Displaced Subjects: Narrative Structures and Material Contexts of Late Medieval Travel Histories

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Abstract

My dissertation, *Displaced Subjects: Narrative Structures and Material Contexts of Late Medieval Travel Histories*, examines accounts of late medieval travel, which I call travel histories, to discuss the complex structures that they generally take. I analyze the narrative and material forms of three late medieval travel texts: Marco Polo's *Divisement du monde* (ca. 1298), Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* (1371) and the opening of the third book of Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*, the "Voyage en Béarn" (1389). My study of narrative manipulations and material book culture on display in both text and illustration show that the experimental form of these travel histories plays with various meanings of displacement and the subject positioning of the writer. Using an interdisciplinary approach grounded in literary criticism, art history and codicology, I analyze the variations of displacement present in these works to argue that they cultivate a distinctive relationship with the function of books in relocating and reenacting journeys. My work engages with recent cultural studies of early travel accounts, particularly with regards to the Medieval Mediterranean, the Global Middle Ages and the Postcolonial Middle Ages. While studies of this type have generally focused on the descriptions of the cultural other, I privilege the formal structures of these narratives and their manuscript contexts to show how innovative literary and artistic techniques situate the writer in distinct subject roles.

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Introduction

The medieval world witnessed many marvelous adventures that set merchants, crusaders, pilgrims and other curious travelers into motion and on itineraries that took them to uncharted regions of the known world. The late medieval period revealed particular enthusiasm for documenting these experiences, and the long-term success of these writings is testified by their wide dissemination into the sixteenth century. Medieval texts that incorporate travel are frequently recognized for their generic flexibility (Zumthor, "The Medieval Travel Narrative" 811), but what will be referred to here as "travel histories" are especially important to our understanding of travel accounts of the Middle Ages because they illustrate how travel accounts are vivified via strategies of history writing, rhetorical and metaphorical play with the concept of travel, and manipulations of the manuscript artifact, all of which implicate the positioning of the subject. These travel histories also share in common their commitment to truth telling. The blending of travel and history is not new to the medieval period and dates back to antiquity with the works of Herodotus. Like their predecessors, medieval writers of travel seem particularly attracted to historiographical methods because they allege to recount facts about past travel.[1] In addition to the truth claim that establishes a parallel between medieval accounts of travel and the medieval chronicle,[2] the frequent inclusion of travel accounts alongside chronicles provides material evidence for the connection between travel and history.[3]

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[1] Mary Campbell states that "the travel book is a kind of witness: it is generically aimed at the truth." *The Witness and the Other World*, 2-3.

[2] I use Monika Otter's definition of truth claim: "not whether it corresponds to fact . . . but how it asks to be taken by the reader." "Functions of Fiction," 112.

[3] As Friedrich Wolfzettel observes, the earliest record of travel to the Mongolian court, the story William of Rubruck, was compiled with chronicles: ". . . ce nouveau type de récit de mission, bien que proche encore

These textual witnesses of past and distant journeys were especially coveted at French courts. Scribes translated accounts of travel into the vernacular, artists produced richly decorated volumes and book producers compiled different materials into travel compendia, all of which were often displayed as court treasures. The popularity of luxury travel manuscripts indicates not only a courtly interest in reading about past journeys and learning about foreign peoples, but also an artistic and literary interest in playing with the depiction of travel, both visually and verbally.

This study takes as its subject the narratival, visual and material experimentation of late medieval francophone travel histories to show how subject displacement relocates and reenacts journeys. Displacement derives from the idea of place that, as recent scholarship has shown, encompasses a multitude of meanings that includes, but is not limited to, location.[4] The use of displacement here serves not only to call attention to travel as a process that physically draws people beyond familiar environments, but also more broadly as any movement, conceptual or otherwise, that puts subjects out of place. For travel histories, this involves the experimental position of the subject relative to the history, which involves the relocation from the scriptorium to distant sites in order to pursue history farther afield. Displacement thus refers to narrative voice, rhetorical manipulations, and visual ways of recounting travel that call attention to the distance, both spatial and conceptual, that travel histories vivify. Four broad categories of displacement characterize travel histories: geographical, which refers to the actual travel

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de la littérature encyclopédique, soit apparanté au genre de la chronique, avec lequel il a en commun le souci de véracité et de témoignage." *Le discours du voyageur*, 23.

[4] For a general overview of scholarship that examines notions of place, see Tim Cresswell's *Place: a Short Introduction*.

of subjects through foreign terrain; narrative, where voices and perspectives represent distant, multiple speaking subjects that reverse the expected roles of traveler and writer; spatial, where narrative and illustrative techniques toy with the distance and proximity that mark the distinction between the actual journey and the physical book artifact containing the travel history; and material, where manipulations of compilation and illustration, in addition to visual evidence of prior circulation that testifies to the mobility of the manuscript, place travel subjects in new material and visual contexts. These forms of displacement elucidate the unprecedented narratival and material play with travel metaphors that characterize journey accounts of the long fourteenth century.

Provocative story-telling strategies draw attention to the multiple forms of displacement, which I claim characterize the narrative and material traditions of late medieval travel histories. I analyze these multi-faceted representations with relation to modern travel theory and current scholarship on medieval travel material, which generally responds to Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978), and his controversial claim that the western discourse of the Other originated in canonical medieval texts (58-59 and 70-71). Said's argument hinged on the idea that, beginning in the medieval era, western art and literature promulgated a binary cultural construction of the world, divided between "us" and "them." While some scholars have upheld this view,[5] others working in the growing fields of the Postcolonial Middle Ages, the Medieval Mediterranean, and the Global Middle Ages have challenged it by taking account of the diversity and movability of the medieval world. In the first major work

[5] Most notably, Syed Manzurul Islam describes medieval travel accounts as a "machine of othering," *The Ethics of Travel: from Marco Polo to Kafka*, 123. Paul Smethurst similarly argues that "Polo's *Divisement* and Mandeville's *Travels* belong to a Western discourse in which European alterity is constructed through and *against* the otherness of the East," "The Journey from Modern to Postmodern in the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and Marco Polo's *Divisament dou Monde*," 165.

published on medieval postcolonial studies, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (2000), Jerome Jeffrey Cohen calls on contemporary medieval scholars to destabilize rigid identities associated with medieval cultures, including the displacement of the domination of Christianity and the decentering of Europe. His formulation—destabilize, displace and decenter—not only establishes points of "temporal interlacement" between medieval studies and modern postcolonial theory, but also realigns the centrality of religious and national identities generally associated with medieval worldviews (6-7). In looking beyond the frontiers of medieval Europe and Latin Christianity, the postcolonial Middle Ages has set the stage for scholarship on medieval travel, which brings a new appreciation for the mobility and connectedness of the medieval world and, as "Displaced Subjects" will make clear, an awareness of the literary experimentation that global displacement inspired.

Scholars of the medieval Mediterranean use this travel material to retrace the circuits of encounter and exchange in the Mediterranean region to show how constant, intercultural contact shaped medieval identities. Sharon Kinoshita examines the literary traces of these encounters in her book, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (2006), by detailing how a wide range of medieval literary texts record western interactions with Levantine cultures.[6] She concludes that: "It is . . . French contact with these lands—familiar yet foreign, where the boundary between self and other was not always self-evident—that underlies many vernacular texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" (8). Kinoshita's emphasis on the networks of connectivity and the porous boundaries of the medieval world reassesses how medieval

[6] Kinoshita primarily focuses on *chanson de geste*, epic and romance materials, though she includes a study on Robert de Clari's more historical work, *La Conquête de Constantinople*.

writers conceived of the cultural Other and, more importantly, themselves. Building on this study of literary texts from an earlier era, I contend that travel histories of the late medieval period pushed the limits of these boundaries by negotiating place, distance and the difference between lived and written experiences.

Drawing on historical and geographical material in addition to literary texts, Suzanne Conklin Akbari also cautions against the application of the orientalist dichotomy between East and West to medieval contexts. Focusing on the medieval western treatment of Islamic culture, she argues that the Orient represented a fixed point that allowed for the generation of its own Other—but an Other that did not represent the West. Instead, as T-O maps and later medieval *mappaemundi* demonstrate, medieval thinkers divided the world into three geographical parts with Asia on one side and Europe and Africa on the other.[7] As she aptly states, "The East is where 'they' are . . . It does not follow, however, that the West is where 'we' are" ("From Due East to True North," 20). Travel histories deliberately disturb this binary in their unconventional portrayal of the travel experience. They redraw and exacerbate territorial boundaries to encompass travelling writers, who experience their own displacement either as second or third hand witnesses or as travellers in unknown territories.

The most recent publication on medieval travel material takes account of this distance to examine the issue of the unstable and uncomfortable perspective of European audiences. In her book *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (2014), Shirin Khanmohamadi underlines the disquiet of medieval European

[7] See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450*, "The Shape of the World," 20-66.

audiences in developing a notion of medieval ethnographical writing. She defines ethnographic poetics as:

> . . . a profound openness to alternative perspectives and voices, attention to the limits and hence dangers of taking a single-point European or Latin Christian perspective in engaging with cultural diversity; and frequent exposure of the discomfort experienced by Europeans in confronting and thinking through unfamiliar words and worldviews, in opening their own systems of thought to competing languages and having their beliefs thus 'dialogized'—and relativized—through the encounter (2).

Khanmohamodi draws attention to multifocality, dialogue, and openness to other cultures to argue that the narrative of medieval ethnographies represents relative rather than absolute perspectives. In challenging the notion of an authoritative, stable narrative perspective, Khanmohamodi reveals that the structure of orientalist discourse, as described by Edward Said, generally does not apply to medieval accounts of intercultural contact. In fact, the tendency to compare European social practices against foreign cultures suggests that medieval European audiences had tremendous difficulty in situating themselves, both within their own world and farther afield. These structural observations indicate the innately experimental nature of medieval travel histories, calling for renewed attention to the formal elements of voice and perspective. As we shall see, interest in multifocality and multivocality were also central preoccupations of writers and bookmakers involved in travel histories.

The contention upheld by Khanmohamodi, that medieval accounts of travel reveal anxiety about the self, is new to Medieval Studies. But it has been discussed extensively

in the broader, modern field of travel studies, especially in recent French interventions on the subject. Charles Forsdick traces the recent development of travel writing as a French genre (288-289), plotting a literary history that only appears beginning in the 1970s and culminates with the multi-author travel collection, *Pour une littérature voyageuse* (1992). In spite of this restrictive timeframe for French additions to the genre, this collection nevertheless inserts French literature into the genre of travel writing that, according to Forsdick, had been regarded as a strictly English genre. The collection's stated goal is to explore French contributions to travel writing, specifically as "invitations à sortir de soi" (10). According to these writers, travel writing opens the rest of the world to readers by taking them elsewhere, but this particular formulation—"sortir de soi"—also points to the tendency of these narratives to foster awareness of the inherent instability of their own position by experiencing the displacement of the writer-traveller. "Displaced Subjects" retraces this proclaimed specificity of French travel writing back to late medieval travel histories, where narrative, visual and material experimentations engage with medieval notions of subjectivity and set the parameters of a long legacy of travelling writers that still remains central to French travel literature.

Other studies of French travel accounts reach back to the medieval period, but ultimately draw attention to the discrepancies between the formal elements of these early texts and the well-established characteristics of the modern travel genre. Published only a year before *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, Tzvetan Todorov's *Les morales de l'histoire* (1991) privileges the late thirteenth-century account of Marco Polo's travel to the Far East in his chapter on travel writing, "Le voyage et son récit." Yet Todorov's association of travel narrative with autobiography overlooks the stylistic anomalies of

medieval travel histories that the Polo text embodies.[8] Here, the traveler does not narrate his own adventure but instead, the romance writer Rustichello da Pisa intervenes. Autobiography is actually rare in medieval travel histories, where it is more common to have "ghostwriters" record the experiences of their travelling interlocutors. The Polo account thus exemplifies this often-overlooked reality of medieval travel histories because it lacks an autobiographical narrative structure, thereby conflicting with the tenets of the travel narrative genre. The Marco Polo case reflects the narrative strategies of most medieval travel histories, the journey is not recounted through the stable perspective of the traveler and instead, spotlights the relationship between travel and the writing process.

Displaced Subjects examines the effect of this narratival displacement, defined as an experimental construction that relocates the journey in the book. This approach reflects more recent views on the subject in travel narrative. Joan-Pau Rubiés goes so far as to say that the narrative construction of subjectivity is key to the genre:

> . . . the distinction between persona and author is important, because the traveller is always a narrative construction, independently of any possible claims to direct observation and to the actual authorship of the text ("Travel Writing as a Genre" 368).

Resonating with Rubiés's observations within the medieval community is A.C. Spearing's reaction to Michel Zink's claim that the birth of the French literary text triumphs at the moment when the text becomes "le produit d'une conscience particulière" (*La subjectivité littéraire* 8). Instead, Spearing argues for the innately textual nature of

[8] Todorov defines the parameters of the travel narrative genre thus: "La limite, d'un côté, est la science; de l'autre, l'autobiographie; le récit de voyage vit de l'impénétration des deux." *Les morales de l'histoire*, 105.

the speaking subject in medieval narrative. In *Textual Subjectivity: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics* (2005), Spearing analyzes examples from romance and lyric traditions "with an eye to the subjectivization diffused throughout the text in linguistic phenomena . . ." (33). Spearing's observations, which pertain to "non-fiction" texts, will be adopted here in our exploration of the nature of narrative in late medieval travel histories where displaced textual subjects generate distance and movement in retelling their travel expereinces.

This decentering of the speaking subject constitutes one strategy to locate the traveller elsewhere, but material displacement represents another. This concept relates to theories in material or manuscript geography,[9] which focuses on a particular manuscript's movement through wider geographical networks. The analysis of manuscript geography reveals the inherent instability and variability of the medieval text, described by Paul Zumthor as *mouvance* (*Essai de poétique médiévale* 507). Moving away from the more traditional models of codicology that attempt to locate a single authoritative manuscript, *mouvance*, the "new philology," and now the emerging field of manuscript geography emphasize the plurality and mobility of medieval manuscript traditions. One aspect of material displacement deals with how the manuscript absorbs physical traces of its own geography. Beyond this physical circulation, material displacement also involves artists' and bookmakers' experimentation with displaced subjects. Artistic portrayals of narrated travel relocate events into new histories and, in certain instances, animate geographical

[9] Scholars identify manuscript geography in different terms, but all refer to the locations of manuscript production and circulation. Abel McKinley and Jennifer Way use the term "geography of material culture," in "Placing the Middle Ages," 2; Wendy Scase refers to "manuscript geography," in her introduction to *Essays in Manuscript Geography*; and Keith Busby employs "geography of the codex," *Codex and Context*, 485.

displacement. The different manifestations of historical and spatial contexts reinforce narrative displacement generated by the textual account.

Physical marks and visual elements recall the past lives of manuscripts, inadvertently becoming signs that, like the text itself, situate the traveller elsewhere. In examining these elements, I suggest that the material and visual properties of the codex articulate movement—a characteristic that gains particular meaning in travel histories where mobility also informs the immaterial narrative text.[10] The material expression of movement is most immediately found in the parchment, where evidence of the material's prior animal existence signals the progression from living skin to writing surface. Wear on the folia, supplemental marginal notes and alterations to manuscript organization represent past readerships that spanned across distant libraries. If the "material and the immaterial are . . . inseparable in the practice of reading" (Catherine Brown, "Remember the Hand" 265), then these physical traces of circulation work with the mobile narrative voices to bolster the concept of displacement. Visual travel cues in the form of miniatures, marginalia and text layout also provoke reflection on the prior movement of the manuscript. These strategies powerfully affect encounters with manuscripts of travel histories by requiring them to be attentive to both the shifting contexts of the speaking subject and also the mobile material subject.

