed between the the 1980s, when Trindade closed for a time the debate on the relationship between *Vīs u Rāmīn* and the *Romans de Tristan* by Béroul and Thomas d'Angleterre, and now is the larger framework for understanding Mediterranean literature with its astonishingly complex system of intertextuality. Thus, if Kunitzsch argued in 1980 that he "found no evidence for Oriental influence in special details, as names and the like," Davis can respond nearly three decades later with two etymologies for the names of the principal pairs of lovers. *Vīs*, Davis notes, is unrecorded as a name but existed as a contraction of the name "Vīseh," which is used in the text when meter allows. Arabized, the name would produce "Wīsa" or "Wīsat" [ويسة], which has marked similarity to the name Yseult once we recall that the terminal "t" would have been pronounced in Old French (Davis xxxix-xl). "To get from Ramin to Tristan," Davis writes, "is clearly not such a short phonetic journey" (Davis xl). In the *Tristan* of Gottfried von Straßburg (d. c. 1210), which Gottfried asserts is based on Thomas's *Roman de Tristan* and can thus be dated to the close of the thirteenth century, Tristan's name is claimed to reflect the fact that he is constantly "triste" or sad.<sup>9</sup> Gurgānī on

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[9] Bédier provides the following explanation in his reconstitution of the *Ur-Tristan, le Roman de Tristan et Iseut*:

Au quatrième jour, elle mit au monde un fils, et, l'ayant pris entre ses bras :  
« Fils, lui dit-elle, j'ai longtemps désiré de te voir ; et je vois la plus belle créature que femme ait jamais portée. Triste j'accouche, triste est la première fête que je te fais, à cause de toi j'ai tristesse à mourir. Et comme ainsi tu es venu sur terre par tristesse, tu auras nom Tristan. »

the other hand informs his audience following the fortuitous death of Rāmīn's brother and the resulting union with his beloved that these desserts are just and that "Ramin's name suited him, because "Ram" meant, / in that time's language, what he was: "Content" (Gorgani 491). Thus, rather than recasting Cligès as an anti-Tristan, we can recast Tristan as an inverted Rāmīn, which also obviates the difficulty of the legends' endings, one happy and other sad, thus drawing a critical parallel between Cligès and Rāmīn.

#### TRIALS BY FIRE: ADULTERY AND CHASTITY

Beyond this historical background, which itself makes a compelling case for the reading of these three romances in parallel, there remain the substantial parallels that exist in their narrative content, which deserve further exploration. While critics who have rejected any connection between these traditions tend to downplay such similarities—Minorsky, as quoted above, only identified two important points of contact between them—proponents of the *Ur-Vīs u Rāmīn* as the *Ur-Tristan* tend toward the relatively superficial, identifying the shared presence of endogamy, philters and exile as inherent proof of a common origin. These elements make the strongest case for any theory of

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Quand elle eut dit ces mots, elle le baisa, et, sitôt qu'elle l'eut baisé, elle mourut. (Bédier *Roman de Tristan* 17)

*On the fourth day, she gave birth to a son, and having took him into her arms, she said:*

*"Son, I have long desired to see you, and I see the most beautiful creature that any woman has ever carried. Sad I gave birth to you, sad is the first celebration I do for you, and because of you I am sad to die. And as you so came into the world with sadness, you will be called Tristan."*

*When she had said these words, she kissed him and, as soon as she had, she died.*

The Bédier etymology in no way precludes Davis' reading. Such play in names was relatively common in the courtly romance tradition. Chrétien de Troyes uses the name of Soredamor, which he glosses as "sororee d'amors" or "gilded with love," at length as a support for a meditation on love and the role of the individual in a love affair in his *Cligès* (v. 980).



inspiration or imitation. However, for such claims to be substantiated, a comparative analysis of the function and deployment of these and other shared tropes is necessary, first to show the ways in which they can be successfully mapped onto each other and second to explain and engage with the important differences from the point of view of cultural specificity. The example of the trial by fire is instructive: as an episodic element, it recurs in all three of the traditions studied here and a cursory study of them might lead the reader to conclude, along with Polak, that the scene's presence in the French traditions is proof of common ancestry. A closer perusal of the events confirms this reading, although, I would argue, for different reasons.

An important vestige of Zoroastrianism present in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, the trial by fire is meant to prove that Vīs is innocent of adultery. The lighting of a sacred fire before an assembly of priests and nobles and the ritual passing through it as a sign of purity are identified by Minorsky as remnants of Zoroastrian belief, which help him date the origins of the epic to the Parthian era ("*Vīs u Rāmīn* - A Parthian Romance (Conclusion)" 33). In its full potentiality, the fire is both savior and executioner, absolving the innocent and punishing the guilty:

And now he wants to show his people I'm  
A woman who is innocent of crime.  
'Pass through the fire', he says 'and demonstrate  
To all the nobles your pure and virtuous state,  
And let the nobles and the peasants see  
That they've believed a vicious calumny.' (Gorgani 165)

Fearing for her life should the fire meant to prove her innocence become her funeral pyre, Vīs flees with her nurse and is met in secret by Rāmīn. This scene can be compared to two separate episodes in the Tristan legend, which recall this event: first, in the Bérroul, Tristan and Yseult are almost burned at the stake for adultery. Tristan escapes and Yseult is turned over to be raped by a band of lepers before

she is saved by Tristan and they can flee into the Morrois forest. Second, in Bédier's reconstruction, Yseult is constrained to swear upon holy relics that she is faithful to her husband and then take hold of a heated branding iron without injury to prove her innocence. While Polak identifies both of these elements as influenced by the Zoroastrian ritual described in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, we will focus on this second, modified version of the Mal Pas episode (Polak 224-5). Unlike the former, which leads directly to the couple's flight as it did in the Persian epic, this latter episode has the exact opposite effect: Yseult swears her oath in order to reconcile with her husband after her long stint in the Morrois forest. With or without the burning iron rod, which is absent from Bérout's *Roman de Tristan*, the Mal Pas episode fulfills the same cultural needs as the the Zoroastrian fire ritual, but within the Christian context. The oath places God, not the world of men, as arbiter of the couple's guilt. Should Yseult's oath not be accepted, the assembled audience would expect her punishment in the form of swift divine retribution. The attendant host incorrectly construes the failure of this retribution to appear as proof of her innocence and not simply proof of the veracity of her statement, dissimulating as it is. This latter event corresponds most closely with the function, narratologically speaking, of the Zoroastrian fire—not the pyre, the only aim of which is the punishment of an already judged crime. This leads us to reject the superficial similarities between the pyre in the Bérout and the ritual fire in the *Vīs u Rāmīn*, even though they both result in fleeing, in favor of underlining the more significant cultural function played by the oath at Mal Pas, despite the trial by fire's existence only in the realm of potentiality, since *Vīs* is never subjected to it.

The third trial by fire, Fenice's torture, reveals a somewhat more complicated relationship with the anterior versions. Fenice drinks a magical potion prepared by her maidservant, Thessala, in order

to simulate death as a pretext for escaping with Cligès to an underground sanctuary and its hidden garden. Alis, refusing to accept his beloved wife's death, calls upon the services of three Salernitan doctors. Sensing that something is amiss but unable to prove it, the doctors turn to more and more extreme methods for waking Fenice's dormant body. When intimidation and fist-blows do not succeed, they whip her denuded body mercilessly:

Lors li donerent un assalt  
Par mi le dos de lor corroies,  
S'an perent contreval les roies,  
Et tant li batent sa char tendre  
Que il an font le sanc espendre. (vv. 5966-5970)

*They then launch an assault with their thongs on her back so that raised welts appear on it and they hit her tender flesh so much that they make blood spill from it.*

Bloodied and mute, Fenice remains in an unconscious state and so the “treatment” continues with the doctors pouring molten lead on her hands. Clearly this scalding of the palms is meant to be the ultimate torture as the next course of action proposed by the doctors is complete incineration, a fate only averted through the rebellion of the city's women, who break down the doors, pull Fenice from the fire, and throw the doctors from Salerno out the windows to their deaths, much to the approval of Chrétien de Troyes's narrator.<sup>10</sup> Rising from the ashes, as it were, Fenice embodies the qualities of her

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[10] Searching for historical antecedents to this ladies' revolution, Ciggaar uncovers two “rebellions” of note led by Byzantine women in the eleventh century. The first, the important role played by women in the accession of Alexios Komnenos in 1081, bears little resemblance to the Chrétien's treatment (Ciggaar 269). The second is far more promising. In 1042, empress Zoe Porphyrogenia (978 – 1050, r. 1042) was exiled to Italy by her nephew, Michael V (1015 - 1042, r. 1041 - 1042), following the death of her husband, Michael IV (1010 – 1041, r. 1034 – 1041) (Ciggaar 269-270). Michael Psellos (1017 – c. 1078) describes the reaction in a contemporary account from his *Chronographia*:

Et les femmes ... Comment raconter cela à ceux qui ne le savent pas ? Pour ma part, j'en ai vu un grand nombre que personne jusque-là n'avait aperçues hors de leurs gynécées, paraître en public, criant, se battant la poitrine et se lamentant d'une

mythical namesake. In many ways, this episode reconciles the differences apparent between the episodes as given in the Gurgānī and the Bédier. As in *Vīs u Rāmīn* and Bérout's *Roman de Tristan*, the episode serves to propel the couple into hiding in edenic seclusion: Vīs and Rāmīn to Ray near present day Tehrān, at the feet of Alburz mountians, Tristan and Yseult to their lodge in the Morrois forest, and Cligès and Fenice to their secret enclosed garden, which is dominated by an erotically symbolic pear-tree. The Salernitan episode does not carry the same valence as the Mal Pas episode or Mūbad's ritual fire, nor indeed need it, with no oath to take. Fenice is up to this point still without guilt, never having transgressed against her husband with Cligès. If anything, the trial by fire suffered by Fenice fails by its inability to judge future events. The significant similarities and divergences between this episode and

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manière terrible sur le malheur de l'impératrice ; et les autres, telles des Ménades, se portaient en avant et constituaient contre le criminel une troupe non sans importance ... et ensemble elles couraient avec l'intention d'incendier le palais. (qtd. Ciggaar 270)  
*And the women... How to describe this to those who don't know it? For myself, I saw a large number of them whom no one had seen before outside of their gynaeceums appear in public, screaming, beating their breasts and lamenting terribly the misfortune of the empress; and others, like Maenads, came forward and constituted against the traitor a significant troupe... and together they advanced with the intention of burning down the palace.*

Michael V was thus forced to relent and restore Zoe to a position of power within the Byzantine court. Ciggaar does not search for an historical antecedent without reading this scene in light of the political actuality of Chrétien's Byzantine romance. Finding it curious that a Byzantine rebellion alone would have been a model for the events, Ciggaar turns closer to home:

À partir de 1174, Aliénor est prisonnière de son mari [Henri II] qui l'exile à Winchester. Chrétien veut-il la consoler quelque peu en évoquant le retour politique de Zoé ? Veut-il stimuler les dames françaises à prendre pareille initiative et suivre l'exemple byzantin [...] ? (Ciggaar 271)  
*From 1174, Aliénor was imprisoned by her husband [Henri II], who exiled her to Winchester. Did Chrétien want to console her somewhat by evoking the return of Zoe? Did he want to stimulate the French ladies to take a similar initiative and follow the Byzantine example[...]?*

The lady's revolution thus becomes another indicator for reading *Cligès* within the geopolitical context of the late twelfth century, without going so far as to reduce it to a *roman à clé*.

its intertexts reveal an attempt to reproduce the scene while recasting it in an entirely new light, which reflects the changing cultural needs and values of twelfth-century Champagne.

Although dating from a period of relative sexual freedom, *Vīs u Rāmīn* still surprises critics by showing little interest in sexual repression for an Iranian courtly romance, a feature that sets it at odds with the corpus of contemporaneous romances extant today. Southgate studies the anomalous nature of the *Vīs u Rāmīn* in the aptly entitled article, “*Vīs and Rāmīn: an Anomaly among Iranian Courtly Romances*,” where it is argued that it “is distinguished from other Iranian medieval courtly romances by its daring depiction of adultery and its uninhibited treatment of sensual love, a subject it examines more thoroughly than other romances” (Southgate 40). On the subject of adultery, Southgate draws parallels between *Vīs u Rāmīn* and Andreas Capellanus’s *De Amore* and its stance on the impossibility of love between husband and wife:

Non posse inter coniugatos amorem suas extendere vires.<sup>11</sup> (Capellanus 266)

*Love cannot extend its dominion to married couples.* (Walsh 267)

While this openness towards sex is considered a lingering, if embellished, trace of the historical past, it is not represented without critique. When the *Vīs*’s nurse convinces her to take *Rāmīn* as a lover, the narrator inflects the scene with his own, Muslim *Weltanschauung*:

And as the nurse spoke, at her voice’s sound,  
A horde of hellish demons crowded round,  
And set a thousand traps, a thousand snares  
Before her feet, to catch *Vis* unawares. (Gorgani 108)

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[11] This judgement, the *iudiciis amoris* XVII, is attributed to the *regina*, either Aliénor d’Aquitaine or Adèle, third wife of Louis the VII, in keeping with an earlier judgement by Marie de Champagne:

Comitissae Campaniae obviare sententiae non audemus. (Capellanus 266).

*We do not dare presume to oppose the opinion of the Countess of Champagne.* (Walsh 267)

Gurgānī thus reflects a double stance on sexuality. He is at the same time faithful to a historical view of sexuality, the tone of which he develops fully from the opening verses of the epic, and critical of the lax morality of his protagonists, which the epic's extradiegetic content condemns sporadically.<sup>12</sup>

*Vīs u Rāmīn* asstests to a degree of sexual freedom that is largely antithetical to the theory of *fin'amors* espoused by the *trouvères* of the French courts and, more importantly, by the *troubadours* and *troubaritz* in Occitania. Indeed, as Jacquart and Thomasset argue in their discussion of courtly love in *Sexualité et savoir médical au Moyen Âge*, courtly love functions by delaying the sex act in order to heighten and prolong desire and pleasure:

Extra-conjugal, l'amour courtois s'accomplit par la volonté de maîtriser l'impatience de l'instinct, par l'accomplissement d'une série d'épreuves initiatiques, par la découverte enfin, grâce à la *dame*, d'un monde de valeurs spirituelles. Selon la poétique des troubadours, la dame polarise l'affectivité, l'activité de l'imagination, la représentation du monde de l'amant. La satisfaction en est proscrite, car l'essentiel pour celui que se consacre au service d'amour est le culte narcissique de son désir ; celle qui reçoit cet hommage tire volupté de l'exercice de son pouvoir et ne peut que refuser l'étreinte qui y mettrait fin. (Jacquart 132)

*Extra-marital courtly love is accomplished through the desire to master instinctual impatience, through the accomplishment of a series of trials of initiation, and finally through the discovery, thanks to the lady, of a world of intellectual values. According to the troubadour's poetry, the lady polarizes the affect, the activity of the imagination, and the representation of the lover's world. Satisfaction is proscribed by it because the essential thing the person who dedicates himself to the service of love is the narcissistic cult of his desire; she who receives the homage draws pleasure from the exercise of her power and can only refuse the embrace that would put an end to it.*

Through its explicit and much vaunted chastity, Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès* represents this Occitan

*Weltanschauung* far more fully than the *Romans de Tristan* by either Béroul or Thomas d'Angleterre or

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[12] For more on the intersection of cultural values at the extradiegetic level in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, see Southgate's "Conflict Between Islamic Mores and the Courtly Romance of *Vīs and Rāmīn*."

even Gurgānī in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, despite the attempts Southgate makes in drawing parallels between the Persianate romance and Andreas Capellanus's canonical love treatise. Tristan and Yseult give in immediately to their desires, once ignited, as do Vīs and Rāmīn. If, however, delay is indeed the primary function of *fin'amors*, that does not entail a complete abnegation of sex. As we showed in our study of the *De Amore* and the *Ṭawq al-Hamama*, sex was theorized as both a desirable and ultimately necessary outcome to the courtly romance, its *causa finalis*. Jacquart and Thomasset make just such a claim because without a conclusion, the delay loses its teleological significance: "au plan de la sexualité, l'amour courtois ne peut être qu'un art de cultiver l'excitation, d'en prolonger la durée pour finalement parvenir à une conclusion" [*as it concerns sexuality, courtly love can only be an art of cultivating arousal, of prolonging its duration before finally arriving at a conclusion*] (Jacquart 132). The escape to the enclosed garden must thus be seen in light of this conclusion, although with the ordeal having been turned back onto the lady and not her lover.

#### MEN WHO MARRY WOMEN WHO LOVE THEIR NEPHEWS

The question of endogamy, part of the basic premise of both the epic and the two romances, provides a critical, second vantage point for the ways in which these similar tales reflect and are inflected by their cultural moment and milieu. In both the Tristan legend and in *Cligès*, the hero falls in love with his uncle's bride. In *Vīs u Rāmīn*, the adulterous couple's endogamy is all the more pronounced: Rāmīn and Mūbad are brothers, although the epic does leave a number of hints that Rāmīn may in fact also be Mūbad's son.<sup>13</sup> The inexact parallel here is largely explained by the historical

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[13] The primary relationship linking Mūbad to Rāmīn is that of brothers from the same mother,

and cultural origins of the Persian epic. While endogamy was strongly condemned in medieval Europe, it had been widely practiced and indeed favored during Antiquity among the Zoroastrian elite, who, according to Minorsky's readings, appears to have constituted the Ur-version's intended audience. Of the practice of *khvētūdās* or next-of-kin marriage, Spooner explains that "although there was nothing extraordinary about it, nevertheless there was great virtue in it—something like supernumerary attendance at mass. It had, in fact, a sacramental value" (Spooner 53). This is confirmed in the sacred Pahlavi Zoroastrian writings:

*Pahlavi Rivayat* 8 f. 3: The first time it comes near 1000 dēvs and 2000 Yātūks and Parīks [three types of evil creatures in the command of Ahriman] die; the second time it comes near 2000 dēvs and 4000 Yātūks and Parīks die; the third time 3000 dēvs and 6000 Yātūks and Parīks; the fourth time both man and wife become manifestly ahrav (blessed); "

*Pahlavi Rivayat* 8 l. 3: "If one is married in kh[v]ētūdās four years and performs sacrifice, then the soul goes manifestly to Gatōtmān<sup>14</sup> where ; if not, it goes to Heaven"; and

*Pahlavi Rivayat* 8 c.: "The sacrifice and praise of one who has performed kh[v]ētūdās are 1000 times as valid as those of other men". (qtd. Spooner 53)

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which differentiates Rāmīn from their other brother, Zard. The next relationship in terms of importance in *Vīs u Rāmīn* between Mūbad and Rāmīn is that of lord and vassal. At certain moments, however, the implication of filiation is present, such as in this description of Rāmīn:

A prince in wealth and in his ancestry,

Worthy of both, and of their sovereignty

Mobad's own brother and his son, the heir

To Mahabad [present-day Hamadān] and all that flourished there. (Gorgani 78)

In his note on this passage, Davis is reluctant to identify Rāmīn as Mūbad's actual son, preferring to construe this passage in the light of paternalistic fealty. "It may be that the appearance of these moments is a survival from an earlier version of the poem in which Ramin was unequivocally both brother and son to Mūbad; or it may be that 'father' is being used by Gorgani merely to mean 'protector'; or it may be both" (Davis n. 27, 504).

[14] Here, Spooner includes the following explanatory footnote: "Gatōtmān is the part of Zoroastrian heaven in which Ohrmazd himself lives" (Spooner 53 n.4). Ohrmazd is the Middle Persian for the highest spirit worshiped by Zoroastrians, Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda is here put in opposition with Ahriman or Angra Mainyu, the incarnation of the destructive spirit.



By the thirteenth century and Gurgānī's composition of *Vīs u Rāmīn* for his Muslim Turkish patron, the practice of *khvētūdās* had all but died out. Thus, while incest and with it sibling–marriage was summararily condemned in Islamic times, it was always described in the context of an ancient practice and not a problem of pressing contemporary relevance, which might explain the relative ambivalence of Gurgānī's occasionally judgmental narrator regarding the practice (Spooner 53).

This preference for *khvētūdās*, coupled with her unrivaled beauty, is in fact the very motive that Vīs's mother Shahrū, gives for marrying her to her brother Vīrū, beginning the cascade of events that leads to Vīs and Rāmīn's affair and its travails. Says Shahrū to Vīs:

Your father is a king, and I'm a queen,  
No husband, in no country that I've seen,  
Is worthy of you, and I'm unsure where  
I'll find a husband who deserves to share  
Your life with you; though here there's one man who  
Is of your rank, your brother, Prince Viru. (Gorgani 17)

Even in her blessing of the couple, Shahrū speaks to the prevalence and acceptance of the practice of endogamous wedding practices within the Zoroastrian faith:

When siblings marry there's no need to hold  
A ceremony bright with jewels and gold,  
Likewise, it doesn't matter in the least  
if you get married here without a priest –  
A sibling marriage doesn't even need  
A witness to corroborate the deed:  
God and Soroush both know what has been done,  
As do the stars, and moon, and shining sun. (Gorgani 19)

If such endogamy is lauded in the marriage of Vīs and Vīrū, it is rarely condemned in Rāmīn's pursuit of his brother's wife.<sup>15</sup> When it is, it is simply done as one might expect of any adulterous relationship.

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[15] While it is not much developed within the text, Vīs and Rāmīn's shared upbringing—they were raised together by the same Khuzan nurse until Rāmīn reached the age of 10—might have constituted a pseudo-familial bond that would have made their union preferable even to a union between Mūbad

When public knowledge of Vīs and Rāmīn's adulterous affair reaches Mūbad through a minstrel using metaphors of a tree, a river, and a bull, he explodes into rage and, wielding a poisoned dagger, demands that his brother "never more show love to Vīs, / that all your courtship of my wife will cease" (Gorgani 267). The scandal is in no way marked as additionally salacious for the familial ties that bind the rival brothers. In fact, if Rāmīn lives, it is strictly because of the intimacy of these ties. Ultimately, following the death of his brother and Rāmīn's ascension to the throne, he takes Vīs as his wife and has two sons by her. Attesting to the sanction of their union, they are both buried in tombs on the grounds of the Borzīn Fire Temple. Mūbad receives no such honor at his death.

In a markedly different moment that appears unique in the epic, the court astrologer Beghui persuades Rāmīn to forget his love for Vīs following the previously mentioned scandal and his ensuing banishment from Mūbad's court at Marv. In his polemic, Beghui underscores two critical reasons for eschewing his relationship with Vīs: the sufferings of love and the enmity of the Shahinshah. Beghui therefore advises Rāmīn to search for greener pastures elsewhere, away from the intrigues of the court. He does, and for a time forgets his troubles in his marriage with Gul. This episode, although lacking in *Cligès*, strongly recalls the marriage between Tristan and Yseult aux Blanches Mains, a parallel that extends even to the initial rejection of the lover by the beloved upon his return and her subsequent regrets. While the first of Beghui's two reasons may be of little interest to the present analysis, his

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and Vīs, since their shared childhood would have made them something akin to brother and sister. It would have under Islam, where what Mitterauer terms *Milchverwandtschaft*, or the relationship with or through one's nurse, is expressly forbidden in marriage, as it is in several Eastern sects, among them the Jacobite, Coptic and Armenian Churches (Mitterauer 322). Mitterauer suggests pushback against Zoroastrian missionaries as a possible source for the increased prohibition against endogamous practices in the East (Mitterauer 317-8).

deployment of the standard tropes of unfortunate love corresponds with those current throughout

French and Islamic lands. Thus he exhorts Prince Rāmīn:

You shouldn't fall in love if you can't bear  
The miseries that lovers have to share.  
Didn't you know when seeds of love are sown  
Grief is the harvest once its shoots have grown?  
That when you're plucking roses one by one  
A thorn might scratch your hand before you're done? (Gorgani 270)

His discussion of Rāmīn's offenses towards his brother is more pertinent to the present discussion

despite its implications remaining difficult to decipher:

You are a byword; in your brother's eyes  
You're someone to disparage and despise,  
When commoners or courtiers drink they name you  
As someone worthy of contempt; they blame you  
For all or your behavior, which they say  
Has grown unchivalrous in every way.  
"What is the point of such a wretched creature,"  
They ask, "who shames his brother by his nature?" (Gorgani 272)

How is one to understand this final verse: "who shames his brother by his nature?" Should it be read as a condemnation of his affair with his brother's wife as a relationship contrary to the natural order?

While this might appear true at first reading, endogamy was not only accepted but lauded in the cultural milieu from which this romance emerged. A more likely reading would be a condemnation of adultery, an affront not only to his brother but also his king, if not also his father. Later, Beghui makes references to Rāmīn's flouting of his brotherly duty to Mūbad. "Ramin should still have known that sense and duty / prevented him from coveting her beauty" (Gorgani 273). It would therefore appear that, ultimately, the relationship of the vassal to his king, as underscored by Rāmīn's loss of chivalry, here a martial quality, supersedes that of being brothers in its outrage.

The cultural context of the creation and elaboration of the Tristan legend entails a fundamentally different approach to the depiction of endogamous relationships. Thus, while such close endogamy would not have been permitted by the Catholic church in Western Europe, the distance of the family ties would have made the relationship, problematic because adulterous, more palatable to European sensibilities.<sup>16</sup> In fact, while there was much debate about the definition of incest throughout the early European Middle Ages, it was, as Gravdal underlines, "only over the degree of exogamy required to constitute a legal and binding marriage" (Gravdal 281). Thus, by the eleventh century, seven degrees of separation were required by canon law to validate a marriage, eliminating thousands of individuals as possible spouses (Brundage, "E Pluribus Unum" 37). This held true, Gravdal points out, "whether the relation was blood, affinal, or one of spiritual kinship from godparenthood" (Gravdal 281). By the beginning of thirteenth century, however, opinions were already beginning to relax and "the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 felt the need to reduce the degree of kinship from seven to four" (Gravdal 281). Within the pre-Lateran Four system, Tristan and Marc would have had only had two degrees of separation at most, Tristan being the son of Marc's sister, Blanchefleur. Most likely, however, even this degree of separation would not have been recognized since, following the death of his parents, Tristan is at least nominally adopted by King Marc, who intends him as his heir. The punishment for nuclear family incest was significant. The seventh-century *Canons* of Theodore is representative of the punishment exacted: "For a man and his mother—15 years of penance; for a brother and sister—15 years for a brother and brother—15 years;

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[16] For a general study of the development of exogamous practice in Christianity, see Michael Mitterauer's "Christianity and Endogamy."

and for a mother and a young son—3 years" (Gravdal 282). Should their spiritual and affinal bonds be taken into consideration, Tristan and Yseult's affair might well have constituted the first of these relationships—between a man and his (step-)mother —, requiring a harsh penalty indeed.

That Tristan and Yseult's relationship borders on the incestuous is important in the representation of their affair both in the texts and abroad. First, one must recognize that, as early as Bérout's *Roman de Tristan*, there is a willful evacuation of agency on the part of the lovers. As Yseult confesses to Ogrin the hermit when fleeing into the Morrois forest, she loves Tristan and he her only because of the unfortunate intervention of exterior forces well beyond their control:

Sire, por Deu omnipotent,  
Il ne m'aime pas, ne je lui,  
Fors par un herbé dont je bui  
Et il en but. Ce fu pechiez:  
Por ce nos a li rois chaciez. (Bérout vv. 1412-6)

*Sir, by omnipotent God,  
He loves me, and I him,  
Only because of a potion  
We both drank. That was tragic:  
For that the king drove us away.* (Lacy 71)

Bérout thus evacuates responsibility and displaces guilt outside of the couple's own agency.<sup>17</sup> If they are irresistibly attracted to each other, it is by no fault of their own but that of the inadvertence of a third party, who mistakenly and unwittingly made them drink the love philter. All the same, Ogrin, the

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[17] Ivo of Chartres held in his *Decretum* that "sexual feelings that were not consciously desire and their physical manifestations such as, for example, a spontaneous erection, might produce no guilt" (Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society* 203-4). Pleasure resulting from such feelings or any voluntary action in response to them were held sinful by all except "Peter Abelard and some writers of the School of Laon[, who] were prepared to maintain that carnal pleasure and the desire to experience it were natural and hence not intrinsically evil" (Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society* 203).

voice of Christian principles within the text, maintains his stance demanding repentance for their sins. Tristan and Yseult thus remain pathetic rather than fully sublimated heroes. This reproach of the character's behavior is consistent with the cultural milieu of its creation. Further, it extends to the representation of the couple in other works. Chrétien de Troyes, in his *Cligès*, for example, portrays his characters as superior to this archetypal pair both in physical attributes and moral fiber, although the former is often represented as being revelatory of the latter. Thus continuing the Greek tradition of *καλοκαγθία* (*kalokagathia*), or the concomitance of *καλός* (*kalós*) or beauty and *ἀγαθός* (*agathós*) or goodness in the same body, medieval theorists of love often posited that great beauty corresponded with great virtue because, as Sevier concluded in his reading of the relationship between goodness and beauty in Saint Thomas Aquinas's mid thirteenth-century *Summa Theologiae*, "where we find beauty in creatures, primarily in virtuous behavior but also in physical features, this is merely a likeness to, an approximation of, and so a sign pointing to, the divine Beauty" (Sevier 125). The lady embodies her worth through the whiteness of her skin just as the hero embodies his prowess through the strength of his arm. This correspondence is after all the basis of attraction within the theories of love presented by Andreas Capellanus and Ibn Ḥazm and explains the essential role of sight in them.

It is significant, then, that *Cligès* is compared with Tristan and presented as his superior:

Ce fut Cligés, qui an lui ot  
 San et biauté, largesce et force.  
 Si ot le fust a tot l'escorce,  
 Si sot plus d'escremie et d'arc  
 Que Tristanz li niés le roi Marc,  
 Et plus d'oisiæx et plus de chiens:  
 En Cligés ne failli nus biens. (vv. 2768-2774)

*Thus was Cligès, who had sense and beauty, largess and strength. He had the wood and the bark, knew more about swordplay and the bow than Tristan, the*

*nephew of King Marc, and more about birds and hounds: in Cligès no good thing was lacking.*

This greater beauty and fortitude speaks implicitly to a greater innate good in Cligès, and thus to a greater nobility and worth.

Similarly, before she marries Alis, Fenice defines herself and her future relationship with her husband and her lover in relation to the love-triangles of Tristan, Yseult la Blonde and King Marc and of Tristan, Yseult la Blonde and Yseult aux Blanches Mains. In so doing, she distances herself from Tristan and Yseult as a model to be followed:

Mialz voldroie estre desmanbree  
Que de nos .II. fust remanbree  
L'amors d'Ysolt et de Tristan,  
Don mainte folie dit an  
Et honte en est a reconter. (vv. 3127-31)

*I would rather be dismembered than the two of us be remembered like the love of Yseult and Tristan, about which many follies are said and which are an embarrassment to speak of.*

With the aid of her duenna, Fenice positions herself to reject Yseult's stance in regards to her husband—giving him her body but not her heart—and Yseult aux Blanche Mains's in regards to hers—giving him her heart but not her body—, forging a new path for the ideal lover that eschews immorality. Again, Fenice evokes the adulterous couple while considering and planning with Cligès their evasion together from the Byzantine court into the erotic Eden that they have constructed for this purpose:

Se je vos aim et vos m'amez,  
Ja n'en seroiz Tristanz clamez  
Ne je n'an serai ja Yseuz,  
Car puis ne seroit l'amors preuz  
Qu'il i avroit blasme ne vice. (vv. 5243-7)

*If I love you and you love me, you will never be called Tristan and I will never be Yseult because then our love would not be honorable if there were blame or vice in it.*

Here again Cligès and Fenice are claimed to be superior to their models, Tristan and Yseult, this time not for their beauty but explicitly for their apparent moral fiber or rather its veneer. As long as the affair remains unknown to Emperor Alis and his court, there is no outrage in it, as there was in the story of King Marc. Further, the marriage between Fenice and Alis remains void as it was never consummated whereas it is implied that, despite the initial subversion, Yseult does subsequently consummate her marriage with King Marc.<sup>18</sup>

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[18] This lack of consummation in *Cligès* will be explored further below. In Bérout's *Roman de Tristan*, Yseult takes an oath on the relics of Saint Hilaire before the assembled courts of Kings Marc and Arthur:

Qu'entre mes cuises n'entra home,  
Fors le ladre qui fist soi some,  
Qui me porta outre les guez,  
Et li rois Marc mes esposez. (vv. 4205-8)  
[That] *no man has ever been between my thighs,*  
*Except the leper who made himself a beast of burden*  
*And carried me across the ford*  
*And my husband King Mark.* (Lacy 187)

Much has been made of the simultaneous veracity and dissimulation of the oath, which, through the substitution of Tristan for the leper, allows Yseult to escape from both human and divine punishment. See for example my "Simulation and Dissimulation in the *Folie Tristan* d'Oxford." If, as Blakey argues "the form of the oath satisfies the world of men, because they are misled by it; because it is not untrue, it is acceptable to God, who acts as supreme and all-knowing arbiter," this to hold true, both sides of the equation must be valid, implying congress not only with Tristan the Leper but also King Marc, her husband (Blakey 24). Fenice confirms his reading in stating:

[...] Ses cors fu a .II. rentiers.  
Ensi toe sa vie usa  
N'oques les .II. ne refusa. (vv. 3136-8)  
[...] *Her body belonged to two and thus she lived her life, she never refused the two.*

Thomas d'Angleterre explicits this in his *Roman de Tristan*:

Dan Marques a le cors Ysodt  
[E] fiat son bon quant il en volt. (vv. 1093-4)



Such superficial parallels between the endogamous premises for the three romances and their ensuing drama are of little value in and of themselves as proof of either shared origin or contemporary culture. Should a shared origin be proved, however, the need for such a change in the narrative fabric would be singularly revealing for its insights into the appropriation of culturally foreign literary content and its requisite adaptation since neither direct translation nor inspiration implies a passive role for the reproducer. Rather, as Hayretting Yücesoy argues, describing the concerted efforts to translate foreign sciences, philosophy and cultural productions by the 'Abassid court at Bagdad, translation is "an act of conquest in which the translator/receiving culture collects, surveys, classifies, and categorizes the source text to manage and control its consent according to the demands of the new context" (Yücesoy 557). The different approaches to and representations of these very similar endogamous relationships goes a long way in explaining certain characteristics of these romances, each resulting from the various authorial positions required by the social mores of their audiences. To a certain degree, these same cultural values dictate the differences found in the climaxes of these three traditions. Despite any desire or attempt to distance themselves for their sin, Tristan and Yseult's lack of repentance for their adulterous and incestuous relationship must ultimately be punished. In *Cligès*, because Fenice's marriage was never consummated, Cligès and Fenice's relationship never truly amounts to incest or even adultery, opening the possibility of a happy ending. Similarly, the cultural stance on endogamous relationships in Ancient Persia permits Vīs and Rāmīn's marriage following the death of her husband.

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*Lord Mark has Yseut's body  
And his pleasure with her whenever he likes. (Lacy 59)*

In the face of such nuanced difference, it remains a simple and relatively tenable stance to attribute the common premise of endogamy to facile happenstance. We will therefore touch briefly upon another moment that speaks to the world-views at play in creation and modification of one of the stories' shared *topoi*: the claiming of the bride-to-be by the hero in the name of the king-figure. Thus, moving beyond the endogamy of the marriage of Vīs to Vīrū, the wedding itself becomes an important catalyst for the ensuing drama. Shahinshah Mūbad, upon learning of their marriage, sends his armies to demand the restitution of Vīs, whose hand he had been promised before her birth. Her forcible removal from her family on her wedding night provides the opportunity for Rāmīn to see her again and fall in love with her as he escorts her litter back to Mūbad, who was engaged elsewhere in battle with Vīrū's forces. The moment of *innamoratio* for Rāmīn is described in the terms of love at first sight, even though they had known each other previously, recalling a combination of love at first sight [الحبّ من نظرة واحدة] and love after long acquaintance [الحبّ مع المطاولة] as described by Ibn Ḥazm in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*. The scene itself merits scrutiny:

A spring breeze blew the litter's veil aside  
Revealing all that it was there to hide –  
You'd say a sword had been unsheathed, you'd say  
The sun had burst forth on a cloudy day.  
The face of Vis appeared; Ramin's poor heart  
Was hers as he felt consciousness depart;  
As if her face had magical powers, on glance  
Deprived him of his soul; a poisoned lance  
Could not have worked more expeditiously,  
Or an arrow struck more unexpectedly. (Gorgani 57)

Through the haphazard intervention of exterior forces, Vīs is revealed to Rāmīn. The imagery, both of flashing sword and sunburst, demonstrates the sudden and disorienting effects of insight, of the eureka moment. The sight of Vīs's beauty—"the path love took was through his sight; his eyes / had rendered his unhappy heart love's prize"—is too much (Gorgani 57). Overwhelmed, Rāmīn faints heroically; heroically because the lexical field remains martial; and because his capitulation and his heart's capture are at the feet of a worthy foe. The immediacy of the expeditious lance and the unexpected arrow further develops the metaphors of the sudden onset of love at first sight, except of course that it is not first sight. Vīs does not yet reciprocate Rāmīn's feelings and it is not until the nurse's intercessions on Rāmīn's behalf that she begins to entertain any attraction to him. This lack of simultaneity is one of the important differences between *Vīs u Rāmīn* on the one hand and the *Romans de Tristan* and *Cligès* on the other, where both of the lovers become enamored with each other at the same time.

The abduction and the use of a military escort in securing a bride promised to another reappears in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, albeit in an inverted context. When the German Emperor decides to marry his daughter Fenice not to the Duke of Saxony, to whom she had been promised, but to Alis, the Byzantine Emperor, he does so only on condition that this latter secure her transport:

Si ne l'an porroient mener  
 Se l'empereres n'i venoit  
 Et s'il grant force n'amenoit,  
 Que li dus ne li poïst feire  
 Honte ne enui au repeire. (vv. 2658-60)

*They would not be able to take her from there unless the emperor came and brought a great force with him so that the duke could not bring shame and bother upon them.*

The risk of abduction comes not from the hero's uncle but from the outside. This organization provides three separate instances for Cligès, who occupies a position in the honor guard, to defend Fenice's honor and life and thus distinguish himself in the eyes of his beloved: first when the duke of Saxony's nephew challenges him to a joust, second when saving Fenice from her abductors, and third when fighting, injured, against the duke of Saxony in single combat in order to prevent needless bloodshed between their two hosts.<sup>19</sup> It is in the context of this escort that Cligès falls in love with Fenice and she with him. Here again, it is a question of reciprocal love at first sight of each other's beauty, a scene with imagery recalling that of Rāmīn's *innamoratio* of Vīs, without the epic fainting.

Un po fu li jorz enublez  
 Mes tant estoient bel andui,  
 Antre la pucele et celui  
 C'uns rais de lor biaute isoit  
 Don li palés resplandissoit  
 Tot autresi con li solauz  
 Qui nest molt clers et molt vermauz. (vv. 2736-42)

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[19] A discussion of the abounding fantasies of father-figure impotence—the substitution and proxy of the lover for the father-figure are of particular urgency—in *Cligès* and the *Romans de Tristan* requires some acknowledgement of the psychoanalytical readings of the manifestations of sexual repression, particularly in relation to the Oedipal complex as they relate to these texts. For Cligès, see Rubey's "The Troubled House of Oedipus and Chrétien's *Néo-Tristan*" and Levine's "Repression in *Cligès*." Linking Tristan and Oedipus, Mickel's "The Shadow of Oedipus in the *Tristan en Prose*" explores the explicit connections made between the progeny of Oedipus, as recounted in the oldest extant romance, the anonymous *le Roman de Thèbes* (c. 1050), and the ancestry of Tristan as provided in the mid-thirteenth-century *Tristan en Prose*, a text of equally dubious attribution (on attribution see Curtius "The Problem of Authorship of the *Prose Tristan*" and Baumgartner's "Luce del Gat et Hélie de Boron : le chevalier et l'écriture"). None of these readings bears significant fruit, perhaps because the source of medieval versions of the Oedipus legend is not the *Oedipus Rex* of Freudian fame by Sophocles (c. 496 – 406 BC) but instead the *Thebaid* by Statius (c. 45 – 96) as well as Seneca the Younger's (c. 4 BC – 65 AD) tragedy, *Oedipus*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Mickel 7; Rubey 75). The question of impotence within the Oedipal triangle is most explicit in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, where Mūbad is stricken by impotence not through the intervention of the brother-son but by the wife-mother. Arabic literature, on the other hand, never developed a tradition of tragedy, according to Andras Hamori (Hamori 33).

*The day was a little cloudy but so much beauty was there between the maiden and he that from their beauty beamed a ray, from which the palace sparkled as the sun shines, very bright and red.*

The three travails that Cligès faces to prove his worth to Fenice serve only to further convince the reader of his physical description's kalokagathic value. It is not until after the joust that Fenice learns his identity and confirms his nobility, and not until after the duel and once she is already wed to Alis that Cligès reveals his love to her, although she has already denied herself nightly to her husband.

In the Tristan legend as reconstituted by Bédier, Tristan and Yseult fall in love with each other while Tristan, acting as his uncle's proxy, seeks to secure her hand in marriage for King Marc. It is as Marc's proxy that Tristan undertakes slaying the dragon of Weisefort, the task that would give him the right of her hand.<sup>20</sup> Before he can lay claim to it on behalf of a second, a third attempts to usurp it through treachery. This latter, the cowardly seneschal, Aguynguerran le Roux, had happened upon the dead dragon's carcass and claimed its head, which he presented to the court before the grievously wounded Tristan was able to present the tongue he had already cut out of it. On the day Yseult is meant to be presented to Aguynguerran before the assembled court, Tristan offers to support his claim through combat. Caught in a lie and faced with the dragon-slayer himself, the cowardly seneschal acknowledges defeat, ceding Yseult as spoils to the victor so that Tristan might claim her hand on behalf of King Marc: "Mais le roi posa la main droite d'Iseut dans la main droite de Tristan, et Tristan la retint en signe qu'il se saisit d'elle, au nom du roi de Cornouailles" [*But the king placed Yseult's right*

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[20] Weisefort is identified by Corbellari as the modern Irish port-city of Wexford, located in the southeastern corner of the island (Bédier *Roman de Tristan* 293).

*hand in Tristan's right hand, and Tristan held it as a sign that he took her in the name of the king of Cornwall]* (Bédier *Roman de Tristan* 53).

Since Roman times, marriage was treated like any other consensual contract agreement between two parties bearing no additional sacramental value. This allowed marriage to be conducted either *per nuntium vel epistulam* [by messenger or letter] through a legal proxy, who had been granted power of attorney (Lorenzen 474). Given that Canon Law was largely based on its Roman counterpart, medieval marriage practice continued and indeed expanded this tradition, opening the possibility for either or even both parties to be married by proxy, while in Roman law, only the groom could be given a proxy, since marriage was only officially consummated through the transfer of property, i.e., through the ritual procession of the bride to the groom's home (Lorenzen 474). More egalitarian, the medieval Church extended this right to both parties. The key role played by consent in Roman Law also extended into Canon Law, following the dictum that *consensus facit nuptias* [consent a marriage makes] (Lorenzen 474). Thus while the Church encouraged marriage ceremonies with witnesses or in the presence of a priest, neither was strictly necessary, and their use extended mainly toward ensuring the validity of the marriage (Musson 132).

Much of the priest's role was to ask simple questions of the couple to verify the legality of their union, and to ensure that, formally, the Canon Law was respected: "The centerpiece of the prenuptial rite was a series of interrogations, in which the priest ascertained that all the prerequisites (mutual free choice, absence of impediments, and so forth) were in place" (Reynolds 66-7). Reynolds provides a description of the prenuptial rite as preserved in the *Magdalen Pontifical*, a twelfth-century pontifical from Canterbury:

The priest first asks the groom and bride whether there is any impediment such as consanguinity or spiritual affinity. Next, he asks them, in turn whether each freely accepts the other, and whether each will care of the other “in health and in sickness,” as befits a Christian. Once they have expressed their mutual acceptance, the bridegroom gives a dower (*dos*) to his bride, which was confirmed with a token knife or cutlass (*per cultellum*), and he presents her with a ring and some “betrothal coins.” After the priest has blessed the ring, the bridegroom takes it and repeats after the priest: “N., with this ring I honor you, and this silver I give to you, and with my body I espouse you, in the name of the Father (on the thumb), and of the Son (on the index finger), and of the Holy Spirit (on the middle finger).” Finally, they proceeded into the church for the nuptial mass. (Reynolds 67)

Legally, much of the prenuptial rite was unnecessary:

the ritual recapitulated the traditional betrothal, including the ring, prenuptial gifts, dotal agreements, and expression of mutual consent, but it typically came at the end of the nuptial process. It was a betrothal with immediate effect. (Reynolds 67)

In accordance with the principle that *consensus facit nuptias*, the giving of consent established the union of two persons within the sacrament of marriage. By the end of the twelfth century Canon Law did, however, distinguish between consent given in a betrothal and consent given in marriage by distinguishing between consent given *per verba de praesenti* [in the present tense] and *per verba de futuro* [in the future tense], where the former was defined as immediately legally binding and the latter as predicated upon the marriage’s consummation; thus it “did not establish a marriage but rather a promise to marry, which was binding only in the contractual and moral senses” (Reynolds 43).

This stance, which was elaborated by Pope Alexander III (né Rolandus Bandinelli, c. 1110 – 1181, r. 1159 – 1181) in an undated decretal to the Bishop of Norwich, *Veniens ad nos*, written some time after 1176, was in response to a debate over the requisite nature of consummation, which continued throughout the twelfth century (Brundage, “Law, Sex and Christian Society” 334). Pope Alexander III’s position was largely a compromise of the two opposing theories of marriage espoused from 1120

onwards.<sup>21</sup> The debate stemmed largely from the role of sex in the “perfecting” or completing of the sacrament of marriage, where the Parisian *magistri moderni* argued for what has come to be termed the “consensual” theory while the Bolognese jurist, Gratian, argued the “coital” theory in the *Decretum Gratiani*.<sup>22</sup> According to the consensual or Parisian theory, the sacrament of marriage was deemed perfected immediately and without need for its consummation because it had been held that *consensus facit nuptias*. Nothing more was required. The Gratianian school differed in their response, claiming that consent in and of itself does not suffice as the distinction between marriage and betrothal, between *per verba de praesenti* and *per verba de futuro*, had always been maintained. Gratian argues therefore that betrothal occurs with the giving of consent while marriage occurs only in anticipation of consummation: “Instead, it is because of the preceding will to contract marriage, or because of the conjugal pact, that the woman may be said to marry [nubere] the man or to celebrate marriage [nuptias celebrare] in the deflowering of virginity or in coitus” (qtd. Reynolds 71). Central to this debate was the increasing popularity of the cult of the Virgin Mary, which brought into the spotlight the paradox of the Virgin Mary marriage to Joseph. As a virgin, could Mary be judged by twelfth-century standards as married to Joseph? For the Parisian *magistri moderni*, the answer was yes simply because *consensus facit nuptias* and there were no external factors impeding or invalidating their marriage. For the Gratians, the answer was still yes but more complicated because “what the

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[21] On the nature of this debate, Reynolds prefers to speak of “divergence” rather than dispute or debate because, “in a dispute, each side defends, articulates, and elaborates its position by arguing against the other side. In a simple divergence, the two sides share certain presuppositions and problems, but they develop their respective solutions independently” (Reynolds 45).

[22] For a comprehensive presentation of Gratian and the *Decretum Gratiani*, see Anders Winroth’s *The Making of Gratian’s Decretum*.



spouses agree to in marrying is strictly not sexual intercourse per se but rather the conjugal debt, for that obligation is intrinsically conditional: each partner agrees to offer his or her body for sex if the other demands it” (Reynolds 57). As Joseph did not demand sex, Mary was not required to provide it.

Pope Alexander III’s position on marriage after 1176 represents the culmination of a gradual evolution in his marriage theory during his pontificate. Following his election in 1159, Alexander III espoused the Parisian consensual theory until 1173, after which point:

his marriage decisions took a different tack: rather than concentrating on the exchange of consent, the decretals of this period focus on the solemnization of marriage. During those years, marriages that had been contracted solemnly and publicly prevailed over those that were contracted informally, secretly or without witnesses. (Brundage, “Law, Sex and Christian Society” 333)

The position outlined after 1176 in the *Veniens ad nos* decretal made sexual intercourse not only fundamental to cementing the bond between couples, but a marital obligation, even in the case of one of the spouses contracting leprosy (Brundage, “Law, Sex and Christian Society” 335). Further it overturned much of the obligation to marry solemnly, providing clandestine marriages the full force of their public counterparts. Even though clandestine marriages without witnesses were declared anathema, witnesses were never required for a marriage to be valid (Brundage, “Law, Sex and Christian Society” 336). Ultimately, clandestine marriages served an important function from the late twelfth century onwards as the general consensus came to view marriage in the new light of a personal choice rather than a political or economic one, as Brundage explains:

The net result of Alexander III’s changes was to make marriage easier to contract and more difficult to dissolve. It does not necessarily follow from this, however, that Alexander III’s marriage rules aimed at reconciling the law of matrimony with the sentiments of courtly love poets. It is more likely that both the ethos of *fin’amors* and Alexander III’s marriage decretals reflected a dawning consciousness of the importance of individual choice, coupled with a new awareness of marriage as a personal relationship—

sentiments that a few decades earlier had seemed heretical. (Brundage, “Law, Sex and Christian Society” 333)

This is the legal backdrop against which the events of the *Romans de Tristan* and *Cligès* play themselves out. The increasing public consciousness of marriage as an individual and consensual relationship, the changing *Weltanschauung* of both medieval authors and audiences, explains to a certain degree Yseult’s relative ease in sharing her body with her husband while her heart resides elsewhere and Fenice’s contempt for it. While *Cligès* undoubtedly predates the *Veniens ad nos*, the evolving trend remains visible, especially within the circles of Parisian legal scholars who supported the “consensual” theory of love, which was even more radical in its reorientation away from existing power structures and towards the expression of the individual’s will.

Conversely, consent plays little part in the logic governing marriage in *Vīs u Rāmīn*. When Shahrū tells Vīs that she is to be given to her brother Viru, her response is embarrassed silence. Seeing the possibility for future love, her silence, by its lack of protest, becomes a tacit agreement:

Love sprang up in her heart, she’d love Viru  
And, saying nothing, she acceded to  
Her mother’s words. Hair fell across her cheek,  
Her face turned scarlet, but she did not speak.  
Her mother realized this embarrassment  
And silence signified the girl’s consent. (Gorgani 18)

Whether Vīs gives her assent or merely does not oppose the prospect, the marriage is designed by her mother and not by her, representing less a personal approach than a socio-political organization of marriage practice. The same traits are eminently visible in Shahrū’s pledge to wed her daughter, should she have one, to the Shahinshah. Such prearranged marriage practices preclude the notion of personal choice, whether consent is ultimately required or not. Similarly, once Vīs has been abducted by Mūbad and taken as his wife, though she despises him, she finds no grounds for resisting him, apart

from the fact that he killed her father, Qārin. Withholding sex becomes the sole tool of resistance against a marriage to which she does not consent and into which she is forced both by a prenatal agreement and an abduction. The death of her father then becomes the pretext for convincing the nurse to bind Mūbad's "virility," rendering him impotent:

Find something to neutralize his lust,  
Give me a year before I have to face  
The thought of this loathed enemy's embrace.  
My mourning for Qaren's death should protect me,  
But, for a year, I don't think he'll respect me –  
He has no shame, no sense of right and wrong,  
I don't think he'll be patient for so long. (Gorgani 72)

Viś is forced to stand on traditional mourning practice to gain distance from her husband, an act which even her loyal nurse disapproves, although her discourse does tentatively acknowledge a right to an extended grieving period, which further underlines the lack of agency ascribed to consent within the structuring logic of marital relations in *Viś u Rāmīn*.

Returning to the scene described in Bédier's *Roman de Tristan et Iseut*, the scene can and must be read in the light either of a proxy marriage or proxy betrothal. Given that the scene's dialogue is not given in direct speech, it is impossible to know if statements of intention were given *per verba de praesenti* or *de futuro* and thus if the marriage was immediately legally binding. Fundamentally, the question bears little weight as what is clear is that Tristan is acting as a proxy to the father-figure, King Marc. It is significant that the action of union described is the linking of Tristan and Yseult's right hands. Contrary to modern standards or even the practice of Southern Europe, the exchange of the rings in medieval France was most often associated with betrothals, rather than marriages (Korpiola, "Introduction" 2; Musson 128). In a study of illuminations from legal documents about marriage law

and practice, Musson contends that the joining of the right hands is the most potent and prevalent symbol of union available to medieval miniaturists:

Symbols of the exchange of vows and the union of one flesh, the giving of a ring and the joining of hands, naturally permeate the marriage scenes, though the distinct physical nature of the two gestures means that they were mutually exclusive [...]. The gestures can be regarded both as “evidentiary,” evincing aspects of intent as well as indicating objectively the legal consequences of the couple’s voluntary physical union, and “demonstrative,” clarifying thereby the implications of the couple’s words (the vows exchanged) and confirming their choice of partner. (Musson 127-8)

In the tableau of union offered by Bédier, the king of Ireland gives his daughter’s hand in marriage is limited to the physical act of literally giving her hand to another (Bédier *Roman de Tristan* 53). The action’s symbolic weight is enough to represent Yseult’s consent, reluctant or not, to the will of her father and King Marc. Through this single element, the joining of right hands, is represented synecdochically the whole of a proxy marriage, which is, itself, a metonymic gesture, as it substitutes a contiguous figure—the proxy, in this case a close family member—for the referent.

Sexual ethics, marriage practice, and religious *Weltanschauung*, not to mention the Mediterranean, separate Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī’s *Vīs u Rāmīn* from Bérout’s *Roman de Tristan*, the oldest of the Old French Tristan romances. From a single, simple premise—a noble of the king’s house falls impossibly in love with his lord and father-figure’s wife—two significantly different traditions arise: where one can end happily while the other can only end in death. Much of this difference can be explained by the cultural expectations of the attendant audience in its historical moment and that as that moment changes so to must the implications of the premise. Yet, despite, the significance of these differences, the romance traditions show striking similarity at many crucial moments. Further, these similarities extend beyond the episodic and the descriptive, implicating instead the very

fundamentals of the narration itself. Thus the bride is not just escorted but that that escort provides the opportunity for love's arrow to strike, while also establishing the lover in the role of proxy for an impotent king, or rather of a king whose potency depends entirely on the intervention and support of the lover. These continuities, rather than mere momentary alignments, are emblematic of a larger discourse that is anything but fortuitous, continuities that reveal the shared concerns and preoccupations in the creation and maintenance of erotic relationships in the aristocracies of the medieval Mediterranean world.

#### THE CONFIDANTE

Moving forward from *Tristan* to *Cligès*, some of the seemingly insurmountable differences identified by Trindade, Polak and Kunitzsch disappear; with this longer view, still more continuities appear. The ineluctable tragedy of Tristan and Yseult's star-crossed love is replaced by a happy union almost beyond reproach. By displacing into the East the romance's setting, by moving from the *matière de Bretagne* to the *matière de Byzance*, Chrétien de Troyes reconnects some of the threads of the legend of Vis and Rāmīn lost in the telling of the Tristan legend. Is this after all not the key to the riddle of Chrétien's eastward gaze in his incipit and explicit? Where the *translatio studii* of chivalry from Greece to France, via Rome, points East, the orientalist fantasies of Eastern sexuality, with its eunuchs and harems, point still further East beyond Byzantium.<sup>23</sup> To explore the implications of *Cligès*

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[23] Concerning the *translatio studii*:

Par les livres que nos avons  
Les fez des anciens savons  
Et del siegle qui fu jadis.  
Ce nos ont nostre livre apris

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Qu'an Grece ot de Chevalerie  
Le premier los et de clergie.  
Puis vint chevalerie a Rome  
Et de la clergie la some,  
Qui or est an France venue. (*Cligès* vv. 27-35)

*Because of the books that we have, we know of the deeds of the ancients and of centuries past. We learned from these books that in Greece were the first laws of chivalry and of the clergy. And then chivalry came to Rome with the entirety of law, which since has come to France.*

For more on the function and implications of *translatio studii* at work in *Cligès*, see Kinoshita's "The Poetics of Translatio: French-Byzantine Relations in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*."

Concerning eastern sexuality:

Einz puis n'i ot empereor  
N'eüst de sa fame peor  
Qu'ele nel deüst decevoir  
Se il oïst ramantevoir  
Comant Fenice Alis deçut,  
Primes par la poison qu'il but  
Et puis par l'autre traïson.  
Por ce einzi com an prison  
Est gardee an Constantinoble,  
Ja n'iert tant haute ne tant noble,  
L'empererriz, quex qu'ele soit :  
L'empereres point ne la croit  
Tant con de celi li remanbre.  
Toz jors la fet garder en chanbre  
Plus por peor que por hasle,  
Ne ja avoec li n'avra masle  
Qui ne soit chastrez en anfance.  
De ce n'est crienme ne dotance  
Qu'Amors les lit an son lien. (*Cligès* vv. 6749-6767)

*Thus since then no emperor has not feared women, that she would deceive him, if he had heard how Fenice betrayed Alis, first by the potion she drank and then by her other treason. For this reason, the empress in Constantinople, no matter how highborn or how noble she might be, is guarded as if in a prison: the emperor does not believe her as long as he remembers the other; he always keeps her guarded in her bedroom, more out of fear than for the sun, and never is she in the presence of a male, who had not been castrated in infancy. And thus there is not reason to fear that Love will ensnare him in her bonds.*

Building on the seminal work by Pierce on the Ottoman harem, Ringrose calls into question the practice of sequestering women at the Byzantine court in "Women and Power at the Byzantine Court."

as repatriation, I will touch briefly on the role of the duenna as confidante and sorceress in the three romances studied, showing that *Cligès's* representation of the duenna has far more in common with that of *Vīs u Rāmīn* than it does with that of either Bérout's or Thomas d'Angleterre's *Roman de Tristan*.

The confidant occupies a privileged role in the medieval imaginary and is central in the landscape of the courtly romance. Companion, advisor, and messenger, the confidant is required by the personification of Love in Guillaume de Lorris's canonical *Roman de la Rose*:

Or te lo et vueil que tu quieres  
Un compaignon sage et celant,  
Cui tu dies tout ton talant  
Et descuevre tout ton corage.  
Cil te fera grant avantage  
Quant ti mal t'angoisseront fort. (vv. 3684-9)

*Now I want and command you to find a wise and discreet companion, to whom you can tell all your desires and reveal your whole heart. He will be of great help to you when your troubles cause you great anguish.*

Meanwhile, the confidant is tolerated by Andreas Capellanus in the *De Amore* but encouraged Ibn Ḥazm in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* (Capellanus 248, Ibn Ḥazm 142). The role of the confidante is attributed to each of the heroine's servants. Milani, writing of the role of the nurse or "nanny"—for Milani, "nanny" is "a generic term referring to maidservants, slave girls, attendants, nurses, and wet-nurses" (Milani 185)—in classical Persian literature, highlights the use-value of her maginal status:

Less constrained by laws of segregation than the heroine, [the nanny] has easier access to the outside world. Her lower social status affords her a certain mobility denied the high-born woman. Heroines, whose seclusion is the prerequisite of their charm and allure, borrow, as it were, their nannies' eyes, ears, tongues, hands, and feet. Working at the limits of a gendered, sexualized,

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Ringrose argues that while the Western European imaginary ascribed the practice of the harem to Byzantium, the Byzantines, in turn, "themselves fell prey to such Orientalizing tendencies. They believed that somewhere 'in the East' there were places where women lived in seclusion guarded by powerful eunuchs" (Ringrose 65).

and segregated world, neither entirely inside nor outside, the nanny figure lives on the borderlines, walks on the edges, oversteps the frontiers. She is a border-transgressor. She trespasses the *ḥaram* [حرام] (women's quarter), disregards the *ḥarīm* [حریم] (protected space), has no respect for *ḥadd* [حد] (thresholds), performs the *ḥarām* [حرام] (the forbidden), and violates territorial and social *ḥudūd* [حدود] (proprieties). The nanny challenges cultural barriers and creates a space of possibilities. As a messenger, adviser, buffer, officer of misrule, mediator between the protagonists and the readers, she transgresses barriers – sexual and textual. (Milani 186-7)

These same remarks hold true for the figure of the *ʿajūz* in medieval Arabic literature and indeed for the *vieille* in medieval French literature, archetypal characters that often serve as messengers and confidantes within their respective literary traditions. Despite the overwhelming similarities between the *ʿajūz* and the *vieille*, the two are not perfectly analogous. While the Christian tradition tended to construe women, following Eve, as bearing responsibility for Man's fall, Islam held that "Adam and Eve were tempted together. Satan murmurs suggestions to them both, and 'So they two of them ate of it'" (Milani 182-3). This allows the *ʿajūz* to be an ambivalent rather than inherently pernicious figure in Arabic literature. In Iranian popular belief, Eve, functioning as a calque of the Zoroastrian figure, Jahi or Jēh, "is viewed as the prototype of womanly guile," a position more closely associated with the *vieille* than the *ʿajūz* (Milani 182).

Brangien is, strictly speaking, not a "nanny," nor does she function along the same lines as Thessala and Vis's unnamed nurse. That the nurse in *Viś u Rāmīn* is identified only by her place of origin and thus remains unnamed throughout the romance, despite the critical role that she plays, further highlights the character's marginal status. Similarly, Fenice's Greek lady's maid seems to be named after her place of origin as well, given the homophony of Thessala and Thessaly, underscoring her marginal status as well. While Brangien, whose name extends her identity beyond simple



provenance, does occupy certain roles and exhibit certain qualities attributed to the nurse in general, she does so as part of a larger cast of female characters, who, through their dissimulations and access to magic arts, destabilize the structural integrity of the Tristan legend's patriarchal hierarchies. Thus it Yseult's mother, the queen of Ireland, brews the magic philter; Yseult herself has access to otherworldly healing skills, and Brangien occupies the marital couch for her mistress. Consider, in comparison, the traits traditionally ascribed to the nurse in Persian literature, as catalogued by Milani:

A guileless nanny is a rarity, even an oxymoron, in classical Persian romances. She is the epitome of shiftiness, of disguise and impersonation. Over and over again, she is portrayed as a perpetrator of outright falsehood, a master of intrigues, a "marvel of deceit," "a woman steeped in magic arts, in spells, and wiles." The nanny is cunning personified. She knows magic recipes and formulas. Through her witchcraft, she can control key characters. She can prepare love potions to captivate the heart of the man whose love the heroine desires. She can concoct aphrodisiacs. She can induce impotence. She can lie, cheat, steal, falsify, withhold vital information, slip in and out of the public arena without revealing her true identity. Unruly woman that she is, she can disrupt power relations. (Milani 185)

In the *Romans de Tristan*, Yseult herself corresponds most closely to this archetypal character: she lies and deceives, pulls the strings for her own gain; she is her own agent. In *Cligès*, Thessala alone provides potions on no fewer than two occasions to aid and abet her mistress, like Vis's nurse who creates the talisman of impotence for Mübad and who takes her mistresses place in bed. The parallels between Thessala and Vis's nurse are apparent in ways that exclude Brangien as a third point.

If anything, we find in the few examples explored here more similarity between Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligès* and *Vis u Rāmīn* than we do between this latter and the *Romans de Tristan* by Bérout or Thomas d'Angleterre, even though *Cligès* seems to explicitly cast itself as a reworking of these earlier Tristan legends. We even find a similarity in the tone that reminds the reader more of *Vis u Rāmīn* than

the *Romans de Tristan*, a certain coldness and critique of the couple's infidelity, all while finding the individual characters laudable. Thus, in many ways, *Cligès* can be read as a repatriation of the Tristan legend, from British Isles in the West into the Greek East, toward the lands of its origin in Persia. We have not set out to prove, however, that the Tristan legend or its rewriting by Chrétien de Troyes are indebted to the legend of Vīs and Rāmīn, wherever we may happen to fall in our convictions. Instead, we aim to show that our three couples, Tristan and Yseult, Cligès and Fenice and Vīs and Rāmīn, constitute three points of a literary constellation that spans the Mediterranean in important and evocative ways. This constellation provides no homogenous or unified representation of adulterous or endogamous love. Far from it, in fact, as each tradition is inflected by the particular cultural values of its author and its intended audience. Through their long tradition, first oral and then manuscript, scores of elements accumulate and linger, adding cultural contradictions that further obscure the common fundamental nucleus that these stories represent. These differences, however, should not be altogether unexpected. Even within a single authors works, one finds contradictions: Guinevere consents in the *Chevalier de la charette* to what Fenice rejects in *Cligès*, each representing different postures within a single conception of courtly love as ideal. Thus both the similarities and differences between these traditions can be mobilized to further explore the shared heritage that they represent.

### Chapter 3: The *Alf Layla wa Layla* in France

A recurring tale in medieval world literature is the tale of the weeping bitch. This tale, thought to have first appeared in India—"primarily because of the implicit concept of the transfer of soul" (Marzolph and Leeuwen 447)—, explores the depravity and duplicity of women and the dangers of credulity. In it, a woman, during her husband's absence, is courted by another man, who, seeing his advances rebuffed, enlists the aid of an old woman in seducing his quarry. In order to convince the married woman to acquiesce to her lover's demands, the old woman shows her a dog, which she has secretly feed peppered meat so as to make it eyes water. This dog, lies the old woman, was once a proud and beautiful woman that was punished and transformed into a dog for rejecting a lover, a decision for which the dog continues to shed tears of regret. Fearing that she should meet a similar fate, the woman agrees to capitulate to her suitor's desires. In some versions, however, the old woman is unable to find him and so she returns with a replacement: none other than the woman's absent husband at whom the wife hurls abuse so as to hide her own guilt. This story appears with minor variation in the *Alf Layla wa Layla* under the title "The Wife's Device to Cheat her Husband," in the *Gesta Romanorum* in the form of the *De inexsecrabili dolo vetularum*, as the basis for the only extant

*fabliau* known in Old English, *Dame Sirip*, as well as in a chapter concerning women's tricks from the fifteenth-century *al-Rawd al-Āṭir fī Nuzhat al-Khāṭir* by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nafzāwī.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike so many other works, the tale of the weeping bitch is unique because we know exactly how the tale made its way into the Latin and Romance corpuses: at some point, most likely during the first quarter of the twelfth century, the tale was adapted from Arabic into Latin by Petrus Alfonsi, a Jewish convert to Christianity from Huesca, in his *Disciplina clericalis*.<sup>2</sup> This compilation of thirty-four exemplary stories told by a master to his disciple, which John Tolan characterizes as "the only work of its genre in twelfth-century Latin literature," was widely translated into a multitude of vernaculars including Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Gascon, Italian, German, English, Icelandic, as well as in both verse and prose versions in Old French. Through out all of these versions and translations, the

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[1] "The Wife's Device to Cheat her Husband" is embedded in the "Craft and Malice of Women" frame—also known as "the Tale of the King, His Son, His Concubine and the Seven Viziers"—, which is known for its largely misogynist corpus of exemplary tales. While it is included in most of the modern editions, including the Bûlâq and the Calcutta II editions, it first appeared in the Breslau edition, which was published between 1835 and 1843. It is absent from both the Galland manuscript, edited by Muhsin Mahdi and Galland's translation.

[2] Little is known for sure about the life of Petrus Alfonsi. According to his own account in the *Dialogi contra Iudaeos*, dated from 1108 or 1110, he was baptized a Christian by Alphonso I the Battler of Aragon in 1106 in Huesca, from whom he takes his agnomen (Tolan 9). What the precise nature of his relationship to his godfather is unclear although it does allow scholars to speculate that he might have been in some way in the service of the court, a charge that, according to John Tolan, "would help explain why some Jews accused him of converting out of lust for worldly power" (Tolan 10). At some point between his baptism and 1116, when he would translate a number of astronomical tables, Petrus emigrated to England where he "may have served as Henry [I of England]'s private physician" (Tolan 11). At some point following this, "Alfonsi went to northern France, where apparently he taught, and where he composed his undated *Epistola ad peripateticos*, a defense of the practical uses of astrology" (Tolan 11). The *Disciplina clericalis* was most likely composed while in either France or England. The *incipit* of the *Disciplina clericalis* suggests that Alfonsi first composed the work in a language other than Latin before translating it himself.

tale, its form and its content, remain largely intact, suggesting that some tales from the Islamicate world were adopted essentially wholesale into the Old French literary tradition with only very minor adaptation; the transposition of the tale from an Islamic to a Christian context often sufficed. While this sort of simple transposition was often effected in shorter tales, such as the didactic folk literature that would eventually find its way into both the *Alf Layla wa Layla* and the *speculum principum* and didactic traditions, such was also the case for Robert d'Orbigny's *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*. This proto-romance, which was adapted into almost every major European vernacular literature during the Middle Ages, has, I will argue in this chapter, an almost perfect counterpart in the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm," the embedded tale in the "the Story of Qamar al-Zamān" from the *Alf Layla wa Layla*, a compendium of Arabic frame stories known variously as *The Arabian Nights* and *The Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will explore these two traditions, those of the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* and the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm," with the aims of elucidating the paths by which tales such as these were able to circulate throughout the medieval Mediterranean. Ultimately, I suggest that it is not simply the fact that this tale reflects universal human experiences that allowed it to be so easily adapted across political, cultural, linguistic and religious borders but that, because it retains the specificity of its complex cultural moment, it also speaks to the common cultural orientations that

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[3] The title, *The Arabian Nights*, is derived from the title of the first translation of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* into English, the anonymous "Grub Street" edition of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*, which was published between 1706 and 1721 from Galland's translation. Robert Mack's *Arabian Nights Entertainments* is based on a slightly edited edition of these early "Grub Street" translations. This title remained the name of choice for future translators, such as Jonathan Scott, who, in 1800, was the first to translate the *Alf Layla wa Layla* into English from Arabic. Edward William Lane first introduced the title *The One Thousand and One Nights* into English through his expurgated three-volume translation published between 1838 and 1841.

underpinned the medieval Mediterranean of the twelfth century.