In order to investigate the narratival and material displacement of medieval travel histories, I have selected texts from different literary traditions that share a preoccupation with the experimental representation of text and image as regards accounts of past travels: Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* (ca. 1298), the well-known account of the

[10] The expressive capacity of the material text has also been studied with regards to violence and the animal sacrifice embodied in the parchment material. See Sarah Kay, "Legible Skins," and Bruce Holsinger, "Of Pigs and Parchment."

Venetian merchant's exploration into the territory of the Great Khan of Mongolia;[11] Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* (1371), a late crusade narrative that relates Pierre de Lusignan's conquest of Alexandria; and Jean Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn," the opening of Book III of the *Chroniques* (1389) that describes the chronicler's adventure through the Foix-Béarn region in search of eyewitnesses to the Spanish-Portuguese conflict that took place during the Hundred Years War. In analyzing these works as travel histories, this study will register the extent to which the material artifact displaces the traveler. The texts to be analyzed have manuscript traditions that, through organization and illustration, enact different strategies for portraying travelling subjects. Extensive illustrative cycles, artistic changes across manuscript traditions, carefully planned compilations, and material evidence of circulation represent different material aspects of medieval travel histories that frame travellers' experiences.

This dissertation begins by approaching Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* as a fractured narrative that will then, via its manuscript history, be relocated into a crusader context. In this opening chapter, "Narrative Shifting and Visual Variance in Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde*," I revisit the widespread assessment that the Polo account represents the quintessential medieval travel narrative. I begin by implicitly questioning scholarship that identifies the observations of foreign cultures and the descriptions of far eastern landscapes as the unique perspective of the traveler, Marco Polo. What is regularly downplayed in these studies is that Rustichello da Pisa, a romance writer who recorded Polo's account while both were being held in a Genoan prison, actually narrates the story and aggressively calls attention to his participation. I explore how this structure works to replace Polo's journey with the narrative as the conceptual itinerary that

[11] Todorov defines the Polo account as the first true travel narrative. *Les morales de l'histoire*, 106.

transforms Rustichello's writing into a travelling experience. Geographical travel is here overwhelmed by "textual travel," which is characterized by shifting perspectives and narrative play with the metaphorical relationship between travel and writing. I retrace the effects of this strategy through the concept of narratival shifting, developed by Roland Barthes in his essay "Le discours de l'histoire." From this model, I identify Rustichello as the organizer of the narrative and Marco Polo as the witness, emphasizing the narratival displacement of the traveler from the record of his own adventures.

The French courtly manuscripts of the Polo account heighten the effect of displacement by visually articulating the merchant's past experience within a particular production context, determined by the patron's commission and ideological motivation. The earliest French Polo text in London, British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, a crusade compendium produced in the Parisian Montbaston atelier for Philippe de Valois on the eve of his intended departure to the Holy Land, recasts Polo's travels to the Far East as events in a distant crusader history. The miniatures in this manuscript function as propaganda for future crusading, as is evident in the striking similarity of images from two other contemporaneous Montbaston manuscripts of Guillaume de Tyr's *Histoire d'Outremer* (1170-1184): Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 22495 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 24209. This artistic strategy, which lifts generic illustrations from crusader histories to illustrate a desired future expedition, inserts the Polo account into a new, disturbing environment marked by violent conflict between Saracens and Christians. The Royal Manuscript therefore embodies displacement on two different levels: first, with the narrative ploy to distance the traveler's perspective in favor of a textual itinerary articulated by the organizer; and

second, with the artistic manipulation to displace, once again, the Polo journey by inserting it into a visual narrative of late medieval crusading ambitions.

I take up the issue of spatial displacement in the second chapter, "The Well-Traveled Text: Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre*." The account of Pierre de Lusignan's crusade to Alexandria results from the folding together of verse romance traditions and history writing expectations. The first-person subject departs from earlier works in the Machaut corpus because his narrative interjections have a distancing effect and frequently serve the purpose of end rhymes. The poet also expresses uncertainty about certain aspects of historical events and he does not disclose the names of his sources, further distancing the events that took place during Pierre's expedition.

In the absence of the crusaders' lived experiences, the material displacement of the manuscript replaces actual travel to become a marker of movement. Unlike the other manuscript traditions to be examined in this study, the *Prise d'Alixandre*, does not have an extensive illustration cycle. Only to be found in the most complete Machaut complete-works anthologies,[12] the *Prise* lacks extensive visual description. Yet in the absence of a large-scale miniature cycle, other material elements, such as parchment marks, sutures and traces of text layout, that draw attention to the material signs of prior use. This material history stretches from the animal origin of the parchment to the widespread circulation of the codex after its production. In BnF MS fr. 1584, marginalia and other minor decorative elements also serve as travel cues that recall the distant setting of the *Prise* while exhibiting uncommon wear that this text alone in the collection suffered when it passed through the hands of different readers before entering the

[12] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 1584; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 1585; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 9221; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 22545-22546; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library MS Ferrell 1.

collection. I conceive of these visual and material signs as qualities that mark the *Prise* as a travel history that underscores its own material displacement, prior to entry into this single-author compendium.

The narrative of Jean Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn" presents yet a different approach from the other texts of this study and inserts the narrating speaker, described as a traveling chronicler, into sites where historical events previously took place. Although Froissart deliberately states at the outset that he wrote the final version of the "Voyage" after his return to Valenciennes, the vivid account of movement and historical discovery in the narrative collapses the journey and the writing process into one event. The physical displacement of the historian as he discovers the distant and ominous Foix-Béarn region keeps the historian in perpetual motion and his continual displacement becomes the new standard for rediscovering historical information. This fieldwork permits the chronicler to associate history with the traveled landscape, a relationship that the third chapter, "Landscapes of Travel and History in Jean Froissart's 'Voyage en Béarn'," analyzes. The narrative begins by explicitly affiliating the language of travel and writing, and by establishing the destinations of the itinerary as sites of historical discovery. Progressively, the narrative builds on the concept of territory by associating storytelling with the staking out of land. The growing awareness of the implications territory has on noble families' legacies, or "héritage," foregrounds an alarming discovery. The most illustrious nobleman of the region, Gaston Fébus, has no heir and the mystery of his son's death drives the travelling chronicler's intellectual and physical pursuit to learn the truth.

The historian's informative adventures in a new and dangerous region figure in the illustrations of certain manuscripts of Book III and Book IV of the *Chroniques*. Art historians have examined sea voyages as a central theme in the illustrations of the *Chroniques* and as a visual link that connects Froissart's work to manuscript traditions of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (Valentina Mazzei "Reading a Frontispiece"). But it is the rare image of the travelling chronicler that establishes travel as a framework for uncovering and narrating lost histories. Striking images, mostly opening miniatures from both the early Parisian and late Flemish production sites of the *Chroniques*, feature the physical displacement of the historian. These illustration depict travel by ship, by horse and by foot—different methods of transport that reiterate how the arduous journey in pursuit of informative stories becomes part of the history itself.

These three medieval travel histories, then, entail narrative strategies and material expression that incorporate geographical, narrative, spatial and material displacement. Although displacement is generally associated with a physical experience, it is expanded in these instances to include shifts in narrative perspective and sequence so that the text becomes a site of movement and adventure. Manuscripts, through illustrative and physical components, bolster this dynamic trait by visually and physically placing these histories into new contexts. Through this experimentation on textual and material levels, the book does not merely record and preserve the events of historical travel, but rather is transformed into a multivalent object that makes journeys come alive. Travel histories, as precursors to the modern travel narrative genre, foster awareness of the relationship between travel and writing through the displaced subjects that recount actual experiences.

Chapter One: Narrative Shifting and Visual Variance in Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde*

Marco Polo has long fascinated readers because of his extraordinary travels to the Far East. What we often overlook, however, is how the narration of the story provides us with an equally complex and mysterious adventure. The narrative form embodies its own unexpected mobility through the negotiation of its two principal voices: Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant, and Rustichello da Pisa, the Italian *romancier*. The prologue describes their collaboration as taking place within the confines of a Genoan prison, an unexpected writing context that stalls the movement of the great traveler.[13] In the absence of physical movement, the narrative draws abundantly on travel metaphors to turn writing into an adventure. The framing of Marco Polo's past journey within the account of the writing act calls attention to the materiality of this tale and the unusual narrative form that it takes. By subordinating Marco Polo's past journey to the writing event, reading takes on a psychological and adventurous quality that allows us to experience travel not vicariously as Polo's fellow travelers, but as active participants in Rustichello's narration.

In a preliminary examination of the qualities of these two narrative voices, we might initially associate Marco Polo with mobility and Rustichello with stability. I would like to suggest the opposite: Polo remains fixed in the distant past of his own travels while Rustichello becomes the traveler of the narrative text. These roles downplay Polo's past physical travel and instead, they map writing and reading as forms of travel. I shall

[13] Some scholars disagree about whether or not this collaboration, as described in the prologue, actually occurred. Barbara Wehr doubts that such a collaboration in a Genoan prison ever happened, "A propos de la Genèse du 'Devisement dou monde' de Marco Polo," 301. On the other hand, Philippe Ménard finds no reason to discredit the described collaboration, "Le problème de la version originale du 'Devisement du monde,'" 19.

explain this phenomenon in reference to Roland Barthes's discussion of history writing in the "Discours de l'histoire." In this essay, Barthes draws on Roman Jakobson's notion of discursive shifters to develop two terms that elucidate the construction of historical accounts: the shifter of listening, "un embrayeur d'écoute" (66), and the shifter of organization, "le shifter d'organisation" (67). The shifter of listening, which I associate with Marco Polo as the witness, is the figure that gathers and expresses what we might term the elsewhere of the account. The shifter of organization, identified here with Rustichello da Pisa as the organizer of the account, engages with the experience presented by the witness at a remove and modifies the course of the narrative with reference to its past construction. What Barthes does not mention is that the folding together of these two practices brings organization forward while distancing the actual experience of the event—a critical distinction that the narrative of the *Devisement* makes by splitting these two techniques between its two narrative voices. The organizer's narrative shifting is therefore more perceptible than the witness's past experiences. This hierarchy replaces the geographic journey with the account of that journey, where textual travel supersedes Polo's actual journey eastward.

This distancing effect, which I will explore as a phenomenon of both the narrative text and the manuscript artifact, distinguishes the earliest French courtly redaction (London, British Library Royal MS 19 D 1) from the earlier Franco-Italian version, which is believed to most closely resemble the original, co-authored text (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 1116). We can trace the French version back to the first decade of the 14th century when Thibaut de Chepoy, while negotiating land rights for Charles of Valois in Venice, retrieved a copy of Marco Polo's account and brought it

back with him to the French court in 1307.[14] The *Devisement* therefore enters the French literary tradition by making a journey of its own, traversing the Alps in the hands of the French king's trusted diplomat and captain, who had himself traveled at some length in the Near East.

The further distancing of the traveling witness from the narrative in its transmission history, combined with the explicit relocation of the Polo journey into an illustrated crusade world in the Royal Manuscript, heightens the sense of displacement that I associate with medieval travel histories. Unlike the earlier, un-illustrated Franco-Italian text where Marco Polo performs the role of storyteller (Gaunt, *Marco Polo's* Le Devisement du monde 73-77), the French redaction removes Polo and his journey from the narrative by progressively supplanting geographical travel with a textual adventure. The rare combination of the narrative and visual displacement of Marco Polo's journey in the Royal Manuscript has led me to focus on the French text instead of on the Franco-Italian redaction, whose textual authority and representation of cultural diversity has recently been celebrated by philological studies spearheaded by Simon Gaunt.[15] Gaunt's 2013 study of linguistic variance across vernacular Marco Polo traditions highlights translators' and bookmakers' manipulations of formal elements and the effect that these changes produce. He argues that the constructed relationship between reading, writing and travel in the *Devisement* brings us ever closer to Polo's experiences along his eastward route (*Marco Polo's* Le Devisement du Monde 57). Cesare Segre has also

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[14] Not much is known about this transmission apart from what the prologue states in the *B* branch of the French tradition. Philippe Ménard maintains that Marco Polo personally made a copy for Philippe de Valois and sent it to him via Thibaut de Chepoy, however Benedetto remains skeptical. See Ménard's introduction (24-28) and J. Petit "Un capitaine du règne de Philippe le Bel."

[15] In Gaunt's publication, *Marco Polo's* Le Devisement du Monde, he reaffirms the Franco-Italian text as the authoritative Marco Polo tradition (13-14)—a argument first made by Luigi Benedetto in his 1928 edition of the Polo narrative. See *Il Milione: Prima Edizione Integrale*.

commented on this metaphor in the Franco-Italian text, explaining that it substitutes a geographical representation, "[una] esposizione geografica," for an experiential geography, "una geografia vissuta" (5), which allows the reader to participate in both the writing process and the past travel experience. This metaphorical relationship, I argue, also pertains to the French courtly translation but, in contrast to Gaunt and Segre's views, replaces the physical geography of Marco Polo's travels with the literary experience of a textual geography. The intrigue of travel in the French *Devisement* hinges precisely on the fact that it is the only illustrated branch of the *Devisement* where both text and image subvert the journey. Over the course of the narrative, the book inherits the strange beauty—"plus biaux et plus estranges (Polo 5:131)—that characterizes the marvelous landscapes of Marco Polo's travel.

"Lequel livre...fist retraire...par mesire Rasta pysan": Rustichello as Mobile Organizer

Despite the skepticism about his importance in the narrative of the *Devisement*,[16] Rustichello da Pisa emerges as the central organizing figure who constructs a textual journey through the use of travel concepts to arrange the narrative sequence. The description of his participation in the writing project emphasizes the separation of Polo's past travel from the present enunciation. The narrative process calls attention to these gaps by highlighting the purposeful arrangement of the past events of the Polo journey into a new narrated sequence. Rustichello's role in determining the order of the *Devisement* recalls Barthes's shifter of organization, as described in the "Discours de l'histoire":

[16] John Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book*, downplays Rustichello's voice (29), and Barbara Wehr, "A propos du genèse," claims that Rustichello fabricated the testimony of his own involvement.

> Le second type de shifter couvre tous les signes déclarés par lesquels l'énonçant, en l'occurence l'historien, organise son propre discours, le reprend, le modifie en cours de route, en un mot y dispose des repères explicites. C'est un shifter important, et les 'organisateurs' du discours peuvent recevoir des expressions variées; elles peuvent toutes se ramener, cependant, à l'indication d'un mouvement du discours par rapport à sa matière, ou plus exactement le long de cette matière . . . (66)

Barthes's definition reflects the tasks that Rustichello performs as the organizer. Although Barthes does not view this role as a way to distance past experience, I interpret the shifter as a marker of the distance between shifting narrative layers. Awareness of this separation has the effect of destabilizing the course of the narrative such that movement occurs in the text rather than in the context of Polo's actual travel. The narrative expresses this shift in movement with direct references to the construction of the narrative text, which I refer to as indicators of organization, and with verbs of motion that simultaneously denote travel, reading and writing. Such interventions in the narrative are more than just traces of Rustichello's participation as an organizer—they establish the narrative text as a conceptual journey to follow.