#### FLOIRE ET BLANCHEFLOR AND THE EUROPEAN PROTO-ROMANCE

The *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* is a profoundly European text, reflecting the fears and fantasies of the mid-twelfth century. It begins on the Camino de Santiago where a knight and his daughter are on pilgrimage from France following the death of his wife when they are waylaid by marauding Muslim forces. Spared death, the daughter is taken prisoner by King Felix and presented to his wife, the queen, as a slave. As it happens, both the queen and her slave are pregnant and both give birth on the same day; the Christian slave gives birth to a daughter, Blancheflor, while the Muslim queen has a son, Floire. As they are raised and educated together, the two fall in love but, disapproving of their union, Floire's parents sell Blancheflor to slave traders, and convince Floire that she has died. In order to authenticate their ruse, Floire's parents build a magnificent, automated mausoleum to hide the absence of Blancheflor's body. Despairing at the death of his beloved, Floire's health degrades rapidly until his parents, fearing for his life, reveal their deceit. Floire, therefore, departs for Babylone to discover the fate of his beloved. Upon his arrival, he learns that Blancheflor is being held by the Emir, Marsile, in his harem, the Tour-aux-Pucelles.<sup>4</sup> Through chess and bribery, Floire infiltrates the

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[4] As early as the *Chanson de Roland*, medieval French literature systematically misidentifies the city of Cairo on the Nile with Baghdad on the Euphrates, which was built some fifty miles north of the historical Akkadian city of Babylon. The confusion appears to stem from misidentifying this latter city with the Roman fortress at Babylone on the banks of the Nile in the area now known as Coptic Cairo. The reader must also recall that Cairo was not the original Muslim capital of Egypt. Instead the capital was the nearby city of Fustat, which was built on the site from which 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ (658–664), the Arab commander of the Muslim forces in Egypt, laid siege to the Babylone Fortress in 640. Cairo, the *madīnat al-Qāhira*, was not built until the Shi'a Fatimids took control of the region in 969 and sought to displace power from the predominately Sunni urban center of Fustat. Fustat reached its zenith

tower hidden in a basket of flowers and thus is reunited with Blancheflor. Their happiness is but momentary as the couple is soon discovered and brought before the Emir for punishment. Recounting their tale, Floire convinces the emir to spare their lives. The emir goes further, however, and marries Floire and Blancheflor to each other and himself marries Blancheflor's companion, Gloris, a captive princess of Germanic origin. During the festivities, a messenger arrives, announcing the death of Floire's father and his ascension to the throne. Together they return to Al-Andalus and Floire converts to Christianity and with him his kingdom, presaging the conversion of Iberia. From them the author traces Charlemagne's lineage. These details help to write the narrative into the context of a European project of imperial prehistory.

It would be difficult to overstate the widespread interest in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* or its longevity throughout Western Europe. Two separate versions of the story of Floire and Blancheflor are extant in Old French; the older *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, referred to as the aristocratic version, which is the object of the present study, and *Roman de Floire et Blancheflor*, commonly known as the popular version. In addition to the inclusion of new elements to the *Conte*, such as the Barbarin episode and the second *planctus*, the later *Roman* is characterized by its more martial interests, thus playing up the epic rather than romantic qualities of the story. While its composition is dated to the twelfth century, the oldest complete manuscript of the *Conte*, MS Bibliothèque nationale de France fr. 375, is from thirteenth-century Picardy. The parallels between certain bibliographical details of the

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during the twelfth century until the Fatimid vizier Shāwar ibn Majīr al-Sa'dī [r. 1163–1169] ordered it razed by in 1169 in order prevent the advancing Crusader forces led by King Amalric I of Jerusalem from seizing its wealth. For an account of the burning of Fustaṭ see Bilkadi's "The Oil Weapons." The Old French "Babylone" is retained in here to maintain this geographic ambivalence.

French royal couple and its correspondence with those of the romance's eponymous couple, however, allow Jean-Luc Leclanche to set Louis VII's 1147 crusade, on which Aliénor accompanied him, as the romance's *terminus a quo* and their marriage's annulment in 1152 as *terminus ad quem*, although Leclanche does suggest that "la vraisemblance psychologique nous arrête plutôt aux années 1147-1149 (Leclanche "La date" 567). Of particular note to Leclanche is the age of the couples: 15 for both Floire and Blancheflor, 15 and 16 for the Aliénor and Louis respectively; the death of a father figure on pilgrimage to Compostela: Blancheflor loses her grandfather, while it was Aliénor's father, Guillaume X, duke of Aquitaine, who died; and finally the news of a father's death during nuptial celebrations: for Floire, the two events are simultaneous, while Louis learned of his father's death only days later (Leclanche "La date" 565). Concerning the attribution of the *Conte*, the situation is less clear. Konrad Fleck, the thirteenth-century German poet, whose adaptation of the *Conte* is discussed below, attributes the original to a certain Robert von Orbênt, which as Leclanche notes, "ne correspond à aucun lieu connu" (Leclanche 556). Rejecting both Joachim Henryk Rienhold's suggestion of a Norman poet and Maurice Delbouille's theory of a poet from Le Maine, Leclanche suggests instead that the poet Robert was from the Touraine: given "le détournement de la locution *avoir l'ostel saint Julien* au bénéfice de saint Martin et le nom même du héros, Floire—nom que la légende, depuis le Pseudo-Grégoire de Tours, attribuait à saint Martin avant sa conversation—, nous orientent-ils vers Tours, la cité martinienne" (Leclanche Introduction xiv-xv). Orbigny in the Touraine is therefore the most likely toponym available in Leclanche's estimation.

In addition to the two integral twelfth-century versions in Old French, which constitute the earliest extant versions in a European vernacular, translations and adaptations of it can be found, and



sometimes in multiple versions, in Spanish, Italian, English, German, and even Norwegian, to name but a few.<sup>5</sup> The dates of these translations suggest that the tale remained relevant throughout much of Europe through the seventeenth century. As Patricia Grieve recounts in her study, *Floire and Blancheflor and the European Romance*, "in 1661 Roman authorities added to the Index of Forbidden Books the *vita* of one Rosana, who was captured by pagans, and her daughter, also named Rosana, whose militant steadfastness to Christianity and chastity—while living in a lustful Sultan's harem—earned her a heavenly crown" (Grieve 2). This saint's life, which was first described in a fifteenth-century Florentine *Sacrae Rappresentazione* that did not survive the sixteenth century, "demonstrates," according to Grieve, "the dangers of reading, for her [Rosana's] *vita* tells not only about a completely apocryphal saint, but about one who is recast from a medieval romance, the story of the lovers Floire and Blancheflor" (Grieve 3). Before passing into hagiography, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, spread widely throughout the European vernacular literatures. In the first quarter of the thirteenth century, it, along with the Tristan legend and Chrétien de Troyes's Arthurian romances, was translated into Old Norwegian as the *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* at the court of the King of Norway, Hákon Hákonarson (1204 – 1263, r. 1217 – 1263), a translation that is extant today in a single Icelandic manuscript of fifteenth-century origin (Grieve 38). By this point, the *conte* would have already had to have been known in England, whence the manuscript most likely came, if we accept Jean-Luc Leclanche's account in his introduction to the critical edition of the *Le Conte de Floire et Blanchefleur* (xiv). Otherwise, Grieve suggests a possible Iberian antecedent:

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[5] Both the Anglo-Norman Palatine fragment (MS Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Palatinus latinus 1971) and the Low Rhenish Trier *Floryis* fragments (MS Stadtbibliothek Mappe X.13) predate MS BNF français 375. These earlier fragments confirm, however, that the *Conte* is in fact anterior to the *Roman*.

While I cannot prove it at this stage, I think it possible that an early version from thirteenth-century Spain went back to Scandinavia with the envoy from King Hákon of Norway (the Norwegian group did, after all, spend one year at Alfonso's court simply arranging the betrothal [of Hákon's daughter, Christina, to Alfonso X's brother, the Infante Felipe], and another period of time preparing the wedding and festivities), and that is perhaps how the Spanish and Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts came to have some odd concurrences. (Grieve 38)

Regardless, an English version, *Floris and Blancheflur*, was composed by the end of that same century, circa 1250, making it roughly contemporary with the various German and Dutch translations discussed below. The Norwegian version, which included a different ending than either of the Old French versions, was translated into Swedish for Queen Euphemia of Rügen (c. 1280 – 1312) as part of the *Eufemiavisorna* ["Euphemia poem"] along with *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren*, based on Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*, and *Hertig Fredrik av Normandie*. This Swedish version was subsequently retranslated into Danish during the decades surrounding the turn of the sixteenth century (Leclanche, Introduction, XXIV).

Interestingly, The *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* is not the only version of the the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* extant from Iceland. Instead, in his 1922 article on the *Fornaldarsögur*, or the sagas of Antiquity, Chester Nathan Gould suggests the value of reading the *Friðþjófs saga* in conjunction not only with a number of southern counterparts but along with specifically Islamicate ones, an impetus that Gould attributes to having "so accustomed myself to the spirit of the other [*Fornaldarsögur*] sagas that the ethical views and the theme of the *Friðþjófs saga*, which were in direct violation of their standards, were repugnant to me" (Gould 220). Specifically, the thingness of women in the *Friðþjófs saga* and thus their portability is in Gould's estimation contrary to the ethos found elsewhere

in Norse epics wherein female characters are actors in their own rights, who exercise their own agency and accept the consequences of their actions, and that "kings in old Scandinavian romance are not in the habit of giving away their wives nor of allowing former suitors to remain in their vicinity" (Gould 225). In searching for this "exotic" theme of female portability and thingness in other literary tradition, Gould identifies a number of parallels from Old French literature. Most naturally, of course, he identifies *Floire et Blancheflor* as it is known in Iceland around the same time but then goes on to identify thirteenth-century prosimetric *chanteable*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, the exact nature of whose relationship to *Floire et Blancheflor* is yet to be fully accounted for, and its fourteenth-century imitation, *Clarisse et Florent*, one of several continuations of the thirteenth-century *chanson de geste*, *Huon de Bordeaux* (Gould 233). This theme, although attested in Old French literature, remains foreign largely, and finds, according to Gould, its authentic expression in Islamic literature. In particular, this story type, in which wives and slave girls are given to their lovers, "so strange to the North, were the commonplaces of the storyteller" of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* and is evinced in a number of its tales (Gould 227). To give an exhaustive list would be unnecessary as several key tales should suffice: "the Tale of 'Attāf," "Abū al-Ḥasan of Khorasan," "The Reeves's Tale" [Ḥikāyat al-Shāhid], "the Tale of Ghānim ibn Ayyūb" [Ḥikāyat al-Tājir Ayyūb wa ibnihi Ghānim wa bintihi Fitna] and "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm," all constitute some version of this story type.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the later *Reinalds-rímur*, a set

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[6] Although included in the Habitch edition of 1825 and in Burton's 1888 sixth and final *Supplemental Nights to the Thousand and One Nights*, "the Tale of 'Attāf" is not included in any of the other principle edition of the *Alf Layla wa Layla*, being absent from both the Galland manuscript and the Galland translation, as well as both the Bûlâq and the Calcutta II editions. The tale's inclusion in the *Alf Layla wa Layla* appears to result from the spurious Chavis manuscript, which claimed to complete Galland's unfinished *Mille et une nuits*. Marzolph and Leeuwen provide the following account of Dom Chavis's manuscript:

of twelve Icelandic dance ballads from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, have been generally accepted as another Nordic variation on the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, although a Byzantine rather than Old French origin has also been suggested (Gould 234).

The continental tradition is equally robust. As Leclanche notes, "le *Conte* avait connu dès les premières années un succès remarquable, qu'attestent de nombreuses mentions qui s'étendent

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In 1788–1789 the *Continuation des Mille et Une Nuits* was published in four volumes of the series *Le Cabinet des fées* in Geneva. The *Continuation* is based on various sources, none of them related to an established pre-Galland version of the *Arabian Nights*. Parts of the *Continuation* are based on an Arabic manuscript that Chavis himself has written while presenting it as "authentic." [...] The manuscript beings by continuing the *Tale of Qamar al-Zamân and Budûr*, which in the final volume of Galland's manuscript was left unfinished. [...] Some of the stories in the *Continuation* were invented outright by either Chavis or [Jacques] Cazotte [who edited Chavis's "translation"]. (Marzolph and Leeuwen 520)

This, however, is not the oldest version of "the Take of 'Attâf." An early version of the tale, for example, is extant in a thirteenth-century Persian compilation of anecdotes, *Javâme' al-Hekâyât*, by Sadîd al-Dîn Muḥammad al-'Ûfi. In the preceding century, however, a version of this same tale, "Exemplum de integro amico," was included as the second tale by Petrus Alfonsi in his *Disciplina clericalis*. From here, the tale made its way into both the *Gesta Romanorum*, abridged in "De amicitiae verae probatione" and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, as "Tito e Gisippo" (Marzolph and Leeuwen 109).

The tale, "Abû al-Ḥasan of Khorasan," is absent from both the Galland manuscript, edited by Muhsin Mahdi, and the Galland translation but first appeared in the *Alf Layla wa Layla* in the Calcutta II and Bûlâq editions. While it appears to have originated during the Baghdad period, Marzolph and Leeuwen note that "the story is also quoted in an anonymous sixteenth-century Egyptian collection of narrative texts similar to those of the *Arabian Nights*" (Marzolph and Leeuwen 69).

"The Reeve's Tale" is an embedded tale within the larger "Hunchback's Tale" cycle. It is extant in every edition of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* from the Galland manuscript onwards. As such, it constitutes one of the tales of the *Alf Layla wa Layla*'s core stories. Muhsin Mahdi shows, in his "From History to Fiction: The Tale Told by the King's Steward" that this tale is based on an historical report from tenth-century Iraq. Specifically, it is recounted by al-Muḥassin al-Tanûkhî (940 – 994), a prominent judge and aide to the Buyid emir, 'Aḍud al-Dawla (936 – 983, r. 978 – 983), in his *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shidda* [*The Deliverance after Stress*]. The setting of the tale from the *Alf Layla wa Layla* is displaced from its original Baghdadi locale to the distant context of the Chinese imperial court.

Translated as "the Tale of Ghānim ibn Ayyûb, the Distraught, the Thrall of Love" by Richard Francis Burton, this tale is present from the Galland translation of the early eighteenth century and included in every subsequent major edition but is absent from the Galland manuscript itself.

jusqu'au début du XVIe siècle" (Leclanche XXV). Most notably, perhaps, amongst these early references to the work are the seventeen found in works by the troubadours, the earliest of which is found in the *Ensenhamen del joglar* of Guirau III, viscount of Àger and Cabrera (d. c. 1165). This two-hundred-and-sixteen-verse didactic poem inventories the literary culture of his day from contemporary troubadour poets to the *Chanson de Roland*. Some scholars have argued—albeit inconclusively—that these references testify to the existence of an early Occitan *Floris* (Leclanche XXV, n. 1). Early interest in the tale was also shown in the Germanic literatures. In fact, the Trier *Floryis* fragments constitute the earliest known manuscript evidence of the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* even though the original dating of c. 1170 has been moved back to the first quarter of the thirteenth century, making them roughly contemporary, if slightly anterior, with the Palatine fragment (Grieve 15, n. 1). The thirteenth century saw translations into Middle Dutch [*Floris ende Blanceflor*] and Middle High German [*Flore unde Blanschelur*] by Diederic van Assenede (c. 1255) and Konrad Fleck (c. 1230) respectively. A third, anonymous Low German adaption, *Flos und Blankeflos*, is also extant from that same century, testifying further to the interest of thirteenth-century Germanic audiences in this tale.

While much of the manuscript history discussed above points to the existence of an early Spanish tradition, the earliest extant manuscript evidence of it is the fourteenth-century *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*, although Patricia Grieve gives a somewhat earlier date of composition c. 1295 (Grieve 204).<sup>7</sup> Still, a hypothetical twelfth or early thirteenth-century version remains conjectural. Before the discovery of the *Crónica*, the earliest version known in Spanish was the late *Historia de los*

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[7] The first critical edition of the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* is published in 2011 by David Arbesú through the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

*enamorados Flores y Blancaflor*, a prose version of the tale dating from the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> This extremely late date was itself astonishing given both the assumptions about its origins and the known facts of its transmission history. The discovery of the *Crónica*, while it does show that the story circulated much earlier than scholars could previously prove, provides little insight into the earlier history of the tale in Iberia.

The chronicle version of *Flores y Blancaflor* appears interpolated in a single late fourteenth, early fifteenth-century manuscript (MS Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 7583) of the *Estoria de España*, also known as the *Primera crónica general*, which covers the history of Spain under the Asturian kings. All things told, this version covers some fifty folios of the *Primera crónica general* (Grieve 22). Building on research by Diego Catalán, Patricia Grieve suggests that, unlike earlier versions of the *Primera crónica general*, which were composed at the request of the Castilian king, Alfonso X el Sabio, BN Madrid 7583 was composed during the reign of Sancho IV in part at least because it responds to the specific needs of the contemporaneous political climate (Grieve 34-5). As Grieve argues, "the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* argues indirectly for the importance of dynasty and for a historical, even divine, establishment of a dynasty that links the thrones of Spain and France" (Grieve 34). Interestingly, whether it responds to these needs or not, the *Crónica* is the only version to explicitly link the story of Floire and Blancheflor to Arabic literature. As Grieve explains

In *Flores y Blancaflor* [...] the Spanish chronicler] Sigiberto is credited with having translated the Arabic story of Floire and Blancheflor into Castilian (f. 8v), having composed a history of African Kings who rules also in southern Spain (f. 5v), and having been an eyewitness to the coronation of Flores and Blancaflor in Córdoba (f. 45r). (Grieve 32).

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[8] For an account of this print version's publication, see Patricia Grieve's *Floire et Blancheflor and the European Romance*, p. 20-22.

While some scholars, such as José Gómez Pérez, have rejected that a Sigiberto existed or have otherwise identified him with the author of the *Chronographia*, variously referred to as Sigibert, Sujulbert or Gilbert de Gembloux, Catalán argues that a now lost *Grande estoria del Señorío de África*—a work that would correspond with the second claim given above—was composed by a monk, most likely at the monastery of San Pedro de Cardena, during the reign of Sancho IV (Grieve 32). Should Catalán's hunch be correct, it would add credence to the chronicler's claims of an Arabic origin to the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*. This possibility is of particular interest, given the authority on which Robert d'Orbigny tells his tale. According to the *Conte's* incipit, he heard it told by a high-born lady to her younger sister "un venredi après mangier" [*one Friday after dinner*] (v. 34). She, we are informed, had it from "un boins clers li avoit dit, / qui l'avoit leü en escrit" [*a good cleric told her, who had read it in writing*] even as the tale itself was already some two hundred years old (vv. 53-4).

While the composition of the anonymous Italian *Cantare di Fiorio e Biancifiore* most likely predates that of Boccaccio's *Il Filocolo*, which was written between 1336 and 1339, Boccaccio's work shows marked similarities to the *Crónica* version. In fact, dating this latter text as anterior to *Il Filocolo* is significant, as Grieve points out because "much of what has been considered to be original material by Boccaccio occurs in the Chronicle" (Grieve 33). This perhaps allows us an important glimpse into the transmission history of the story of Floire and Blancheflor in fourteenth-century Italy. Because while she is apt to draw parallels between the *Crónica* and *Il Filocolo*, Grieve is equally drawn to the similarities between the *Cantare di Fiorio e Biancifiore*, the sixteenth-century *Historia de les dos enamorados Flores y Blanceflor* as well as the fifteenth-century version in Greek, *Φλώριος και Πλατζια*

φλώρα (Grieve 68, 73, 132).<sup>9</sup> Thus as far as the current state of the manuscript history of the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* within the medieval Mediterranean can reveal, it appears that France was the entry point of the tale into the European vernaculars, from whence it spread north before following the southern littoral from the Iberian, through the Italian and into the Greek peninsulas.

Despite being essentially European and despite its widespread appeal, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* is equally an Islamicate text both in its origins, as I will argue, and its setting. The entirety of the romance's plot—apart from the pilgrimage and the conversion that bookend its action—occurs within the confines of the *dār al-Islām*: it is the tale of a Muslim prince traveling to a distant Muslim court. And yet the world described by Robert d'Orbigny is simultaneously accurate and inaccurate. Certain elements, such as the Customs of Alexandria and certain mechanical marvels, which are discussed below, are faithfully reported. Others, however, such as its political hierarchies, are imposed by or translated through those current in Christian Europe. This cultural flattening often coincides with a territorial flattening that creates an in-between space that is neither fully foreign nor fully familiar. Such is the case, for example, of Daire the pontooneer's description of the city of Babylone and its fortifications:

En Babiloine ça dedens  
A tors faites plus de set cens  
U mainent li baron casé,  
Qui enforcent molt la cité.  
La plus foible ne la menor  
Ne doute roi ne aumançor ;  
Neis l'empereres de Rome  
N'i feroit vaillant une pome. (vv. 1807-1814)

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[9] The full title in Greek is *Διηγησις Εφαιρετος Ερωτικη και Ξενη Φλωριου Του Πανευτυχουσ και Κορησ Πλατζια Φλωρασ* [*The Exceptional and Curious Story of the Love of the Most Lucky Florios and the Beautiful Platzia Flora*].



*In Babylone, where we are, there are more than seven hundred towers, where the barons are housed, and which greatly protect the city. Neither the weakest nor the smallest fears king or aumançor; not even the emperor of Rome could do more damage there than an apple.*

This description is ostensibly addressed to a Muslim from Al-Andalus by a Muslim from Egypt. And yet the series of titles this passages presents is a mixture of Islamicate and French titles. Here the vassal of the *amirail*, an authentic enough title derived from *al-'amīr*, are referred to as his *barons*, a distinctly foreign office in the Caliphate. Similarly, Daire's description implies that threats to the city's welfare, as inconsequential as they may be, come from *rois* and the *empereres de Rome*—a claim that makes sense when contextualized by Crusade politics but not those of the pre-Carolingian era in which the story takes place—, not to mention from the *aumançors* of the world. This fictitious title of the Muslim nobility in Old French literature is derived from the *laqab* or honorific nickname, *al-Manşūr*, the victorious, a title worn by two Muslim leaders of relevance to the present study: the second Abbasid Caliph, Abū Ja'far 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Manşūr (714 – 775), who is credited with founding the round city of Bagdad between 762 and 767, which was home to the celebrated *Bayt al-Hikma*; and the *de facto* ruler of Cordoba, Ibn Abī 'Āmir al-Manşūr (c. 938 – 1002, r. c. 980 – 1002), known in Spanish as Almanzor.<sup>10 11 12</sup> While the early Abbasid point of reference is in keeping with the

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[10] A third al-Manşūr was the Almohad Caliph Yūsuf Ya'qub al-Manşūr (c. 1160 – 1199, r. 1184 - 1199), on whose orders the works of Ibn Rushd were burned. While he is roughly contemporary to the composition of , his life and, more importantly, reign, was somewhat later, indicating that he was likely not a point of reference for the author. Similarly, as the title was in circulation in Old French well before the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, an earlier point of entry is necessary.

[11] This round city bears certain resemblances to the city of Babylone described by Robert d'Orbigny if the description of the fortifications are read as indicating a circular, rather than square, disposition (cf. p. 91, n. 3).

[12] The *Bayt al-Hikma* was founded not by Al-Manşūr but by Hārūn al-Rashīd. Often assumed to be a

Baghdadī origins and pro–Abbasid sentiments of the Arabic tale, it is most likely due to the ruler of Cordoba that the title *aumançor* found its way into Old French and into the earliest works of vernacular literature, among them the *Chanson de Roland*. Thus this passage, like the title *aumançor* itself, reflects an unsuccessful attempt by a Christian author to make sense of the Islamic world with which he is forced to contend. This, not to mention the fact that the city itself appears to occupy the space of both the Abbasid and Fatimid capitals of Baghdad and Cairo respectively.

#### FLOIRE ET BLANCHEFLOR IN A SEA OF STORIES

The "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm," which is embedded in the frame–narrative, "The Story of Qamar al-Zamān," in the *Alf Layla wa Layla*, shows marked similarities in structure to the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*. A brief synopsis of the plot's principal contours should prove sufficient to highlight the numerous points of contact between these two tales. Ni'mat Allah, son of al-Rabī ibn Hātīm of Kufa, is raised alongside a slave girl of remarkable beauty, named Nu'm. They get married and fall in love. However, one day, al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, governor of the city, overhears Nu'm singing and devises a plan to have her abducted and sent to the caliph, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, in Damascus in order to further advance his own political career.<sup>13</sup> He therefore enlisted the aid of an old

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library of sorts by contemporary scholars, no evidence of its existence as a physical structure has been discovered.

[13] 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (646 – 705, r. 685 – 705), the fifth Umayyad caliph, and his governor, al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (661 – 714, r. 694 – 714), are both historical characters, allowing the events of the tale to be situated, at least fictitiously, to the decade spanning the turn of the eighth century, 694-705. That being said, the casting of al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq—that is the governor of the garrison towns of Basra and Kufa—is typical of later pro-Abbasid sentiment. Thus, although the content predates the stories of Hārūn al-Rashīd (c. 763 – 809, 786 – 809), found for example in "the Hunchback" cycle by nearly a century, the tone dates from this later period. Despite his many reforms,

lady [*‘ajūz*], who, pretending to be a Sufi penitent, infiltrates the house and entices Nu‘m into visiting a holy shrine while Ni‘ma is away. Abducted, Nu‘m is sent immediately to Damascus, to the Commander of the Faithful's harem, where she begins suffering from acute lovesickness due to the separation. Back in Kufa, a similar fate afflicts Ni‘ma following the loss of his beloved. His parents, seeking a cure, hire a traveling Persian physician who readily identifies the underlying cause of the ailment and so offers to help the couple reunite. Ni‘ma travels with the physician, whom he serves as an assistant, until they arrive in Damascus, where they discover Nu‘m's whereabouts when the Persian is asked to concoct a treatment for a lovesick girl matching her description. Disguised as a slave girl, Ni‘ma infiltrates the harem but loses his way, entering the rooms of the caliph's sister rather than Nu‘m's chambers. Having forced him to reveal his secret, the caliph's sister is moved by their story and so decides to aid them and to facilitate their union, a union that is quickly interrupted by caliph himself. Because the caliph does not realize the identity—or gender—of the interloper, the caliph's sister is able to convince her brother to pass judgement on the couple's situation anonymously, paving the way for their identities to be revealed, and order and the couple to be restored.

Despite the numerous points of alignment between these two narratives, as we have already seen, many of these similarities are not limited to these two stories. Instead, antecedents to the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* can be found in numerous tales from the *Alf Layla wa Layla* as well as

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later literature motivated by sectarian politics tended to portray al-Ḥajjāj as a bloodthirsty despot, highlighting, for example, his killing of the last of the Prophet Muḥammad's companions, Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allah, and of crucifying ‘Abd All ibn al-Zubayr, the grandson of the Rāshidūn Caliph Abū Bakr, and minimizing his role in establishing and overseeing the first Islamic mint, which was founded in Wāsiṭ, Iraq, as well as his instrumental role in establishing Arabic as the official language throughout the *dar al-Islām*.

elsewhere in Arabic and Persian literatures. Further, certain central elements also point back to Latin and Greek sources as well, complicating the picture in entirely new and significant ways. Nevertheless, "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm is the closest counterpart to the tale I have discovered and this pairing will be explored here. This pairing is justified not only because of this proximity but also because because, as a proto-romance, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* is a transitional text in the evolution of Old French romances. As such, a better understanding of its origins has profound implications for understanding the development of the romance in the European High Middle Ages.

Drawing comparisons between the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights* and another medieval text, regardless of origin, be it in Old French or Arabic, is a complicated proposition, since we know so little for certain about the *Nights* in its earliest form. The *Thousand and One Nights* owes something of its origins to a Persian text called the *Hazār Afsāna*, including its frame narrative, "The Story of King Shāhrayār and Shahrāzād, His Vizier's Daughter." The encyclopedist al-Mas'ūdī (c. 896 – 956) provides the following account of the origins of the *Thousand and One Nights* in his *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādīn al-Jawāhir* in the first half of the tenth century:

Many of those well acquainted with their *akhbār* (pseudo-historical tales of 'Abīd [ʿUbaīd] ibn Sharyah and other of the court of Mu'āwiyah) state that these *akhbār* are apocryphal, embellished, and fabricated, strung together by those who drew nigh to the kings by relating them and who duped their contemporaries with memorizing and reciting them (as authentic. They state, furthermore), that they are of the same types of books that have been transmitted to us and translated for us from the Persian [Pahlavi], Indian, and Greek—books composed in like manner as the above mentions—such as the book of *Hazār Afsāna*, or translated from the Persian to the Arabic of the *Thousand Khurāfāt*, (fantastic tales), for *khurāfa* in Persian is called *afsāna*<sup>14</sup>.

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[14] Concerning the etymology of *khurāfa*, Mia Irene Gerhardt provides the following summary of Duncan Black Macdonald's historical explanation:

A 13th-century author states, giving the chain of witnesses, that Mohammed once tolf

The people call this book *A Thousand Nights[and a Night]*. It is the story of the king and the wazir and his daughter and her nurse, [or maid, or sister, or the wazir and his two daughters] named Shīrāzād [Shīrazād] and Dīnāzād [Dīnārazād]. (qtd. Abbott 55)<sup>15</sup>

A similar, contemporary account is found in Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. c. 995) *al-Kitāb al-Fihrist*, which equally relates this literary tradition to that of the *asmār* or night-stories. Together, these two accounts amount to the earliest reliable glimpse into the content of the historical *Thousand and One Nights* because before this, all that is extant is a single folio including the title page of the *Kitāb fī Hadīth Alf Layla* dating to before 879, discovered and deftly analyzed by Nabia Abbott in 1948 at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and a single reference uncovered by Shelomo Dov Goitein in the following decade, among the documents found in the Cairo Geniza. In this "repository of discarded writings in Fustāṭ or Old-Cairo, written mostly in Hebrew characters, but largely in Arabic language and stemming preponderantly from the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods," Goitein discovered in notebook of a Jewish *warrāq*, or book dealer and notary, whose very first entry on the very first page, dating from 1155, read:

‘Ind R(abbī) Menaḥēm k(itāb) al-ta’rīkh  
Majd b. al-‘Azīzī k(itāb) alf laila wa-lailah

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Aīsha a story about a man named Khurāfa, who was caputred by three demons, and redeemed by three passers-by who each told an amazing incident (one of these involving a transformation). Our *The Merchant and the Demon* is so like the Khurāfa story as to appear just another, somewhat more elaborate version of it. [...] If the Khurāfa stoy really goes back to Mohammed's time, the ransom frame [which, according to Gerhardt is an Arab invention] would be quite an old pattern indeed. If, on the other hand, it was made up later, as an attempt to provide the word *khurāfa* with an etymology, it may have been modelled upon *The Merchant and the Demon*. (Gerhardt 402-3)

I am inclined towards this latter opinion.

[15] Text in square brackets constiute variant text while text in parentases are clarifications provided Nabia Abbott.

Ben al-Sōfēr al-dayyān k(itāb) 'Ashr maqālāt. (qtd. Goitein 85)<sup>6</sup>

This reference, again, tells us little in and of itself about the nature and context of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* in this period and yet it is extremely important for deciphering the early history of the *Thousand and One Nights* because, after these four brief indicators, the trail goes silent until the Galland manuscript arrives in Paris in or around 1701. That is the only mention of the compendium extant from the first half of the second millennium apart from a much later but tenuous account that otherwise confirms this chronology: the fifteenth-century Egyptian historian, al-Maqrīzī (1364 – 1442), notes in *al-Mawā'iz wa al-'Itbār bi-Dhikri al-Khiṭaṭ wa al-'Athār*, on account of the thirteenth-century Andlusi, Ibn Sa'īd, that, according to an unidentified al-Qurṭubī, that is to say an individual of Cordovan extraction, the *Thousand and One Nights* circulated in Fatimid Egypt as early as the late eleventh century (Irwin 50).

Between the fragment discovered by Abbott and the Galland manuscript some five centuries

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[16] Goitein unpacks this passage as follows:

Which history book is referred to here cannot be made out, of course. As the man who borrowed the book is styled "rabbi," one might assume that Josippon's very popular *Jewish History* was intended. However, this item is called on p. 38 *Yos' b. Gūriyōn*; therefore, another *Ta'rikh* must be meant here.

*The Ten Chapters* are no doubt Ḥunain b. Ishāq's *Ten Treatises on the Eye*, mentioned again in full on p. 29. [...] The "judge" who borrowed the book most probably practices the medical profession for gaining his livelihood.