Rustichello emerges as the dominant voice in measure with Marco Polo's gradual displacement from the text. This process begins early in the narrative when Rustichello, the organizer, dislodges Marco Polo from the stability of the speaking subject and names him as an object to be described in the book. Polo's first appearance is observed at a distinct distance in the narrative. Niccolo and Maffeo Polo encounter him upon their return to Venice after several years of travel and trade abroad: "Si trouva mesire Nicolo

sa femme morte, et li estoit demourez de sa femme .I. filz de .XV. ans, lequel avoit non Marc, de cui cest livre parole" (Polo 1: 125).[17] The formal naming of Marco Polo establishes him as an object first gazed upon by his father and uncle. Subsequently, the narrative extends to Polo the title "mesire Marco Polo" because of the remarkability of his account: ". . . si que pour ce des lors en avant il fu apelez mesire Marc Pol, et ainsi le nommera des ore mais nostre livre, car c'est bien raisons" (Polo 1:130). We initially encounters Marco Polo as a marvelous foreign object and his status as a strange and distant figure further jeopardizes his position as a narrating subject. The sustained absence of direct discourse attributed to Polo throughout the book reinforces this point. Polo remains confined to a past adventure now recast by Rustichello. In this respect, the designated traveler does not travel in the *Devisement* but rather serves as a stable, referential object in the past from which to draw information. While Marco Polo may acquire a title of respect—"mesire"[18]—, it is their book—"nostre livre"—, narrated by Rustichello, that confers this title on him.

Rustichello's dynamic role comes into sharp focus when the prologue identifies him as he who orders the narrative. The narrative implicates his name alone in the creation of the book, drawing us closer to his role in the construction of the text: "Lequel livre, [puis demourant] en la carsere de Gene, fist retraire par ordre par mesire Rasta pysan, qui en cele meïmes prison estoit au temps que il couroit de Crist .MCCXCVIII. anz de l'Incarnation" (Polo 1:118). The expression "retraire par ordre" suggests that Rustichello was ordered to record the book. It also denotes organization and movement,

[17] All Middle French citations are from Philippe Ménard's edition.
[18] According to Leonardo Olschki, the title "mesire" indicates Marco Polo's importance within the Mongolian Court. *Marco Polo's Asia: an Introduction to his 'Description of the World' called 'Il Milione*,' 101.

a double connotation that expands the significance of the writing act to encompass travel.[19] Rustichello, the organizing agent of this action, embeds movement into the writing process when he subordinates past events to the narration. The mobile narrative text stands in stark contrast to the confining Genoan prison that the narrative evokes twice in this passage. While both the traveler and his ghostwriter are restrained to this controlled space, Rustichello associates himself with action. He juxtaposes the static environment of the collaboration and the retelling of past adventures with a deliberate presentation of storytelling as a journey that unfolds on the page. Mobility does not pertain to Polo's own experiences, which remain fixed in the past, but instead it makes up the very structure of the newly ordered narrative sequence.

Grammatical manipulations early in the text intensify this link between mobility and Rustichello's arrangement of the narrative sequence. This connection emerges in the first mention of the ordering of the text, where adverbial expressions establish movement as a mode for writing: ". . . si comme nostre livres [vous] contera tout par ordre [apertement] . . . " (Polo 1: 117). The insistence on clarity and methodical ordering may first appear as a trope to establish the veracity of the account, aligning the *Devisement* more closely with strategies of history writing. But the redundancy of the expressions "tout par ordre" and "apertement"—distinctive terms that evoke organization and clarity —especially calls attention to the organization of the narrative and its movement, which contrasts Polo's prior travel experience now completed. The future tense of "contera" further marks this shift from past history both to the present unfolding enunciation and to the future encounters with the written account of these arranged and transcribed events.

[19] Valeria Bertolucci-Pizzorusso comments on the unusual choice of "retraire," to write or to organize, in the description of the book's construction. "A propos de Marco Polo et de son livre: quelques suggestions de travail," 800.

Focus turns from Polo's completed journey and toward the written account that is presently to be discovered.

Complementing the effect of these indicators of organization that distance Marco Polo from the written account, the treatment of Polo's actual adventures subordinates his discoveries to the experiential process offered by reading the present text. Polo, in these moments, often joins Rustichello in the textual adventure. For instance, the concluding remarks of the Polo brothers' extensive travel in the service of the Great Khan include an adverbial indicator of organization to create a clear division between the present narration and Polo's past travel: "En chevauchant, trouverent moult de granz merveilles de diversetez pour ce que mesire Marc, qui toutes ces choses vit aussi, le vous conter[a] en ceste livre en avant tout apertement" (Polo 1:121). The brothers discovered many marvels during their travels, which Marco Polo would also see—"vit aussi"—in his later journey to the East, yet all these events occur in a remote and receding past. The book, on the other hand, will embark on a mediated textual journey—"conter[a]"—and will present relevant episodes "en avant tout apertement" as we venture further into the text. This temporal shift also reflects the type of travel that the narrative privileges. The Polos' past physical travel, conveyed by the expression "en chevauchant," recedes into the past while the narrative foregrounds Rustichello's textual itinerary—"en avant".

The tension that the indicators of organization create between past travel and present narration has a different dynamic in the introduction of the Great Khan. This passage figures as the most memorable marvel of the French tradition of the

Devisement—so much so that the text often bears the title *Le Livre du Grant Caam*.[20] At this key juncture in the text, the French translation eschews mention of the past travel experience to focus instead on the narrative sequence: "Et ce vous mousterrai je tout apertement en nostre livre que c'est tout voir ce que je vous ai dit—et que chascuns y sera [content]—comment il fu li plus granz sires qui onques fust ne qui orendroit soit" (Polo 3: 57). The accompaniment of the indicator of organization, "tout apertement," with the future tense, "mousterrai," pushes the reading experience forward. Moreover, Marco Polo is noticeably absent from this description because the narrative replaces his testimony with what Rustichello has already recounted—"ce que je vous ai dit." The narrative does not need a statement from Polo because Rustichello has already mediated and recorded the account. In Polo's absence, the narrative declares that it will show us the true, marvelous nature of the Great Khan, suggesting an alternate route of discovery through both textual and, as we shall see, visual forms. This new adventure, breaking off from the elusive Polo journey, carves out a unique path of the organizer's written exploration of the marvels of the Mongolian court.

The favoring of textual travel in lieu of physical travel is most vivid at the end of the story. In the descriptions of the eastern limits of the Great Khan's territory, verbs of motion allow Rustichello to replace Marco Polo as the principal traveler of the *Devisement*. For example, the brevity of the description of Cyangly limits the amount of available information and draws attention to the textual transition from the present city to the following destination of Candinfu:

[20] This title only pertains to the B branch of the Marco Polo French tradition, which includes the Royal Manuscript that contains our text of study. For more information on the manuscripts of the French tradition, see Philippe Ménard's introduction.

> Cyangly est unne cyté du Catay vers midi et est au Grant Caan. Et sont ydres et ont monnoie de chartres. Et vait par mis ceste cité un grant flun et large, par lequel se porte amont et aval grant quantité de marchandise de soie et d'espiceries et d'autres choses en grant quantité; ne autre chose n'i a qui a conter face. Or nous partirons de Cyangly et vous conterons de unne autre cyté qui est loing de Cyangly [.VI.] journees vers midi, laquelle [cité] se nomme Candinfu. (Polo 4: 101)

The description contains details about money and trade—points of interest that characterize many of the accounts in the *Devisement*. Yet this particular encapsulation is exceptional for its slippery usage of "nous," which implicates new subjects in the travel experience. Transitions from one description of a foreign land to another favor motion verbs in the first-person plural in order to implicate Rustichello into Polo's travels.[21] These instances also establish two distinct interpretive modes, where verbs of motion double for the description of past physical travel and present textual travel, thereby marking the discursive shift from history to narrative. Rustichello therefore reveals the influence of travel on writing, revealing a particular dynamic where the writing project substitutes for Marco Polo's journey as the true adventure of the narrative.

Another technique that implicates the organizer in the adventure of recounting travel turns on the descriptive encapsulations of the Far East. What can read as static encyclopedic entries that string together random facts about each region turn out to be sites of rapid movement in the narrative. Movement through text occurs in the descriptions of distant lands and Marco Polo disappears from the narrative altogether.

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[21] Simon Gaunt examines pronoun variance between the earliest Franco-Italian version and the later French redaction. His focus on the shift from "je" to "il" glosses over the prominence of "nous" and "vous" in the latter portion of the French text. See *Marco Polo's Le Devisement du monde*, 60-61.

The increased frequency of motion verbs encourages textual travel and confirms that these types of passages go beyond simply transferring facts. Inviting us to focus on the organizer Rustichello, the previously cited account of the discovery of Cyangly introduces the verb "partirons" to identify a departure distinctive from Marco Polo's physical progression from one geographical region to another. The subsequent verb, "conterons," confirms the textual nature of this movement and points to Rustichello, the organizer, as its agent. Rustichello now joins Polo in the exploration and description of another city. Such delicate syntactical choices inevitably infuse reading and writing with the movement of the travel experience, allowing Rustichello's textual travel to replace Marco Polo's actual journey.

The increasing inaccessibility of Marco Polo's travels thus leads to the substitution of geographical travel with textual travel. Rustichello reaffirms his influence as an organizer when he detours from the subject of Polo's past travels to include vivid accounts of battle. Such episodes show the pervasive influence of Arthurian romance in the *Devisement*, Rustichello's preferred genre.[22] Above all, these digressions foster awareness of Rustichello's mediation and the gradual fading of the Polo experience. The account of the clash between the Khan's army and the forces of the treacherous baron Liycan Sangon provides an example of this distancing effect while continuing to rely on motion verbs. The hasty conclusion of the conflict inserts movement into the transition from the battle scene to another regional description, all of which the organizer now references as textual matter or "matiere": "Or nous partirons de ceste matiere puis que nous le vous avons contee, et vous conterons d'une autre contree qui est vers midi, qui a

[22] Rustichello also wrote Arthurian romance. See Fabrizio Cigni's edition, *Il romanzo arturiano di Rustichello da Pisa*.

non Singuy" (Polo 4: 103). The first person plural form of "partirons" includes Rustichello as a participant in the journey, but as a narrated experience instead of actual travel. Their journey is of a textual nature, as confirmed by the strategic replacement of a geographical departure point with "ceste matiere." The repetition of the verb "conter" in its past and future forms—"avons contee" and "conterons"—reveals the boundaries of the narrative that stretch backwards and forwards in textual terms.

As Marco Polo's travels take him deeper into remote territories, the narrative itself proposes an alternative textual route. Take as an example the description of Fuguy, one of the far-off regions of Mangy. Here, the narrative implies a dead-end in Polo's actual travels and proposes to reroute us by moving on to other tales: "Et autre chose n'i a qui face a ramentevoir. Si nous en irons avant pour vous conter des autres choses" (Polo 5: 129). The narrative rhetorically equates the lack of information about distant geographical locations with the halting of Polo's travels. The motion verb "irons," combined with the adverb "avant," replaces Polo's stalled travels with a narrative that presses forward. More than ever, the mobile narrative text replaces the incomplete and stagnant past history. Rustichello leads the way to discover new marvels when the presumed traveler reaches his limit.

The distinction between geographic travel and textual travel culminates when Marco Polo crosses into India.[23] In this region that marks the farthest corners of the globe from a western medieval perspective, we expect emphasis to be placed on the incredible distance that Polo traveled. Instead, the narrative reserves motion verbs to articulate textual transitions, as expressed in this first account of the passage into India:

[23] For a complete analysis of the content of Marco Polo's journey through India, see Ananda Abeydeer, "Le voyage de Marco Polo dans le pays de bouddhisme."

". . . [n]ous commencerons a entrer en Ynde por vous conter toutes les merveilles y sont" (Polo 6: 1). This passage contains one verb of motion, "entrer," which complements a verb of organization, "commencerons." The connection between these two terms situates movement at the level of the narrative, confirmed by the following verb "conter." This transitional passage therefore marks the shift between the actual entrance to India and the account of that experience. Rustichello is associated with both actions, as he implicates himself as Marco Polo's travel companion—"nous commencerons a entrer"—and then as his reader's guide—"por vous conter," thereby, yet again, identifying future movement with the textual account.

The continued coupling of verbs of motion and organization in the final narrative transitions suggests that the textual travel established upon entering India guides continues through the rest of the account. The pace of these transitions quickens with the descriptions of the various Indian islands that Marco Polo visits. Some particularly vivid instances create textual geographies. Consider the passage moving from the account of merchant ships on the Indian Ocean to the description of the island of Sypangy: "Si nous en partirons et vous conterons des autres ille qui sont en ceste mer la ou nous sommes ores" (Polo 6: 3). As in previous examples, the motion verb "partirons" does not denote the actual travel experience but progression through text. Rustichello confirms the shift in meaning with the verb that he has come to associate with narration, "conterons." The final words of this passage, "la ou nous sommes ores," uncharacteristically draw attention to the written word as geographical space. Here, the "nous" includes the in the travel experience, a point further emphasized by the deictic term "la," which refers to a place in the intricate geographical web of the narrative text.

Rustichello anchors himself in the very ordering of the text and while the narrative continues to press forward, it also repeatedly leaves past physical travel behind. Some instances, as in this account of the island of Sypangy, show a remarkable effort to downplay physical travel in favor of the movement of the narrative. The organizer digresses from Polo's travel again to add a flourish of epic romance, reporting how the Khan's men conquer the great city of the island. This detour sets the narrative in motion relative to the actual sequence of events, and verbs of motion doubly reinforce the textual quality of movement: "Or vous lairons atant a conter de ce fait et retournerons a nostre matiere pour aler avant" (Polo 6: 8). Two verbs of motion, "retournerons" and "aler," identify the narrative, "nostre matiere," as the site of real activity and movement. Furthermore, Rustichello moves immediately from this narrative diversion, "ce fait," to the next episode without any concluding remarks on Polo's personal experience in the region. The organizer progresses along an alternate textual path, gradually losing contact with Marco Polo.

Insistence on the limit of the traveler's field of vision represents another strategy to distance the displaced traveler. Marco Polo does not see everything nor does he go everywhere, which also has the effect of stalling his experience even when the narrative moves on. We see this in the testimony of Sypangy and the various idolaters who live there, where the articulation of the organizer's return to the well-established itinerary is more perceptible than the actual travel that occurred:

> Or nous partirons de ceste contree, plus que ne vous en conterons ne des ylles, pour ce que trop sont desvoiables lieus, et pour ce aussi que le dit mesire Marc Pol n'i fu pas. Si vous di que le Grant Caan n'a que faire a eulz, ne ne li rendent

> nul treuage ne riens ne font pour lui. Et pour ce nous en retournerons nous a çayton et d'iluec recommencerons encore nostre livre. (Polo 6: 11)

The foreignness of the region finds its expression in the hasty departure of the narrative and the refusal to describe "desvoiables lieus," places where one can easily stray away from the organized itinerary. The absence of information interrupts Polo's physical travel, but the narrative itself nevertheless continues. We leave the country—"partirons"—return to Cayton—"retournons"—and begin again—"recommencerons."

Rustichello explains that the missing information about Spangy is due to the fact that Marco Polo did not actually go to all of the islands—"Marc Pol n'i fu pas"—and therefore could not provide a comprehensive account. The organizer's reliance on the Polo's experience in this instance problematizes Rustichello's efforts to replace fully the traveler and reveals his dependence as organizer on the witness. These roles, which Barthes had previously developed independently from one another, engage in constant interplay in the *Devisement* so that we are aware of the challenging process of mediating distant travel for a textual record. At the conclusion of the *Devisement*, our textual journey stalls because "Marc Pol n'i fu pas." Without Polo's guiding presence, we must start the book again: this time with the participation of an informative witness.