Last, but not least, *Alf Layla wa-Laila* was lent out to one called Majd al-'Azīzī. The family name may either go back to the name of the fifth Fatimid Caliph al-'Azīz (976-96), which would mean that the man concerned was the descendant of somebody belonging to the bodyguard or entourage of the Caliph, but as most probably the person was Jewish, it is more likely that the family name refers to the various Egyptian villages called al-'Azīziya. In any case, we see that a book called "One Thousand and One Nights" could be borrowed from a bookseller in Cairo around the middle of the twelfth century. (85)

The *warrāq* not only bought and sold but also lent books or individual stories by the quire.

at least intervene; while Muhsin Mahdi suggests that the manuscript dates from the fourteenth century (Mahdi XX), Heinz Grotzfeld has persuasively argued for an even later date. Based on numismatic evidence from the Hunchback's Tale cycle, Grotzfeld shows that the manuscript's *terminus post quem* is 1426, as this was the year that the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Barsbāy minted his *dīnār*, which would come to be referred to by both Syrian and Egyptians as an *ashrafi*.<sup>17</sup> Grotzfeld therefore argues that it would have taken some decades before the use of the new *ashrafi* was so well established that it became synonymous with the *dīnār* and thus dates the manuscript to the middle of the fifteenth century. Apart from these early examples, most the extant manuscript and early print versions were the product of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one or two seventeenth-century manuscripts excepted. In fact, the *Thousand and One Nights* known today in both the Middle East and abroad is based primarily on manuscripts of nineteenth-century origin that are now lost. Thus the two versions that "superseded almost completely all other texts and formed the general notion of the *Arabian Nights*" is the Bûlâq edition of 1835 and the Calcutta II edition, published between 1839-1842, both of which are ostensibly based upon a corpus of texts known as Hermann Zotenberg's Egyptian Recension or ZER, which is, in Zotenberg's words, "la rédaction moderne de l'Égypte" (Grotzfeld "Neglected Conclusions" 88, qtd. Grotzfeld "The Age of the Galland Manuscript" 107).

This constitutes, therefore, what little we know with certainty about the early history of the

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[17] Showing the extent to which which the term was adopted, Grotzfeld provides the following additional remark concerning the *ashrafi*: "European merchants and travelers, unless they called these *dīnārs* simply *ducat*, that is by the name of its European counterpart, used to call this coin *serif*, *cerif*, or *serifi*, in the plural *serifin*, *cerifin*, or the like" ("The Age of the Galland Manuscript" 110).

*Thousand and One Nights*. Abbott's reading of the single, heavily damaged folio of *Kitāb fīhi Hadīth Alf Layla* and the other subsequent early sightings of the text discussed above can yet provide some insights into the contents of the earliest versions of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The ninth-century manuscript fragment of ultimately Syrian origin, most likely carried back to Egypt by a soldier following Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn's 878 campaign in Antioch, represents an advanced stage of literary borrowing from the Persian tradition. As Abbott notes, this process passes through three distinct stages: translations, adaptation and imitation. Thus, as corroborated by the later accounts of Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Mas'ūdī, the Persian *Hazār Afsāna* would have circulated first in a translation in Arabic under the title of *Alf Khurāfāt*. It would then have been slowly Islamized and Arabized until the model could be divorced from the initial corpus of texts and begin to include Arab stories. As early as 879, the *Alf Layla* represents this last stage as, in the few lines of the fragment from that year that are legible or that can be partially reconstructed, Dīnāzād asks Shīrāzād:

[...] تحدثيني بالحديث الذي اوعدتيني به واضربى (المثل) عن الفضل والنقص  
والحول والجهل والسخا والبخل والشجاعة والجبن [ي]كون في الانسان غريزة او طريفة  
[او] يخص معلمه او ادب شامى [او اعد] رابى . (Abbott 26)

[...] relate to me the tale, which you promised me and quote striking examples of the excellencies and shortcomings, the cunning and stupidity, the generosity and avarice, and the courage and cowardice that are in man, instinctive and acquired, or pertain to his distinctive characteristics or to courtly manners, Syrian or Bedouin (Abbott 26-7).

In addition to the explicit interest in stories concerning Syrians and Bedouin Arabs, this fragment begins as a continuation from other previous nights since, already on page one of the text, immediately following the title page, Dīnāzād's request to tell "the tale, which you promised me,"



implies a previous narration. As such, the fragment is likely a supplement to or a collection of choice tales rather than representative of any integral tradition. This is supported by the title of the fragment itself, *Kitāb fīhi Ḥadīth Alf Layla*, which is not *Alf Layla*, or the *Thousand Nights*, but instead *The Book of Tales of the Thousand Nights*. Already, the very title of the work points to its status of compilation, it being a book of tales from a larger corpus rather than the beginning of an integral version itself.

Beyond this, Abbott speculates about the possible content of the tale included in this manuscript—namely, and ironically, "The Story of Sindbād," which is universally regarded as a separate tradition entirely—but as this is merely scholarly conjecture, we will leave it behind with the suggestion that should this reading of the manuscript fragment be accurate, as I am inclined to think it is, it would be unlikely that at this point there would have been a standard version of what would become the *Thousand and One Nights* by the twelfth century. Instead, as Abbott shows in the concluding pages of her article, it was most likely the product of a constant process of combination and recombination. After passing from "most probably a complete and literal translation" of the *Hazār Afsāna* "perhaps titled *Alf Khurāfāt*," to a partial or complete Islamized, Arabic version that would have circulated, probably under the name *Alf Layla*, during the eighth century, the ninth century would have seen "a composite *Alf Lailah* containing both Persian and Arabic materials" (Abbott 72). As Abbott argues, "while most of the former [materials] came undoubtedly from the *Hazār Afsāna* [at this point], other current storybooks, especially the *Book of Sindbād* and the *Book of Shimās*, are not improbable sources" (Abbott 72). The following century, as Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* makes clear, saw the rise of other compilations of night stories [*asmār*] in Ibn 'Abdūs's (d. 942) monumental, if incomplete, *Alf Samar*. By the twelfth century, the period in which the title *Alf Layla wa Layla* is first attested

among the documents of the Cairo Geniza, the Egyptian tradition would have been fully formed through the augmentation of this previous material by local Egyptian and foreign tales of Indian and Asian origin.

The subsequent history of the *Thousand and One Nights* is of little interest to the present discussion.<sup>18</sup> Regardless, what is clear is that it is impossible to claim with any certainty what the early versions of the *Thousand and One Nights* might have contained, apart from the framing narrative of King Shahraman and Shahrazad, which was inherited from the Persian *Hazār Afsāna*, extant in the earliest fragment, known in the tenth-century encyclopedias and present in the Galland manuscript several centuries later. Nevertheless, the Galland and all future manuscripts share a nucleus of eleven stories that allow us to imagine what was most likely among its integral early components:

King Shahrayar and Shahrazad, His Vizier's Daughter  
The Merchant and the Demon  
The Fisherman and the Demon  
The Porter and the Three Ladies  
The Three Apples  
The Two Viziers, Nur al-Din 'Ali al-Misri and Badr al-Din Hasan al-Basri  
The Hunchback  
Nur al-Din 'Ali ibn-Bakkar and the Slave-Girl Shams al-Nahar  
The Slave-Girl Anis al-Jalis and Nur al-Din 'Ali ibn-Khaqan  
Jullanar of the Sea  
Qamar al-Zaman and His Two Sons, Amjad and As'ad (Haddawy x)

Some of these tales, such as the Hunchback cycle, are somewhat later additions to the *Thousand and*

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[18] Abbott summarizes this history of "the final state of the growing collection extending to the early sixteenth century" as follows:

Heroic tales of the Islamic counter-crusades are among the most prominent additions. Persia and 'Irāq may have contributed some of the later redominantly Far Eastern tales in the wake of the thirteenth-century Mongol conquest of those lands. The final conquest of Mameluke Syria and Egypt by the Ottoman Salīm I (1512 – 1520) closed the last chapter of the *Arabian Nights* in its oriental homeland. (Abbott 72-3)

*One Nights*, at least as they are presented in the Galland manuscript. The "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" is a tale embedded in the last of these integral tales, the "Tale of Qamar al-Zamān and His Two Sons, Amjad and As'ad."<sup>19</sup> However, because only the first few nights of this frame is extant in the Galland manuscript and because the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" is embedded at the very end of this rather long romance, we cannot say for sure that it constituted part of the fifteenth-century version of the "Tale of Qamar al-Zamān," let alone earlier versions.<sup>20</sup> Through Sahar Amer's readings of love between women in Medieval French and Arabic literature in *Crossing Borders*, however, it has become clear that "Tale of Qamar al-Zamān" was known in France at least by the end of the twelfth century through the similarities between it and Jean Renart's *Escoufle*, as well as the later *Chanson d'Yde et Olive*.

All the same, it is not completely accurate or, I would argue, plausible, to dismiss the very clear similarities between the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" and the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, as does Jean-Luc Leclanche in his introduction to his edition of the Old French proto-romance (Leclanche, Introduction xvi). Sharon Kinoshita, in her *Medieval Boundaries*, highlights, for example, the indebtedness of the *Conte* to the frame narrative of the *Thousand and One Nights* when addressing the

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[19] Muhsin Madhi's critical edition of the Galland manuscript includes the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" but uses the Bûlâq edition for both the frame and the embedded tale. Its telling is not integral to the plot of the frame and serves only as an brief interlude meant to illustrate the reunion of family:

At this [promise to return them to their families] they [Amjad and As'ad] rejoiced and wept bitterly, but he [Bahram] said to them, "Don't weep, my lords, for in a short time you will be reunited with your family, as were Ni'ma and Nu'm. (Haddawy 247).

This should not, however, be read as an incidental inclusion all the same because as Gerhardt explains, the compilers "did not strive to interrelate stories and frame, nor to keep alive the interest in the framing story itself" (Gerhardt 399).

[20] Also missing from the Galland manuscript is a single folio which "leaves a gap in the text from the beginning of the Night 102 until that of Night 104, or from the first sentence of "The Hunchback" to the arrival of the tailor and his wife at the Jewish doctor's house" (Mahdi "Sources" 131).

Emir Marsile's stratagem for selecting a bride, remarking imprecisely that "the emir's palace is [...] the site of a horrific ritual combining the 'evil custom' typical of romance with the Oriental despotism of the *Thousand and One Nights*" (Kinoshita "Medieval Boundaries" 94). Jocelyn Price, on the other hand, writes "the harems of the *Thousand and One Nights* have been adduced as sources for the tower, and its framing story as an analogue for the Emir's ritual of bride-choosing" (Price 13). The ritual in question is the selection of a wife for a fixed term before beheading her and moving on to the next. As Floire's host, Daire, explains in the Old French *Conte*:

Li amirals tel costume a  
Que une feme o lui tenra  
Un an plenier et noient plus,  
Puis mande ses rois et ses dus ;  
Dont li fera le cief trenchier.  
Ne veut que clerc ne chevalier  
Ait la feme qu'il a eüe. (vv. 1945-51)

*The emir has such a custom that a he will keep a wife for one full year and no longer, then he sends for his kings and his dukes; then he has her head cut off. He does not want another cleric or knight to have a women than he has had.*

This connection becomes all the more apparent once we consider the fact that, as Patricia Grieve shows, in other versions of the *Floire et Blancheflor*, this process occurs not annually but daily (Grieve 1). In this, the *Conte*'s Emir corresponds closely to the *Thousand and One Nights*'s Shahrayar, who having learned of the perfidy of women and the omnipresence of adultery marries a virgin daily only to behead her the following morning so as to forestall the possibility of being made a cuckold.<sup>21</sup> It is therefore evident that, in addition to drawing on numerous sources from Latin and Greek, the *Conte*

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[21] Some traditions ascribed the same practice to Shahrayar's brother, Shahzaman, who was also cuckolded by his wife. That certain traditions tie this practice to both brothers testifies to the degree to which it is associated with the *Thousand and One Nights*'s frame narrative.

*de Floire et Blancheflor* is equally inspired by, or at the very least, incorporates certain elements known primarily from the *Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>22</sup>

‘AJĀ’IB IN THE *CONTE DE FLOIRE ET BLANCHEFLOR*

Much of the atmosphere of the *Conde de Floire et Blancheflor* is supplied by its exotic setting, which explicitly makes it an eastern tale. It would be simplistic, however, to reduce the many exotic elements of Robert d’Orbigny’s *Conte* to a proto-Orientalist fascination with the Eastern other, confounding magic with science or technological superiority. While it is not the only such site, the Emir’s Tour-aux-Pucelles [*la tors as Puceles* or the Tower of Virgins] with its marvelous feats of engineering is at risk of being read by the contemporary audience as otherworldly by the conflating the wonder of the improbable with the awe of the impossible. Thus the city of Babylon is first presented as immense, measuring sixty miles in diameter [*“vint lieus de tos sens”*] and surrounded by thirty-foot walls [*“quinze toises de haut”*] with no less than one hundred and forty gates [*“set vins portes”*] (v. 1796, v. 1803, v. 1808). So powerful is it and its seven hundred towers, of which the Emir’s is only the principal and most spectacular:

La plus foible ne la menor  
Ne doute roi ne aumaņor ;  
Neis l’empereres de Rome  
N’i feroit vaillant une pome. (vv. 1811-1814)

*Neither the weakest nor the smallest fears king or aumaņor; not even the emperor of Rome could do more damage there than an apple.*

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[22] For a list of influences, see Jean-Luc Leclanche's introduction, in particular pages xv-xvi.

While Robert d'Orbigny's narration provides no insight into Floire's reaction to his helpful host, Daire the pontoneer, and his description of the city of Babylon, apart from his final exclamation of dismay at the apparent impenetrability of the Tour-aux-Pucelles, the description leaves little doubt that it is meant to induce wonderment. Floire, and the audience along with him, is therefore meant to marvel at the immensity and prestige of this city that surpasses even the greatest cities of Christian Europe. Similarly, the three-story tower's plumbing system provides a useful example of a marvel that remains plausible in its historical context:

U marbre cler comme cristal  
Dedans a un bien fait canal  
Per quoi sus monte une fontaine,  
Dont l'ève est molt clere et molt saine,  
Desi c'amont el tierç estage. (vv. 1855-1859)

*It has a well-made canal made of marble as clear as crystal in it by which rises up a fountain, the water of which is very clear and very healthful, through this it is drawn up to the third floor.*

The marvel of a limpid fountain bubbling out for a third-floor marble fountain takes greater shape in light of the feats of engineering achieved in the medieval Islamic world. That which is described in the passage cited above is no doubt a *sāqiya* or water elevator, similar to the *sāqiyas* installed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to feed an aqueduct running from the banks of the Nile to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's hill-top Citadel perched above Cairo in 1312 (Rogers).<sup>23</sup>

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[23] The *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* provides the following summary description of the typical *sāqiya*:

A complex hydraulic machine with over two hundred component parts, still in use today. It consists essentially of a large vertical wheel erected over the water supply on a horizontal axle. This wheel carries a chain-of-pots or a bucket chain. On the other end of its axle is a gear-wheel that engages a horizontal gear-wheel to which the driving bar is attached. The animal is harnessed to the free end of this bar, and as it walks in a circular path, the gears and the wheel carrying the chain-of-pots rotate. The pots dip in succession into the water and when they

More wondrous a creation still are the walls of the Tower's enclosed gardens, which are set with a statue of a different bird on each crenel that "quant il vente si font douç cri / que onques nus hom tel n'oï" [*when the wind blows they makes such a sweet cry such as no man has ever heard*] (vv. 1969-1970). These marvelous wind-powered automata, not unlike the statues of the two lovers erected over Blancheflor's false tomb by Floire's parents, that move, embrace and speak, recall historical examples of automata found at the Caliphate court as early as 917 when Caliph al-Muqtadir built his new palace in Bagdad, for which al-Khāṭib al-Baghdādī (1002 – 1071) provides a contemporary account in his *Tā'rikh Baghdād*. Donald Hill provides a summary of this account:

These included a tree of silver, in a large pond, with 18 branches and multiple twigs, which silver or gilt birds which whistled at times. On both sides were 15 statues of mounted horsemen which moved in one direction as if chasing each other. There was a mercury pond, 30 cubits by 20, with four gilt boats and around it was a fabulous garden. (Hill 205)

A similar construction, the Throne of Solomon, is described in a treatise of Byzantine origin and confirmed by Bishop Liuprand of Cremona, who, in 948, was sent as an envoy to Constantinople on behalf of Berengar II of Italy and later, in 966, on behalf of Emperor Otto II. The Byzantine throne is described as having "a tree with singing birds, roaring lions and moving beasts" (Hill 205).<sup>24</sup> While the

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reach the top, they empty into a channel.

The name, *sāqiya*, which plays on its primary significance of "female water-bearer," inspired the Spanish *acequia* [*séquia* in Catalan], an irrigation ditch introduced to Europe by Muslim agricultural engineers and used today in as far removed places as the modern-day American Southwest. Jean-Luc Leclanche misidentifies this device as the similar *nā'ūra* [*noria* is Spanish] in an explanatory footnote (93, n. 2), a device in which the pots are attached to the wheel itself and the wheel is driven exclusively by flow of the river. Further, because the lift of a *nā'ūra* is limited to the diameter of the wheel, the sheer size of the wheel – 20 meters in the case of the largest of the wheels at Hama on the Orontes in Syria – would preclude their use subtle palatial construction (Hill 142).

[24] E.R. Truitt provides a more complete description and discussion of Liuprand's account of the Throne of Solomon, as well as confirmation of this account from Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos's *De ceremoniis*, which was composed between circa 956 and 959, in her *Medieval*

example of singing birds is realistic if marvelous, the latter example of the embracing states is clearly an exaggeration of the contemporary mechanical prowess of scholars, artisans and engineers of the Islamicate world.<sup>25</sup> What d'Orbigny can only explain through "ingremance" or necromancy is elsewhere understood as *'ilm* or science. The vision of the Islamicate world and the wonder it elicits that Robert d'Orbigny presents his audience then is a relatively realist although also largely exaggerated.

This is not the only aspect of the tale that is drawn from the Islamicate tradition, however; distinct from the fantastic, fay character of other Old French romances such as the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* adapts the Arabic concept of the *'ajā'ib* [singular *'ajība*], which is so central to the *Thousand and One Nights*. *'Ajā'ib*, which can be translated as wonders, marvels or astonishing things, its derivative forms [*'ajīb*, adjective: wondrous, marvelous, or astonishing; *'ajab* or *ta'ajjub*, substantive: wonder, astonishment] perform a critical emotional function in the *Thousand and One Nights*, as Roy Mottahedeh shows in his article, "*'Ajā'ib* in *The Thousand and One Nights*." Teasing out the specificity of the meaning of *'ajā'ib* in the context of

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*Robots*, pp. 22-24.

[25] While these automata could have been the result of a continued tradition from Hero of Alexandria's mid-first-century *Pneumatics*, itself built upon Philo of Byzantium's *Pneumatics* (c. 250 BC) it was likely influenced by the advances of the ninth-century Baghdad workshop of the Banū Mūsā. These three brothers, Muḥammad, Aḥmad and al-Ḥasan, who, under the patronage of Caliph al-Ma'mun and thus were associated with the illustrious Baghdadi institution of the *Bayt al-Hikma*, were central to the introduction of Greek mechanical science to the Islamicate world during the Abbasid translation movement, made unparalleled advances in the use of differential pressures for automatic control such that, according to Donald Hill, "nothing like it is known to have been attempted before or since, until the advent of modern pneumatic instrumentation. Indeed, they had exhausted the subject, and it would have been impossible to emulate them in this kind of construction" (Hill 219).



Islam, Mottahedeh turns to two scholars of Quranic vocabulary. The first, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn in Muḥammad ibn al-Mufaḍḍal (d. 1108), better known al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, states in his highly-regarded dictionary of Quranic terminology, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, that "ʿajab and taʿajjub are states which come to a person at the time of that person's ignorance of the *sabab* [cause] of something" (qtd. Mottahedeh 30). Further developing this first definition, Mottahedeh turns to the theologian ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (1331 – 1414), who, in his *Kitāb al-Taʾrīfāt*, defines ʿajab as "the change of the *nafs* [spirit or soul] through something the cause of which is unknown and goes out of the ordinary" (qtd. Mottahedeh 30). While they are unknown, unfamiliar or unexpected, ʿajāʾib are not otherworldly or fantastic.<sup>26</sup> Instead, they constitute part of creation and as such is almost synonymous with the *khaṣāʾiṣ*, or local specialities, in the literature of the geographers (Mottahedeh 30). In the *Thousand and One Nights*, the ʿajīb is regularly paired with the *gharīb*, or the foreign or strange. As Mottahedeh notes, "in Muhsin Mahdi's magnificent new edition of the *Nights* the great majority of nights in the first third of the book begin with a formula such as 'among the astonishing [ʿajīb] and the

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[26] Thus, in *āyāt* 9 of the *Surat al-Kahf* is written

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا.

Or did you think that the people of the Cave and al-Raqim were the wonders of Our Signs. (18.9, Fakhry 290)

Likewise in *āyāt* 17 of the same *sura*, concerning the marvel of the sun,

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا.

That was one of Allah's Signs. He whom Allah guides is well-guided; and he whom Allah leads astray, you will not find a friend to direct him. (18.17, Fakhry 290)

Together, these two *āyāt* show that ʿajīb is manifest in creation and is not abstracted from the mundane.

N.B. All citations from the Qurʾān and English translations of its meanings are drawn from Majid Fakhry's bilingual *An Interpretation of the Qurʾān*.

strange [*gharīb*] stories of the *Thousand and One Nights*..." (Mottahedeh 31).<sup>27</sup> Thus, central to the function of these concepts as literary devices is the novelty of the tales, which serves to create suspense within the narrative. Once the tale is told, that which had once been *ʿajīb* and *gharīb* becomes known [*maʿrūf*], often to the edification of the listener. Such is the case in the episode of the Kings Shāhrayār and Shāhzamān and the *ʿifrīt*'s captive bride from the frame narrative.<sup>28</sup>

These concepts are critical to an understanding of the function of the *Thousand and One Nights* because, as André Miquel argues, "this literature of pleasure serves also (quite naturally) as a witness, meaning that it was a reflection of its society and not a deliberate act of the storyteller. Under the guise of our pleasure, we discover the world that produced it" (Miquel 10). To illustrate this reading of the collection, Miquel gives the example of the story of Sindbād the Sailor, arguing that one can read it as a textbook or guidebook, a *roman à thèse*, and a breviary (Miquel 10). It is primarily with this first element that I am interested here because, as he shows, "behind the fantastic exists a series of concrete and real references—references to navigation techniques, various goods, countries; in short, the universe that merchants were invited to discover," a reading Miquel supports by drawing our attention to the fact that a mid–ninth century, unromanticized version of the tale, the anonymous

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[27] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines the *gharīb* in the following way: "One says of anything separated away, that it is *gharīb*, and of anything which is not similar to its species [*jins*] that it is *gharīb*. Hence the Prophet said: Islam appeared *gharīb* and it will again be as it then appeared" (qtd. Mottahedeh 31).

[28] What Shāhrayār and his brother, Shāhzamān, conclude is, of course, the wrong lesson. As Peter Heath explains:

The King, however, has gone astray, lost his wits, and come to erroneous conclusions about how to act in love and life. And this being romance, where unfaithful lovers meet fitting ends, he is in terrible danger. From this viewpoint, Shahrizād steps forward not only to save the other maidens of the kingdom but the King himself. It is he whom she is redeeming. (Heath I, 19)

*Account of China and India*, is known to have existed (Miquel 10). In addition to this, Miquel highlights another important fact derived from the tale itself, which allows scholars to theorize the practical value of collections of tales that pertain, in particular, the *'ajā'ib*: "when, on more than one occasion, Sindbad found himself in an awkward situation, he was not bewildered but on the contrary he knew what was happening because, as he said, he remembered hearing about it from merchants" (Miquel 10). The presence of *'ajā'ib* in the *Thousand and One Nights* and in Arabic literature more broadly serves, therefore, in many cases as a didactic tool to prepare eventual travelers—which is essentially every Muslim, for whom *hajj* is not only encouraged but one of the five pillars of their faith—for the wonders that they might encounter *en route*.

This demystified conception of the marvelous contrasts in many ways with that dominant in the Latin West, where the marvelous often conflates with the miraculous. In his contribution to *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture*, "The Aesthetics of the Marvelous: The Wondrous World of Art in a Wondrous World," James V. Mirollo notes that "there was some continuity [with Antiquity] in the tradition of the marvelous during the Middle Ages, since wonder is an effect of miracles, which are central to the Christian marvelous" (Mirollo 31). In Mirollo's conception, then, the marvelous is to be seen and understood through the lens of Christian doctrines on the miraculous, perhaps because "Latin texts in the early Middle Ages used *mirabilia* and *miracula* more or less interchangeably" (Bynum 8). As Benedicta Ward shows, however, that since Augustine of Hippo the marvelous has operated on multiple levels, some of which sometime intersect with the miraculous:

There were [for Augustine] three levels of wonder: wonder provoked by the acts of God visible daily and discerned by wise men as signs of God's goodness; wonder provoked in the ignorant, who did not understand the workings of nature and therefore could be amazed by what to the wise man was not unusual; and wonder

provoked by genuine miracles, usually manifestations of the power of God, not *contra naturam* but *praeter* or *supra naturam*: "I call that miraculous which appears wonderful because it is either hard or impossible, beyond hope or ability." (Bynum 3-4)

By the thirteenth century, the division between *miracula* and *mirabilia* had become firmly entrenched.

Caroline Walker Bynum, in her presidential address to the American Historical Association, "Wonder,"

citing Thomas Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, states that

this [natural Aristotelian] understanding of wonder combined with the development of an ontological distinction between *miracula* and *mirabilia*, in which marvels were defined as natural effects we fail to understand, whereas miracles were "unusual and difficult" (*insolitum et arduum*) events, "produced by God's power alone on things that have a natural tendency to the opposite effect." (Bynum 4-5)

It is indeed a somewhat curious occurrence that the 'ajā'ib of *Floire et Blancheflor*—the tomb, the tower and the Tree of Love among them—corresponds so closely with the aesthetics of the *Thousand and One Nights* because, even though these elements appear to have been drawn from either the corpus of the *Nights* itself or from examples extant in the contemporary Islamicate world, because "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" itself is entirely devoid of both the 'ajīb and the gharīb, contrary, of course, to its frame narrative, "The Story of Qamar al-Zamān." Instead "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" purports to be historical in nature and evidently means to betray the tyranny of the historical figures portrayed in it, most specifically Governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī of Kufa, which constitutes proof of the Baghdadi and pro-Abbasid origins of the tale as it is extant today. As the *Conte's* marvelous elements must necessarily be traced to sources outside of the Arabic tale itself, scholars are forced to contend with the question of how to explain their inclusion here. Much has been made of the exotic and idyllic qualities of the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, as well as its apparent naivety. However, as Jocelyn Price states, "the presence of 'Easternness' cannot be ascribed automatically to

escapism or naivete" (Price 17). Further, she later concludes that "no marvel in the romance can be unambiguously ascribed to the supernatural. Its single clearly magical object—the protective ring given to Floire by his mother—never has its magic drawn on" (Price 27). But the conclusions must be taken a step further, and it is here that I suggest that Miquel's reading of the *Thousand and One Nights* can be informative for our reading of *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, especially once we realize that the marvelous elements of the text are not the only exceedingly realist ones: the mundane elements are as well. If we view the marvelous as a didactic tool for acquainting other with the foreign, Robert d'Orbigny's *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, which is marvelous only in its foreignness, can be shown to effectively reproduce the experience of Christian pilgrims and merchants to Islamicate lands during the twelfth century.

#### PILGRIMAGES EAST AND WEST

Scholars have widely remarked upon the prominence of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* since they first turned their interest towards the work. Thus, in a recent study, the important migrations and physical displacements in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* are underscored by Sharon Kinoshita when she reappropriates Joseph Bédier's remark about the centrality of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela to the origins of the *Chanson de Roland*: "In the beginning was the road" (qtd. *Medieval Boundaries* 77).<sup>29</sup> This same road occupies an equally foundational and formative role in the *Conte* because, as she argues, not only does the

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[29] While Kinoshita gives Bédier's phrase in translation, the original reads, "Au commencement était la route" (Bédier *Légendes* 367).

pilgrimage route provide the setting of the *Conte's* opening but it also provides the historical and cultural context within which the text must be deciphered. Both figuratively and literarily, the Camino provides the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor's* narrative frame. The southern branch of the Camino Frances, which passes through the cities of Jaca on its way from Arles, runs within a single day's ride of the *ṭā'ifa* of Zaragoza and the city of Huesca [*Washqa* in Arabic], which was not conquered by the Aragonese until 1096, some thirty-two years before Zaragoza itself fell back to Christian rule. Because of this proximity, the Camino serves as a powerful metaphor for both cultural and literary migrations.

Simultaneously, embedded in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* is an object that, through its thingness and inherent portability, concretizes the themes of circulation and exchange that dominate much of the narrative. The *coupe* for which Blancheflor is exchanged—on which is depicted the judgment of Paris before the walls of Troy and which is said to have been forged by Vulcan himself—reveals two important aspects of the cultural history of the medieval Mediterranean relevant to this study. First, it reveals the female body equal to the *coupe* in its thingness and its portability and as such testifies to the networks of slavery that extended throughout the Mediterranean and its hinterlands. The circulation of foreign bodies around the Mediterranean and with them their wealth of cultural knowledge is central to theorizing the spread of literature throughout the region via informal routes.<sup>30</sup> These informal networks of slaves reinforced and were reinforced by the networks of pilgrims and merchants that crisscrossed the Mediterranean, gradually reducing distances through the repetitive act of *cabotage*.<sup>31</sup> And, second, the *coupe's* own trajectory from Gods to the Caesar and

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[30] In this, the circulation of foreign bodies echoes María Rosa Menocal's assertions concerning Guilhelm IX's likely exposure to the Arabic lyric tradition (30).

[31] Slaves did not only hold menial positions in Mediterranean courts; Philip of Mahdia, a eunuch of

the the kings of Rome, through the hands of thieves and merchants, and into the hands of the Emir speaks to the *translatio studii* of the Old French literary tradition within formal routes as it parallels and inverts the trajectory of an historical *coupe*, the Aliénor Vase, which moves instead from Persia, through the hands of an Andalusī emir and the house of the dukes of Aquitaine to the king of France before coming to rest, in the words of Abbot Suger, "*ad libandum divinae mensae*" ["for libations at the Holy Table"] (qtd. Beech "Origins and History" n. 30, 78).

But like the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*'s inversion of the Aliénor Vase's trajectory, the Camino de Santiago de Compostella appears doubled and inverted by Robert d'Orbigny in Floire's East-west journey from al-Andalus to Babylone, a journey that parallels the *hajj* pilgrimage route from Al-Andalus to Mecca, and more specifically the stage from the Iberian peninsula to Cairo. Charles François, in "*Floire et Blancheflor : du chemin de Compostelle au chemin de la Mecque*," first unearthed the critical parallels between Floire's itinerary—in particular his disembarkation at Baudas followed by four days of overland travel to Babylone—and Ibn Jubayr's (1145 – 1217) journal describing his arrival at Alexandria and the subsequent travels through the Nile delta to Fustaṭ. These important parallels lead François to conclude:

Au moins nous concédera-t-on, sans doute, que les rapprochements que nous venons de faire confirment la justesse de nos premières impressions : à tel ou tel détail du récit, qui donne l'éveil au lecteur de *Floire et Blancheflor*, répondent, comme un écho rassurant, des faits bien réels, attestés tantôt par Girard, le chanoine de Saint-Jacques, tantôt par Ibn Jobaïr, le pèlerin de La Mecque. Ces faits sont-ils, en outre, précisément ceux que le romancier a

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sub-Saharan African origin, served as admiral and chamberlain to King Roger II before being executed in 1153 ostensibly on account of being a crypto-Muslim. Slaves such as Philip of Mahdia were able to exert an influence not just in their own courts but also abroad. See in particular Brian Catlos's "Who Was Philip of Mahdia and Why Did He Have to Die?" and Joshua Birk's "Narrating the Past of Twelfth-Century Sicily."

exploités à des fins littéraires, pour les avoir connue par ouï-dire, sinon d'expérience personnelle ? A nous, la chose paraît vraisemblable. (François 856)

For this reason, the *rapprochements* suggested by François merit further scrutiny, especially as it dovetails nicely into the millennial angst that seems to pervade the romance: a truncated pilgrimage rerouted from Mecca back towards Christian Europe following the marriage of Floire to Blancheflor and subsequent conversion map nicely onto both the historical model of Charlemagne's incursion into Al-Andalus as a prototypical model for the Reconquista just as the pilgrimage to the East mirrors the aspirations of the Crusades, especially once the parallel between Floire and Blancheflor and Louis VII and Aliénor d'Aquitaine is established. Through Floire and Blancheflor's progeny, a new Holy Roman Empire is born while, as its calque, in millennial fashion, the future ascendancy of Christianity in the West and East is prophesied.

Given the chronology of events, it is unlikely that Robert d'Orbigny would have had access to Ibn Jubayr's account of his travels from Granada to Mecca, unless the romance was written nearly half a century later than Leclanche has argued, as Ibn Jubayr didn't leave the court of Granada until the 4th of February, 1183 and did not return until May 3rd, 1185, after having passed through Baghdad, Damascus and Trapani, Sicily. All the same, should the travails documented by Ibn Jubayr in his travelogue have been universal to the experience of travelers and traders at the port of Alexandria, it is reasonable to imagine that, given the level of detail accurately related by Robert d'Orbigny, he either had experience of them first hand or had heard accounts of it from pilgrims and merchants returning from any of the major port cities of the eastern Mediterranean. If indeed overtaxation was commonplace and the experience thus endemic, as indeed seems to have been the case, it is curious



then that it should have elicited so much outrage from a traveler such as Ibn Jubayr. Regardless, after nearly two long months at sea on a Genoese ship, Ibn Jubayr arrived in Alexandria on the 28th of March to one of the most taxing events of his journey: the Customs. Ibn Jubayr recounted his experiences thus:

The day of our landing, one of the first things we saw was the coming on board of agents of the Sultan to record all that had been brought in the ship. All the Muslims in it were brought forward one by one, and their names and descriptions, together with the names of their countries, recorded. Each was questioned as to what merchandise or money he had, that he might pay *zakat*, without any enquiry as to what portion of it had been in their possession for a complete year and what had not. Most of them were on their way to discharge a religious duty and had nothing but the (bare) provisions for the journey. But they were compelled to pay the *zakat* without being questioned as to what had been possessed by them for the complete year and what had not.

Ahmad ibn Hassan of our number was called down to be questioned as to the news of the west [i.e. from Spain and North Africa] and as to the ship's cargo. Under watch he was in turn conducted first to the Sultan, then to the Qadi, then to the officials of the Customs, and then to a group of the Sultan's suite, and after being questioned concerning everything, and his statements recorded, he was released.

The Muslims were then ordered to take their belongings, and what remained of their provisions, to the shore, where there were attendants responsible for them and for carrying to the Customs all that they had brought ashore. There they were called one by one, and the possessions of each were produced. The Customs was packed to choking. All their goods, great and small, were searched and confusedly thrown together while hands were thrust into their waistbands in search of what might be within. The owners were then put to oath whether they had aught else not discovered. During all this, because of the confusion of hands and the excessive throng, many possessions disappeared. After this scene of abasement and shame, for which we pray God to recompense us amply, they, [the Pilgrims] were allowed to go. (Ibn Jubayr 31-2)

Ibn Jubayr's outrage stems from the honorable religious purpose of his travel: the fulfillment of the the *hajj*.<sup>32</sup> Ibn Jubayr was so distressed by his experience that he even composed a poem of complaint to

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[32] Ibn Jubayr recounts that, as secretary at the court of governor of Granada, he was offered a cup of

Ayyubid Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn about it. This treatment of merchants and travelers is in direct contrast with all of the other details Ibn Jubayr provides on his experience traveling from Alexandria to Fustat, from the daily ration of two loaves of bread for foreign travelers [*abnā' al-sabīl*] paid out of the Sultan's treasury to the al-Qarāfa cemetery in Fuṣṭāṭ, which “is remarkable for being all built with mosques and inhabited shrines in which lodge strangers, learned men, the good and the poor” (Ibn Jubayr 34, 42).<sup>33</sup> This contrast only serves to further emphasize the abuse of *zakā*, which respected neither the term of ownership nor the *niṣāb*, the minimum amount of wealth below which *zakā* is not collected.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the *zakā* collected at the Customs of Alexandria resembles the *jizya*, or poll-tax that non-Muslim men [*ahl al-dhimma*], were required to pay in order to avoid persecution within the confines of the Islamic empire.<sup>35</sup> To have one of the five Pillars of Islam denigrated in such a way that Muslims

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wine, which he declined because of his religious prohibition. Seeing the refusal as a slight to his power, the governor, in a rage, forced Ibn Jubayr to drink not one but seven cups of wine, after which, feeling shame for his cruelty, the governor recompensed his secretary with an equal number of cups of gold dinars, with which Ibn Jubayr pledged to fulfill his obligation of *hajj* to Mecca to expiate his sin.

[33] A particularity of the Cairene “City of the Dead,” as it is known today, is that it has been continuously inhabited since it was first founded as a cemetery in 642, when ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ took Babylone.

[34] *Al-Zakā* or *zakāt al-māl*, literally “the purifier of money,” is one of the five pillars [*arkān*] of Islam—along with *shahāda* or the profession of faith, *ṣalāh* or prayer, *ṣawm* or ritual fasting and *hajj*—, which is prescribed to all Muslims meeting the financial requirements of the *niṣāb*. The *ḥadīth* set the rate at 2.5 % of the owner's property above *niṣāb*, which varied historically and geographically, that had been in the owner's possession for a full lunar year.

[35] Although the collection *jizya* is prescribed by the Qur'ān itself as a protection tax, its rates were not defined by *sharī'a* law:

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ  
الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّىٰ يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ.

*Fight those among the People of the Book who do not believe in Allah and this Last Day, do not forbid what Allah and his Messenger have forbidden and do not profess the true religion, till they pay the poll-tax out of hand and submissively.* (9:29 Fakhry 188)

were forced to pay the same tax as the *dhimmī* Christian Genoese merchants with whom they traveled would have constituted a profound disappointment to so pious a man as Ibn Jubayr.

The corresponding passage from Robert d'Orbigny's *Conte de Floire et Blanchefleur* reveals an equally exorbitant level of taxation and, indeed, inconvenience.

Li pors estoit a l'amirail ;  
Maint home i a eü travail.  
U soit a droit u soit a tort,  
Tot lor estuet doner au port  
La siste part de lor avoir  
Et puis jurer qu'il dient voir,  
Et rendre toute a dam Marsile  
Cil qui maistres est de la vile. (vv. 1443-1450)

*The port was the emir's; many men worked there. Right or wrong everyone at the port had to give a sixth part of what they had and then swear that they were telling the truth, and give it all to lord Marsile, who was master of the city.*

Given the degree of taxation, one sixth of the traveler's value, it resembles more closely *jizya* than *zakā*. The imposition of the tax upon everyone alike here remains just as problematic from a legal standpoint as it did in the case of Ibn Jubayr's account: Christians, Jews and Muslims all appear to suffer equally at the hands of the unjust emir, "dam Marsile." That these conditions reflect the contemporaneous lived experience of pilgrims and merchants traveling across the Mediterranean basin is significant, especially once we consider that most if not all of the marvels presented in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* are marvelous only in their foreignness. The signs of otherness help the audience orient themselves in the foreign spaces traversed by the *conte*, thereby preparing them to better navigate those spaces themselves. The routes traced by merchants, pilgrims and by Floire

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Although disagreement did exist on who exactly was expected to pay *jizya*, it was generally accepted that it was an obligation of only enfranchised Christian and Jewish men and did not include the poor, the physically and mentally infirm, the elderly or those in monastic orders.

himself serve both as the context of and a metaphor for the routes by which goods, individuals, information and stories could circulate from Christian to Islamic lands.

#### ROMANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Nothing guarantees the easy assimilation of a story into a new cultural context when passing from one literary tradition to another across political, religious and linguistic borders. The active translation process not only adopts but also adapts content and meaning to fit the interests and needs—that is, the cultural project—of the adopting literature. Of course, the translation history of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* is a perfect, if modern, example of this: from expurgated to enhanced versions, the *Thousand and One Nights* exemplifies the pliability of text in the face of the constraints of individual and societal tastes and mores. Comparing the translations of Edward Lane (1839-1841), Richard Burton (1885-86) and N. J. Dawood (1973) in his introduction to the second volume of his own translation of the *Nights*, Husain Haddawy presents the following summary of their strategies:

Dawood omits all the verse passages. Lane translates his sentences closely, but, ever sensitive to Victorian sensibilities, he omits many words and passages he considers inappropriate or offensive, passages or words that not only lend the Arabic original color and piquancy, but also reveal the spirit in which it was written. Burton, on the other hand, revels in and preserves the peculiarities of the style of the Arabic original declaring in his introduction that he has "carefully Englished the picturesque turns and novel expressions of the original in all their outlandishness." But for Burton, preserving these peculiarities meant exaggerating them by creating an ornate pseudo-archaic style that is alien both to the style of the Arabic original and to any recognizable style in English literature. (Haddawy Introduction xiii)

Even from the first European translation by Antoine Galland, we know that "la bienséance"

encouraged deviation from the original as contemporaneous translation theory dictated.<sup>36</sup> This sort of adaptation has been a constant since the very first fragmentary manuscript evidence in Arabic of the *Kitāb fihi Ḥadīth Alf Layla*.

Supporting this phenomenon is the understanding that "shared tradition between author and audience is essential to literary communication, because it saves each from having to create and learn a new *langue* with each new literary production," a thesis that leads Peter Heath to conclude in his study of "Romance as Genre in the *Thousand and One Nights*" that "generic perception is [...] an integral, if not always explicitly cognized, aspect of literary experience" (Heath I, 5-6). Understanding and, indeed, identifying a genre is within this conception a necessary step in negotiating the meaning of a text.<sup>37</sup> Of course, the question then remains as to whether genre exists "within the context of clear and provable historical linkages" or whether there exists literary universals so that every genre "exists as a potential means of literary expression at any time and place, because it is an innate option of human literary discourse, a natural way for man to organize certain perceptions of life" (Heath I, 8). Perhaps however the choice in camps is not so dire as the either/or binary that Heath suggests.

Northrop Frye, for example, argues in *the Secular Scripture* that not all genres are practiced within a literary tradition at any given historical moment. Their appearance remains culturally and historically

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[36] For a developed discussion of the interplays of seventeenth-century translation mores and the Galland translation, see Muhsin Mahdi's "The Sources of Galland's *Nuits*," pp. 127-129.

[37] The importance of genre for construction and constraining meaning is quite evident in the many and divergent readings of Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, as discussed in Chapter 1. Classical readers saw it as satire while medieval readers appeared to have taken it mainly at face value. Similarly, teasing out the genre of Andreas Capellanus remains a contested project and produces wildly differing readings of the text and its cultural project. Of course, as noted below, a text can function in—and thus benefit from situating itself within—multiple genres simultaneously.

situated and, as such, reveals the cultural values of their particular moment. Romance is a prime example of this because its rise in the context of Old French literature occurs simultaneously with the rise of Old French literature itself from a minor towards a major literature.<sup>38</sup> Concurrently, the birth of the romance occurs in tandem with the appropriation of the Occitan literary tradition, in particular its lyric poetry and, with it, its theory of *fin'amor*. Given the relationship between the genre of romance and intergenerational rebellion, it is not surprising that this genre should have constituted the defining mode of this rising minor literature. Conversely, as Heath remarks, romance in the context of medieval Arabic popular literature "is a genre without poetics: primarily, it seems, due to the genre's social provenance and context" (Heath I, 15). This to a certain degree speaks to the almost complete lack of mention of the *Thousand and One Nights* by medieval literary historians. And yet, despite this negligence, the *Nights* and romance with it continued to circulate throughout the Arabophone world—from Syria to Egypt and Iraq—and beyond.

Building on Northrop Frye's diffuse definition of romance in *the Secular Scripture* as a genre between the two extremes of myth and realism, Heath defines the "fundamental aspect of the genre's 'informing drive'" by claiming that romance "*investigates the concerns of honor as balanced between the demands of love and social propriety, within the context of Fate*" (Heath I, 13, emphasis in original).

Heath goes on to unpack this definition for his readers:

"Investigates," because matters of direction, parameter, and outcome are not necessarily prescribed; "honor," because this is a concept which represents a convergence between individual and social values (one is usually honorable if

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[38] In relation to Old French literature, the meanings of "romance" are multiple: it signifies 1) any text written in the vernacular, and thus *romanz*, and not in Latin; 2) the formal designation of a long narrative poem composed of rhyming, (primarily) octosyllabic couplets; and 3) the genre discussed here.

one maintains one's own standards of self-worth, but these are usually congruent with those of society); "love," because this is romance's dominant, although not exclusive, realm of human interest and activity, a central arena where one's "honor" is tested; "social propriety," because society's objective rules of conduct must be dealt with, in one way or another, while one pursues one's own subjective love interest; and "Fate" because it is a prime postulate of the genre that poetic justice exists, that there is a supra-human force rewarding those who adhere to honor's dictates and punish those who do not. (Heath I, 13-14).

Before applying Heath's definition of romance to both the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" and the *Conte de Floire and Blancheflor*, to see how these two tales overlap, two more points must be addressed. First, formalistically, the romance in Heath's eyes is tripartite: the hero and his beloved "move from innocence, to experience, to a renewed state of innocence which encompasses experience" (Heath I, 20). Here Heath's reading differs from Frye's, as he notes, stating that Frye "portrays the movement as one from innocence to experience to return-to-innocence, without positing any moral or psychological development in characters" (Heath I, 20 n. 46). These three steps correspond with a trajectory from an initial state of security, which once broken requires one or more trails in order to return to a new and stable state of security (Heath II, 10). As Heath contends:

It is important to note that for protagonists these steps do not represent linear movements but rather developmental progressions within moral and psychological matrices, movements from innocence to experience, ignorance to knowledge, naiveté to maturity. It is for this reason that protagonists of *Nights* romances [as well as Old French romances] are so often adolescents, for this transition state between childhood and adulthood is ideal for treating the themes the genre wishes to explore." (Heath II, 10-11)

And, finally, and this is critical for understanding Heath's theory of romance, is the caveat that genres are not pure. Instead elements of the epic, for example, can exist in romance just as elements of romance can exist in the epic. Romances, in this light, are simply the "ones in which romance

elements dominate" (I, 10). Similarly, as Heath argues, "romances are not stories that fulfill generic definitions completely, but those in which it [the generic definition's applicability] predominates" (Heath I, 10).

An analysis of "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" and the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* therefore does not need to tick every box of the genre's definition as proposed by Peter Heath. And yet, in Heath's estimation, as Marzolph and Leeuwen note, "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" constitutes "a prominent example of love romance, with two lovers fighting for a just cause, the theme of love versus social propriety, and the ultimate triumph of fate. During their struggle the characters develop and finally reach the state of maturity" (Marzolph and Leeuwen 314). Thus, as well shall see, it essentially does tick each and every box and, what is more, this is also true of the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* as well.<sup>39</sup> From the couples frame of reference, the familial home is a space of safety and innocence, with the couple's union officially sanctioned by Ni'ma's parents, whose dictates organize the young couple's world: as children, the two call each other brother and sister until the father intervenes, saying:

يا ولدى ليست هذه اختك بل هي جاريتك واشتريتها على اسمك وانت في المهد، فلا  
تدعوها اخت من بعد اليوم. (Alf Layla wa Layla 653)

Son, Nu'am is not your sister, but your slave whom I have bought in your name while you were still in the cradle. From now on, don't call her sister. (Haddawy

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[39] "The Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" also shows considerable similarity to the "Tale of the Man of Khorasan, His Son and His tutor," which is embedded in the "Story of King Shāh Bakht and His Vizier al-Rahwān." Unlike the other tales present in the Breslau edition mentioned above, which are present in virtually all nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions, both this tale and its frame are absent from both the Bûlâq and the Calcutta II editions. This tale "is told by the vizier to ward off his execution. The tale's moral is that whoever seeks his fortune on his own strength will fail," a markedly different one than the consolation announced in the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm"'s frame (Marzolph and Leeuwen 285).



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It is this interdiction, this first brush against the constraints of social propriety, that propels the couple forward first to marriage and then to love:

فقال اذا كان الامر كذلك فانا اتزوجها . ثم انه دخل الى والدته فعرفها ذلك فقالت يا ولدى  
هي جاريتك . فعمد الغلام الى الجارية ودخل بها وصارت محبتها تزداد في كل يوم .  
(*Alf Layla wa Layla* 653)

Ni'ma said to his father, "If this is the case, I will marry her." Then he went in to his mother and told her about it, and she said, "Yes, son, she is your slave." Ni'ma then slept with her and fell in love with her. (Haddawy 248)

Ultimately, it is the legitimacy of their union that will create much of the tension in the romance, especially once Nu'm is abducted and removed to Damascus. Here, because of al-Ḥajjāj's subterfuge, to the best of the caliph's knowledge, Nu'm is his legitimate property. As such, once Ni'ma has infiltrated the caliph's harem and thus violated the sanctity of the caliph's home, he is ultimately—and knowingly—in the wrong. Mixed with the absolute authority of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān as *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, or the Commander of the Faithful—the title by which he is referred in the tale—the tale juxtaposes "a conflict of two 'just' cases" (Heath I, 19). Enter the intervention of fate:

فدخل نعمه مطاطى راسه ونظر الى القصر واراد ان يدخل على يساره فاخذ على يمينه  
واراد ان يعد خمس مقاصير فعد ستة فدخل سابع مقصوره . ( *Alf Layla wa Layla* 671)

Ni'ma bowed his head and entered, but, instead of turning to the left, he turned to the right by mistake, and instead of counting five doors and entering the sixth, he counted six and entered the seventh. (Haddawy 257)

At first glance, this would appear to be fate putting its will against that of the lovers. Ni'ma, rather than happening upon his beloved, blunders into a perilous encounter. Ultimately, however, this very blunder saves his life by resulting in the caliph's sister effectively purchasing Ni'ma's life through her

guile.<sup>40</sup> The couple's case triumphs and the couple is reunited. In so doing, the tale fulfills yet another of Heath's parameters, namely that "one must not only love passionately, but also rightly, [...] one must be true and faithful in love. Almost any act stemming from true love is excused, while any deed that promotes it is accepted, indeed aided, by Fate" (Heath II, 1). Ni'ma is absolved of his trespasses first by the caliph's sister and then by 'Abd al-Malik himself; while the act of trespassing furthers Ni'ma's amatory project.

Similarly, on the level of the romance's action, the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" corresponds closely to the archetypal description provided by Peter Heath. Ni'ma's adventure quite literally propels him from his home and from under the aegis of his father's good name, taking on instead first the inferior station of the physician's assistant before abasing himself further as a cross-dressing slave girl, hereby losing the privilege of both his gender and his class. The move is ultimately rewarded through a revelation that restores Ni'ma's privileged identity. Here, I disagree with Heath's reading of the tale because, whereas he ascribes this restoration of identity to Ni'ma's act of "assuming the almost magical control over material states implied by the physician's profession," I read it as the his reclamation of his original identity: it is through revealing his identity as the son of a prominent member of Kufa's society to the caliph's sister that his life is saved the first time (Heath II, 13).<sup>41</sup>

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[40] Where the *'ajūz* uses hers to harm the couple, the caliph's sister uses her cunning to help them. The interplay of age, gender and cunning in medieval Mediterranean literatures deserves more attention than it has received to date.

[41] The use of stories to buy a life is central to the narrative structure of the *Alf Layla wa Layla* and, indeed, is one of the three types of frame stories identified by Mia Irene Gerhardt. These are the entertaining frame, the time-gaining frame and the ransom frame. She considers this last frame to be an originally Arab story type, which is derived from the *khurāfāt*. The frame, much reduced in the case of "the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm," essentially runs: tell me a sufficiently marvelous tale and I will spare your life.

Similarly, the second time his identity is revealed, albeit initially anonymously, his property is restored to him by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān. At this point, Ni'ma and Nu'm's relationship has been validated by the highest authority, adding additional security to the final state of the tale as it closes. It is the intervening period, in which Ni'ma's identity is in question, and with it the validity and permanence of his love, that represents the period of trials and insecurity. Heath asks the following question of Prince Tāj al-Mulūk in the embedded "Tale of Tāj al-Mulūk and the Princess Dunyā" found in the "Tale of 'Umar ibn al-Nu'mān": "even if he could postpone this indefinitely, does he expect to spend the rest of his days in someone else's palace disguised as a slave-girl" (Heath II, 3)? The impossibility of this situation creates tensions and drives the narrative, forcing the reader or auditor to ask if Ni'ma will be discovered and if Nu'm will be called to her master's bedchambers? The couple's union represents a moment of stasis, yes, but an unstable one. The only way out is forward, through even greater danger, in order to prove the sincerity of their emotions and the justice of their cause.

Unlike in the case of Ni'ma and Nu'm, Floire's parents are opposed to a union between the two lovers. Even at birth, custom dictated, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* tells us:

Livré l'ont a la damoisele [Blancheflor's mother],  
 Por çou qu'ele estoit sage et bele,  
 A norrir et a maistroier,  
 Fors seulement de l'alaitier.  
 Une paiienne l'alaitoit,  
 Car lor lois l'autre refusoit. (vv. 179-184)

*He was given to the damsel [Blancheflor's mother], because she was well-behaved and beautiful, to be feed and raised, but not to be breastfed. A pagan breastfed him because their laws prohibited the other.*

Refusing to have Floire breastfed by a Christian performs the double work of simultaneous preventing *a priori* an incestuous relationship between milk brother and sister and announcing the social order

that their love will have to circumvent through the course of the romance. This resistance occurs both on the religious and economic level. As the two grow older and increasingly inseparable, the king begins to fear for the honor of his lineage, so he resolved to remove her:

Ocirra le hastivement,  
Puis querra selonc son lignage  
A son fil feme de parage. (vv. 280-282)

*Kill her quickly then look for a girl in the area according to his lineage.*

Of course, the objection of status is purely illusory, as is that of religion, as the romance bears out. Blancheflor is the daughter of a Christian knight and thus of noble status; in some versions she is explicitly a countess (Grieve 1). Moreover, the final conversion of Floire to Christianity negates *a posteriori* Islam. Regardless, the king sends his son away to study at Montoire in order to facilitate the deed. He thereby creates momentary absence that prepares the sale of Blancheflor to merchants bound for Babylone. This scheme is similar to that used by the *ʿajūz* with Nuʿm in order to remove her from the safety of her home. In both instances, it is worth noting, the texts are organized to highlight the contention between the wills of adults and youths. Floire is thus dragged out into the world, where he must prove against his parents and his religion that his love for Blancheflor is honorable and just. The subsequent journey from port to port in *cabotage* fashion brings constant news of the "you should have been here yesterday" variety: at every stop, innkeepers recognize Floire by his beauty and his sadness as being the other half of a similarly beautiful and similarly sad slave girl of obviously high birth who had recently passed through. Fate thus inexorably keeps Floire on the right course to Blancheflor.

The *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* introduces another subtle realignment in relation to the

"Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm": unlike al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, who abducts and wrongfully sells Nu'm to 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, King Felix exchanges Blancheflor against a marvelously crafted golden cup. Therefore, when she is transferred into the position of Emir Marsile, who intends to choose her as his next wife, he does so lawfully, Floire having no claim to her beyond his love. Further, the couple is not married, as opposed to Ni'ma and Nu'm, who are.<sup>42</sup> This sets Floire's act of transgression in a higher register still than the analogue. Further, as the role of the caliph's sister is replaced by Gloris, a German princess imprisoned with Blancheflor in the *tors as Puceles*, there is no one to intercede on the couple's behalf. These changes influence the trajectory of the revelation of identities once the couple is discovered, changes that dovetail nicely into the conversion narrative that has been added to the tale.<sup>43</sup> Floire effects this revelation and transformation from slave girl to prince in his own name before the assembled court of the Emir. In this case, love triumphs quite literally; unwilling to let the other die before them, they jockey to be executed first, a spectacle that induces unanimous pity among those assembled. The general commiseration puts into doubt the emir's honor, should he choose to move forward with the execution:

Et que dira on s'il l'ocit ?  
N'est pas grand los, si come je cuit !

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[42] Some versions of the *Conte* stage a clandestine marriage between Floire and Blancheflor while in the harem together, while other still only have the two sleep together.

[43] Grieve sees the religious elements central to the legend of Floire and Blancheflor:

If the "third strain" [a hypothetical and unattested version whose existence was surmised by Patricia Grieve] with all its emphasis on conversion represents not a reworking that expands and transforms the secular into the sacred, but a version closest to a lost original that was, in its essence, a tale of religious import, then it is certainly possible that the Old French and Middle English authors or redactors modified the religious tale to make it more courtly. (Grieve 94)

Of course, I would have expected the very opposite procedure as it is the older texts that show greater religious investment. This would map more closely onto the trajectory I am tracing here, as well.

Se il les deus enfans afole,  
Molt en istra male parole. (vv. 3031-3034)

*And what will they say if he kills her? No great praise, I am sure! If he harms these two children, much bad rumor will come from it.*

In the end, Marsile's concern for honor coupled with his interest in preventing further breaches in his harem's security drives the Emir to spare Floire and Blanche-flor's lives and to marry them to each other. Thus, in exchange for a story, the couple's lives are bought.

So what then can this tell us about theories of love and their mutual compatibility around the medieval Mediterranean? Love is represented as transcendent in both the Islamicate and Old French contexts. The lover is, as Peter Heath recognized, excused for any and all of his deeds that were motivated by love. Thus "the longing for love justifies many otherwise socially unacceptable actions" (Heath II, 1). However, this can only go so far before the couple is faced with either the end of their love—both narratives project this through the threat of death—or the reintegration of their love within the norms of socially accepted behavior. Lovers do not remain mavericks without regard for the mores of the culture. Instead they strive against those mores in order to create a space for themselves; it is not a clash of the individual will against that of the group but rather a proving of the individual for inclusion in the group. Love is also redemptive; it cuts across socially constructed borders, allowing the slave to rise to queen and the infidel to discover Christianity. And the model of love can save others as well: those third parties witnessing the transcendental nature of the lover's union are often driven to mend their ways. The witness to the miracle of love, as it is so often represented, turns from despotism to benevolence and sin to saintliness.

If love appears to be profoundly liberating in both of these instances, it is also restrictive. It is

represented as monogamous in both instances as an example of a love for the ages. The one exception is the harem of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān; even Emir Marsile's harem is serially monogamous as he only maintains one wife at a time before executing her and moving on. Love is strictly heterosexual, although both narratives play with androgyny. While Floire is mistaken as a girl by the chamberlain due to his lack of body and facial hair and is only discovered because he is mistaken as Gloris, who is already in attendance, Floire remains in control of his gender privilege. Blancheflor is not able to explain the terrible mix-up that has landed her in the situation she finds herself in, where she will be forced into marriage, raped and then executed—only Floire is provided that privilege. Still, both of these tales call into question contemporaneous—and thus anachronistic—models of masculinity and reveal the porosity of gender identity in the Middle Ages, both in France and in the Islamic world. The representation of love in both the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* and the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" also restricts the *innamoratio* process to youth as both present children in the act of falling in love. But both couples also pass from youth to adulthood once the couples are officially sanctioned by society and its representatives in the stories.

In terms of the mechanics of love, both the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* and the "Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" imply that love can be generated through long exposure and that, while it is the product of the sight of beauty, it is not necessarily instantaneous. Over time, the beauty of each attracts the other and also convinces third parties that the two are meant for one another. This similarity between the lovers extends from their physical descriptions to their names: Floire, the rose, and Blancheflor, the lily; Ni'ma and Nu'm both being derived from the trilateral n-ʿ-m for comfort and pleasure. Ni'ma and Nu'm love for each other, although it is really only Ni'ma love that is explicitly

addressed in the tale, is perfected only after their marriage is consummated. This is not dwelt upon but can be adduced through the linearity of the sentence's syntax:

فعمد الغلام الى الجارية ودخل بها وصارت محبتها تزداد فى كل يوم.  
(*Alf Layla wa Layla* 653)

And so the youth went to the slave girl and slept with her and his love for her grew daily. (my translation)

The concept of sex as a cause for love is absent from the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* but present in the texts studied above in chapter 1; particularly, Ibn Ḥazm explicitly references this process in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma* while Andreas Capellanus does so implicitly in his *De amore*. Once love has become entrenched in the lover's heart, separation from the beloved leads inexorably to lovesickness, which is curable only by the couple's reunion. The symptoms of lovesickness—listlessness, sleeplessness, pallor, loss of appetite—are constant across both traditions, and are diagnosable by a trained physician. Without treatment, despair ultimately leads to death. These images of love in both narratives show considerable similarity even as elements in the tales shift from context to context. The shared general framework for understanding love, informed by and informing contemporaneous theoretical works, allowed for a relatively simple transfer of literary models across cultural and linguistic borders. Beyond this, however, the diffusion of these tales in their respective literary cultures testifies to their contemporaneous interest in romance and the values that it addresses.

In this chapter, I have referred to the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* as both a quintessential and a proto-romance even as I have sought to differentiate the earlier *Conte* from the somewhat later and somewhat expanded *Roman de Floire et Blancheflor*. Partly as a strategy to avoid the multivalence of the term "romance," I have insistently referred to it either as a *conte* or tale, maintaining that it is



fundamentally different than the later *romans courtois* and the *matière de Bretagne*. Nowhere are the otherworldly, fey marvels of chance encounters on forest paths or lonely manors inhabited by hospitable vavasours and their comely daughters to be found. Nor are there marvelous pavilions or enchanted fountains. Instead of the inscrutable magic found in the Celtic folk literature from which the *matière de Bretagne* drew its inspiration, the world of the *Conte* is simply foreign and unfamiliar. The marvels of this world are characterized by an ingenuity that borders on the fantastic. The seemingly magical "arbre d'amors" that dominates the Emir's rooftop garden and that is used to ritually select the Emir's bride is not animated by demons or God but subject to the "engien" of the man who planted it. As Robert d'Orbigny explains:

Par grant engien l'arbres i siet,  
car li arbes est tos vermeus.  
De çou ot cil molt bon conseus  
Qui le planta k'a l'asseoir  
Fu fais l'engiens, si com j'espoir.  
Au main, quant lieve li soleus,  
En l'arbre fiert trestos vermeus.  
Cil arbres est si engigniés  
Que tostans est de flors cargiés. (vv. 2030-2038)

*By means of an ingenious device set in the tree, the tree is all red. It was so well conceived of by he who planted it that when it was set the device was made, I believe. In the morning, when the sun rises, it quickly makes the tree red. The tree is so ingenious that it is always covered in flowers.*

The tree itself is red unlike other trees not because of any particularity of the tree itself but apparently because of the way in which it is positioned in relation to the rising sun, a positioning that was by all accounts deliberate. In these few lines, "engien" appears twice while its derived "engignié" appears once along with "conseus," all of it speaking to the creative act of artifice, of intellect over the magical.

Writing of automata, such as the *arbre d'amors*, the kissing funerary statues and the singing birds that decorate the Emir's sensual garden, E. R. Truitt, in her *Medieval Robots*, a study of automata in Old French literature, states that "automata from historical texts were translated to literary texts and then reinscribed into historical legend and biography" (Truitt 8). The causes that animated these automata varied from genre to genre in important ways even as they "were not always or completely understood as mechanical" (Truitt 15). Thus, as Truitt contends, "demonically animated automata appear in some medieval romances and texts," such as Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*, "but not in any of the *romans antiques*" (Truitt 59). This is critical as the marvels in the *roman antique* fulfill a singular function that differs from that of the *roman courtois*, where they mark foreignness or exoticism. In the *roman antique*, however, wonders mark less the outgroup than the ingroup:

By including automata in these romances, the French and Anglo-Norman authors, and their patrons, could claim automata as part of their cultural patrimony. [...] *Romans antiques* allowed French and Anglo-Norman nobility to claim the cultural, technological, and intellectual achievements of these ancient [Greek and Trojans] dynasties. (Truitt 64).

These fictional accounts then came to inflect the historical record, completing the trajectory traced above. Truitt proffers the tradition of Vergil as artificer as an example because it appears in ostensibly nonfiction writing only after it begins to show up in the *romans antiques*:

In the *romans antiques* automata are written into the past, as part of the ancient heritage of the nobility, and are credited to men with skills in divination, philosophy, and even poetry (or enchantment). *Romans antiques*, based in part on the *Aeneid*, claim Roman or Trojan lineage for their French and Anglo-Norman audiences. The *romans antiques* were stages in a literary past that was heavily inflected by contemporary twelfth-century courtly society. Automata in *romans antiques* are part of the pageantry of the courts from which the French and Anglo-Norman nobility claim their descent. Writers of compendia, encyclopedias, and other nonfictional Latin prose translated automata from the literary *matière*, based on Vergil and recomposed in the *romans antiques*, and reinscribed them into the Vergilian legend and the

Roman pas, in the way that the authors of vernacular romance had earlier translated Vergil's epic of empire to France and the Anglo-Norman realm. (Truitt 67).

Automata in the literary tradition of the *matière de Rome* and the instances of where it then appears in the *matière de France* thus represent a confluence of the *translatio studii* and *imperii*. Their inclusion of these lineage-building myths draws a critical link between the contemporaneous political order and the historical political entities through which their legitimacy is created.

The *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* functions in a strikingly similar way, providing both a lineage for Charlemagne and a pseudo-historical model and counterpart for the perfect lovers, Aliénor d'Aquitaine and Louis VII of France. It looks however not back toward Rome, Greece or Troy but towards the technologically superior Islamicate world via the Muslim polities of Iberia. It should not be surprising then that the aesthetic of its marvels is more closely linked to those of the *roman antique* than to the fey otherworld of the *roman courtois*. It is perhaps for this reason more than any other that the *Conte* represents a transitional work that bridges the gap from earlier *romans d'Antiquité* to the later *matière de Bretagne*, still looking for inspiration and legitimacy to the south and not yet to the north, while already adopting the courtly and amatory posture to be more fully developed in these latter works. As quintessential a romance as it is, the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* remains fundamentally a proto-romance because it points towards what the romance was to become some three decades later at the court of Champagne all while maintaining the aesthetics of older literary forms. As just such a hybrid text, it is perhaps more susceptible to foreign influences and story types.

The medieval Mediterranean was a space of porous borders that people, goods and ideas could, and indeed did regularly, traverse with relative ease. This chapter has sought to show that tales such as

"the Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" could be easily adapted from their Islamicate contexts into their new European contexts not in spite of but precisely because of their implicit cultural baggage. Romance in particular was highly mobile across these borders because both Islamicate and Old French theories of love shared considerable congruity. By looking at shared stories in both Arabic and Old French, we have seen that, whether we know the trajectory they took or not, we cannot deny that the process occurred. Further, I would argue that, just as the Camino de Santiago de Compostella can serve as an evocative metaphor for the circulation of people, their beliefs, their stories and their goods, so too can material culture, such as the Aliénor Vase, act as a model for illuminating the routes by which literature could spread. The exchanges in the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* become a pretext for new intrigues and the telling of new tales.

#### Chapter 4: Love, Arabic Medicine and the Twelfth–Century Romance

While it is possible to demonstrate that there is considerable overlap in the ways in which theories of love are expressed in contemporaneous Old French and Islamicate treatises, it is currently impossible to show that Ibn Ḥazm's *Tawq al-Hamama* circulated north of the Pyrenees. Nor is there any evidence that it was read by anyone traveling south of the Pyrenees either. It is therefore impossible to posit that either the troubadours or the later trouvères had direct access to it or other Islamicate amatory treatises in translation; neither extant physical evidence in the form of manuscripts nor discernible textual evidence in the form of explicit allusions, paraphrases or quotations is known to exist. The provocative similarities between Andreas Capellanus and Ibn Ḥazm could therefore be easily dismissed were they not paralleled in the extensive evidence of cultural and intellectual transmission from the Islamicate world to Christendom that typified the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In domains as far reaching as mathematics and mechanical engineering, philosophy and theology, European scholars redeployed Islamicate practice and theory and reinvigorated the Greco-Roman foundations of Old French science and culture.

One of the many lasting contributions that medieval Islamicate science made to the Latinate

world over these centuries of borrowing was in the medical arts. After centuries of stagnation in the science and practice of medicine, the expansion of empirical practice and the theoretical apparatuses that supported it revolutionized European medical arts and recontextualized mental, physical and emotional processes within a medicalized and rationalized body. Love was among those processes that passed from an abstract malady to a mundane, embodied process governed by the same rules as indigestion and insomnia. These new theories of love borrowed from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian physicians of Cordoba, Cairo and Baghdad would come to exert considerable influence on physicians in the medieval Francophone world. This influence would eventually extend into the literary domain, opening a new set of amatory symbols and metaphors up for exploitation by poets and prozers alike. In this chapter, I will explore the avenues of this influence through translations of Arabic medical treatises and their impact on Old French literature. In so doing, I will show that despite the ubiquity of Arabic science at scholastic centers across Europe, including the cathedral schools of northern France as well as at the recently founded University of Paris, the representation of love medicine in literature did not begin to change until the middle of the thirteenth century. Ultimately, I will argue that the history of medical sciences sheds little light on the development of literary expression in twelfth-century France and that its usefulness lies in its ability to illuminate the porosity of intellectual borders during that period. Thus, although late twelfth-century authors, such as Chrétien de Troyes, were aware of the developments in the medical arts, they continue to use traditional representations of love medicine at the expense of more current approaches, as we will see in an analysis of Fenice's simulated death in *Cligès*.