"Celui meismes de qui notre livre parle": Marco Polo as Distant Witness

While references to the organization and the execution of the written text bring Rustichello into sharper focus, Marco Polo's particular presence as a subject experiencing far-off travel leads to a different outcome. Constantly informing the narrative without ever taking over as the dominant voice, Polo acquires the role of the witness, analogous to the shifter of listening that Barthes elaborates in his examination of historical writing:

"Ce shifter désigne donc toute mention des sources, des témoignages, toute référence à une *écoute* de l'historien, recueillant un *ailleurs* de son discours et le disant" (66). Distant information, as I have shown, can have the unexpected and overlooked effect of progressively distancing the traveller, which I associate with Barthes's "shifter of listening." Polo collects knowledge in two fashions: he witnesses firsthand events and marvels, and he obtains secondhand information from other witnesses or documents. These two types of information, while distinctive in terms of establishing Polo's proximity to recorded facts, signal a remote past that precedes both the narration and even the Venetian's own travels.

The divide between present subject and the past object persists even to the far reaches of the Great Khan's eastern dominion. Even though this point of the history largely consists of encyclopedic entries of foreign regions, the narrative nevertheless continues to recall Marco Polo's narrative function in the context of his duties as the Khan's ambassador and messenger. For three years, Polo resided in Yangzhou, a great city in a far-off Chinese province, where he gathered extensive information for the Great Khan. This experience qualifies him as a witness to distant regions and direct mention of him figures in the description of the city: "Et si vous di que le dit messire Marc Pol, celui meismes de qui nostre livre parle, sejourna en ceste cité de Ianguy .III. ans acomplis par le commandement du Grant Kaan" (Polo 5:102). The book speaks in the present about the past travels of "messire Marc Pol," whose very title recalls his prior objectification in the opening chapters of the narrative. Here again the third person reference to Marco Polo relegates him to a past that recedes as he enters increasingly distant regions.

In other instances, the narrative elaborates on the witness's role in collecting information beyond his immediate experience. These descriptions call attention to the distant sources of information that Polo consults and the continued transmission of information through Rustichello: "Et pour ce, metrons nous les choses veues pour veues, et l'entendue pour entendue, a ce que nostre livre soit vrais et veritables sanz nule mençonge" (Polo 1:117). While drawing on truth conventions typical in travel histories, this passage fails to collapse time between the moment of travel and that of recounting. Instead, it maintains the vast distance between the layers of narrative text, which is attributed to organizer and witness, "—nostre livre—," Marco Polo's own observations, "—les choses veues—," and secondhand sources that provide him with additional information "—l'entendue—".[24] These distinct stages represent points in the progression of Polo's past travel to the current mediated account, creating a marked division between geographic and textual travel.

Marco Polo's service to the Great Khan, for whom he gathers information, mirrors his role as witness in the narrative of the *Devisement*. As the Khan's vassal, Marco traveled across the vast Mongolian territories in order to accumulate accounts of wondrous marvels for the ruler of the realm, just as he will later bring an account of his journey to the writer of the *Devisement* and its audience.

> Quant Marc fu retournez de son message, si s'en ala devant le Seigneur et li conta tout l'afaire pour quoi il estoit alez, et moult y avoit bien achevé toute sa besoingne. Puis li conta toutes les nouveles et toutes les estranges choses que il

[24] Valeria Bertolucci-Pizzorusso identifies the same word choice in the Franco-Italian translation, but posits that it represents "le souci de véridicité". "Pour commencer à raconter le voyage," 121.

> avoit veu et seu, bien et saigement, si que le Seigneur et touz ceulz qui l'oïrent le tindrent a merveilles . . . (Polo 1:130)

There is a striking similarity between the syntax earlier in the prologue, where Marco Polo reports "les choses veues" and "l'entendue," and the way the narrative recounts Polo's performance as a messenger. He gives an account of "les estranges choses que il avoit veu et seu" directly to the Great Khan who thirsts for knowledge about unknown wonders. The overlapping of Polo's roles in the story and the production of the written narrative affirms his position as witness and articulates the narrative layers that make up the travel history. Polo's exceptional nature transforms him into a wondrous object for Rustichello's audience, but also for his first eastern listeners who "le tindrent a merveilles." Marco Polo's wondrous qualities not only point to his remarkable cultural adaptability, as Sharon Kinoshita has suggested (71), but also to his status as a marvelous, far-off object of wonder for his public.

The explanation of the creative motivation behind the *Devisement* in the prologue further underscores the separation between narrative discourse, eyewitness observation, and secondhand sources. This description, while showing Marco Polo's involvement in the book's redaction, nevertheless points to his displacement from the narrating voice. Polo does not write the account, nor does he speak through it—at best he joins with Rustichello to produce "nostre livre." He confers writing to another: "pensa que ce seroit granz maus se ce ne feist metre en escrit ce que il avoit veu et oÿ par verité" (Polo 1:118). Polo is the observant, inquisitive witness who passes along what he saw firsthand, "ce que il avoit veu," and what he learned from other people, "oÿ par verité." This passage more clearly associates temporalities with the agents of the history. Rustichello writes

the book in the present, Polo's eyewitness experiences remain in the past, and information he learned from others is transmitted via the organizer to the audience. This emphasis on time sequence creates a distancing effect, where the narrative presses forward as past travel moves backwards into an increasingly protracted history.

The organizer heightens this distance when he insists on Polo's difficulty in obtaining secondary information. For the witness, the gathering of knowledge is not always a matter of simply listening to others' testimony. He must also reach out to others to unlock guarded facts that remain unknown to much of the region's general public. For instance, Polo notices the large number of ships travelling through the city of Singuy and speaks with informed inhabitants to uncover a secret dealing with mercantile traffic: "Et selonc ce que le dit messire Marc Polo raconta, il oÿ de ceulz qui tiennent la seccrete pour leur seigneur en ceste cité, qui li conterent par verité, que plus de [.CC.] nez y passent [chascun an] . . . " (Polo 5: 108). The information that Polo reveals to the redactor of the *Devisement* is not only hearsay but also classified. The necessity of Polo's active retrieval of these secret facts suggests their location in a secure, closed-off environment. This quality makes the episode of the merchant ships—"nez"—appear more remote than the facts that Polo recounts after seeing them firsthand. The perceived distance from the trading vessels, in addition to their extraordinary number, is what makes the account a "grant fait"—a distant marvel that remains elusive.

The change in the form of secondhand accounts reflects continued concern with the potential inaccessibility of information. As marvels become more and more incredible, Marco Polo relies on written accounts instead of the oral testimony of trustworthy men. He only comprehends the immense wealth of the distant Chinese

province of Mangy when he consults the written record of the region's income—not once, but several times:

> Si que toutes ces rentes montent un si desmesuré nombre de monnoie que ce est une impossible chose a oïr, . . . Et pour ce que vous en sachiez le nombre, je vous di que messire Marc Pol, qui tout ce raconta, dit par verité que il y fu par plusieux fois pour veoir la raison de la rente de l'année . . . (Polo 5: 122-123)

The unbelievable amount of money that the region takes in accentuates the difficulty the witness has in conveying extraordinary information from far afield. This challenge becomes even more perceptible when we learn that Polo went many times to see the "raison," the written account of the province's annual profits. The past income preserved in this record is the only means Polo has to measure this marvel. This change in source suggests that the gradual distancing from present narration, to past travel, to the remote past of events recorded in secondary sources, increases with cases of incredible facts. This particular example of a written secondary source also implicates books themselves as records of marvels.

The witness's ultimate failure to observe everything firsthand heightens the remoteness of the world he encounters from the narrative that describes it. In these instances, secondhand sources do not supplement the witness's experience, but rather substitute for it. The narrative therefore constructs content as follows: "des que mesires Marc Pol, sajes et nobles sitoiens de Venice, raconte pour ce que il les vit; mais auques il y a choses qu'il ne vit pas, mais il [l'] entendi d'ommes certains par verité" (Polo 1:117). Marco Polo recounts what he witnessed firsthand, but he also relates things that he did not see and only heard from reliable men. Although the detailing of Polo's sources

shows a certain attempt to establish the veracity of the account,[25] the limit placed on his field of vision ultimately denies insight into the world where his journey takes place. The more Marco Polo plays the role of witness, the more his travel experience becomes inaccessible.

The description of Marco Polo's information gathering therefore serves the double purpose of explaining how he obtains facts for his report to the Khan and heightening awareness of the remoteness of these facts. This effect is particularly pronounced when Polo retrieves information about figures already well known in the Latin Christian tradition, where providing sources to establish the truth of the account is perhaps not as crucial as in other, more marvelous and exotic accounts. This occurs in the episode of the miracle of the three Magi, whose tomb resides in Persia and whose mysteries Marco Polo seeks to uncover by interviewing local sages: "Et le dit [messire] Marc Pol demanda moult aus anciens de cele cite de l'estre de ces .III. [Magis], mais il n'en trouva nul qui riens l'en seust dire, mais que tant il estoient .III. roy qui anciennement y furent ensevelis" (Polo 1: 151). Polo's repeated inquiries initially yield no result. His field of vision limits access to information, as discussed before, but what his sources choose to tell him also hinders his observations. The miracle of the three Magi, which we might expect Rustichello to make readily available, instead escapes the informants.

After three days of inquiries, Marco Polo finally locates some idolaters who can tell him about the Magi. This account, which Rustichello presents within the context of Marco's encounter with idol worshippers, sparks a change in perspective that roots the

[25] For more information about rhetoric and its role in establishing the truth of medieval travel accounts, see Michèle Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l'empire mongol*.

three Magi in a foreign territory despite their familiarity to the western audience of the *Devisement* (Kinoshita 76). The narrative attributes the act of recounting to the idolaters and they assume the role of the enunciating subject: "Ainssi le [conterent] cil de celui chastiau au dit messire Marc Pol et li afferment pour verité que ainssi avoit esté . . . " (Polo 1:153). Proximity to the idolaters' account diminishes the effect of the role of the witness, who now only passively receives information instead of actively seeking it out in foreign landscapes. Marco Polo's quest comes to a halt even while the narrative advances to tell us about the miracle of the Magi and the idolaters who have preserved the incredible history.

The narrative re-emphasizes the gap between Polo's physical travel and Rustichello's later written account, which produces a persistent strangeness in the French translation of the *Devisement* (Gaunt, *Marco Polo's* Le Devisement du monde 59-61). However Rustichello incorporates this troubling quality as an aesthetic component of travel writing that makes the test enjoyable. As he explains of the description of India: " . . . et pour ce est bonne chose et pourfitable a meitre en escript en nostre livre a ce que il soit plus biaux et plus estranges; mais ce sont dé choses veritables sanz nulle fable" (Polo 5: 131). By the time Marco Polo reaches India, he has fully metamorphosed into one of the many marvels of the *Devisement* and his book has become as strange as the places to which he ventures. However this is a beautiful strangeness—"plus biaux et plus estranges"—where the awe of incredible marvels, the distance of the actual travel experience, and the dynamism of textual travel are experiences to be savored when reading the *Devisement*.

This narrative analysis of the French courtly tradition of the *Devisement du monde* has traced out the roles of organizer and witness as the principal figures informing the relationship between actual travel and narrating travel. The rhetorical strategies on display, most notably verbs of motion and pronoun variance, reveal an important double narration that reconfigures reading and writing as an adventure. Rustichello da Pisa, a figure often overlooked in Marco Polo studies, instigates this narrative break and pulls the into a textual journey. Travel becomes a uniquely literary experience where shifts in narrative perspective and sequence transform the text into a site of movement. Through experimentation on textual and material levels, the travel book does not remain an object that merely records and preserves past journeys, but rather it emerges as a multivalent object that makes journeys come alive.

Re-contextualizing the Great Khan and his Mongolian Court in London, British Library MS Royal 19 D 1

The courtly French manuscripts of the *Devisement* create a particularly dynamic reading adventure where images of foreign encounters confirm the function of the written artifact as a terrain of discovery. Marco Polo illustrations are only to be found in late medieval French manuscripts and those in London, British Library MS Royal 19 D 1, the earliest French codex, provide a particularly jarring visual journey. Dating from 1333 to 1336, this manuscript was produced by Robert de Montbaston's workshop in Paris as a "crusading miscellany" for Philip VI of Valois on the eve of his intended departure for the crusades.[26] The contents of the manuscript reflect the crusader world for which it was created: *Le Roman d'Alexandre*; Jean de Nevelon's *La venjenge d'Alixandre*, a

[26] Consuelo Dutschke, Mary Rouse and Richard Rouse discuss the patronage and producers in more depth. See C.W. Dutschke "The Truth in the Book," and Richard and Mary Rouse, "Context and Reception: a Crusading Collection for Charles IV of France," *Courtly Arts and the Art of Courtliness,*106-107, and *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, Chapter 9.

continuation of the Alexander romance; Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde*, here described as "Li livres du grant Caam"; Jean de Vignay's French translation of Oderic de Pordenone's *Merveilles de la terre d'outremer*; a French translation of John of Plano Carpini's *Historia mongolorum quos nos tartaros apellamus*; Vignay's French translation of the "Directorium ad faciendum passagium transmarinum," otherwise known as the *Directoire*; selections translated from Primat of Saint Denis's "Chronique," which gives an account of Louis IX's last crusade; and extracts of the *Bible historiale* that describe King David's feats of arms.

The text selection for the compilation reflects the crusader ideology that precipitated the commission and production of the manuscript. Yet it is the illustrations of the Royal Manuscript that definitively relocate the diverse texts of the compendium into a distinctive crusader world. The distancing of Marco Polo and his journey therefore occurs in the text as a result of the narrative shifters, and also in the illustrations that are manipulated to fit in a crusader compendium. The artist, identified as Jeanne de Montbaston,[27] portrays troubling scenes of Holy War across the entire manuscript, absorbing romance, Biblical and travel material into a visual crusader history. Nowhere is this more present than in scenes of the Marco Polo section of the manuscript, entitled "Li livres du Grant Caam." Anticipating Philippe de Valois's planned crusade, the artist transforms Polo's journey of discovery in the East into a narrative of ongoing conflict between Christians and Saracens in the Levant. As a result, the audience frequently encounters the Great Khan as a Saracen king and his subjects as idolaters. The variance of the Polo miniatures with regard to the text raises questions about the relationship

[27] Richard and Mary Rouse identify Jeanne de Montbaston as the primary artist of the Royal Manuscript and her husband, Richard, as the master artist of the workshop. See *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, 244-7.

between the Polo narrative and crusader ideology, as well as how the artist's iconographic choices reflect medieval depictions of the cultural other.

However, as a comparative study of images from other Montbaston codices will make clear, disconcerting illustrations do not reflect the artist's deliberate re-imagining of the Polo narrative. The artist transports Marco Polo's tale to a new historical space that meets the requirements of a manuscript produced for a crusader king. Scenes of courtly activities and rituals also diverge from the Polo text but without explicitly putting crusader ideology on display. Furthermore, the broad cultural associations that the artist unwittingly makes in some miniatures contradict situations in other illustrations. This widespread divergence from text to miniature indicates the artist's ignorance of the text as a whole, corroborating Consuelo Dutshcke's view that "[the miniatures'] presence is determined by a set of rules that have nothing to do with the text at hand; they are commercially, not textually required" ("The Truth in the Book" 292). Bold and disturbing images of Saracens and Christians in battle do not reflect an artistic interpretation of the foreign cultures recorded in the Polo text. In fact, they rarely represent any of the rare marvels that different artists meticulously recreate in other manuscripts of the *Devisement*.[28] In place of detailed images that attempt to reflect the information given in the narrative, the artist reuses generic stock images that reappear in other sections of the Royal Manuscript and also in other contemporaneous Montbaston manuscripts. The striking similarities between the illustrations of Phillippe's crusade book and the Montbastons' production of the most popular illustrated crusade history of

[28] For instance the artists of Bodleian MS 264, which was copied from the Royal Manuscript, paint detailed scenes that reflect events recounted in the narrative. The Duke of Berry's travel book, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 2810 also contains carefully reproduced images that reflect the diversity of the marvels that Marco Polo unearths during his journey.

the thirteenth century (Camille 137), William of Tyre's *Histoire de la terre d'outremer* (1170-1184), attest to the hasty production process that the Royal Manuscript underwent. The miniatures in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 22495 (ca. 1337) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 24209 (ca. 1337), both copies of the *Histoire* produced in the Montbaston atelier, reveal the widespread recycling of certain iconography and compositional layout of *Histoire* image in the Marco Polo's text. The lack of detail in the Royal miniature cycle, particularly as concerns the background (Quigley 76), facilitated the re-appropriation of images that share a general context and similar action. This illustrative tactic removes *Devisement* characters and stories from their distant eastern setting, while introducing new subjects into Polo's historical journey.