When, in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, Fenice attempts to fake her own death in order to escape from her marriage to Alis, she inadvertently pits two competing schools of medical arts against each other.<sup>44</sup> The empiric Thessala, Fenice's duenna, fools Alis's court physicians by swapping Fenice's urine with that of a stranger whom she had found in the market. Because the woman was indeed gravely ill, the doctors were provided with what appeared to be credible evidence that Fenice's death was indeed imminent, despite being unable to find any particular cause for her apparent demise while examining her person. They were thus prepared to accept without question the sleight Thessala was preparing in the form of an anesthetic tincture that put Fenice into a profound and prolonged, almost death-like sleep.

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[44] The classification of the medical arts into three schools was current during the Middle Ages, although it originated in ancient Greece. In his chapters, “De inventoribus medicinae” [*The Inventors of Medicine*] and “De tribus haeresibus medicorum” [*The Three Schools of Medicine*], Isidore of Seville provides an account of the origins of medical science as understood in late Antiquity. The god, Apollo, is credited with being the “auctor ac reparator” [*author and discoverer*] of medicine, the study of which was then further developed by his son, Aesculapius (Isidore 165, Barney et al. 109). Following Aesculapius's untimely death by lightning strike, the study of medicine was banned for some fifty years until its study was revived by his descendent, Hippocrates of Cos. Each of these three physicians founded their own school of medicine:

Prima Methodica inventa est ab Apolline, quae remedia sectatur et carmina. Secunda Empirica, id est experientissima, inventa est ab Aesculapio, quae non indiciorum signis, sed solis constat experimentis. Tertia Logica, id est rationalis, inventa ab Hippocrate. [...] Enpirici enim experientiam solam sectantur: Logici experientiae rationem adiungunt: Methodoici nec elemntorum rationem observant, nec tempora, nec aetates, nec causas, sed sola morborum substantias. (Isidore 165-6)

*The first Methodical school, which advocates remedies and charms, was founded by Apollo. Second, the Empirical school was founded by Aesculapius; it is the most grounded in experience and depends not on the symptomatic signs but on experimental results alone. Third, the Logical – that is, rational – school, founded by Hippocrates. [...] So the Empiricists advocate experience alone; the Logicians add reasoning to experience; the Methodicians take no account of reasoning from principles, nor of circumstances, ages, and causes, but only of the actual diseases.* (Barney et al. 109)

Three traveling physicians from Salerno then appear at the court in mourning. Learning of the

Empress's recent death, one of the physicians vaunts:

Se nos fussiens venu des hier,  
Molt se poïst la morz prisier,  
Se a force rien nos tolsist. (vv. 5795-5796)

*If we had come yesterday, Death might have boasted her strength, should she have taken anything from us by force.*

Not trusting her because of the treachery of Solomon's wife, the head physician approaches Fenice's bier and, placing his hand on her chest ["sor la coste" (v. 5818)], he feels her pulse and confirms his suspicions that she is not dead:

[...] et sant sanz dote  
Que ele a el cors l'ame tote ;  
Bien le set et bien l'aparçoit. (vv. 5819-5821)

*[...] and no doubt feels that she has yet her soul in her body; well he knows it and well he sees it.*

Aware of the sleight but unable to comprehend its cause and its functioning, the physicians attempt to coax Fenice out of her death-like state, first with their voices and then, when this fails, with escalatingly violent actions: slapping her about the body and face and ultimately scalding her flesh with molten metals. This ends poorly for the physicians when the women of the palace, so outraged by the treatment of their lady, rise up and throw them out of a castle window to their deaths.

Thessala appears a master of both the magical and medical arts; not only is she capable of curing various illnesses but also she is able to meet and surpass the magic of the fabled Greek princess, Medea:

Je sai bien garir d'itropique,  
Si sai garir de l'arcetique,  
De quinancie et de cuerpous ;  
Tant sai d'orines et de pous



Que ja mar avroiz autre mire ;  
Et sai, se je l'osoie dire,  
D'anchantemanz et de charaies  
Bien esprouvee et veraies  
Plus c'onques Medea n'an sot. (vv. 2983-2991)

*I know well how to cure drospsy, and I know how to cure gout, and quinsy and asthma; I know so much about urine and the pulse that you would be wrong to ever have another doctor; and I know, if I dared to say it, more than ever Medea knew, about tried and true enchantments and spells.*

Curiously, however, Laine E. Doggett goes to great length in her study of the representation of healing and love magic in twelfth-century Old French romances, *Love Cures*, to distance herself from scholars who have sought evidence that Chrétien's Thessala' was modeled after the mythological sorceress, Medea, almost as if she forgets that it is Chrétien de Troyes himself that draws the reader's attention to the connection. Nevertheless, as Doggett shows, the *Roman de Troie*, which would have been a likely source of inspiration for the character, "contains no mention of healing whatsoever" (Doggett 64). Indeed, Ovid's representation of Medea in the *Metamorphoses* is no closer an antecedent: "Ovid's Medea with her cruel rejuvenation regime and vengeful infanticide is clearly very far from Thessala in character, motive, and, finally, magical means to her ends" (Doggett 67). Thus, when Doggett concludes, "the references to Medea and Thessala function, in short, to elevate Thessala's status in the Byzantine world of the romance, and perhaps to remind us again of the relationship between magic and medicine for Chrétien's audience," the argument falls flat (Doggett 67). As it stands, this conclusion makes two separate claims, each with varying degrees of acceptability. The first, that the reference to Medea resituates the character Thessala within the long lineage of powerful practitioners of the medical and magical arts from the eastern Mediterranean, seems entirely plausible. Sharon

Kinoshita seems to share this reading when she asserts in "Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès* in the Medieval Mediterranean" that "originating from the other end of the Mediterranean, 'mestre' Thessala incarnates yet another alternative to the routes of *translatio*, combining a professionalized medical knowledge of pulse and urine with a (gendered) mastery of the esoteric arts of the east" (Kinoshita "Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*" 54). The second, that Chrétien's audience required a reminder of what was an obvious fact in the twelfth century, namely that magic and science were either indistinguishable or inextricably intertwined, seems somewhat unlikely.

As an empiric, Thessala lacks formal or institutional training in medicine. Instead, Thessala owes skills in the medical and magical arts to her upbringing in Greece, where such knowledge and practice are said to be widespread among women:

Sa mestre avoit non Thessala,  
Qui l'avoit norrie en anfance,  
Si savoit molt de nigromance.  
Por ce fu de Tessalle nee,  
Ou sont feites les deablies,  
Anseigniees et establies.  
Les fames qui el país sont  
Et charmes et charaies font. (vv. 2962-2970)

*Her master, who nursed her from infancy, was named Thessala and knew much about necromancy. Because she was born in Thessaly where devilries were taught and established. The women who live in this country do charms and spells.*

The relationship between magic and science in medieval thought has been widely discussed and documented, most effectively perhaps by Richard Kieckhefer in *Magic in the Middle Ages*, where he argues that the distinction between science and magic simply did not exist as we understand it today:<sup>45</sup>

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[45] For a more comprehensive survey of the intersection of magic and science during the High

Natural magic was not distinct from science, but rather a branch of science. It was the science that dealt with 'occult virtues' (or hidden powers) within nature. Demonic magic was not distinct from religion, but rather a perversion of religion. It was religion that turned away from God and toward demons for their help in human affairs. (*Magic* 9).

If Thessala's love magic is termed *nigromance* or necromancy by Chrétien de Troyes, it is not because she completes it through recourse to demonic aids or because he is seeking to censure it explicitly as an author. Instead, as Kieckhefer shows in his essay, "Erotic Magic in Medieval Europe," in the minds of the authorities:

[E]rotic magic threatened private morality and public order just as much as bodily harm and death, destructive storms, or theft. Because it violated the free will of those it ensnared and disrupted the social order, erotic magic was categorized not with the white magic of healing, prevention of misfortune and recovery of goods, but with the black or maleficent magic of sorcery.<sup>46</sup> ("Erotic Magic" 31)

And yet, we should not assume that Chrétien's depiction of Thessala is necessarily dangerous, because as Doggett notes, despite the relationship of court poets to the moral and intellectual authorities of the day, their representation of morality tended towards ambivalence:

Although clerics trained by the Church created the romances we will examine [including *Cligès*], the authors do not belong to the specialist subset of theologians and canonists. Composed for entertainment as the goal, the romances never take on accusatory tones towards practices that theologians or

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Middle Ages, see Lynn Thorndike's monumental *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*.

[46] Describing various practices for inducing *amor*, whether that is glossed as love or lust, Kieckhefer notes:

All these necromantic experiments rely heavily on some form of image-magic; whether the image is made of wax or drawn on skin or tile, the assumption is that the affliction of the image will cause suffering in the desired woman until she yields to the magician. This form of magic is thus inherently violent, and more overtly than other forms of erotic magic it constitutes a kind of magical rape of the victim. ("Erotic Magic" 41)

The use of such magic in attaining a lover is diametrically opposed to the courtly methods advocated in the *De amore* by Andreas Capellanus ("Erotic Magic" 46).

jurists might condemn. They do not concern themselves with moral assessments of the empirical activities shown or depict other characters who take such an interest. (Doggett 21)

In fact, when compared with the *fisiciens* from Salerno, who inflict intense violence and suffering on their “patient,” Thessala’s “medicine” is depicted far more favorably. Thus, what Chrétien de Troyes describes as marvelous is not Thessala’s potions but rather that Fenice survived the brutal treatment of the *fisiciens* (Doggett 29).

The exact status of Thessala as a practitioner of the medical arts has been debated by scholars. Sharon Kinoshita ties the title of *mestre* “back to the world of the 'New Schools' of twelfth-century Paris, where *magister* (from which 'mestre' derived) was gaining currency as an honorific 'meant to stress one's membership in not just a profession but a social class'" (Kinoshita "Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*" 53). This is an important step in recognizing the role of women in the medical profession as previous translations have tended to trivialize the role of female attendants by translating the term as "maîtresse" and "nourrice" in modern French translations and "nurse" or "governess" in English ("Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*" 53). Similarly, the same title is applied to the builder, Jehan, who is tasked with constructing the tower to which flee Cligès and Fenice after Thessala successfully fakes her ward's death. Jehan's mastery of his arts is explicit in the description Cligès gives of his work:

As soes oevres contrefeire  
Ont appris quanqu'il sevent feire  
Cil d'Antioche et cil de Rome. (vv. 5325-5358)

*By counterfeiting his works have learned everything they know how to do, those of Antioch and those of Rome.*

The prodigious marvels of these two cities are naught but copies of Jehan's work. We are therefore to draw this parallel from Jehan back towards Thessala to fully understand her own mastery of the

medical arts.

Peggy McCracken, on the other hand, distances herself from such a reading by insisting on the late date of the institutionalization of medicine in France because:<sup>47</sup>

One can only begin to speak of official, legal hierarchies within the profession in France after restrictions on the practice of medicine were established within the founding of the medical faculty at the University of Paris in the early thirteenth century. In 1220 the practice of medicine and the right to the title *medicus* were limited to graduates of a medical school. ("Women and Medicine" 246).

The discussion to the title *medicus* is germane to this discussion because, as we have already seen, Thessala, in her description of her own talents, chides Fenice for considering the help of an "autre mire" (*Cligès* v. 2987). The title *mire* "is derived from the Latin *medicus*, which gives rise to *mège* in the langue d'oc of southern France," and was primarily used in the north of France, especially around Paris, Reims and in Picardy and Hainaut (Doggett 46). Indeed, as Doggett argues, this, and not *mestre*, is "in fact, the only word in the text related to Thessala's abilities" (Doggett 44).<sup>48</sup>

This reading corresponds closely with what is known about the early history of medical study in France. While there is evidence that medicine was taught in Paris as early as the end of the twelfth century—"Alexander of Neckam implies that he studied in Paris in the early 1180s" (Doggett 46)—the first document to list a faculty of medicine among others at the University of Paris dates from the middle of the thirteenth century. Still, it is clear that some sort of formal structure existed as early as

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[47] McCracken glosses *mestre* as "nurse" in her "Women and Medicine in Medieval French Narrative" (242).

[48] Interestingly, the Salernitan physicians are also repeatedly referred to by the title "mire" (*Cligès* v. 5833, v. 5848, v. 5860, v. 5959, v. 5968, v. 5978); they are in fact far more often addressed as such in the text than is Thessala. While this does not establish an equivalence between Thessala and the Salernitans, as only the Salernitans are referred to by the most prestigious title of *fisiciens*, it does provide evidence that Thessala is viewed as a "real" doctor.

1231, while it was not regulated for another forty years. Prior to this, clerics and lay practitioners were educated at the cathedral schools of northern France, in particular Reims, Chartres, Poitiers and Amiens. Even once medicine was firmly anchored in the scholastic setting, however, only 51.3 % of known doctors from after the twelfth century can be proven to have held degrees from a university, pointing to the continued transmission of medical knowledge through informal routes (Doggett 45-6). In fact, historians have shown that "non-school- or university-trained healers [were] active through the Middle Ages and afterwards. Even after the establishment of medical schools, empirics continued to receive training and to practice" (Doggett 16). The battle of wits between the empiric *mire* and the Salernitan *fisciciens* also reveals a second front on the battle for cultural and intellectual superiority of these two schools, namely the efficacy of theoretical versus practical medicine. As Doggett explains:

The speculative status accorded to medicine by its entry into the university would be forfeited if physicians used manual techniques. Despite this new strand of medical thought, the theory/practice divide was not neat and clean, as several writers pointed out the continued value of practical approaches. [...] Because theory became 'so complex as to be unworkable,' practical knowledge of herbal applications continued to be transmitted in both oral and written forms throughout the Middle Ages. (Doggett 189).

As such empirics remained relevant even after university faculties began teaching medicine and they continued to constitute an active and valued presence within the medical profession. It therefore would be wrong to view the female empirics, either as women or as empirics, as taken less seriously than their university-trained counterparts by the medieval populace.<sup>49</sup> Instead, as Doggett notes, "their presentation is strikingly positive. [...] They successfully diagnose and heal using methods of the

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[49] "Old French romance shows women, but rarely men, in these roles [as healers], despite evidence that both women and men undertook healing and magical activities in the high Middle Ages" (Doggett 3).

day,” even as others fail, as is the case in *Cligès* (Doggett 4). Doggett goes further to state that “Thessala offers a highly realistic depiction of an empirical healer and magical practitioner of the later twelfth century” (Doggett 42).

Opposite Thessala are the three *fisiciens* from Salerno, who, even though they are able to correctly identify that Fenice is still alive, are unable to reverse the effects of Thessala’s anesthetics. Lacking the practical experience of the empiric, their superior education and theoretical knowledge fails to justify their initial bravado. There should be no doubt, however, that their arrival at the Greek court posed a serious threat to Thessala’s plans. This threat is doubly articulated in the text: firstly, they are physicians and, secondly, they are from Salerno. As McCracken shows:

The superior knowledge and training of these doctors is immediately obvious in their title, not only because they come from Salerno, site of the celebrated medical school, but perhaps more importantly, because they are called *fisiciens* (from *physicus*) rather than *mires* (from *medicus*). Paul O. Kristeller has shown that this distinction becomes firmly established in the twelfth century, and attributes it to the growing conception of medicine as a theoretical science connected with the universities, and with the beginnings of the professionalization of the discipline. (McCracken 252)

Thus, beyond the status of *physicus* over *medicus*, Salerno was known during the twelfth century as the single most important site of medical instruction in Christian Europe as from the eleventh century onward it constituted the epicenter of a burgeoning movement introducing Islamicate medical science and practice to the Latin world. The status attached to the city of Salerno was not limited to male practitioners, either in literature or in practice. As such we must be careful not to read too deeply into the gender politics of this scene in *Cligès*. Marie de France’s lai, *Les deus amans*, for example, features a female physician who is asked to intercede with her considerable knowledge for a lover’s benefit. The woman is explicitly stated to be well versed in *physicus* and not *medicus*:

En Salerne ai une parente,  
Riche femme, mut ad grant rente.  
Plus de trente anz i ad esté ;<sup>50</sup>  
L'arte de phisike ad tant usé  
Que mut est saive de mescines. (vv. 103-108)

*In Salerno I have a relative, a rich woman with a large income, more than thirty years she has been there, the art of physics she has practiced so much that she is knowledgeable in medicine.*

That such a woman, if not several, did indeed exist in Salerno during the twelfth century is demonstrated by the existence of a collection of three works on women's health, known as the *Trotula* ensemble, two of which Monica Green has shown to have been authored by women (Green 29). Named after Trota, "the sole female healer [mentioned by name] in any of the three *Trotula* texts," Green argues that the works are not the work of a single woman but rather several, providing evidence for the existence of an active community of female physicians at the most preeminent medical center in twelfth-century Europe (Green 59).<sup>51</sup>

#### CONSTANTINUS AFRICANUS AND THE SALERNITAN TURN

Regardless of their failure in *Cligès*, the *troi fisiciens de Salerne* represent a critical juncture in history of medicine that came to shape the Old French theory and representation of love, and in

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[50] In comparison with many of the women who serve as aides and confidantes in love, the physician here is not reduced to the stock character of the *vieille*. As McCracken rightly observes, "Significantly, the woman is not described as 'vieille'; her age is indicated only by the length of her stay in Salerno. Marie thus refuses the association with the old women who populate much of medieval literature and who are synonymous with lay empirics" (McCracken 256).

[51] This is, however, despite the fact that only one other female doctor is documented as having lived in Salerno during this period: "one Berdefolia *medica*, who died in 1155 and who is mentioned in a calendar for the deceased in one of Salerno's parishes" (Green 59).



particular morbid love or lovesickness, as it became increasingly medicalized throughout the later Middle Ages. Indeed, the High Middle Ages were witness to something of a revolution in medical sciences, the so-called Salernitan Turn, with its increased emphasis on theory and its reliance on new medical texts translated from Arabic, which reinvigorated and reoriented classical theories of morbid love. From the eleventh century onward, significant interest was given to defining the nature and origin of morbid love and to debating its finer points. Of particular importance to these debates was the introduction of Islamicate medical sciences to the major medical centers of Christian Europe, and with them Galenic medicine with its insistence on the importance of the humors on health and wellbeing.<sup>52</sup> Although not completely unknown to the European medical establishment, Galen's medical theories were not as widely read as they were in the Islamicate context, where commentaries and glosses of Galen's treatises constituted the foundational texts for a medical education.<sup>53</sup> And

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[52] Humoral science developed by the fifth century BC out of the desire to explain the world in terms of four opposing pairs of principles that governed the universe and the four elements that constituted it. Like the macrocosm surrounding them, humans reproduced that order on the microcosmic level in the form of the four humors, which each combine a principle and two element. Blood corresponds with air and the sanguine is hot and moist; phlegm with water and the phlegmatic is cold and moist; yellow bile with fire and the choleric is hot and dry; black bile with earth and the melancholic is cold and dry. To each of these was added a season and a corresponding period of one's life: sanguine with spring and childhood; choleric with summer and youth; melancholic with autumn and maturity; phlegmatic with winter and old age. Despite predispositions from birth, the patient's humors were affected by the climate, the season and their age and diet (Arikha 5, 9-14).

[53] *Al-Jawāmi' al-Iskandāriyyīn*, or the sixteen books of the curriculum of the Alexandrian school of medicine, can be seen as representative of the state of medical education in the Islamicate world, from at least the eleventh—when Ibn Riḍwān mentions—through thirteenth centuries—when the same collection is confirmed by Ibn al-Qifti—, although there is reason to believe the tradition significantly predates this (Iskandar 257; Okka and Demirci 940; Dols 38-40). A. Z. Iskandar's reconstruction of the academic trajectory of an Alexandrian student shows the indebtedness of the curriculum to summaries and compendia of the works by Galen. Thus, in addition to the primary course in medicine, which occurred over seven distinct grades [*ṭabaqāt*], physicians were also expected to read extensively in logic, mathematics and even grammar in order “to comprehend and

central to the introduction of Islamic medicine was Constantinus Africanus, whose impressive program of translation brought up-to-date medical knowledge to the Latin West.

Little is known for certain about Constantinus Africanus's life and, thus, about the time he spent at the abbey of Monte Cassino, located to the southeast of Rome but with significant connections to the city of Salerno further to the south; it is surmised, for example, that Constantinus died on 22 December 1087. The day is known but the year is assumed because, while he is known to have taken vows and entered the holy orders at Monte Cassino sometime between 1058 and 1086, while Desiderius (c. 1027 –1087) was abbot, there is no evidence of him having been active during the tenure of Desiderius's successor, Oderisius I (Bloch 100).<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Constantinus's agnomen, Africanus, and conversion story speaks to a North African origin, most likely from the environs of

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distinguish between subjective and predicative statements," not to mention readings in practical skills such as the compounding of drugs (Iskandar 257). Preparatory work complete, the aspiring student then passes successively through the following seven grades of instruction:

Grade 1. *On Sects; On the Art of Physic; On the Pulse, to Teuthras; and To Glaucon , On Therapy.*

Grade 2. *On the Elements According to Hippocrates; On the Temperament; On the Natural Faculties; and On Minor Anatomy.*

Grade 3. *On Diseases and Symptoms.*

Grade 4. *On the Diagnosis of Diseases of Internal Organs; and On the Pulse.*

Grade 5. *On the Types of Fevers; On Crisis; and On Critical Days.*

Grade 6. *On the Method of Healing.*

Grade 7. *On the Method of the Preservation of Health.* (Iskandar 258)

Each grade was meant to teach students a different knowledge and skill set: the first grade was meant to teach the essentials of medicine; the second covers the naturals, such as the elements and the temperaments; the third through sixth grades treat diseases, that is the contra-naturals; and the seventh addresses the principles of hygiene and the six non-naturals (Iskandar 258).

[54] Desiderius, born Dauferio, was elected Pope on 24 May 1086 under the name Victor III as successor to Pope Gregory VII but died only a year later on 16 September 1087. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1887. Because of the brevity of his pontificate and its relative insignificance in relation to his tenure as abbot of Monte Cassino, he continues to be known by the name, Desiderius.

Carthage in modern-day Tunisia. Of Constantinus's arrival at the abbey of Monte Cassino, equally little is known. It appears that Constantinus Africanus arrived at the abbey of Monte Cassino with a letter of recommendation from Desiderius's close friend, Alphanus (c. 1020 – 1085), who would remain Constantinus's patron.<sup>55</sup> In it, Alphanus lauds Constantinus's translations of Galen's *Tegni* or *Ars parva* and of the *Liber isagogarum* by the Baghdādī Christian physician, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq al-'Ibādī (808 – 873), known to the Latin West as Johannicius (Bloch 100-1). Beyond these meager details, only a handful of extant legends provide further, if uncertain, light on the earlier periods of Constantinus's life.<sup>56</sup>

Although several of Constantinus's translations address questions of morbid love, it has been his *Viaticum peregrinantis*, a translation of Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-Musāfir wa Qut al-Ḥādir* that has primarily held the attention of scholars as successive glosses and commentaries on its chapter on love were composed and promulgated throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>57</sup> Equally indicative of the interest

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[55] A minor son of the Lombard line of Salernitan princes, Alphanus had been a fellow monk at Monte Cassino with Desiderius but was made abbot of the monastery of St. Benedict in Salerno in 1057 before becoming Archbishop of that city (Bloch 95).

[56] Peter the Deacon (1107 – 1153), the librarian at Monte Cassino, provides the earliest account in his *De viris illustribus cassinensis* [*On Illustrious Men of Monte Cassino*], while a similar account is available in his continuation of cardinal Leo Marsicanus of Ostia's *Chronica monasterii cassinensis* [*Chronicle of Monte Cassino*]; a third, Salernitan account is given by the thirteenth-century physician Matthaeus Ferrarius; and a final account originates in the fourteenth century at Montepellier, another important site for the study of medicine. Herbert Bloch provides a decent account of the first three legends in his three volume *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, including a transcription and translation of the pertinent section of Peter the Deacon's *De viris illustribus cassinensis*. The Montepellier legend is studied by Charles Singer in "A Legend of Salerno," which also provides a transcription in the Latin as well as a translation of the text.

[57] The manuscript and gloss history of Constantinus Africanus's *Viaticum peregrinantis* testifies to the prolonged interest with which it was met throughout the Middle Ages. Mary Frances Wack charts this history in *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*. For the *Viaticum* itself, over one hundred twenty-three manuscripts dating to before the fifteenth century are extant today. Already, within two decades of

shown in theories of love within the medical community is an only slightly posterior retranslation of Ibn al-Jazzār's original chapter on love by Constantinus's disciple, Johannes Afflacijs. These two translations, together with the subsequent glosses of Constantinus's work, testify to an impressive diffusion of Islamicate theories in the European intellectual milieu. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Constantinus's translations had spread from the Abbey of Monte Cassino and the nearby faculty of medicine at Salerno throughout France and, more suggestively, in Paris and its environs, at Chartres and Royaumont.<sup>58</sup>

Was Islamicate medicine known then in the clerical circles active at the court of Champagne in the closing decades of the century? Danielle Jacquart suggests that Andreas Capellanus himself might have been familiar with the earliest of Constantinus's commentators, Gerardus Bituricensis, who wrote his *Glosule super Viaticum* "at the request of his Parisian colleagues in order to remedy the

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Constantinus's death, his disciple, Johannes Afflacijs, composed something of a "second edition" to his *Viaticum*. This work, the *Liber de heros morbo*, is extant in two manuscripts. The first actual gloss of Constantinus's work is Gerardus Bituricensis's late twelfth-century *Glosule super Viaticum*, which is extant in seventy manuscripts dating to before the fifteenth century. The *Glosule* is followed by Egidius's early thirteenth-century *Glose super Viaticum*, which addresses two brief questions about lovesickness. This *Glose*, which is known in only one manuscript, was followed by Petrus Hispanus's *Questiones super Viaticum*. Petrus, who taught medicine in Siena from 1246 to 1250, composed two versions of the *Questiones*; Version A is extant in two manuscripts while the later Version B is extant four. The last gloss treated by Wack is Bona Fortuna's mid fourteenth-century *Tractatus super Viaticum*, which is extant in two manuscripts. The Latin texts for Constantinus's original and its subsequent glosses, as well as translations, are included in the second part of Wack's *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* while the *Liber de heros morbo* is addressed in depth in her "The *Liber de heros morbo* and Its Implications for Medieval Love Conventions."

[58] Constantinus Africanus's works have been shown to have heavily influenced both the early to mid-twelfth-century *De philosophia* and *Dragmaticon* of William of Conches (c. 1090 – c. 1154) at the cathedral school of Chartres as well as being used extensively by Vincent de Beauvais (c. 1190 – c. 1264) in the *Speculum maius*, particularly books XXVIII and XXXI of the *Speculum naturale* and books XII and XIV of the *Speculum doctrinale* (Bloch 108).

excessive brevity of *Viaticum*'s discussions of causes, signs and cures, and to supplement what was ignored by his predecessor," most likely in the third quarter of the twelfth century (Jacquart 95; Wack *Lovesickness* 52). This claim by Jacquart is endorsed somewhat more forcefully by Mary Frances Wack but it remains nothing more than conjecture—"Les deux hommes pourraient donc avoir été contemporains et avoir évolué dans le même milieu parisien" [*The two men could therefore have been contemporaries and have evolved in the same Parisian milieu.*] (Jacquart 95)—built upon certain similarities between Gerardus's and Capellanus's formulations and because they were likely part of similar cohorts in Paris. Still the similarities are striking and deserving of closer scrutiny.

#### EROSIS IN CONSTANTINUS AFRICANUS'S *VIATICUM PEREGRINANTIS*

The arrival of Constantinus Africanus at Monte Cassino towards the end of the eleventh century constituted a critical juncture in the development of erotology in the Latin West because it established the framework in which the medicalization of love was possible. Constantinus's working definition of love is markedly similar to those provided by Ovid in the second century and, in the twelfth century, by Andreas Capellanus, whose definition that would then be taken up in contemporary literature composed in Old French:

Amor qui et eros dicitur morbus est cerebro contiguus. Est autem magnum desiderium cum nimia concupiscentia et afflictione cogitationum. Unde quidam philosophi dicunt: Eros nomen maxime delectationis designatum.  
(Constantinus 186)

*The love that is also called "eros" is a disease touching the brain. For it is a great longing with intense sexual desire and affliction of the thoughts. Whence certain philosophers say: Eros is a word signifying the greatest pleasure. (Wack Lovesickness 187)*

Despite the significant overlaps between these definitions—love is represented as characterized by obsessive thoughts and desires and includes the proto-Petrarchan oxymoron of a pleasurable suffering—, Constantinus's definition effectuates a crucial slippage from *passio* [suffering] to *morbus* [disease]. This allows for an equally critical slippage from discussing “eros,” that is specifically sexual or romantic love, to “erosis” or lovesickness; love moves from a concept to a complex network of etiology [*causa*], symptomology [*signa*] and treatment [*cura*].

Within this new nexus of medical semiology, Constantinus's discussions of lovesickness continue to show considerable continuity, as well as certain divergences, from the models explored in the preceding chapters.<sup>59</sup> Following in the neoplatonic vein of contemporaneous theories of love from around the medieval Mediterranean, Constantinus ascribes the onset of lovesickness to the sight of beauty as a primary cause:

Aliquando etiam eros causa puchra est formositas considerata. Quam si in sibi consimili forma conspiciat, quasi insanit anima in ea ad uoluptatem explendam adipiscendam. (Constantinus 188)

*Sometimes the cause of eros is also the contemplation of beauty. For if the soul observes a form similar to itself it goes mad, as it were, over it in order to achieve the fulfillment of its pleasure.* (Wack Lovesickness 189)

While this extremely orthodox stance on the causes of love maps neatly onto those espoused in treatises on and in works of literature with considerable investment in theories of love, it does so only

“sometimes” because the primary, that is to say, the first cause of lovesickness is humoral in nature:

Aliquando huius amoris necessitas nimia est nature necessitas in multa humorum superfluitate expellenda. Unde Rufus: Coitus, inquit, ualere uiditur quibus nigra colera et mania dominatur. Redditur ei sensus et molestatio herior tollitur, si etiam cum non dilectis loquatur. (Constantinus 188)

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[59] For more on the semiology of medical discourse, see Jean-Marie Fritz's *Le Discours du fou au moyen âge*, in particular chapter 5, “La Médecine ou le discours infini” (115-152).

*Sometimes the cause of this love is an intense natural need to expel a great excess of humors. Whence Rufus says: "Intercourse is seen to benefit those in whom black bile and frenzy reign."<sup>60</sup> Feeling is returned to him and the burden of eros is removed, even if he has intercourse with those he does not love." (Wack Lovesickness 189)*

Therapeutic sex is therefore of primary importance in the expulsion of excessive humors. This stance, while in many ways radical as sexuality is strictly policed by social, cultural and religious mores, had a long history as a cure for morbid love. Nevertheless it would not always be practicable and so physicians would develop other, possibly less effective cures to take its place.

An analysis of these first two sections of the *Viaticum peregrinantis*'s chapter on lovesickness—the definition and causes of morbid love—reveals two essential traits of Constantinus Africanus's medical discourse on love. First, it makes no distinction between romantic love [*eros*] and lovesickness [*erosis*] as the former is functionally defined as morbid. Second and a corollary of the first, lovesickness is defined by its symptomology alone, regardless of its root cause, be it a simple humoral imbalance of black bile—or, eventually, burnt yellow bile—or the Neoplatonic yearning of one soul for the beauty of another. Love and lovesickness, *eros* and *erosis* are synonymous. It is unclear if Constantinus meant to extend this parallel to include all love [*amor*] as morbid; at the very least *eros* is defined as a subset of *amor*. Mary Frances Wack's translation of the opening phrase of this section sides firmly with with latter reading, in which the "qui" in "amor qui et eros dicitur" introduces a restrictive clause, which she translates as "The love *that* is also called eros" (my emphasis). This reading, however, while supported by later glosses and commentaries, is not necessarily borne out in

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[60] Wack's translation of "mania" as "Frenzy" is problematic as frenzy or phrenesis and mania are distinct mental illnesses with disparate humoral origins.

the remainder of the text. The variation “aliquando huius amoris” and “aliquando etiam eros causa” carries no semantic weight in the description of causes as both are associated with erosis and both appear operatively interchangeable. Recasting the same phrase as non–restrictive, “Love, *which* is also called eros,” would provide a markedly different reading of Constantinus’s lovesickness than that proposed by Wack, a reading that is fully in keeping with the primacy given to love’s symptoms in establishing its morbidity. Lovesickness is identifiable only through its external symptoms and identical symptoms, whatever the cause, necessarily lead to an identical diagnosis. This is all the more the case because of lovesickness’s inherent interiority.

The symptomology for *erosis* reflects this interiority. Constantinus shows morbid love is primarily an affliction of the mind [*animus*].<sup>61</sup> If it has an effect on the body it is because:

si in cogitationibus profundatur, actio anime et corporis corrumpitur, quia coprus animam in sua accione sequitur, anima corpus in sua passione comitatur. (Constantinus 188)

*if the patient sinks into thoughts, the action of the soul and the body is damaged, since the body follows the soul in its action, and the soul accompanies the body in its passion.* (Wack Lovesickness 189)

The symptoms of lovesickness are typified by excessive thought [*cogitationes nimias*], hollow, darting eyes [*oculi semper concaui, cito mobiles*], heavy, jaundiced lids [*palpebre eorum graues, citrini ipsorum colores*], sleeplessness [*uigiliis*] and a hardened pulse [*pulsus induratur*] (Constantinus 188).