Figure 1. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 85r, detail. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f085r

Occasionally, illustrative variance results from the insertion of the Montbaston master's instructional sketches in the margins.[29] These sketches guided Jeanne de Montbaston's choice of scenes to illustrate. Many of these sketches are no longer discernable, but one does appear on fol. 85r where faint outlines of turbaned figures cued the artist to insert familiar Saracen portraits. The

[29] For more on the function of marginal sketches in the Royal Manuscript and in other medieval codices, see Jonathan J. Alexander *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work*, 60-68 .

resulting miniature produces a troubling effect and inadvertently problematizes the cultural identity of the Great Khan. In this scene, where the Khan exacts punishment for his cousin's treacherous deeds, he plays the part of a vengeful Saracen king [Figure 1]. The sovereign, wearing both a regal crown and a distinctive turban, looks on as two other Saracen figures execute a supplicant figure with western physical traits. The Khan's distinctive markers of Saracen identity suggest, according to Simon Gaunt, the artist's discomfort with the cultural ambivalence of the text (*Marco Polo's* Le Devisement du Monde 133). Yet a closer examination of the relationship between image and text in the Royal Manuscript reveals the artist's unfamiliarity with the text rather than a cultural interpretation of it. In the narrative, we learn how the Khan's disloyal cousin, Naian, is smothered in a rug because it is against Mongolian custom to spill royal blood—an important detail that the artist openly ignores in the portrayal of a bloody and gruesome execution.

Figure 2. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 107 r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f107r

The artist skips over the details surrounding other penalties that the Khan inflicts on his rebellious subjects, transforming a textual narration of due punishment into a vision of Saracen terror. The miniature on fol. 107r [Figure 2] shows two western figures suffering a violent death at the hands of two turbaned figures, while the Saracen king wields a sword and points to the prisoners in a gesture of condemnation. This image refers to the episode of the rebellion at Candifu, a region under Mongolian rule. In the text, Rustichello repeatedly insists that the Khan spares the life of many of the insurgents, but the artist does not depict such clemency. Instead, drawing on the broad themes of other crusader histories, the artist generates stereotyped images of supplicant Christians enduring Saracen retribution. The Montbaston workshop produced an analogous image for the frontispiece to the second section of the *Histoire de la terre d'outremer* in BnF MS fr. 22495 [Figure 3]. The impressive sexpartite illustration contains one panel that reiterates the violence of the aforementioned execution scenes in the Royal Manuscript. Although the composition

Figure 3. BnF MS fr. 22495 fol. 9r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f22.image.r=22495.langEN

of the scene changes where the executioners stand behind the prisoner instead of beside him, the physical characteristics of the figures and their gestures remain unchanged. The crowned king stands to the left side and points to the condemned western prisoner. Two turbaned figures stand behind the kneeling European: one holds the prisoner's arms in place while the other raises his sword. The similarity of the scenes indicates how the artist lifted the visual vocabulary of this crusader history and employed it in the Polo section of the Royal Manuscript, transforming specific cultural practices and historical events into stereotyped scenes of bloody beheadings. This discrepancy between text and image attests to the re-contextualization of the Polo account where the audience now anticipates scenes of gruesome conflict rather than the discovery of unknown marvels.

Moreover, the beheading scene in the *Histoire* includes a golden idol, a sign that many medieval artists of crusade chronicles used "to understand their enemies [and concretize] them in terms of the conventions of pagan idolatry" (Camille 140). The inclusion of the idol in this miniature therefore reasserts the position of the figures as Saracen adversaries within a crusader discourse. The Montbaston artist inserts the prominent golden idol into the Polo section of the Royal Manuscript on two distinct occasions: first to portray the city of Campisio [Figure 4], and then on the following miniature to portray the God of the Tartars [Figure 5]. The use of the idol in the first instance inserts the scene into a crusader context by associating the people of Campisio with the Saracen enemy, even though the text following the miniature expressly describes the Campisio inhabitants as "ydles et sarrazins et crestien." The effacement of diversity in the portrayals of eastern people continues when a similar golden idol, perched atop a two-tier pedestal, reappears in the description of the Tartars' religion. The Polo narrative

Figure 4. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 76r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f076r

Figure 5. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 78v, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f078v

distinguishes between these two groups, where the relatively tolerant Tartars rule over a culturally and religiously diverse region, yet the artist reduces both groups to the role of Saracen enemy. Having illustrated the iconic idol on other occasions, exemplified by the execution scene in BnF 22495, the Montbaston artist fosters a sense of displacement from a textual account of diversity to a visual binary rendering of Saracens and Christians.

Figure 6. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 77v, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f077v

The artist's conflation of Mongolian and Saracen identity continues in prominent battle scenes, which at first appear to confirm the view that the artist purposefully assigned the Great Khan and his subjects Saracen affiliations. The miniature of the skirmish between the Khan and Prester John [Figure 6], an eastern Christian ruler well-known to medieval audiences, associates the Khan with the Saracen figures pitted against the western, Christian forces of Prester John. Although this rendering reinforces the Khan's identity as conveyed in images of capital punishment and idol worshipping, other scenes of Christian and Saracen conflict expose a remarkable inconsistency in the Khan's cultural affiliations. For example, the miniature on folio 103r [Figure 7] portrays a

Figure 7. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 103r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f103r

Figure 8. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 189v, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f189v

Crusader force riding out against a Saracen army, easily identifiable by the figures' skin tone, turbans, scimitars, and the crescent-shaped design on the armor. Lieselotte Saurma-Jeltsch identifies the insurgents of Mien, the antagonists of the narrative, with Saracen soldiers, and the Christian army with the Khan and his forces (60-61). The depiction of the Khan as a Christian hero in battle stands in contrast to the vengeful Saracen Khan that appears in the illustration of Naian's execution. The insertion of the Mongolian ruler into this crusader context unintentionally places him on both sides of an imagined conflict.

The role of the production process in the visual displacement of the Great Khan into a crusading world of the Levant becomes more prominent when examining Montbaston images outside of the Polo material. For instance, the scene of the rebellion at Mien forms part of a visual narrative in the Royal Manuscript that retells the numerous battles in the struggle for control over the Holy Land. The likeness of the Mien illustration to the last miniature of the *Directoire* (fol. 189v) [Figure 8], a travel guide for crusader armies inserted toward the end of the compendium, further intertwines the Polo narrative with these turbulent events. In both miniatures, the artist places the Saracen army, wearing turbans and armor decorated with crescents, on the right side of the composition and the Christian knights, with light skin and traditional armor, on the left side. The similarity in iconography and organization of the composition creates a seamless visual crusader narrative despite the diversity of texts within the manuscript. While the specifically exploratory nature of the Polo journey does not correspond to crusading, both the Mien and crusade battles share a common general context of violence and conflict. The artist, unfamiliar with the relatively new Polo text and under pressure to produce quickly the manuscript, relocated the Khan's victorious combat into a crusade

Figure 9. Bnf MS fr. 22495, fol. 19r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f42.image.r=22495.langEN

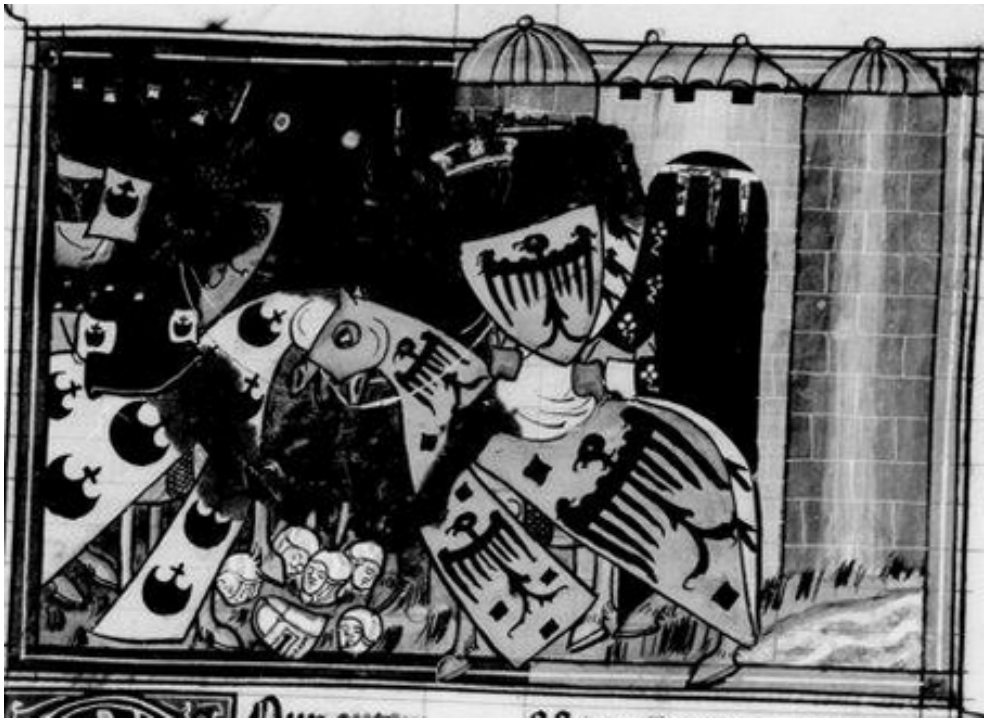

Figure 10. Bnf MS fr. 22495, fol. 23r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f50.image.r=22495.langEN

Figure 11. Bnf MS fr. 22459, fol. 147 v, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f299.image.r=22495.langEN

campaign reminiscent of other works in the Montbaston corpus. The same iconography and compositional layout characterizes battle scenes in BnF MS fr. 22495 [Figures 9-11], a manuscript of the *Histoire d'outre mer*. The illustrations that accompany this historical account of Levantine colonies reveal the pervading influence of crusader history illustrations in a workshop that was frequently called on to reproduce the visual vocabulary associated with crusader ideology. This artistic strategy allowed illustrators to work at top speeds and invited medieval audiences to reimagine Marco Polo's journey in the new, provocative setting of a long-established western crusading tradition. Important to this study is the function of the *Devisement* as a narrative that now guides audiences to move across Alexander romance, Oderic of Pordenone's travel account, and finally to the crusade material at the end of the manuscript. Together with the *Devisement*, these works patch together a new itinerary that leads to the Levant.

If battle scenes lead viewers to distant, violent places, then the portrayal of courtly activities brings audiences to a present, more familiar realm. Scenes of conflict, because they involve the binary positioning of one army against another, call particular attention to the jarring representation of the Mongolian ruler. However scenes of courtly activity also contain images that uproot the Polo narrative from the eastward journey and, as a result, place traveling and conquering subjects into the context of European courts. The first illustration of the Polo account in the Royal Manuscript, designed to accompany the textual description of the two golden tablets that the Khan gives to Marco's father and uncle, greatly deviates from the narrative [Figure 12]. Instead of depicting the merchant

Figure 12. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 59v, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f059v

Figure13. BnF MS fr. 24209, fol. 32r, detail. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90639623/f39.image.r=22495.langEN

brothers in receipt of the Khan's golden tablets, the artist portrays two Franciscan friars in front of a large golden table. On one level, this comical error results from the semantic confusion of the cues in the text directly above the rubric, "les freres," and in the rubric itself, "la table d'or," where the Montbaston artist looked for illustration instructions (Dutschke, "The Truth in the Book" 292). The mistake undoubtedly resulted from the artist's ignorance of the Polo text, but it is equally a product of the artist's intimate familiarity with other illustrations of religious orders and their activities at court. Knowledge of analogous scenes, such as the one on fol. 32r of BnF MS fr. 24209 [Figure 13], prompted the artist to use a more formulaic composition that fails to capture the particularities of the narrative and ultimately renders the Polos' exceptional experience inaccessible to viewers. The recurrence of the compositional layout and the iconography of this image, which includes hand gestures, hairstyle, and the drape and style of the clothing, provides more evidence of the artist's strategy for illustrating the Royal Manuscript. The portrayal of Oderic de Pordenone, accompanied by an entourage of Franciscan and Dominican friars [Figure 14], mirrors the image of the Polo brothers and their encounter with the Great Khan. The illustrative process of the Royal Manuscript, where the artist repeatedly uses generic

images, thus has the effect of associating the Polo journey with missionaries' experiences in the Levant and beyond.

Figure 14. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 136r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f136r

Coronations, arguably the most well known courtly ritual, also present the opportunity to copy iconography across different manuscripts. For the Montbaston artist working on the Royal Manuscript, this iconography involves the central placement of the new sovereign, who sits on a bench and makes a sign of benevolence. Courtly officers and bishops adorned with miters surround him and delicately place a golden crown on his fair head. This scene recreates a European coronation, though it is the image that the artist inserts to portray the Mongolian coronation of the Khan's son Mangalai [Figure 15]. Some scholars have argued that the Khan's western physical attributes represent the artist's attempt to assimilate the eastern ruler for a Euopean audience (Ross 68).

Figure 15. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 97r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f097r

Figure 16. British Library Royal MS 19 D 1, fol. 7r, detail.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_19_d_i_f07r

Figure 17. BnF MS fr. 24202, fol. 94r, detail. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90639623/f104.image.r=22495.langEN

Although this may be the effect of the image, an overview of other Montbaston coronation scenes points instead to the artist's widespread reuse of a generic coronation scene regardless of the specific context of the narrated event it accompanies. The miniature of Alexander's coronation from the *Roman d'Alexandre* [Figure 16], the text that precedes the Polo account in the Royal Manuscript, exhibits the same characteristics as Mangalai's coronation scene. The repetition of this image to portray both Mangalai and Alexander, who was often praised as the ideal sovereign in medieval Europe, pulls the foreign Mongolian ceremony into a wider western tradition that also took place in the Levantine colonies. Coronation scenes reoccur in the two Montbaston *Histoire* manuscripts and the miniature on fol. 94r of BnF MS fr. 24202 [Figure 17] bears a particularly close resemblance to the Royal coronation scenes. Here, the artist paints a young monarch seated between two mitered bishops, who place a crown on his golden head. BnF MS fr. 22495 contains similar images [Figures 18 and 19], though with more angular lines and without the prominent bishop's miter. The uniform treatment of all these coronation scenes clarifies how the artist of the Royal Manuscript worked, drawing from stock images rather than from specific examples found in the narrative text. The result of these methods divorces text from image and relocates the Mongolian court into a European world marked by courtly rituals.