Constantinus continues by stating that aggravated lovesickness results in depression:

Unde si non eriosis succuratur ut cogitatio eorum auferatur et anima leuigetur, in passionem melancolicam necesse et incidant. Et sicut ex minio labore

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[61] Mary Frances Wack, in her translation of the twentieth chapter of the first book of the *Viaticum peregrinantis*, translates *animus* as “soul,” which she opposes with body. “Mind” seems a more accurate translation in this instance, although the distinction between the two is difficult, if not unnecessary to parse. Translations given from Wack’s edition will conserve the original “soul.”



corporis in passionem laboriosam incident, itidem ex labore anime in melancoliam. (Constantinus 188)

*Thus if erotic lovers are not helped so that their thought is lifted and their spirit lightened, they inevitably fall into a melancholic disease. And just as they fall into a troublesome disease from excessive bodily labor, so also [they fall] into melancholy from labor of the soul. (Wack Lovesickness 189)*

To prevent the patient from sinking into a depressed state because of their obsessive thoughts about their beloved, Constantinus, citing Galen, Zeno of Citium, and Rufus of Ephesus—the primary authorities cited in the chapter on lovesickness—, prescribes a multi-sensory feast of distractions:

Vinum est temperatum et odoriferum dandum et audire genera musicorum; colloqui dilectissimis amicis; uersus recitatio; luciferos habentes aquam et claram; spatari seu deducere cum femina seu maribus pulcre persone. (Constantinus 190)

*Temperate and fragrant wine is to be given; listening to music; conversing with dearest friends; recitation of poetry; looking at bright, sweet-smelling and fruitful gardens having clear running water; walking or amusing themselves with goodlooking women or men. (Wack Lovesickness 191)*

Beyond simple distraction, however, these remedies were thought to exercise a direct impact on the bodily humors. Wine, because of the warmth [*temperatum*] that it inspires, was construed as healthful for the melancholic and phlegmatic, because of their inherent coldness, but damaging for the choleric and sanguine, who are already hot-tempered. Quoting Rufus, Constantinus continues his development of the temperate as cure for melancholy:

Non solum modo uinum temperate ebibitum aufert tristicam, sed et alia quidem sibi similia, sicut balneum temperatum. (Constantinus 190)

*Not only wine, temperately drunk, relieves sadness, but indeed other similar things, like a temperate bath. (Wack Lovesickness 191)*

Exposure to warmth, particularly in liquid form, appears central to improving one's mental state.

Similarly, the harmonics of music were thought to resonate with the body "*circa sanitatem anime*" ["for

the health of the soul”] (Constantinus 190; Wack *Lovesickness* 191). Constantinus substantiates this claim with a citation attributed to music’s patron and personification, Orpheus,—but attributed to Al-Kindi in Arabic sources (Wack *Lovesickness* 299 n. 20)—:

Imperatores ad conuiuia me inuitant ut ex me se delectent; ego condelector ex ipsis. Cum quo uelem animos eorum flectere possim, sicut de ira ad mansuetudinem, de tristitia ad leticiam, de auaricia ad largitatem, de timore in audaciam. (Constantinus 190)

*Emperors invite me to banquets so that they may take pleasure in me, [but] I delight equally in them; as I wish I am able to bend their spirits from anger to mildness, from sadness to joy, from avarice to liberality, from fear to boldness.* (Wack *Lovesickness* 191)

Ideally, however, these cures are combined rather than administered individually so that the mental imbalance caused by love is addressed on all fronts through each of the five senses, plus the company of friends:

Quod si fiat in ortis lecentibus et odoriferis seu fructiferis, optimum et inocundissimum sit. Si autem non, eorum caminata ubi sessuri sunt munda sit et lucida, apponantur rosa et mirta, salices, basilicon et similia. Ab ebrietate caueant et cum oporteat doriant. Post somnum uero in balneo delectentur cum aqua et aera temperato et lucido, neque eis accedat quod animus abhorreant. (Constantinus 192)

*[The cure] is best and most joyous if it takes place in bright, fragrant or fruit-bearing gardens. If not, let the rooms where they are to sit be clean and bright, [and] let roses and myrtle, willow, basil and similar things be placed there. Let them avoid drunkenness and when it is fitting let them sleep. After sleep let them take pleasure in a bath with bright and temperate water and air, and do not let anything befall them that the spirit might shrink from.* (Wack *Lovesickness* 193)

Before continuing any further, it is important that we remark the classical origins of the theory that Constantinus is working with. It is equally imperative that we remember, however, that Constantinus is not composing *ex nihilo* a treatise on lovesickness but rather is translating a medical text from Arabic into Latin, a fact that is easily forgotten when reading Constantinus's *Viaticum*. It is therefore

essential to recognize that Islamicate medical science was not simply a derivative form of classical Greek medicine but a much expanded and adapted system that updated and corrected Greek science, repurposing it to its own ends. Further, although the Greek tradition was elaborated on by the Romans and thereby made its way into medieval European culture, the reintroduction of classical Greek thought in the twelfth century was almost exclusively mediated by the lens of Islamicate culture.

#### EROS IN GERARDUS BITURICENSIS'S *GLOSULE SUPER VIATICUM*

The extent to which Constantinus Africanus's works were known in twelfth-century France can be judged by the range of his readership, which included William of Conches and Vincent de Beauvais. Further, and more importantly, we know that the *Viaticum* specifically was studied at the university of Paris in the closing decades of the twelfth century because Magister Gerardus Bituricensis wrote a *Glosule super Viaticum* “at the request of his Parisian colleagues in order to remedy the excessive brevity of the *Viaticum*'s discussions of causes, signs and cures, and to supplement what was ignored by his predecessors,” as he states explicitly in his prologue to the work (Wack *Lovesickness* 52).<sup>62</sup> In this gloss, Gerardus relies heavily on the recent Toledan translations of Ibn

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[62] The *Glosule super Viaticum* can only be dated with any certainty to before 1236, the date of its earliest extant manuscript. This date corresponds the earliest identified quotation from the text: around 1235, Hugh of St. Cher quoted Gerardus Bituricensis on the nature and cause of “heroic love” [*amor ereos*]. There are, however, reasons to date the work to the preceding century, in particular, a discussion of a birth defect known as *frater lombardorum* attributed by Magister Bernardus Provincialis to Gerardus in the *Tables of Salernus*, which has been dated to the middle of the twelfth century. Interest in this particular defect is evident in Paris around the close of the century as it is discussed both by Gilles de Corbeil (c. 1140 – c. 1124), canon at Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral and royal physician to Phillippe Auguste (1165 – 1123, r. 1180 – 1123), and by Master Alan, identified with Alain de Lille, who died in 1203, in his *Prose Salernitan Questions*. Gerardus's use of Ibn Sīnā's translations place the work third quarter of the twelfth century (Wack 52-3).

Sinā's commentaries on Aristotle's *Liber de anima* in the *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, which were translated into Latin between 1152-1166, especially for its language describing the mental faculty, and his encyclopedic *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb*, which was translated as the *Canon medicinae* by Gerardus Cremonus (c. 1140 – 1187) before 1187, in particular its chapter on love [*ishq*], in order to supplement his discussions of the nature and causes of morbid love.

In its definition of lovesickness, the *Glosule super Viaticum* retains many similarities to earlier definitions:

*Amor qui heros dicitur. Hec passio dicitur apud autores sollicitudo melancholia. Est enim plimum similis melancholie, quia tota intentio et cogitatio defixa est in pulchritudine alicuius forme uel desiderio coadiuuante. (Gerard of Berry 198)*

Love that is called [h]eros. *This is called a melancholic worry by medical authors. It is indeed very similar to melancholy, because the entire attention and thought, aided by desire, is fixed on the beauty of some form or figure. (Wack Lovesickness 199)*

The *Glosule* presents lovesickness as a melancholic disorder, typified by obsessive thought provoked by the beauty of the desired object. Unlike Constantinus's *Viaticum*, Gerardus's *Glosule* elaborates the psychological mechanisms that animate morbid love; namely he states that it is caused by a malfunction in the estimative faculty during the *innamoratio* process:

*Causa ergo huius passionis est error uirtutis estimatiue que inducitur per intentiones sensatas ad apprehendenda accidentia insensata que forte non sunt in persona. Unde credit aliquam esse meliorem et nobiliorem et magis appetendam omnibus aliis. (Gerard 198)*

*The cause, then, of this disease is a malfunction of the estimative faculty, which is misled by sensed intentions into apprehending non-sensed accidents that perhaps are not in the person. Thus it believed some woman to be better and more noble and more desirable than all others. (Wack Lovesickness 199)*

Essentially, the disordered thoughts of morbid love are caused by the overactivity of the estimative

faculty that ascribes, beyond reason, excessive value to the beloved and her qualities. A single attractive feature multiplies in the mind of the lover into myriad. This malfunction is the result of a humoral imbalance that alters the physical characteristics of the brain and therefore the brain's capacity to function in an orderly fashion:

*Ymaginativa autem uirtus figitur circa illud propter malam complexionem frigidam et siccam que est in suo organo, quia ad mediam concauitatem ubi est estimatiua trahuntur spiritus et calor innatus ubi estimatiua fortiter operatur. Unde prior concauitas in frigidatur et desiccatur, unde remanet dispositio melancholica et sollicitudo. (Gerard 200)*

*Moreover, the imaginative faculty is fixated on it on account of the imbalanced complexion, cold and dry, that is in its organ, for the spiritus and innate heat are drawn to the middle ventricle [of the brain], where the estimative faculty functions intensely. The first ventricle therefore grows cold and dried out, so that there remains a melancholic disposition and worry. (Wack Lovesickness 201)*

Gerardus's description of the mental faculties is based on Ibn Sīnā's complex model of cognition, in which the five faculties are apportioned between the brain's three ventricles, with two each in the front and middle ventricle and one in the rear ventricle.

Simon Kemp provides a useful summary of Ibn Sīnā's system of the mental faculties in his *Medieval Psychology*. At the front of the front ventricle, just behind the optic nerve, is the *sensus communis* [common sense], which "performs the perceptual function identified by Aristotle" and was thus responsible for deciphering and comprehending external stimulus (Kemp 54).<sup>63</sup> At the back of the front ventricle is housed the *imaginatio* [imagination]. This part of the ventricle, because it was believed to be somewhat drier and therefore less slippery, would retain mental images received from the *sensus communis*, fulfilling the role of short-term memory (Kemp 55). It is this part of the brain

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[63] For more information on sensation and perception, see Simon Kemp's *Medieval Psychology* (33-36).

that is responsible for both recollection and recognition, whether waking or in a dream–state, and together with the *sensus communis* is responsible for what is now called visual imagery (Kemp 56-7). From the *imaginatio*, “retained forms” pass to the middle ventricle, the front of which is occupied by the *cogitativa* [cogitative] faculty, “which has the power to create new visual images from the forms contained by the imagination” (Kemp 57). The *cogitativa*—which Gerardus Bituricensis calls the *imaginativa*—faculty thus allows the individual to imagine things that they themselves have never witnessed, such as the monstrous animals that populate the pages of medieval bestiaries or the *Voyages of Sindbad*: having seen a bird and a snake, one can imagine a winged snake; having seen an island and a fish, one can imagine a fish the size of an island. The *cogitativa* faculty is followed by the *aestimativa* [estimative] at the rear of the middle ventricle. This faculty is responsible for the evaluating the various retained images as to whether they are good or bad, positive or negative. For the animal, this faculty was the product of instinct while it was governed by reason in man (Kemp 58). Beyond a small aperture in the middle ventricle is the rear ventricle, which is responsible solely for long–term memory.

To further concretize these functions, an explanation of the *innamoratio* shows the role of each of the mental faculties. When the lover first perceives the future object of his desires, the image of the beloved is transmitted through the eyes into the *sensus communis* via the optic nerve, from whence it is imprinted into the *imaginatio*. The *cogitativa* faculty is then able to imagine multiple scenarios involving the beloved, such as conversation and embraces with her, all of which the *aestimativa* judges as good and therefore desirable.<sup>64</sup> These judgments are then stored in the memory

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[64] Gerardus refused to designate a location for what he refers to as the *concupiscibilis* (Gerard 200).

in the rear ventricle. In the case of morbid love, or *erosis*, the melancholic humoral imbalance forces the brain to fixate on the beloved and one or several of her attributes. This is because:

unde prior concauitas infrigidatur et desiccatur, unde remanet dispositio melancholica et sollicitudo. (Gerard 200)

*the first ventricle therefore grows cold and dries out, so that there remains a melancholic disposition and worry.* (Wack Lovesickness 201)

The capacity to perceive new stimuli is reduced by the increased dryness of the front ventricle, while the *imaginatio*, which is already naturally dry, fully loses the ability to retain new information.

Previous mental images, specifically those of the beloved and ancillaries, becomes set and fixed. An

analogy can be made with mud: when too viscous, it retains no imprint, but, as the mud dries,

imprints hold more firmly and more clearly until it has dried completely, at which point new imprints

becomes impossible. Thus the lover's eyes become vacant and the pulse disordered until:

res consimiles rei dilecte commemorantur (Gerard 200)

*he recalls something similar to the beloved object* (Wack Lovesickness 201)

or is moved to tears:

cum audit amoris cantilenas et precipue si fiat mentio de repudio et de separatione rerum dilectarum. (Gerard 200)

*when he hears love songs and especially if mention is made of rejection and separation of beloved objects.* (Wack Lovesickness 201)

Simultaneously, this disordered state both increases and is increased by the activity of *aestimatiua*

faculty in the middle ventricle. This overactivity leads the patient to overestimate the value of the

desired object relative to others. Such is the disorder, as it is these aberrant images that are retained in

the memory.

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While this faculty does not correspond with Ibn Sīnā's system for describing cognition, my own reading of the relevant passages would associate it with the *aestimativa* faculty.

The cure, like in the *Viaticum peregrinantis*, is either a multi-sensory therapy of warm wine, music and baths or therapeutic sex. However, unlike in the *Viaticum*, the *Glosule* maintains that a multi-sensory therapy is an imperfect remedy. Sense therapy therefore is relegated to treating merely the symptoms and not the cause of the disorder. Consequently, Gerardus advocates strongly in favor of therapeutic sex within the confines of legal and religious limits:

Morbus iste perfect non curatur nisi per coniunctionem et permissionem legis et fidei. (Gerard 200)

*This disease cannot be perfectly cured without intercourse and the permission of law and faith.* (Wack *Lovesickness* 201)

Prescribing sex, however, was a dangerous pursuit for the physician:

In 1215, for instance, the fourth Lateran Council—called by Pope Innocent III to gather clearly around the Christian World—forbade “any physician, under pain of anathema, to prescribe anything for the bodily health of a sick person that may endanger his soul,” since the patient’s soul was worth much more than the body and “sickness of the body may sometimes be the result of sin.” Doctors—“physicians of the body”—were therefore ordered, “when they are called to the sick, to warn and persuade them first of all to call in physicians of the soul so that after their spiritual health has been seen to they may better respond to the medicine for their bodies, for when the cause ceases so does the effect.” (Arikha 79)

Clearly, prior to 1215, then, there was concern among ecclesiastics that physicians were prescribing treatments that were themselves sinful. Falling into this category, depending on the time and the place, might include abortifacients, ritual talismans and, of course, therapeutic sex outside of wedlock, not to mention prohibited manners or on prohibited days. The fourth Lateran Council was clearly reacting in opposition to behaviors that they deemed of pressing importance to the spiritual health of the Ecumene.

If sex, as a purgative act, is the only perfect cure available for lovesickness according to



Gerardus, it is curious that he downplays the importance of the physiological origin of love. While Gerardus still draws a distinction between the fixation on beauty and the simple, biological need to expel excesses of humoral fluid, he does so to elaborate an erotological taxonomy:

*Aliquando huius amoris. amorem non uerum hic tangit, qui non est nisi ad deponendas superfluitates. Aliquando etiam hereos. hic tangit ueri amoris causam.* (Gerard 202)

Sometimes of this love: *he touches here on false “love,” which is nothing but getting rid of superfluities.* Sometimes also hereos: *he touches here on the cause of true love.* (Wack Lovesickness 203)

In Constantinus Africanus’s *Viaticum*, “*amoris*” is used in the passage describing the causes of *erosis* in relation to the biological imperative to remove excessive humors from the body; “*hereos*”—or “*eros*” in Constantinus’s text—is, on the otherhand, the result of perceived beauty. Whereas Gerardus makes use of this distinction after the fact in his gloss to justify an evolving understanding of the nature of love, this distinction carries little semantic weight as, in the context of the *Viaticum*, Constantinus employs both terms, “*amor*” and “*eros*”, interchangeably.

From where then does this taxonomy come if it is not present in Constantinus’s translation of the *Zād al-Musāfir*? In part, it is the product of one of the most significant departures that Gerardus’s *Glosule* makes from the *Viaticum*: its explicit class-based rationale. Lovesickness is, for Gerardus, not *erosis* but *herosis*, the disease of heroes:

*Amor qui heros.* Heroes dictuntur uiri nobiles qui propter diuicias et mollitiem uite tali pocius laborant passione. (Gerard 202)

Love that [is called] heros. *Heroes are said to be noble men who, on account of riches and the softness of their lives, are more likely to suffer this disease.* (Wack Lovesickness 203)

The designation *amor heros* originates not in Gerardus’s *Glosule super Viaticum*, however, but in a

separate translation of the chapter on morbid love in Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-Musafīr* known as the *Liber de heros morbo*. This translation, which dates from circa 1100, is attributed to Johannes Afflacijs, Constantinus Africanus's disciple at Monte Cassino (Wack, "Liber de heros morbo," 325). Afflacijs, it appears, retranslated the pertinent chapter on lovesickness in order to clarify a number of the problem areas in Constantinus's original translation of the *Viaticum* with which subsequent scribes had difficulty (Wack, "Liber de heros morbo," 332). While the *Liber de heros morbo* is judged to be a retranslation from the Arabic, rather than a new edition of the *Viaticum peregrinantis* because it includes passages elided by Constantinus, Wack assumes that it was retranslated with access to the *Viaticum*. On the slippage from *eros* in the *Viaticum* to *heros* in Afflacijs's *Liber de heros morbo* and subsequent glosses, Mary Frances Wack argues:

The change most difficult to clarify and yet most intriguing is the substitution of *heros* and *heroicus* for Constantine's *eros* and its derivatives. This change makes sense, I believe, only if the author was familiar with Constantine's translation. Otherwise he has no motive for interpreting Arabic *'ishq* 'passionate love' as *heros*, whose usual meanings were "hero, noble, baron." Were the *Viaticum* not implicated, the author might have chosen to transliterate the Arabic word, as Gerard of Cremona did in his translation of Avicenna's *Canon*, yielding something like *ilisci*. Alternatively, he could have improved Constantine's latinization of *eros* and brought some order to the morphological confusion surrounding the word. Or he might have used forms of *amor*, *concupiscentia*, or *cupiditas*. To arrive at "heros est morbus quem patitur cerebrum" from the Arabic text would have been possible only if Constantine's version, beginning "amor qui et eros (var. heros) dicitur morbus est cerebro contiguus," were at hand as well.<sup>65</sup> The *Liber de heros morbo*, then, drew both from the Arabic and from the *Viaticum* and hence is posterior to Constantine's translation. (Wack, "Liber de heros morbo," 336-7)

In essence, there is no rational explanation from Ibn al-Jazzār's Arabic to insist upon the form *heros* over *eros*. Indeed, *'ishq* does not carry any particular class value, outside, perhaps, the phenomenon of

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[65] "*Heros[is] is a disease that the brain suffers*" (Wack, "Liber de heros morbo," 328).

*zarf* culture—a highly-stylized Islamicate courtly culture—, but even then *zarf* culture was more urbane than martial, making the fit equally incongruent. Similarly, when translating the text into Latin from Arabic, there is no reason to choose jargon of Greek etymology over the many choices available in Latin already. Even *eros* is an unlikely choice if viewed from outside of the continuous tradition from Constantinus to his disciples and beyond. Eros, aspirated or not as heros, was simply misread: the homograph was taken to mean “heroic” and not “erotic.” Subsequent commentators would begin, as Gerardus does, developing a theoretical apparatus to justify this mistake. Lovesickness would slowly skew away from *erosis* and towards *herosis* within medical and literary discourse.

#### LOVESICKNESS IN THE LITERARY REGISTER

By the end of the fourteenth century, the representation of lovesickness in literature had been fully medicalized such that it could be explained explicitly through humoral science. This is the case for Geoffrey Chaucer's description of lovesickness in the opening section of second part of the "Knight's Tale" from the *Canterbury Tales*. In this passage, Arcite, fearing never to see his beloved Emelye again, suffers from an acute form of lovesickness. The description of his malady not only corresponds perfectly with the symptomology discussed above but it is also couched in an explicitly medicalized discussion of lovesickness, what Chaucer refers to as the the lover's malady or *herosis*:

So muche sorwe hadde nevere creature  
That is, or shall, whil that the world may dure.  
Hi slep, his mete, his drynke, in hym biraft,  
That lene he wex and drye as is a shaft;  
his eyen holwe and grisly to biholde,  
His hewe falow and pale as asshen colde,  
And solitarie he was and evere allone,  
And waillynge al te nyght, makyng his mone;

And if he herde song or insrument,  
 Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghte nat be stent.  
 So feble eek were his spiritz, and so lowe,  
 And chuanged so, that no man koude knowe  
 His speche nor his voys, though men it herde.  
 And in his geere for al the world he ferde,  
 Nat oonly lik the loveris maladye  
 Of Heroes, but rather lyk manye,  
 Engendered of humour malencolik  
 Biforem, in his celle fantastik.  
 And shortly, turned was al up so down  
 Bothe bahit and eek disposicioun  
 Of hym, this woful lovere daun Arcite. (vv. 1359-1379)

Although it is not until the closing lines of this description that melancholy is explicitly invoked, from its opening verses, Arcite's specific humoral diagnosis is prepared. In addition to his "sorwe" and "woful" demeanor, Arcite is described simultaneously as "drye as is a shaft" and, two lines later, "as asshen colde," characteristics that correspond in the melancholic quadrant of the traditional hot/cold–wet/dry division of the four humors. Further, this diagnosis is confirmed by "his hewe falow and pale," that is to say jaundiced; a typical symptom of excessive melancholy in the body. Beyond this, the typical tropes of lovesickness appear: loss of appetite, sleeplessness, isolation, confusion and emotional volatility.

More striking than any of this, however, is the attribution of this symptomology to a specific disorder, with its particular etiology: lovesickness, or the "loveris maladye," which Chaucer additionally qualifies as "Heroes," or *herosis*, the defective form of *erosis*, introduced by Johannes Afflacijs and subsequently justified by Gerardus Bituricensis. Given that the substitution of *eros* with *heros* can be traced back directly to the interplay between the early translations of Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zādd al-Musāfir wa al-Qut al-Hādir* by Constantinus Africanus and his disciple and their subsequent glosses,

beginning with the Gerardus Bituricensis's *Glosule super Viaticum*, this specific tradition can be traced from the late eleventh-century monastery at Monte Cassino to fourteenth-century Kent, where Chaucer wrote the early parts of the *Canterbury Tales* (Benson xxiv). As such, this particular artifact constitutes an evocative, if late, proof of the influence of the medical sciences on the medieval worldview as seen in literature. But should this genealogy not be sufficient, another striking piece of evidence from this passage confirms this influence. Chaucer localizes the "manye engendered by humour malencolik" in the lover's "celle fantastik."<sup>66</sup> This "celle," or ventricle, is located at the front of

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[66] The relationship between mania and melancholy in medieval medicine, and with them *phrenesis* or frenzy, are difficult to tease out. Danielle Jacquart notes in "La maladie et le remède d'amour dans quelques écrits médicaux au moyen âge" that, unlike Rufus of Ephesus, Caelius Aurelianus, associating love with *furia*, "tirait davantage encore l'amour vers la folie en le rapprochant de la manie" [*drew love further still towards madness by linking it to mania*] (Jacquart "La maladie" 94). Jean-Marie Fritz traces the development of the various forms of madness in his *Discours du fou au Moyen Âge* from Hippocrates's *De Morbo Sacro* through Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Qānūn fī Ṭibb*. Hippocrates divided madness into two primary orders—*alientatio cum febris* and *alientatio sine febris*—, which he then subdivided again according to the patient's level of agitation. The principal dyad, frenzy–lethargy, contrasted feverish madness with and without agitation. Each of these were closely associated with a specific humor: frenzy with choler and lethargy with phlegm. The second dyad mania–melancholy, which included the madness without fever, did not correspond as closely to the quadripartite division of the humors. As Fritz explains:

Alors que les maladies avec fièvres forment un couple remarquablement stable, dans la mesure où elles sont liées à deux humeurs, manie et mélancholie, troubles sans fièvres, auront une histoire plus mouvementée et seront souvent confondues, la manie n'étant qu'une forme violente de mélancholie, ou celle-ci une forme atténuée de celle-là. (Fritz 133)

*Even though the illnesses with fever form a remarkably stable pair, in the sense that they are linked to two humors, mania and melancholy, troubles without fever, would have a more lively history and would be often confused, mania being only a violent form of melancholy, or the latter being an attenuated form of the former.*

This is not surprising as the divisions could not be mapped stably onto the division of the four humors because while the level of agitation was associated with the warmth of the humors, the presence of a fever did not correspond with the humidity of the humors. Over time, however, this taxonomy of madnesses changed to better mirror its humoral underpinnings so that, by the end of the thirteenth century, pseudo-Arnaud de Villeneuve could provide the following description of the four madnesses

the head [*biforen*] and can be identified with the *imaginatio* within Ibn Sīnā's conception of cerebral anatomy as described by Gerardus Bituricensis. Chaucer's conception of love is therefore strikingly coherent within the trajectory of medical lovesickness originating in Constantinus Africanus's

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in his *Breviarium practicae*: "Si le sang est en cause, les malades rient toujours ; si c'est le flegme, ils se croient des poissons ; la bile jaune les rend fous furieux ; la mélancholie les plonge dans des pensée macabres" [*If the blood is the cause, the sick patient is always laughing; if it is the phlegm, they believe themselves to be fish; the yellow bile drives them mad; the black bile plunges them into macabre thoughts.*] (Fritz 134-135). Sanguinity would create a predisposition towards mania. These developments were present also in Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Qānūn fī Ṭibb*, where he elaborates a "positive" approach to describing the types of madness, to use Fritz's word because, "au lieu de soustraire, on additionne. La mélancholie n'est plus le résidu de la frénésie, mais celle-ci, un composé de celle-là" [*rather than subtracting, one adds. Melancholy is no longer the residue of phrenesis, but the latter, a composite of the former.*] (Fritz 135). Thus melancholy plus violent gesticulation constitutes mania and melancoly with inflammation and fever makes frenzy. Mania and frenzy together constitute an aggravated form of *phrenesis* called *ṣabārī*, or severe delirium (Dols 75-76).

According to Al-Majūsī in the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, which was translated both by Constantinus Africanus as the *Liber Pantegni* and again by Stephen of Antioch as the *Liber regius* in 1127, mental illness and madness were often caused by traumatic psychic events. These psychic events included the onset of strong emotions, such as fear, anger and passionate love because they were "seen as external causes," according to Michael Dols (64). As such, they were included amongst the six Galenic non-naturals that governed health. Grouped together in the ninth chapter of the second half of the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, following discussions of apoplexy epilepsy and incubus, is an account of melancholia, lycanthropy and lovesickness, the latter two of which were considered to be subsets of the former. On the cause of melancholia, Al-Majūsī agrees with Hippocrates in stating that "when the temperament of the heart is hot and dry and that the brain is moist, black bile is plentiful because yellow bile is converted into black bile by burning. The brain receives the burnt black vapour of the body and creates melancholia, and this condition is common in the autumn" (Dols 65). The Romance tradition associated the Spring with the onset of passionate love even though melancholia is primarily associated with the Autumn. Regardless, which humor was burnt and where played an important role is defining its ensuing symptomology, according to Al-Majūsī. Thus if black bile was burnt in the brain, symptoms included delirium (*ḥadhayān*), love-madness (*haymān*) and hallucinations (*tathayyulāt*). Because black bile disrupts digestion, when it was burnt in the stomach, added to these were flatulence, belching, stomach pain. If it arose from the blood, symptoms included weight loss, flushed complexion and redness in the eyes. Yellow bile when burned produced its own set of sometimes overlapping symptoms: "love-madness, madness (*junūn*), joking, crying, confusion, insomnia, restlessness, rumbling in the stomach, as well as fury, wrath, and fever. The patient looked like a lion and was yellow in complexion" (Dols 65). Here again phrenesis and lovesickness are associated.

*Viaticum peregrinantis*.

That Chaucer accepts the etymologically defective "loveris maladye of Hereos" as a natural or logical description of lovesickness shows the extent to which Constantinus Africanus's *Viaticum peregrinantis*, mediated by subsequent glosses and editions, had been naturalized into the medieval worldview. The naturalization of medicalized theories of love and lovesickness imported by Africanus to the European cultural consciousness from the eleventh century onward, however, as scholars such as Laine Doggett have contended, it is not until significantly later, that is from the middle of the thirteenth century onward that this influence begins to appear in Old French literature. In fact, the representation of love and love medicine and magic in literature can be shown to have begun deviating from contemporary approaches to medicine by the middle of the thirteenth century (Doggett 188). Instead, sources cleave to other models that derive primarily from Ovidian sources, this is the case even for literature that invests specifically in medical imagery or metaphors (Doggett 182). This is true for the Occitan troubadour lyrics as late as the third quarter of the twelfth century, in *cansos* such as "Un vers farai de tal mena," where Raimbaut d'Aurenga, lord of Orange in Provence, plays not only on the role of the doctor in curing lovesickness but also explores the space around obsession and disordered mental functions. In these early centuries of European literature in the vernacular, the shifts from the earlier Ovidian paradigm were slight and, although they point in the direction of an increasingly medicalized discourse of or about love, these shifts are therefore difficult to identify.

The anonymous *Roman d'Eneas*, composed around the middle of the twelfth century, has long been read as quintessentially Ovidian in its treatment of love and lovesickness. As early as 1913,

Edmond Faral began drawing parallels between the *Eneas* and Ovid's works in *Les Sources latines des contes et romans courtois du moyen âge*:

D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas seulement une idée générale [de l'amour] qu'il [Ovide] a fournie à l'auteur d'*Eneas* : il lui a fourni aussi plusieurs éléments de sa description, et, en certains endroits, le texte du roman français ne paraît qu'une amplification du texte latin (Faral 135).

*Nevertheless, this is simply a general idea [about love] that he [Ovid] gave the author of the Eneas: he also gave him several elements of his description and, in certain places, the text of the French romance seems like nothing more than an amplification of the Latin text.*

Faral rejects earlier attempts to situate the representation of morbid love as originating in medical texts, particularly those emanating from the Islamic world. We would agree with this estimation that:

pour expliquer cette idée que l'amour est une maladie, il est inutile de recourir, comme on l'a proposé, à l'hypothèse que l'auteur aurait puisé dans des traités médicaux. Elle est très répandue dans l'œuvre des érotiques latins, et notamment dans celle d'Ovide. [...] Enfin, c'est en médecin, inspiré d'Apollon, qu'Ovide se pose au moment où il entreprend d'écrire ses *Remèdes de l'amour*. (Faral 135)

*to explain this idea that love is an illness, it is unnecessary to turn, as has been proposed, to the hypothesis that the author would have delved into medical treatises. It was well known in the works of the Latin erotics, and notably in those by Ovid. [...] That is to say, it is as a doctor, inspired by Apollo, that Ovid presents himself at the moment when he begins to write his Remedia amoris.*

Faral's rejection of medical antecedents for the Roman's treatment of lovesickness highlights two essential aspects of the representation of lovesickness found in Old French literature. Firstly, despite the use of medical jargon in describing the effects of lovesickness on his characters, there is no reason to believe that the author of the *Eneas* had recourse to any medical texts. All that was required of him could easily be found in the works of Ovid, which leads Faral to rightly conclude that "le dieu



d'amour que peint l'auteur d'*Eneas* n'est pas autre que celui d'Ovide" ( 150) ["*the god of love that the Eneas author paints is none other than that of Ovid*"]. Further, as notes the translator John Yunck in his reading of these same descriptions, "the symptoms described are in complete conformity with the love rules and love psychology recorded some twenty or twenty–five years later by Andreas Capellanus" (Yunck 81, n. 29). This points to the currency of these ideas in courtly circles and to the similarities that this representation shares with medical discourse of its day, making it tempting to read medical theory into a text where it was most likely absent.

The episode that will be the object of the present discussion—Dido's *innamoratio* and tryst with Eneas leading to her eventual suicide—constitutes the most poignant and prolonged representation of and meditation on morbid love in the *Roman d'Eneas*. By representing Dido at multiple stages along the progression of her relationship with Eneas, from inception to fruition and separation, the *Eneas* author is able to show the ways in which morbid love mutates from context to context. Curiously, Dido's infatuation with Eneas begins not at first sight or even after having spent time talking with him, although it is through this latter action that she is able to judge his quality:

Ge cuit qu'il est de halt parage  
Et de celestial Linage ;  
De tot pert bien qu'il est gentiz,  
Et molt par est cortois ses fiz. (vv. 1285-1288)

*I believe that he is of high rank and of celestial lineage; from everything it is clear that he is noble and his sons are very courteous.*

These markers justify *a posteriori* her feelings, which are the result of an enchantment placed by Eneas's mother on his son, Ascanius. Fearing that some misfortune will befall her son in Carthage, she kisses her grandson, thereby imbuing him with love:

De faire amer grant poësté :

Qui anprés li lo baisera  
Del feu d'amor espris sera. (vv. 773-776)

*Great power to induce love: whoever kissed him would be taken by the fire of love.*

Thus when Dido later kisses Eneas's son and then Eneas, the two are inextricably bound as if by having consumed a love philtre. In fact, it is in these terms that the *Eneas* author describes Dido's longings:

Mortal poison la dame boit,  
De son grant duel ne s'aperçoit ;  
O le baiser tel rage prent  
D'amor que li cors li esprent. (vv. 811-814)

*A mortal poison, the lady drank, to her great chagrin, she did not notice; from the kiss such a passion of love took hold that her body was overtaken.*

The same imagery reappears several verses later before the dinner scene, during which the couple speak at length and Eneas recounts his adventures.

C'est Dido qui plus fole estoit,  
Ele i a pris mortal ivrece ;  
Ja l'amor en grant destrece. (vv. 820-822)

*It was Dido who was more foolish, she got a fatal madness from it; now love was in great distress.*

And again, the first passage above is repeated in parts almost verbatim, after Dido's sleepless night.

Ele ne set qui l'a surprise :  
Mortel poison avoit beü ;  
El ne soit qui li enfes fu  
Qu'ele ot tenu et acolé,  
Qui la rage li ot doné. (vv. 1259-1262)

*She did not know who surprised her: a mortal poison she had drunk; she did not know that it was the child, which she had held and embraced, that had given her the passion.*

Yunck, in his translation of this last passage, sees a slip into the "Vergilian substitution of the disguised

Cupid for Ascanius" (Yunck 81, n. 28). I, however, see no need for such a confusion. Smitten with Ascanius as she is—for Dido cannot bring herself to stop kissing and hugging the child—there is no contradiction in her not equating it with her love for Eneas in the light of Venus's child and love personified, Cupid, even as the *Eneas* author makes no reference to arrows and darts, especially as Faral has shown that the author is heavily channeling Ovid.