Figure 18. BnF MS fr. 22495, fol. 121v, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f247.image.r=22495.langEN

Figure 19. BnF MS fr. 22495, fol. 113r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062228b/f288.image.r=22495.langEN

Images of conflict and court in the Marco Polo section of the Royal Manuscript thus represent two illustrative themes where the artist unknowingly shifts the travel context from an unknown eastern region of discovery to the site of Christian conquest in the Levant, preserved in a crusade chronicle repeatedly illustrated in the Montbaston workshop. In retracing a visual network between London, British Library Royal MS 19 D 1; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 24209; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 22495, this study has shown how the methods of production and the destination of the book dramatically altered the quality of the miniatures and their relationship to the narrative text. This is not to say that the generalized images of the Royal Manuscript do not reflect certain cultural conceptions of the Middle Ages. These stereotyped images reflect a general interpretation of the context of events rather than the artist's understanding of the text. The artist, ignoring the particularities of the Polo narrative, reused images common to the Montbaston atelier in order to quickly produce a luxurious manuscript for a crusader king, who undoubtedly planned to take his book with him on his journey. The widespread inclusion of scenes that depict conflict between Saracens and Christians, as well as courtly rituals that took place in Levantine colonies, anticipate future conquest and re-colonization, while having the distinct effect of relocating Marco Polo's adventure to a crusade world.

* * *

The repetition of generic images in the Royal Manuscript thus mirrors the textual displacement of the traveling witness in the *Devisement*, such that both text and image subvert Marco Polo's actual journey of discovery through unknown, eastern lands. Vibrant images of foreign landscapes, in addition to the textual travel fostered by

Rustichello da Pisa, assert the role of the book in producing a distinct travel experience. Other writers and bookmakers later experiment with the relationship between reading and writing, as established by the French Marco Polo tradition. The following chapters will consider two works, Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* and Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn," each of which has been widely associated with history writing. Yet with the *Devisement du monde*, celebrated as the first travel narrative, they also share in common the assigned role of travel as a dominant preoccupation that ultimately translates into textual and visual experimentation.

Chapter Two: The Well-Traveled Text: Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre*

In the previous chapter, we saw how manipulations of narrative voice and illustrations place Marco Polo's geographical travel in different spatial and temporal contexts, ultimately distancing his eastward journey. Through Rustichello da Pisa's narrative games, textual travel supplants the actual journey. The illustrations of the earliest French manuscript further displace Polo's journey by distancing Polo from the court of the Great Khan and the marvels of the East to relocate him within a crusader tradition that speaks to contemporary interests. Turning to Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* (1371) will allow us to investigate a different form of displacement that draws attention to the space between the poet and his historical subject: Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus (1328-1369) and the leader of the crusade to Alexandria (1365). The narrative interventions that characterize this crusader travel history represent practices in verse romance that, when used in historical narration, have the effect of distancing the poet from the story.

The effect of this strategy resonates with the Marco Polo text to the extent that both travel histories emphasize the distinction between lived experiences and their written record. Whereas, in the *Devisement du monde*, Rustichello called attention to his distance from Marco Polo's journey to highlight the adventure of writing about the Polo travels, the frequent narrative interventions create awareness of the spatial distance between themselves and the related historical events. The manuscripts of the *Prise* also evoke distance from the crusade history by recalling a different lived experience—that of the mobility of the material artifact itself. Similar to the effect produced by the earliest manuscript of the *Devisement*, where artistic manipulations reroute viewers to a crusade

world marked by violence, the *Prise* manuscript replaces geographical travel with the reading experience. Spatial displacement in the narrative and material displacement in the manuscript are unintentional results of the writing and bookmaking process, but nevertheless both text and manuscript create a distancing effect.

"Que je ne say pas nomer": the Distancing Effect of Historical Verse

La Prise, Guillaume de Machaut's last *Dit*, has played a vital role in medieval history studies as a rare source for Pierre de Lusignan's late crusade campaign in Alexandria. Although the patron of the text remains unknown, scholars generally support the view that Machaut wrote the *Prise* in order pay homage to Pierre, whose untimely death captured the attention of other celebrated medieval writers. In the past, historical interest in the work overshadowed its rich literary qualities, which have only recently attracted the attention of literary scholars. The allegorical description of Pierre's birth at the beginning of the text, as well as hagiographical and biographical thematic influences, have come to the forefront of these literary studies. These avenues of inquiry have generally led to the conclusion that Machaut intended to express great admiration for Pierre, whom he considered as the ideal, western crusader king.[30]

However, more recent narrative studies of the *Prise* have challenged these interpretations by calling attention to the stark difference between what the poet recounts and how he recounts it. The innovative verse form of the chronicle in particular has fueled extensive conversation about how poetic structures shape the perceived objectivity of the historical account. Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay remark that, generally

[30] For instance, Angela Hurworth states that the *Prise* functions as a monument to Pierre's glory (108), William Calin argues that "Guillaume de Machaut displays the most intense personal admiration for his protagonist" (213), and R. Barton Palmer suggests that Machaut is partial to his subject ("Introduction," 28).

speaking, verse challenges readers to think through the meaning of events instead of simply presenting facts to be ingested. They state that "the presence of verse conjures an absent meaning, a 'truth' about history that is not be equated with factual detail because it is located not in external reality but in (not necessarily explicit or even conscious) subjective processes of reflection, sentiment, commitment, or memory" (*Knowing Poetry* 60). Reflecting these observations, the verse narrative of the *Prise* does not present a straightforward account of events, but rather it invites readers to grapple with highly complex political situations and contentious historical figures.[31] More specifically, the poetic form marks a division between a geographically distant history and literary creation, creating an in-between space where the reader is expected to engage in the interpretive process. In her study of the *Prise*, Zrinka Stahuljak states that " . . . it can be argued that verse, as an ancient form, served to distance the immediacy of events and facilitated the engagement with controversial and disputed facts . . . " (279). If Machaut chose Pierre as his subject in order to discuss a diverse set of issues related to kingship,[32] then the particular form of the *Prise* only encouraged a closer, interpretative reading of the Cypriot king and the political questions that arose as a result of his turbulent and disputed reign.

Verse, a popular form for romance material, reflects the merging of fictional and factual modes of writing in the *Prise* that ultimately destabilizes the narrative. The narrative interventions, because they draw attention to the verse form and recall his

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[31] It is important to remember that in reality, Pierre was a controversial figure. His nephew, who had the support of Parisian and Neapolitan royal courts, disputed his claim to the Cypriot throne. Pierre's crusade was largely an effort to legitimize his rule and it did not receive support everywhere. For more information, see Peter Edbury "Machaut, Mézières, Makhairas and the Amadi," 353-354.

[32] For more information about issues about medieval kingship, see Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 94.

absence from related historical events, distinguish between actual experiences and the poetic craft that records them. Though these interventions result from Machaut's mixing of verse traditions and history writing, they do not reflect the author's intention as we saw earlier with the example of Rustichello and his involvement in the *Devisement*. Rather, we should see these interventions as a result of recording historical journeys in a poetic form that introduces hesitation into the reception of the account. Instead of giving "an impression of historical accuracy" (Calin 207), the poet's assertion of his own viewpoint creates an impression of historical distance by separating him from the story and locating him in the later narrative enunciation. The speaking subject of the *Prise*, though informative, is nevertheless more reminiscent of the distant, observing subject of Machaut's *Jugement* poems than a narrating eyewitness who, as we shall see later in Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn," participates in the story to be recounted. The poet reinforces his remoteness in the *Prise* across three distinct strategies: by dislocating himself from the usual position of the speaking subject in impersonal expressions to spotlight his absence from crusading action; by declaring his uncertainty and unfamiliarity with the details of Pierre's quest, which pulls the poet out of the historical moment; and when assuming the "je" of the text, he adopts the role of listener rather than speaker when referring to unspecified secondhand witnesses. The effect of these strategies distances both the poet and his sources from lived history.

As concerns the poet's distancing from the position of speaking subject, Machaut frequently depends on impersonal expressions that point to speculation and uncertainty. Key examples of these expressions used in the *Prise* include "ce mest avis" and "ce me samble," which linguistically rearrange the expected order of the speaking subject and the

verb to distance the speaking "je" from the action. This change in ordering reflects the "contorsion stylistique" that characterizes linguistic dislocation (Pagani-Naudet 7), or the change in grammatical function of the subject, but also the poetic form of the account. The manipulation of the word order in these expressions generally involves the relocation of the verb to the end of the verse in order to complete an end rhyme. The effect of these verse fillers is to emphasize the written poetic form as a way to create rhyme and rhythm, rather than implicating Machaut in the history that he recounts. This distinction further draws attention to the poetic form of the account, thereby underscoring the subjective, mediating lens through which we read about Pierre of Lusignan's trials and tribulations.

This type of poetic expression appears in the first of Pierre's voyages detailed in the *Prise*, a definitive episode that establishes Pierre as a crusader king and exposes the first anagram where Machaut first alludes to his subject. The account of a young nobleman's journey to a devotional site at Famagusta and his inspired decision to embark on a crusade gives shape to the subject by rooting it in its geographical origin: Cyprus. The description of this voyage thus plays an important narrative role in the gradual unveiling of Pierre and the geography of his voyage, from which the poet is markedly absent:

> mais il y avoit bien maniere
> car ce nest pas chose legiere
> de mettre fin sit tres grant oeuvre
> et pour ce faut il bien quil oeuvre
> sagement et de grant avis

et par conseil ce mest avis (333-338)[33]

The poet asserts the magnitude of Pierre's actions in describing his "grant oeuvre" that was planned "sagement" and "par conseil." This assertion presents a similar strategy to the organizing tactics of Rustichello to the extent that he also emphasizes distance from events. In the *Prise*, the poet casts judgment on this early adventure in exclaiming that "ce nest pas chose legiere," yet the enunciation of the speaking "je" is embedded in the second end rhyme, "ce mest avis." In this last sentence, the subject functions as a poetic element, determining the form of the account rather than participating in the journey that it describes. This sets the subject of the *Prise* apart from Rustichello in the *Devisement*, who creates a textual adventure, and Froissart in the "Voyage en Béarn," where the chronicler engages with and continually reflects on the experience of travel, whether literary or geographical in nature. The repetition of impersonal expressions, including "ce faut il bien [que]" and "ce mest avis," also complicates the poet's position relative to the experiences that he relates. The replacement of the enunciating "je" with the impersonal "ce" elucidates the poet's view on Pierre's early adventure, but nevertheless creates a spatial gap between the historical event and the present enunciation.

The juxtaposition of these types of impersonal expressions against the more active speaking "je," especially in the sequence where the poet describes the symbolic meaning of Pierre's sword, highlights the poet's distance from the particular events of Pierre's crusade but also his familiarity with broader crusader traditions. Experimentation with active and passive narrative modes generates a distancing effect and creates suspense with regard to the outcome of the campaign in Alexandria. First, the poet maintains an active role in throughout his portrayal of the sword: "et vesci lordre et la devise" (355),

[33] All citations are from R. Barton Palmer's edition.

"je ne te celerai point" (387), "diray la signe fiance" (401), and "le vueil prouver" (443). The speaking "je" guides this sequence, giving the impression of familiarity with the customs of crusader knights. He interprets facts as opposed to witnessing firsthand events. When it comes to the outcome of the crusaders' endeavors, the poet takes on a very different position. He states: "par lespee gloire et acquiert/ honneur et profit tout ensamble/ et bon memoire ce me samble" (480-482). "Ce me samble," an impersonal expression that removes the subject from the position of the first-person speaker, provides a striking contrast to the previous declarative sentence, "je ne te celerai point." This linguistic shift, where the manipulation of the interventions fits a rhyme scheme, distinguishes between poetic form and the actual events of the crusade. The insertion of the poet's opinion bolsters this effect and, in creating a distinct space between history and narration, reflects on the outcome of crusade ventures.

Impersonal expressions persist in the description of the unfolding of events, including those of utmost importance to the success of the campaign. One critical aspect of the crusade venture is the financial support necessary to gather troops, arm them and sustain them for a prolonged period of time. The poet devotes much energy to this topic, perhaps because it had been a determining factor in the success of prior crusades. Although we learn significant details about financial negotiations, the poetic form nevertheless detaches the poet from these critical events. The impersonal expression "ce mest avis," which again serves as a line fill, removes the poet from Venice, where the Cypriot crusaders negotiate for funds, ships and supplies:

pour ce que moult de gent faudra
passer quant la saison vendra

que ceus qui sont en dieu creans
passeront sus les mescreans
si demanderent jour davis
. .i. jour ou .ii. ce mest avis (1561-1566)

In the description of the proceedings with the Venetians, the inclusion of references to time, "la saison" and "jour," brings new focus onto the duration and chronology of the events. Yet when the poet intervenes to give us the precise timeframe of the negotiations, he equivocates—".i. jour ou .ii." The uncertainty that this ambiguity provokes divorces the poet from the events in addition to the following impersonal expression, "ce mest avis." He projects his opinion, once again, in the form of a line filler, which has the effect of closely associating him with the enunciation of the account instead of the history itself.

Once we learn that Pierre has secured the necessary funds and supplies for his venture, the poet records through direct discourse differing views on military strategies. This makes the reappearance of the poetic voice all the more noticeable, especially in the graphic description of the undulating movement of the crusader ships as they make their way across the Mediterranean Sea to the port of Alexandria. Together with the vividness of the sea voyage, the shift from dialogue to the narration of events in this sequence draws attention to the subject's position. At this key juncture, the poet intervenes with an impersonal expression that highlights his subjective viewpoint:

si ont tant nagie et vogue
par mi la mer qui a po gue
quau viez port devant alixandre

vint li bons roys sans plus atendre

en un juedi ce mest avis (2189-2193)

Attention to the physical experience of the voyage, "nagie et vogue," establishes geographical travel as an essential component of Pierre's history by directly alluding to the jostling movement of the eastward ships. Whereas the poet infuses physical movement into Pierre's activities, his voice remains anchored in the narration rather than the events. Similar to the preceding example, the intervention occurs at the end of the line and takes the passive form of "ce mest avis." He partakes in the narrative verse, he reveals his failure to remember the date of an event for which he was not present.

The use of impersonal expressions reflects one strategy that destabilizes the narrative, but the articulation of uncertainty represents another. The poet frequently alludes to the impossibility of relating certain facts, which highlights the distance between the event recounted and the act of recounting. This kind of intervention also has the effect of casting the poet as a far-off, secondhand observer of past events. This strategy occurs in the depiction of the most important event of the text: the taking of Alexandria. At this climatic moment, the poet gives a play-by-play account of the thrilling action and the heroic sacrifices that take place, heightening suspense concerning the outcome of the most important battle of the crusade. He only intercedes, however, well into the account of the battle when, with the weakened crusader forces threatened by Saracen reinforcements arriving from Cairo, Pierre must implement a risky strategy. Once Pierre and his knights secure the city, they must burn the nearby bridge in order to stop the advancing Saracen troops. Pierre rides out to the bridge in order to carry out this defensive maneuver, only to find that hundreds of thousands of Saracen troops have

already arrived. The crusader king, realizing that his strategic plan has failed, must then make a last minute effort to shut all the gates in order to defend the city. At this crucial juncture, where Pierre's mission lies in the balance, we expect a concrete reaffirmation of the success of the crusade, but instead the poet expresses uncertainty about key details:

> Li bons rois a pris son retour
> et voloit aler tout entour
> la ville . pour faire fermer
> les portes que ne say nomer
> mais celles sont ce mest avis
> qui sont devers ses anemis (3053-3058)

The poet does not know what to call the gates, "ne say nomer"—a noticeable omission because they play an essential role in the defense of the city and therefore the overall success of the crusade. The intervention does not reaffirm the veracity of the events, as we expect in historical discourse, but rather it expresses unfamiliarity with the terrain of the historical event. The hesitant poet continues to describe the Alexandrian gates but in the form of an impersonal expression: "celles sont ce mest avis/ qui sont devers ses anemis." This narrative intervention, instead of completing missing information about Pierre's military strategy, only reinforces the poet's distance from the battlefield. The impersonal expression "ce mest avis," as discussed earlier, occurs in an end rhyme and thus has the effect of rooting the subject in the poetics of the account rather than in the history itself. The double evocation of distance from a critical moment of the crusade endeavor calls particular attention to the situation of the poet.