Thus poisoned with love,

D'amor se desve la raine. (v. 1391)

*the queen becomes obsessed with love.*

Unable to sleep, Dido thinks obsessively of her beloved:

Dame Dido pas ne oblie  
Celui por cui li deus d'amor<sup>67</sup>  
Lavoit je mise en grant freor ;  
De lui comance a penser,  
En son corage a recorder  
Son vis, sun cors et sa faiture,  
Ses diz, ses faits, sa parleüre,  
Les batailles que il li dist. (vv. 1220-1227)

*Lady Dido does not forget he for whom the god of love had put her in a great furor; of him she begins to think, in her heart to record his face, his body, his features, his words, his acts, his speech, the battles he tells her about.*

So infatuated is she that she begins to lose touch with reality and to fantasize about Eneas, imaging

herself in bed with him, naked, in the throes of ecstasy.

Molt est la dame mal baillie,  
Et quant ce est qu'ele s'oublie,  
Ansanble lui quide gesir,  
Antre ses braz tot nu tenir,  
Antre ses braz lo quide estraindre. (vv. 1235-1240)

*The lady is in very bad staits, and when she forgets herself, she believes herself*

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[67] Officially, of course, this is Venus, and not Cupid, in the text, although see above, pp. 207-8.

*lying with him held naked in his arms, in her arms she believe she holds him.*

So distorted is her thinking that she confuses Eneas with her blanket and her pillow, which she kisses repeatedly in her madness. These symptoms endure until she grows sick, at which point, seeking distraction, she leaves to go hunting and there, in the woods, she is seduced by Eneas. Immediately, her mood is much improved.

Al demeine joie molt grant,  
Nel cela mes ne tant ne quant,  
Molt s'en faisoit lie et joiese. (vv. 1531-1533)

*She shows very great joy, nothing but that nothing more nor less, very happy and light she shows herself.*

And yet, in love, all is not well as Dido constantly and consistently debases herself before her lover—hereby reversing the expected order—, living and sleeping with Eneas openly and outside of wedlock to the great chagrin of her barons, who feel themselves slighted and dishonored by her behavior. This leads Dido to fear a rebellion against her leadership by her barons, but she would rather risk being deposed and driven from her country than lose Eneas, judging it better to be deposed and lose her kingdom than to lose her life, should she lose Eneas. Eneas, as well, is aware that should he leave once once the gods called him away that his decision puts into jeopardy Dido's life because she would be unable to recover from the blow. Ultimately, tragedy strikes once she is abandoned and she burns herself alive in a fire that renders manifest the flames of passion devouring her heart and mind, depriving her of her reason and self control. The author of the *Roman d'Eneas* closes the episode with a citation of her epitaph, which reads:

[...] Iluec gist  
Dido qui por amor s'ocist ;  
Onques ne fu meillor paiene,  
S'ele n'eüst amor soltaine,

Mais ele ama trop folemant,  
Savoir ne li valut noiant. (vv. 2139-2144)

*Here lies Dido who killed herself for love; never was there a better pagan, had she not loved alone, but she loved too crazily, her intellect was worthless to her.*

Dido, Eneas and the *Eneas* author all present death as a reasonable, if unfortunate outcome of morbid love, which overcomes reason. Thus incapacitated, Dido was unable to save herself.

In many ways, the lovesickness displayed by Dido in the *Roman d'Eneas* corresponds closely with what can be found in contemporaneous and later medical texts. Love and lovesickness's symptomology is faithfully reproduced from the changes in complexion to the distraction and emotional volatility it engenders. The *Roman d'Eneas* shows that love, when impeded, can lead to lovesickness, which results in depression and, in aggravated cases, death, but which is curable through sex with the beloved. But where those medical texts extend beyond the framework provided by Ovid, the *Roman d'Eneas* does not and for this reason it can serve as a baseline of comparison for other contemporaneous texts in their treatment of and engagement with medicalized discourses of love. Raimbaut d'Aurenga's *canso*, "Un vers farai de tal mena," is an example of work that can be plotted along the trajectory from this Ovidian baseline, represented here by the *Roman d'Eneas*, to a fully medicalized endpoint, such as Chaucer's "Knight's Tale," because it both develops a robust psychological mechanism and strategically deploys medical metaphors to describe the amatory experience of the lover.

The second son of Raimbaut II, Count of Orange, Raimbaut d'Aurenga was born sometime between 1140 and October 1148—although a later date circa 1147 is generally accepted—and died after

only twelve years of majority in 1173 (Pattison 12).<sup>68</sup> Despite the relatively short poetic career of Raimbaut, thirty–nine extant poems have been attributed to him from 1162 to 1173. Politically, Raimbaut, who was lord of Orange and Aumelas, can be shown to have had an intimate relationship with the counts of Barcelona and even the court of Aragon under Alfonso II. As Walter Pattison writes:

Turning the pages of Raimbaut's poetry we come up a "comte Barselones"; a "king" whom Raimbaut addressed directly, and who I believe is Alfonso II; and another poem which makes specific allusions to Alfonso II without naming him. There can be no doubt that Raimbaut, too, was closely linked to the house of Barcelona. I believe we can prove his presence in Catalonia at Alfonso's court in 1162 and 1170. It is not surprising that he talks to Urgel or of his love for a Catalan woman. The old opinion, held almost universally by all who have written on Raimbaut, that his unique center of activity was Orange and that he would not be likely to wander so far from his own territories as Catalonia, needs to be abandoned once and for all. His fortunes were closely tied to Montpellier, whose ruler had declared himself unconditionally for Barcelona. And even in his more distant territories at Orange, Raimbaut was under the influence of another partisan of Barcelona. (Pattison 9)

A study of the correspondences between Raimbaut's poetry and the corpus of other troubadours, as well as of the various *senhals*, or poetic nicknames, used by Raimbaut shows that he was writing in response to a number of active troubadours. Among these were Giraut de Bornèlh, who laments Raimbaut's death in his *planh*, or funerary lament, "S'anc jorn agui joi ni solatz," Pèire Rogièrs and Bernart de Ventadorn. Perhaps more significant to the present study, however, is the link drawn by Aurelio Roncaglia, in his study of the *senhal* "Carestia," between Raimbaut d'Aurenga, Bernart de Ventadorn, and Chrétien de Troyes, the first of the *trouvères* in the *langue d'oïl* tradition. Joseph

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[68] Raimbaut's date of birth is extrapolated from the wills of both his mother, which was written in 1150, and his father, from 1156, as he had not yet reached his majority at that point and, as Walter Pattison explains, "the legal code of Montpellier [from whom the family held their fief] states clearly that the age of majority shall be after completing the fourteenth year," although others have suggested a late majority at the age of twenty–one (Pattison 12).

Duggan summarizes the findings as follows:

Chrétien's poem, "D'amors qui m'a tomu a moi" contains correspondences in imagery, reference, and wording to Raimbaut's "No chan per auzel ni per flor," as well as to Bernard de Ventadorn's famous "Can vei la lauzeta mover." Roncaglia shows that Chrétien is taking a tack contrary to the stances of the two troubadours. The *senhal* "Carestia," meaning "rarity, scarcity," would derive from a concept dear to Chrétien, reflected in the phrase *chiers tans* "time of scarcity," in line 42 of Chrétien's poem, in which he exhorts his heart not to abandon faith toward the lady despite the scarcity of love it is experiencing. The idea that a love that is delayed—and thus "scarce"—is all the more enjoyable is found among Gauvain's arguments to Yvain in the *Chevalier au lion*. "Carestia" appears also to be a pun on the name "Crestien." If Roncaglia is right, and in my view he is, then Chrétien would have been active as a poet in the early 1170s, since Raimbaut was dead in 1173. (Duggan 5-6)

Should this theory be correct, not only would it help situate Chrétien's work historically but also it shows that, even as Raimbaut d'Aurenga was looking south towards Barcelona and Huesca, from where the Aragonese crown was ever expanding its sphere of influence southward into Islamic lands, Chrétien was also looking south thereby bridging the distance between the shores of the Mediterranean and its north hinterlands.

In addition to acting as a bridge between the court of Champagne and the northeastern banks of the Mediterranean, Raimbaut's *canço* also constitutes an early point along the trajectory towards a medicalized representation of morbid love in literature. This vector extends from the Ovidian treatment of love found in the *Roman d'Eneas* and culminates in works such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, especially in the "Knight's Tale." The shift as of the third quarter of the twelfth century is only slight, however, although a nuanced reading can uncover traces of this subtle phase change.

Raimbaut d'Aurenga opens his *canço* with a verse that harkens back immediately to the origins of the troubadour lyric itself, the poetic oeuvre of Guillaume IX:

Un vers farai de tal mena

On vuelh que mos sens paresca,  
Mas tant ai ric'entendensa  
Que tostz n'esauc en bistensa  
Que no posca complir mon gaug;  
Ans tem c'un sol jorn no viva  
Tant es mos desirs del fait lonh. (vv. 1-7)

*I shall make a vers in such fashion that my meaning will, through my own volition, appear in it but I have so lofty an aspiration that I soon become doubtful that I can bring my joy to completion; rather my desire is so far from accomplishment that I fear I shall not live a single day. (Pattison vv. 1-7)*

Specifically, "Un vers farai de tal mena" finds its parallel in the much celebrated *canso* "Farai un vers de dreit nient," although it is immediately evident from these first verses that the *cansos* part in opposite directions, a movement reflected in Raimbaut's reversal of the standard verb–object word order.

Where Guillaume tells us that he will compose about nothing, Raimbaut promises the exact opposite procedure. Unlike Guillaume before him, he will make his meaning visible, "mos sens paresca" (v. 2).

And yet, despite this proposition, Raimbaut never does name his subject explicitly in this opening stanza. Instead, it is through recourse to established metonymy that Raimbaut ultimately aims to express himself, a procedure not too unlike that used by Guillaume in "Farai un vers de dreit nient."

Indeed, Raimbaut makes his meaning known through references to joy [*gaug*] (v. 5), desire [*desirs*] (v. 6) and fear [*tem*] (v. 7) and it is not until the third verse of the second stanza that *amor* makes its first intervention:

Qu'ins en mon cor me semena  
Us volers, e crey que-y cresca  
D'Amor que-y met tal creyssensa  
Que d'als non ai sovinensa,  
Ni res qu'ieu aya no-m fa gaug;  
Ans lays, e mos cors esquiva,  
Autre joy que d'al non ay sonh. (vv. 8-14)



*Within my heart takes root a longing, and I believe that it grows with Love which gives it so much growth that I remember nothing else nor does anything I have give me joy. Rather do I put aside and avoid any other joy, for I have no interest in anything else. (Pattison vv. 8-14)*

This delay, along with this contradiction of speech and action—Raimbaut promises to do something he does not do—, speaks not only to the reticence often mentioned by Raimbaut throughout his poem but also to the poet's loss of full control of his own mental faculties.

In its description, Raimbaut's poetics do not extend far beyond the canonical, Ovidian representations of love; the oscillation between fear and joy constituting the backbone of both literary and medical definitions of love. Similarly, the second stanza, with its meditation on remembrance that borders on the obsessive, is in full keeping with earlier and contemporary descriptions of the lover's psychological state while awaiting his beloved's favor. He thinks of nothing else—"[...] als non ai sovinensa" (v. 11)—, nor does anything bring him joy—"ni res qu'ieu aya no·m fa guag" (v. 12)—; instead he is dominated by "us volers," which Walter Pattison translates as "a longing" in order to keep the lexical variation Raimbaut deploys and to juxtapose it with "desirs" used elsewhere. Everything that the poetic subject would do that does not actively participate in the pursuit of love is left to the wayside. In this, the desiring subject embodies Dido's preoccupation when she announces "ge aim" (v. 1275). Without object, the verb describes not an action but instead a state; a state of being and of mind. The lover's identity is thus subsumed by and reduced to the single, involuntary act of loving.

It is in the following stanza, however, that the first cracks begin to show in the lover's facade:

Pero si·n sofr'ieu gran pena

Qu'ins en mon cor sal e tresca,  
Qu'anc hom per belha parvensa  
Non trays tan greu penedensa.  
Mas non ai per qu'ieu n'aya gaug? —  
Quar us volers m'en abriva  
E-m ditz qu'en altre joy non ponh. (vv. 15-21)

*But indeed I suffer great pain because it leaps and frisks within my heart; for no one ever got such a severe penitence because of a beautiful fantasy. But haven't I a reason to get joy from it? — For a desire of it assails me and tells me not to strive after another joy. (Pattison vv. 15-21)*

The stanza opens with the characteristic *passio* of the lover, who suffers his all consuming desire while the second couplet adds in a certain element of doubt that I would like to explore in depth. Doubt is, of course, a regular feature of the lover's state, and is present in the poem as early as the first stanza, in particular verses three through five. But it is not to that doubt that I make reference here; instead I would focus on the apparent realization that the lover's experience is essentially illusory. The penance [*penedensa*] (v. 18), that is the lover's suffering, which here takes on overtones approaching martyrdom, is the result of [*per*] (v. 17) what Pattison translates as "a beautiful fantasy" (83). The Old Occitan, "belha parvensa" (v. 17), carries something of the meaning of appearance as well. This therefore raises the crucial question of whether the "belha parvensa" that is driving the poetic subject to distraction is, in the neoplatonic vein, the beloved's appearance or is it the longing and desire that "en mon cor sal e tresca" (v. 16). Or are we instead referring to the realization that his eternal lover's hope is unfounded in an real expectation of the future? Or, again, is it the realization that the beloved is herself a fantasy of his creation, existing only in appearance and not in reality? Parsing this verse then is central to unlocking the erotological worldview of Raimbaut d'Aurenga.

The following stanza can shed some light on these questions and guide us through the multiple readings available of this *canço*:

Ben m'a nafrat en tal vena  
Est'amors qu'era-m refresca  
Don nuls metges de Proensa  
Nadius no-m pot far guirensa;  
Ni mezina que-m fassa gaug,  
Ni ja non er hom qu'escriva  
Lo greu mal qu'ins el cor m'esconh. (vv. 22-28)

*Indeed this love, which is now renewed for me, has wounded me in such a vein that no doctor native to Provence can cure me, no [is there] any medicine which can bring me joy, nor will there be anyone who can write the grievous suffering which I engrave in my heart. (Pattison vv. 22-28)*

From the third verse of the fourth stanza, Raimbaut begins to explicitly medicalize his discussion of love. The construction of the passage, which relies heavily on localization to construct its meaning, implies to a certain degree the separation of the lover from the beloved. There might be "a doctor" able to cure what ails him, but if [s]he is not to be found in Provence, maybe [s]he is to be found further afield in, say, Catalonia, a reading confirmed by the rest of Raimbaut's œuvre. But this reading appears to be contradicted in the following verse, when the possibility of a cure by medicine is categorically rejected. Raimbaut appears to be suggesting the need to have recourse to a stronger, more direct treatment. If we do choose to read the "metges" or doctor as a reference to the beloved's foreign birth and also accept the inadequacy of medicine in definitively curing love, we find that Raimbaut's proposition is not far from Gerardus Bituricensis's stance favoring sex over other treatments.

There is no reason to think that Raimbaut was specifically thinking about Gerardus's *Glosule super Viaticum* as "Un vers ferai de tal mena" is dated to 1165 and the *Glosule* might not

have been composed until after 1166 (Pattison 45). Instead, like Raimbaut d'Aurenga's poetry, which would have captured the developments of an evolving understanding of the nature of love throughout the twelfth century, so too would have Gerardus's gloss. Said otherwise, it is not Gerardus Bituricensis's interventions *per se* that would have revolutionized the psychological underpinnings of late twelfth-century medical theories about love. Instead, they would have reflected and compounded a developing trend already underway. Thus, when Raimbaut d'Aurenga writes, in the closing two verses of the third stanza, that:

Ni ja non er hom qu'escriva  
Lo greu mal qu'ins el cor m'esconh (vv. 27-28)

*Nor will there be anyone who can write the grievous suffering which I engrave in my heart.* (Pattison vv. 27-28)

he not only does make use of metaphors of the act of writing but he also channels and redeploys contemporaneous physiological theories about the mental faculties. Thus, the literal love imprint is repackaged by the poet into a literary exposition of the poet *cum* lover at work.

The use of medical rhetoric in the stanza immediately following the intervention of "belha parvensa" in the text reflects, I believe, a useful tool in deciphering this reference, which had earlier proved inconclusive. I do not believe that Pattison's translation of "fantasy" is that inaccurate, although it does undercut the implications that sight has on the formation of the love imprint that Raimbaut employs in the above-quoted verses. To a certain degree, "belha parvensa" is doing the work of all four readings proposed above. Because of the beloved's beautiful appearance, the lover is enamored; because of his enamorment, the lover is the victim of a hope beyond hope: this hope must remain beyond hope as the moment that

the beloved acquiesces, the longing that is so central to the lover's identity is obviated as is its generative powers, that is until the lover's parting, which requires still further poetic creation. But is there reason to believe that Raimbaut is here acknowledging that the poetic subject's object of desire is already an illusion and the product of an overactive *aestimativa*? Evidence to support this conclusion appears in subsequent stanzas as well, in particular stanzas six and eight, which focus heavily on the disordered functioning on the brain. First, the three opening verses of the sixth stanza present a state of confusion, where his ability to control his desire is overrun:

Ben ai ma voluntat plena  
De tal sen que s'entrebesca;  
E cuig que m'aia tenensa  
Car nuls hom mais per plivensa  
Non estet en aitan gran gaug!  
Domna, si-m fossetz aiziva  
Tost saubra s'en fol m'en peronh. (vv. 36-42)

*My desire is filled with confused thoughts and I fear that it [my desire] will continue to possess me, for no man, on credit alone, was ever in such great joy! Lady, if you were gracious to me I should soon know if I am glorifying myself like a fool. (Pattison vv. 36-41)*

Similarly, the eighth stanza opens with a curious couplet:

Mas ben grans talans afrena  
Mon cor, que ses aigua pesca.  
Pus no-ill o uesc a prezensa  
Dir, Dieux l'en don entendensa  
A lieys, tal que me torn en gaug!  
Que-l vers farai (que-m caliva)  
Dir a lieys a cuy Pretz se jonh. (vv. 50-56)

*But a very great passion restrains my heart which fishes without water. Since I cannot openly declare it to her, may God give understanding of it to her, so that she may make me joyous again! I shall cause vers (for it is important to me) to be recited to her, with whom Worth dwells. (Pattison vv. 50-56)*

Pattison translates "talans" as "passion," which is only one of the word's many meanings, but it could equally have been translated as disposition or humor, which ties into the melancholy evinced in towards the close of the fifth stanza.

Mas ill non sap qual estrena  
M'a dad ni cum m'adesca;  
Quar tant sos pretz sobregensa  
Qu'il no cre que per temensa  
Auzes ges de lei aver gaug;  
Qu'ill es tant nomenativa  
Tem, si-l o dic, no me vergonh. (vv. 43-49)

*But she does not know what an anticipatory taste she has given me nor how she lures me on; for her worth is so very great that she thinks that I should not dare, out of respect, to have joy from her. She is of such lofty rank that, if I tell her of it, I am afraid she may humble me. (Pattison vv. 43-49)*

Here, despite his variable emotional outbursts, the poetic subject remained ensconced in melancholic musings such that "vau quo fai res pessiva" (v. 34). But be it a very great [*ben grans*] (v. 50) passion or predisposition, the poetic heart, symbol of the amatory process, "ses aigua pesca" (v. 51). Fishing without water here represents the single greatest act of folly one can possibly undertake. The extent to which Raimbaut shows the lover's complete lack of reason speaks powerfully to the brain's inability to function properly, i.e. break the obsessive cycle of loving an impossible object, making forever unobtainable the cure to his madness.

As we have seen, Raimbaut d'Aurenga's treatment of love in "Un vers farai de tel mena" is still firmly couched in an Ovidian theory of erotological practice. We see little evidence of the contemporaneous medical theory introduced by Constantinus Africanus in twelfth-century poetry, even though it would come in later centuries to inspire the creation of a new language for discussing love. At the same time, Raimbaut d'Aurenga's poetry reveals the

proximity of the theories of love presented by Ovid and Constantinus. Thus love and its pain, "qu'ins el cor m'esconh," is in perfect keeping of the Ovidian arrow of love that, entering through the lover's eye, is lodged firmly in the heart (v. 28). At the same time, when read within the network of other references to contemporaneous medical arts, the poem's use of medical discourse reveals the shadow of the love imprint coloring that treatment. Both Ovid and Constantinus's theories of love exist simultaneously side by side with the literary acting as a metaphor for the medical. This was perhaps one of the reasons that literary representations of love see a significant delay in their incorporation of new theories of medicine. Paradoxically, it was surely this same similarity that allowed the two to eventually map explicitly onto each other.

The use of medical illness and cures becomes increasingly prevalent from the thirteenth century onwards. The forms this took were multiple and it is important to affirm along with Julie Singer, in *Blindness and Therapy in Late Medieval French and Italian Poetry*, that:

with medieval medicalization, unlike its modern corollary, the use of medical language does not necessarily imply a concession of authority to the medical domain. Furthermore, in a late medieval context, to medicalize is not always to pathologize, but simply to avail oneself of certain terms of medical discourse. (Singer *Blindness and Therapy* 9)

One potent trope is the arrow of love, which enters the heart via the eye and imprints the beloved's image on the lover. While this trope has a very long history that can be traced back with ease to the Latin antiquity, the advent of the theory of intromission in the *Kitāb al-Manāẓir* by the Fatamid physicist and mathematician Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥaytham (c. 965 – c. 1040) fundamentally

changed the way in which sight and therefore the *innamoratio* was represented in literature.<sup>69</sup> Another interesting case is the late *fumeur* songs by Eustache Deschamps (c. 1346 – 1406/7), which mobilize humoral theory as a humorous explanation of literary creativity, which is explored in Julie Singer's essay, "Lyrical Humor(s) in the 'Fumeur' Songs". In them, the mixing of wine with the black bile creates a smoke that rises through the body, producing poetic inspiration.

Ultimately, however, the enormous contributions of Constantinus Africanus in shaping the medieval understanding of love and lovesickness appear to have had little impact on the literature we studied here. This is ironic, especially for a field plagued by a lack of documentary evidence, as the exchange of medical and scientific knowledge between the Latin West and the Islamic world is among the most well documented for the Middle Ages. Rather than being able to identify medicine as a site of exchange that influenced the twelfth-century representation of love, we must conclude that it indeed did not. Nevertheless, this analysis is valuable because it shows the extent to which information was able to circulate and the extent to which that information was able to penetrate Old French culture. Thus, while the history of the transmission of Constantinus Africanus's translations does not itself illuminate their own possible influence on vernacular discourses of love, it does show that Arabic medical science had penetrated at least as far north as Chartres by the second decade of the twelfth century and that, by the middle of the following century, that knowledge had been consolidated and assimilated enough for it to be included in the most important encyclopedia of the

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[69] Until the tenth century, light was thought to be sent out by the eye in order to detect objects as a sort of extra-spatial hand. This emission or extramission theory underlies, for example, the description of love given by Ibn Ḥazm in the *Ṭawq al-Hamāma*. This development and its impact on literary production is addressed in greater depth by Dana Stewart in *The Arrow of Love*.



Late Middle Ages, the *Articella* (Bloch 107).<sup>70</sup> Also of Salernitan origin, this important textbook, which dates from the beginning of the twelfth century and would continue to circulate and be updated through the sixteenth century, was, according to Herbert Bloch, “for more than three centuries in part composed of translations of Constantine” (Bloch 107).

Medicine thus constitutes an important element of the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Middle Ages. But this domain more than any other was influenced by trends both south and east of the Mediterranean. So much so that Christine Morris argues that:

in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was no appreciable difference between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin. A doctor from Egypt could practice his art in Byzantium and, as early as the tenth century, there was a physician at the head of the Jewish community of Bari in Italy. [...] The practice and study of medicine penetrated the Islamic civilization and was paramount in the life of the so-called protected communities, the Christians and the Jews. (Morris 151-152)

While there is a certainly some amount of exaggeration and generalization in this broad and sweeping claim, the sentiment of it surely rings true. Because so little evidence remains to substantiate the literary borrowings that must have occurred in order to account for the manifold similarities between the Old French and Arabic traditions, the history of medicine can serve, as I have shown, as a model

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[70] Bloch provides the following inventory of the early manuscripts of *Articella*:

the *Isagoge* to Galen's *Tegni* by Joannicius, probably in Constantine's translation; the *Liber pulsuum* of Philaretus; the *Liber urinarum* of Theophilus; Hippocrates' *Liber Aphorismorum* with Galen's commentary, surely by Constantine, to whom the *Liber Prognosticorum* with Galen's commentary seems to belong; and Galen's *Tegni* (= *Microtegni*), to which was later added the commentary of “Hali Rodoam” (‘Alī bin Riḏwān), an Egyptian physician, who died in 1068; the translation of the former may be by Constantine, that of the commentary is usually ascribed to Gerard of Cremona († 1187). (Bloch 107)

Taken as a whole, this widely circulated textbook would have provided, especially early on, extensive access to Constantinus Africanus's translations, regardless of if they circulated anonymously or under the name of a compiler.

for the ways in which such borrowings could have and would have occurred.

## Conclusion

In the nearly two centuries since Stendhal suggested an Andalusí origin of the troubadours' lyric poetry in his *De l'Amour*, there has been a quantitative shift in the evidence supporting theories of literary exchange between the Old French and Arabic literary traditions. Increasingly, scholars begin their work from the assumption that such exchanges did indeed occur, regardless of how little we can demonstrate this from the manuscript history. Nevertheless scholars continue to operate from the same assumption as Stendhal, namely that such exchanges must have occurred, without being able to point to any concrete evidence of the existence of these exchanges in any general sense. For most texts, it is highly unlikely that the necessary evidence will ever be found, if only because much of the early transmission of literature would have occurred exclusively via oral transmission, possibly in informal setting and without authoritative versions. As we look back, therefore, we are faced with the opacity of an unrecorded history; we are faced with the unknowable.

One of the central premises of this project is that by defining the contours of the lacunae in our knowledge, we will be able to better predict the form and content of that missing knowledge.

Thus, because we know that from the earliest days of medieval literature in the Romance vernacular

certain elements of that literature bear striking similarity with its Arabic counterparts, and because we know that there was extensive cultural and material exchange between the Latinate and Islamicate worlds during this period, and because we know that certain texts and tales of Islamicate origin find their ways into Old French literature, there is reason to believe that the more concretely we can demonstrate those exchanges, the more we can induce about the relationship between those two literatures. The goal of this dissertation, therefore, was to represent that qualitative shift in approach away from beginning with the premise that such exchanges did occur towards searching for alternative ways of showing that such exchanges must have occurred by defining as much as possible the space surrounding the unknowable. Said differently, the goal was to find a reasoned and evidence-based approach to demonstrating that various works of literature in the Old French vernacular were indeed inspired by or drew upon Arabic sources.

This approach is most explicit in Chapter One, where I aim to show that the Latin inheritance of amatory theory from Ovid does not sufficiently explain the theories of courtly love elaborated by Andreas Capellanus in the *De amore*. That is not to say that courtly love is not particularly Ovidian, indeed it is. Instead, there is evidence that these new theories should not be seen as a simple progression of the Ovidian approach. Instead these new amatory theories drew on multiple sources of inspiration, among them the theories of *fin'amor* expressed by the Occitan troubadour poets. Understanding the genealogy of *fin'amor*, however, faces the same dilemmas as Capellanus's courtly love: neither can be fully explained as a refurbishment of Ovid's work. By including the Arabic tradition, represented by Ibn Ḥazm in this instance—this choice primarily being governed by his relative contemporaneity and proximity to the geographical borders of the Old French world—, I was able to show that many of the elements missing in

Ovid but present in Capellanus can be associated with theories and beliefs current in the Arabic. It is because of this preponderance of details that I suggest reading these two texts in parallel in order to better understand the development of theories of love in the twelfth century.

Chapter Two attempts to apply a similar approach to works of literature that have long been suggested as being related with little substantiation by evidence. Instead, scholars had long contented themselves with simply identifying the similarities between the Persianate epic, *Vīs u Rāmīn*, and the old French *Romans de Tristan* by Bérout and Thomas d'Angleterre. Little attempt was made to document how such a tale originating in ancient Persia might have come to be known in Norman England, apart from the recent work by Shahla Nosrat, who suggests that it was brought to western Europe in the fifth century by the Alans, a nomadic people of Indo-Iranian descent, who settled in the region around Orléans at the request of the Roman commander of Gaul, Flavius Aetius, and who were instrumental in rebuffing the Hunnic invasion at the Battle of Châlons in 451. Taking a different tack, I instead focus on showing the relationship between the *Vīs u Rāmīn* and a text that is demonstrably a rewriting of the Tristan legend, Chrétien de Troyes's Byzantine romance, *Cligès*. Comparing these two texts, the degrees of similarity increase significantly, while also accounting for some of the more peculiar aspects of *Cligès*, such its Mediterranean setting, which is uncharacteristic of other Arthurian legends.

The analysis of "The Tale of Ni'ma and Nu'm" from the *Alf Layla wa Layla* and the *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* in Chapter Three differs slightly from the approach outlined above. The interest here is not on the origins of these two texts but instead on the routes by which these texts might have circulated. A better understanding of these routes would represent a major intervention for scholars as this better understanding is necessary to begin piecing together how Old French and medieval Arabic literatures interacted and what effect each

might have had on the other. These routes are not limited to the pilgrimage and trade routes that spanned and linked the disparate cultural spaces of the medieval Mediterranean, but also include the nature, context and limits of human interactions within those spaces. The *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* reenacts these routes, which are central to the tale, and I argue that understanding how those routes are represented can illuminate the routes by which this and other tales likely circulated.

Unlike the history of literary transmission, the history of the transmission of medical science is well documented. In fact, even in some of the earliest cases, scholars know when, where and by whom specific texts were transmitted. As we see in Chapter Four, however useful it might be for understanding the genesis of the representation of love in later centuries, this knowledge does not shed much light on the vernacular literary production of the twelfth century. This came something as a surprise to me as I had expected to find evidence of the influence of new theories of medicine in the representation of love, love medicine and lovesickness far earlier than I was able, especially given its currency and its proximity to the literary centers I explore. Despite these shortcomings, however, the history of this transmission confirms the fact that such exchanges were occurring, often on large scales, by what were likely both formal and informal routes. The multiple origin stories attributed to Constantinus Africanus by subsequent generations, who did not find it preposterous that he could have been either an opportunistic merchant or a highly trained physician, suggest as much. If anything, as Thessala's confrontation with the Salernitan physicians reveals, while authors would have been aware of these changes, they might have chosen to retain a more antiquated representation because of its authority within the literary tradition.

The degree to which this approach was successful must be judged in several ways. We must consider to what extent we were able to show the common cultural orientation of the Islamicate and Old French worlds as it concerns amatory theory, the representation of erotological knowledge in literature and in terms of the representation of love medicine. We must also consider to what extent love as a particular lens proved useful for interrogating this cultural orientation writ large. Finally, we must ask if this approach ultimately provided our findings a firmer basis than other approaches.

I have no doubt that I have demonstrated that there is extensive overlap in theories and approaches to love in the Old French and Islamicate worlds. That is not to say, however, that both traditions, as represented in the two treatises studied here, are identical; far from it. Instead, whether about the ideal lover's traits, the place of morality in the pursuit of pleasure, or the role of women as agents in their own sexuality, we see that theorists are contemplating similar concepts, asking similar questions and ultimately coming to similar conclusions in eleventh-century Al-Andalus as they are in twelfth-century Champagne. We see that these concepts translate with relative ease into literature and are represented both in works in Arabic—and in Persian—and in Old French. We also see that this overlap in the representation of love most likely facilitated the transmission of works of literature across borders. At the same time, these works also brought with them on occasion new outlooks and approaches as they were translated. Sometimes, the foreign concepts requires alteration as they were accommodated into their new cultural milieu but often, because authors aimed to entertain more than lecture on morality, these concepts passed even as they conflicted with the mores of society. And finally, we see that, even though it did not penetrate into the representation of love in literature, medicalized love was built on shared foundations.

Together, this evidence does speak to a larger investment, beyond the scope of love or even literature, by the Old French world in the knowledge and culture of the Islamicate world and helps to elucidate the common cultural orientation visible throughout the medieval Mediterranean. Again, my argument is not that the cultural space of the Mediterranean and its hinterlands was homogeneous; it was not. Instead, I have argued that symbols of wealth and power translated easily across fragmented spaces such that a rock crystal vase from Persia could become a treasured object in a Parisian basilica. Likewise, I have shown that there was fear, rightly or wrongly matters little, at the University of Paris about the increasing influence of Ibn Rushd's theology within its hallowed halls. We see human and commodities trafficking along trade routes and we see that their value rests heavily in their mutual intelligibility. These are only a few of the signs of this common cultural orientation that I have suggested throughout this project, while what I have done represents only a few of the many avenues of exploration this project could have taken. Other routes might have included an examination of discourses of love in theology from Ibn Rushd to Thomas Aquinas or in the poetry of Sufi poet Ibn 'Arabī, or the representation of love madness in Old French texts such as the *Folie Tristan* or *Yvain* and in the poetry attributed to Majnūn Laylā.

There is little question in my mind that the genesis of courtly love in Old French literature owes something to the contemporaneous theories and cultural practices of love found in the Islamicate world, particularly in Al-Andalus, and I would suspect, along with Stendhal, that this transmission was mediated by the culture of *fin'amor* described—but most likely never practiced—in Occitania. Nevertheless, also like Stendhal, I am unable to substantiate that claim. The goal of this dissertation was to find a way of bolstering such a claim while lacking explicit evidence in its favor. On



final reflection, however, this project has been unsuccessful in setting its findings on firmer ground than previous attempts. While there should be no question about the usefulness of Medieval Mediterranean Studies as a lens for recontextualizing and historicizing the production Old French literature or of shared cultural orientation for theorizing relations across cultural, political, religious and linguistic borders, their usefulness in responding to the specific questions posed here is less in evidence. While I can affirm that my approach in this dissertation has helped to further define the contours of the domain, I cannot say with any greater confidence today that theories of courtly love were inspired by or drew on Islamic sources. The question therefore remains unresolved.

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