Returning to the beginning of the *Prise* with the description of Pierre's first voyage as a young prince, we see that similar expressions of uncertainty establish the poet's unfamiliarity with events from the outset of the narrative. He relates this early voyage in terms of a thwarted crusade attempt, where Pierre takes up the cross, departs, but is then captured by his father's men and imprisoned for disobedience. Although the poet coherently relates these events, he skips over key information about how the prince's plans unravel. Someone betrays Pierre to his parents and the poet provides details in the form of direct discourse: ". . . sire vez la/ vostre fil en ceste galee/ ne say quel part sera salee" (536-538). The direct quotation creates the illusion of proximity to the conversation at hand, however the manner in which the poet describes the subject of this discourse—"mais ne say qui le revela" (535)—ultimately reveals his own distance from the encounter. The intermingling of these two strategies reveals a tension in the narrative where the poet provides detailed information about Pierre's history while simultaneously revealing his distance from it. The result of this mixture of authentic detail and explicit acknowledgment of missing information destabilizes the narrative and brings into question whether this is an authentic history or a verse romance.

The poet's distance from the crusade history becomes all the more perceptible at other key moments in the narrative, particularly in the passage immediately following the second anagram that finally reveals Pierre to be the subject of the narrative. The poet takes on an active role in naming Pierre and invites us to closely study the text to uncover the name—"je vous nomme" (1381), "le vous nommeray" (1383), "vous ay je nomme son nom" (1394). These assertive statements sharply contrast with the expressions of uncertainty in the following episode of Pierre's lengthy recruitment campaign in Eastern

Europe. We learn details concerning the diplomatic mission, specifically about the festivities at the Duke of Austria's court, but the poet also reflects on the difficulty in accurately and completely describing the grandeur of these events:

> . . . la duchesse en tel maniere
> li fist si amiable chiere
> et toutes les dames aussi
> que je ne say pas nomer si
> que raconter ne le savoie
> tant menoit chascuns feste et joie
> taire me vueil de leur mengier
> car on ne porroit souhaidier (1419-1425)

The poet does not know how to name the ladies of the Austrian court, "je ne say pas nomer"—a striking contrast to the preceding passage where the poet uses similar language to name Pierre, but in the affirmative "je vous nomme." This distinction closely associates the poet with the act of writing, as expressed by the textual nature of the preceding anagram, while distancing him from the site of Pierre's past travels in the East. The tension between the poet's uncertainty and the account he provides comes across in the following intervention: "raconter ne le savoie." While it may be argued that this declaration serves as a trope to heighten the exceptionality of the convivial banquet, it also highlights the distinction between narration and history. The poet provides information about the banquet all the while reminding us that his descriptions do not capture the full experience of the event.

The poet also intervenes in the account of Pierre's visit to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV, another destination along his itinerary through Eastern Europe. We expect the poet to proclaim knowledge of the events and participants in this particular episode because, as he explains earlier, he was secretary to Charles's father, John of Bohemia. The poet's distance from the diplomatic meeting between Charles and Pierre is therefore all the more striking because he has already declared his intimacy with that court earlier in the narrative. Here follows the position he takes when relating the welcome feast: ". . . et de vin quil burent/ me tais . car je ne les diroie/ sun jour tout entier y pensoie" (1194-1196). The poet points to his own silence in the account of these courtly activities, creating a critical distance from the scene. The narration does not fully recreate the actual history that transpired.

The poet continues to reveal his distance from later events that occur in preparation for the immediate departure to Alexandria. Pierre fails to receive any substantial aid from Charles, even after his diplomatic visit in Eastern Europ. Only Venetian contributions and support from the Cypriot nobility make his crusade possible. The amount of funds that Pierre secures from these sources is therefore essential to understanding how the crusade unfolded, yet the poet is not in a position to reveal the entire sum of these gifts:

> il trouverent si grant finance
> et tant davoir que sans doubtance
> je ne le saroie nombrer
> pour ce ne men vueil encombrer (1807-1810)

The poet does not know how to take account of the funds that Pierre raises for his expedition to Alexandria—"je ne le saroie nombrer"—an acknowledgment that alludes to the great expense of the crusade while distancing the poet from the history. He elaborates that he does not want to encumber himself with such details: "pour ce ne men vueil encombrer." This declaration further separates the actual events from the narration because it refers to a decision to develop certain aspects of the event while skipping over other details.

Similar expressions occur in the climatic account of Pierre's taking of Alexandria, where the poet's distance produces a particularly troubling effect. In this episode, which occurs over several hundred lines, interventions rarely occur. The uninterrupted sequence of the battle heightens the action and builds suspense concerning the outcome of the conflict. The scarcity of the poetic voice makes it all the more noticeable when he finally does interject, if only to undermine his proximity to the events. When describing Pierre's success on the battlefield, he states:

> si quil en y ot tant de mors
> dedens la cite et dehors
> que je ne le saroie dire
> nuns bons clers nombrer ou escrire (3261-3264)

The poet does not know how to describe the aftermath of the assault—"je ne le saroie dire." This intervention comes at a moment where we expect a more affirmative, detailed description of the scene to confirm the success of Pierre's military exploits. Instead of attributing a number to the troops, as frequently occurs in battle scenes of romance traditions, the poet instead indicates uncertainty and reaffirms his removal from the event.

The following line, “nuns bons clers nombrer ou escrire,” further distinguishes the history from the narration by referring to clerics who might have provided greater detail about the casualties in a chronicled account.

Expressions of uncertainty represent one narrative strategy to distance the speaking subject from the story he recounts; another way entails shifting the speaking “je” to the position of a listening, observing subject. The narrative voice undergoes this transformation during the account of Pierre’s final preparations on the eve of his departure for the crusade. The Cypriot nobility manages to muster an army of tremendous size and the poet, hearing about this incredible success, exclaims: “car si com jay oy retraire/ si grant plante en y avoit/ que homme nombrer ne le savoit” (1814-1816). The poet again expresses the impossibility of describing such a feat, “que homme nombrer ne le savoit,” but he also makes a more direct statement about the role he performs as a listener and observer. The speaking “je” listens, “jay oy,” while an unnamed, secondhand source recounts, “retraire.” These associations reverse expectations for the speaking “je” which, as we saw with Rustichello da Pisa in the previous study, is closely associated with the verb “retraire.” Furthermore, we expect the poet to name his source, as we shall see in the “Voyage en Béarn,” but the passive construction of the intervention omits any mention of the witness.

Unstable historical sources emerge at other key moments in the narrative, for instance in the account of the outcome of Pierre’s diplomatic mission to Venice. The Venetians’ decision to provide funding to the Cypriots will determine whether or not they can embark on their crusade and so the description of their deliberations plays a suspenseful role in the narration. The poet finally informs us that the crusaders will

receive the aid that they need from the Venetians, but he remains uncertain about the exact amount because he is in the position of a far-off observer:

premierement il li offrirent
navie . quil delivreront
a tous ceuls qui passer vorront
et avec ce juste nol pris
et encor se bien lay compris (1578-1582)

The poet states that the Venetians will deliver ships and money, but his intervention takes the form of an expression of uncertainty: "se bien lay compris." Similar to the previous example of "ce mest avis," the poet's intervention performs a particular poetic role, associating him with the narration rather than the history. The construction of the phrase also masks the identity of the consulted sources, dislocating him from the events as well as from the witnesses who experienced them.

The poet continues to downplay the name of his witnesses, creating a destabilizing effect where, in contrast to the Marco Polo and Froissart texts where the organizer and the chronicler repeatedly name their witnesses, a vague source provides information about Pierre and his crusade. The poetic alludes to his ambiguous source when he describes the king's actions on the battlefield at Alexandria, suggesting unfamiliarity with both historical events and participants who witnessed them. For instance, in the narration of the suspenseful scene where Saracen troops sneak into the city unbeknownst to Pierre, the poet does not disclose the name of his source:

et pour ce grant mestier avoit
de chevauchier seurement

et de li garder sagement

car il navoit pas avec li

si com dire oy lay celi

qui y estoit . plus de .l.

hommes darmes . ou de .lx. (3224-3230)

Pierre rides out with fifty or sixty knights—an imprecision that spatially distances the poet from the historical event and draws attention to the source of this perplexing information. Instead of openly naming a reliable witness, as expected in traditions of history writing, the poet merely states that he hears about these happenings from someone, "celi." A vague, indefinite pronoun stands in for the name of the name of the source—a detail necessary to anchor the text in lived history. Without this information, the two components of the narrative text, the narrative enunciation and the history of Pierre's exploits, remain distant from one another.

The witnesses of other climatic events remain equally elusive and continue to generate a distancing effect. The arrival of Pierre's forces at the port of Alexandria on the first day of battle represents an important turning point in the narrative and also figures as the opening miniature of the *Prise* in some manuscript traditions. The poet, instead of naming a witness as in the tradition of history writing, appeals to an unknown source to learn the number of troops that Pierre was finally able to bring with him:

. . . jay entendu

et le me dist uns chevaliers

quil nestoent pas .viii. milliers

bons et mauvais. grans et petis (2426-2429)

The poet hears that no more than eight thousand troops arrived at the city, yet this is an approximate number given by an unnamed knight, “uns chevaliers.” Although the poet gives more detail about his sources, since we now know that he has consulted a knight who participated in the crusade, he still does not provide a name in order to anchor his discourse in the history. The linguistic shift of the subject from the speaking “je”—“jay entendu”—to an indirect object—“le me dist”—also adds to the distancing effect. The poet, an observing object rather than an active participant, learns about events from unstable sources.

As we read on, we finally discover the identity of the unnamed source, “uns chevaliers” and the role he played in the crusade. This delay tactic reflects experimentation on the level of the narration, where the poet unveils information in a way that does not so much reflect the chronology of events as create a suspenseful narrative. The poet discloses the name of the knight informant at the critical moment in the actual history during the truce negotiations between the Cypriots and the Saracens. He identifies this knight as Jean, who serves as Pierre’s messenger during peace deliberations in Cairo. Jean is both participant in and witness to the history: “cils jehans dont je vous parole/ maprent et menseigne . et mescole/ et mamenistre ma matiere” (5937-5939). The delayed mention of Jean, a key figure in the truce between the crusaders and the only named source in the narrative, underscores a continued effort to distance narrating and observing subjects from past experiences. The poet fails to name Jean alongside the narration of prior events that he undoubtedly observed and then recounted, thereby divorcing the witness from the event.

"Or deviseray son chemin par escript en ce parchemin": Material Displacement in the *Prise* Manuscripts

In distancing himself and his witnesses from Pierre's travels in Europe and conquest in the Levant, Guillaume disconnects the narrative from the travel experience. Whereas this experience remains elusive in the narrative, it comes to life in the manuscripts that preserve it. The distinctive material anomalies of the *Prise* present a complex, multi-layered text that fosters a dynamic viewing experience, leading the imagination down a conceptual path of travel. The visual and material components of the codex contribute to the overall sense of movement by bringing to mind the prior locations and circulation networks of the book, and by framing the physical manuscript as a terrain of discovery. The travel experience denied by the text becomes accessible in the mobile object that preserves Pierre's history.

In order to explore this phenomenon, I will begin with an examination of the material, illustrations, and text layout of the *Prise* in Manuscript A (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1584), perhaps the most well-known of the Machaut complete works manuscripts dating from the early 1370s. Although several scholars have argued for the unified stability of Manuscript A under authorial supervision,[34] detailed analyses of the individual texts contained in this manuscript, such as Kibler and Wimsatt's study of the *Jugement de Behaigne*, open the manuscript to new interpretations.[35] With new emphasis on the particular role of the *Prise* in Manuscript A,

[34] Studies that have identified authorial supervision in Manuscript A include: Lawrence Earp, "Machaut's Role in the Production of His Works"; Sylvia Huot, "A Late Redaction of Machaut's Oeuvre: The codex Bibl. Nat. fr. 1584"; François Avril, "Les Manuscrits enluminés de Guillaume de Machaut"; and Sarah Jane Williams, "An Author's Role in Fourteenth-Century Book Production."

[35] This study focuses on the textual deterioration of the *Jugement de Behaigne* to challenge the claim that Machaut was involved in the production process. See Kibler and Wimsatt, "Machaut's text and the Question of his Personal Supervision."

the second part of this chapter will uncover the dynamism of the manuscript, the variety of artistic expressions used to evoke travel, and the traces of prior circulation. The inherent instability of the material artifact accesses the physical movement that drives the crusade venture. The eye navigates the codex and folio surfaces at the instigation of visual, textual and material cues, echoing the steps of Pierre's journey to the Levant. Machaut calls attention to this inseparable relationship between travel, text and manuscript by associating Pierre's path with writing and parchment: "Or deviseray son chemin/ par escript en ce parchemin" (1509-1510). Machaut's description of Pierre's itinerary involves the physical surface of the parchment, "ce parchemin," thereby drawing attention to the material and visual pathways that cut through Manuscript A in order to discover the meaning of travel in the *Prise* and, more broadly, in Machaut's material legacy.

The particular organization of the *Prise* in Manuscript A offers the parchment material as a substitute terrain of exploration. Nestled between the *Voir dit* and the *Dit de la rose*, the *Prise* follows the order prescribed by the index, a feature that provides evidence of careful planning and supports the argument that Machaut was involved in the production of the manuscript. Yet a closer look at the index itself reveals a discrepancy in the initial ordering of these works because the listing for the *Voir dit* has been added in

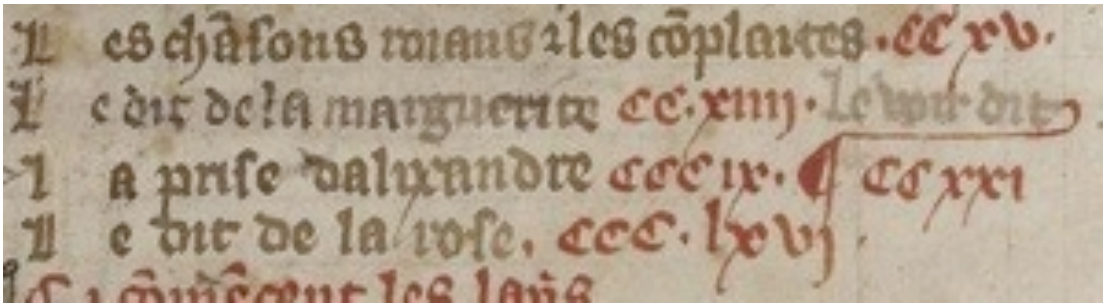

Figure 20. BnF MS fr. 1584, fol. 1v, detail. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f10.image

fainter ink to the right of rather than directly above the *Prise* [Figure 20]. This misalignment of the index format suggests a retroactive adjustment to the list that, instead of accurately detailing the order Machaut purportedly wanted for his own book, ultimately marks a fissure between the *Prise* and the preceding narrative verse texts.[36] Even before turning to the crusade account, we encounter visual evidence of the discontinuity between the *Prise* and the surrounding gatherings. The fainter catchword on the quire following the conclusion of the *Prise* confirms this initial impression and calls attention to the posterior linking of two separate texts.[37] The folia that immediately precede the account, on the other hand, do not contain any text and thus sever the *Prise* from the *Voir dit* along with the preceding verse narratives. These text-less folia, though most likely an unintentional result of the compilation of the codex, nonetheless represent material markers that recall the travel experience.

The barren folia do not contain any linguistic signs, but they bear distinctive dark grey lines of ruling that are designed to receive text and shape its layout. The absence of text suggests a disruption in the organization of the manuscript, further undermining the coherency of the compilation and the place of the *Prise* within it. The barrenness of these lines has the potential to entice engagement with the raw material support of the codex, drawing their imagination to distant locations beyond the immediate space that the manuscript occupies. According to Michel Butor, the absence of text stimulates conceptual movement, whereas the emptiness conveyed by the whiteness of the page allows the mind to wander elsewhere. He states: " L'ailleurs que nous donne le livre

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[36] Deborah McGrady analyzes the table of contents in *Controlling Readers*, 99-100. Lawrence Earp speculates that the *Voir dit*, along with the *Prise* and the *Dit de la rose* were added to the index after the original listing. "Scribal Practice," 60.

[37] For more on the organization of Manuscript A and the other Machaut complete-works manuscripts, see Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*.

nous apparaît, de par la traversée de la page, comme pénétré de blancheur, baptisé" (« Le voyage et l'écriture » 3). The traces of text layout in the final folia of the *Voir dit* call additional attention to the missing text.

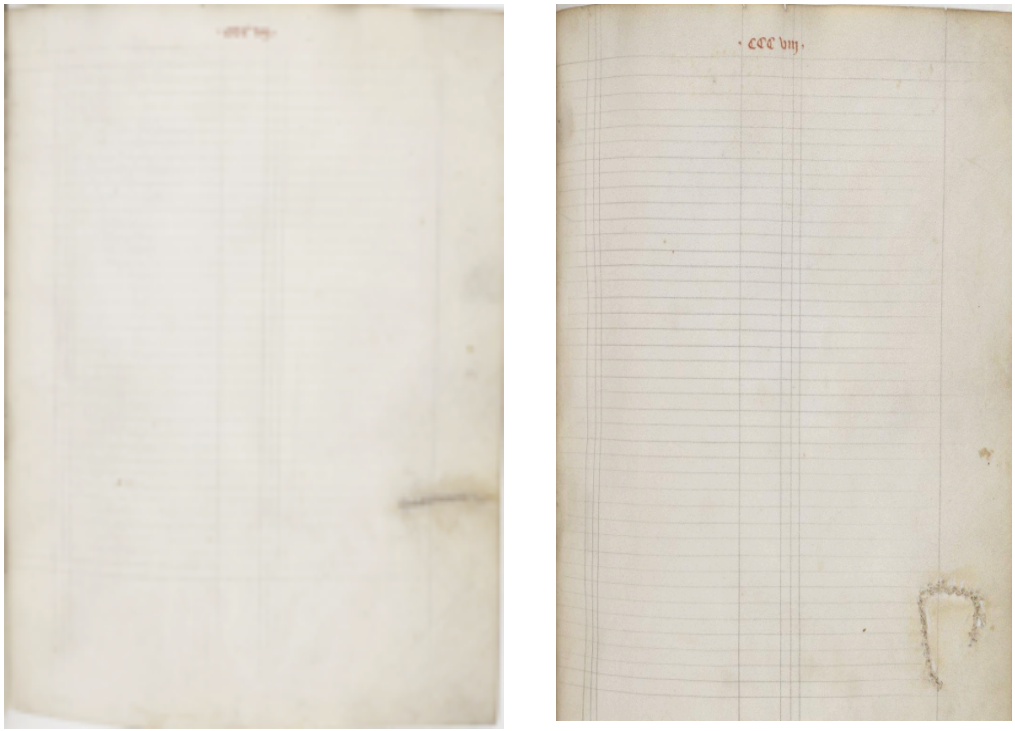

Figure 21. BnF MS fr. 1584, fol. 307-308.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f635.image

Butor analyzes the white page with regard to modern travel writing, but the expressive capacity of the raw material support also pertains to the *Prise*. Whereas the sterile white page of the printed modern travel account creates a sense of wandering, the quality of the parchment folio directs attention to a very particular elsewhere marked by sacrifice and violence. The parchment has already been processed to receive words on the lines, but, in the absence of the text, we come into closer contact with the physical quality of the material itself. The soft skin tone of the folio recalls the high quality of this luxurious manuscript but also the flesh of the living animal that was sacrificed to make it. The large sutures on both of the final folia of the *Voir dit* provide physical reminders of

this violent past [Figure 21]. As Sarah Kay has convincingly suggested, medieval readers and bookmakers were aware of the relationship between animal flesh, parchment, and text. They created meaningful connections between the parchment material and the textual *matière*, where marks of violence on the folio surface could reflect the suffering that certain texts described ("Original Skin" 38-47).[38] In this way, the two folia preceding the *Prise* have the effect of anticipating the violent subject matter of Pierre's crusade because they bear traces of past brutalities in the sutures that mark their surface. The animal's prior flesh wound and the casualties of hand-to-hand combat surface in the gashes that cut through the folio.

Whereas the sutures recall the violence that frames both the crusade history and the production of the manuscript, the worn condition of the well-traveled text recalls the use and circulation of the manuscript. The opening folio of the *Prise* also materially expresses the travel theme of the narrative. It shows signs of wear and tear where use and abuse have rubbed off ink and discolored the parchment. The dilapidated condition of the folio does not correspond to its current placement in the middle of the manuscript, where the surrounding gatherings would have protected it from extensive handling. Instead, these traces of circulation suggest that this is the first folio of a separate set of gatherings that had once circulated independently from the manuscript that now contains it. The damaged quality of the material thus vivifies the movement that informs both the medium and the text. Evidence of the circulation of the manuscript recalls the relationship between travel and material. The text and the manuscripts of the *Prise* in Manuscript A establish a notion of passage that knit together reading, writing and

[38] For more on this topic, also see Sarah Kay, "Legible Skins," and Bruce Holsinger, "Of Pigs and Parchment."

travel—themes that distinguish the *Prise* as Machaut's last work and unique travel history.

Figure 22. BnF MS fr. 1584, fol. 309r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f639.image

The material expression of displacement entails one way to link the manuscript artifact to the travel themes of the text, but artistic representation also plays a key role in establishing this relationship. The opening miniature of the *Prise* exemplifies developments in 14th century manuscript painting with gestures toward visual depth [Figure 22].[39] The overlapping of the Cypriot knights and the positioning of architectural elements over the illustrative border paint the illusion of space and the movement that it facilitates. The three-dimensional quality of the image sculpts the distant battlefield so that it, as well as the sea voyage that transports the avid crusaders, becomes more vivid. The light blue wash that appears in the foreground adds to this effect, where the transparent brushstrokes simulate the cool waves of the water and exemplify the sensory experience that characterizes medieval manuscripts. The realistic representation of water

[39] For more on the developments of 14th century courtly manuscripts, see François Avril, *Manuscript Painting at the Court of France: the Fourteenth Century (1310-1380)*.

adds to the production of a dynamic space and directly refers to the crusaders' mode of transport to the port of Alexandria. The evidence of wear on the miniature and its special artistic treatment, coupled with the subject matter of the arrival to Alexandria, thus signify travel both in the form it takes and the subject it treats.

Figure 23. Ferrell MS 1, fol. 335r, detail. http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=3774

This association provides an artistic component to the material and metaphorical expressions of travel that influence the *Prise* in other manuscripts. The striking resemblance of the *Prise* miniature in Manuscript A to the opening image of the contemporaneous Manuscript Vg (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library Ferrell MS 1) [Figure 23],[40] suggests that travel themes impacted the design of other Machaut compilations. As in Manuscript A, the first miniature in the *Prise* of Manuscript Vg depicts the arrival of the Cypriot knights to the port of Alexandria against a striking red wash. The decoration of Manuscript Vg has been qualified as an "artistic rush job" (Leo 60), and the illustration cycle does not faithfully portray narrated events (Drobinsky 317). The similar composition and pigmentation of the miniature support this view, suggesting that the artists of Manuscript Vg worked in a hurry to provide a smaller version of a model that was provided by or linked to Manuscript A. This persistent iconography may also be attributed to the widespread

[40] The copying of Manuscript Vg began in the late 1360s but the illustrations were completed around the same time as Manuscript A in the 1370s.

influence of certain romance manuscript traditions, where ". . . images of bleeding and dismembered knights became icons of worthy sacrifice through their preservation on skins that represented both beauty and death" (Cruse 54). Drawing on the visual effects of more familiar romance illustrations, the opening miniatures of the *Prise* in Manuscripts A and Vg perhaps reflect a deliberate choice. The aesthetics of this illustration, while not as sophisticated as examples from other luxurious manuscripts of the fourteenth century, nevertheless insert Machaut's crusade text into a larger illustrative tradition that celebrates heroic exploits and commemorates sacrifice.

The opening miniature of the *Prise* in Manuscript A is also noteworthy for its large scale, suggesting that bookmakers placed more emphasis on this image than in its counterpart in Manuscript Vg. Occupying nearly half of the space on the folio, the miniature marks the *Prise* as the opening text of a new set of gatherings later added to Manuscript A. The only other miniatures of this distinction are those in the general *Prologue*, which were created in a Parisian atelier and then later tipped in.[41] The similarity in size and degree of artistic attention of the miniatures in the *Prise* and the *Prologue* not only points to the importance of the two works as the culmination of Machaut's career as a poet, but their grandeur also indicates that the artists designed these miniatures to function as frontispieces. Just as the *Prologue* miniatures mark the beginning of the anthology, so does the *Prise* miniature introduce the text as its own set of mobile and independent gatherings, set apart from the rest of the manuscript. The prominent image of the Cypriot knights' arrival at the gates of Alexandria announces the

[41] François Avril locates the origin of these illustrations in « Les Manuscrits enluminés de Guillaume de Machaut. »

travel theme of the *Prise* while also identifying through the first folio that this copy constituted a separate volume that was later bound to Manuscript A.

Figure 24. BnF MS fr. 1584, fol. 309r, detail. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f639.image

Artists also distinguish the opening folio to the *Prise d'Alixandre* through extensive marginalia. They decorate the margins of the folio with colorful foliage and figures that they do not include elsewhere in Manuscript A. The moth, lions and foliage all receive extensive pigmented shading, though years of use have since removed most of the color. The rich hues of these decorative elements reinforce the effect of the large-scale miniature that establishes the first folio of the *Prise* as a frontispiece. The striking marginalia also includes the only figure of a peacock in the entirety of Manuscript A, which was most likely added by a later, second artistic hand [Figure 24].[42] This icon is charged with meaning: as an exotic bird with an eastern origin, its inclusion in the elaborate illustrative program of the first folio announces the *Prise* as a text that describes people, places and events in the distant East. Furthermore, this marginal figure recalls the popular medieval peacock romance cycles, the *Voeux du paon* and the *Restor du paon*. As continuations of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, these texts address themes of conquest and kingship and had far reaching influences in the medieval world.[43] The Manuscript A peacock draws on this literary tradition to provide an important visual link between Pierre I of Cyprus, the protagonist

[42] I owe this finding to the online digital annotation tool Digital Mappaemundi, which allowed me to catalogue all the marginalia and glosses in Manuscript A. Domenic Leo argues that a second hand painted the peacock in "Authorial Presence."

[43] For more information about peacock cycles and their illustrations, see Domenic Leo "Images, Texts, and Marginalia in a 'Vows of the Peacock Manuscript," and Michel Margue, "Les voeux sur les oiseaux."

of the *Prise*, and Alexander the Great, widely portrayed in medieval literature as the ideal chivalric and conquering sovereign.

This graphic connection also involves other heroes of the peacock cycle, most notably Godefrey de Bouillon. He represents one of the well-known Nine Worthies described in the *Voeux de Paon* and, as the allegorical prologue of the *Prise* stipulates, he is the famous crusader king in whose footsteps Pierre is meant to follow. The inclusion of the peacock, an exotic creature that recalls Alexander's far-off conquests, also evokes the wide textual network of the Alexander manuscripts in which Manuscript A participates. Furthermore, the physical wear of the peacock image, where the faded blue color disrupts the contours of the bird's rotund body, materially associates the far-off sites of travel and conquest with the circulation of the *Prise*. The peacock has the effect of bringing together the eastward itinerary of military exploits and the pathway of the manuscript. The past journey of the Cypriot king comes to life in the rich decoration of the opening folio and in the physical travel of the codex that leaves traces on the folio surface.

The expression of elsewhere, in terms of manuscript circulation and the crusade expedition, constitutes one aspect of material travel in the *Prise* of Manuscript A. The transformation of the manuscript artifact into a landscape of travel represents another. The copying of the text onto the folio involves several aesthetic choices that generate meaning and, most importantly, a spatial component to the literary text. Paul Zumthor defines this quality as textual space: « l'écrit en effet n'exhibe pas la seule écriture: il comporte une organisation visuelle, résultant aussi bien du graphisme que de la disposition relative des parties, encrées ou non, du parchemin ou du papier » (*La mesure*

du monde 369). In the context of medieval manuscripts, graphics as well as the material surface constitute modes of writing that reinforce linguistic signification. The linguistic and plastic aspects of the text are completely integrated with one another, inviting a veritable exploration of the manuscript's physical space and past networks of circulation.[44] Textual space in the *Prise* thus materially bolsters the travel that informs the narrative.

The creation of space in the manuscript involves the manipulation of a variety of plastic elements beyond the miniature and marginalia. Text layout and the marked traces of folio ruling become integral parts of folio decoration, particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[45] These components set texts in dynamic spaces that set the eye into motion. The movement of the reading process, where audiences pass through decorated and inscribed folia, establishes a metaphorical relationship between reading and travel. As Michel Butor explains, ". . . il y a trajet au moins de l'oeil de signe en signe, selon toutes sortes d'itinéraires que l'on peut assez souvent, mais non toujours, simplifier grossièrement comme la progression selon une ligne droite d'un point de départ à un point d'arrivée . . . " ("Le voyage et l'écriture 10). Butor continues to explain that for texts that recount far-off travel, this connection between reading and travel attunes readers to the experience of the journey. Across the manuscript traditions of the *Prise*, a text that records a crusade expedition, striking visual pathways echo the physical circulation of the text and retrace the Mediterranean world that Pierre navigated.

Changes in text layout occur when Machaut abandons verse form for prose, which occurs when the poet incorporates direct discourse in the form of personal, handwritten

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[44] Ibid. 371.

[45] Albert Derolez discusses a variety of manuscript production techniques and how they come to represent decorative aspects of the folio. *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 34-39.

letters. This organizational shift first appears in Machaut's corpus in the *Voir dit*. Scribes, especially those responsible for Manuscript E, enhanced this shift in the correspondence between the Lover and Toute Belle by changing the format from verses in columns to a full-page prose format, and by abandoning the formal Gothic script for a more informal cursive script. While this attention to text layout stresses the process of writing and compilation (Huot, "A Late Redaction" 283), it also emphasizes the mobility of written documents. Miniatures portraying the exchange of these "letters in motion" establish a rhythm that guides readers through the narrative and instills a sense of movement in the epistolary creation (McGrady, *Controlling Readers* 112-113). Bookmakers and artists employ a similar strategy in the *Prise* with the documentation of the quarrel between Pierre of Cyprus and his vassal, the Lord of Lesparre. The quarrel begins when Lesparre sends a defamatory letter to Pierre, complaining that, after ten months of service in the Alexandrian campaign, Pierre unjustly dismissed him without compensation. In Manuscript A, scribes spatially offset Pierre and Lesparre's letters and visually condense the text, which now reaches from the left line marker to the right. On the left side of the parchment on folio 355, sutures that repair torn parchment invite reflection on the physical insertion of letters into the narrative. Attention to inscription gives the illusion that the letter itself is sewn into the page and endows the text with a sense of authenticity (Palmer 447). Although the realistic, graphic representation of the correspondence speaks to the truth claims of the *Prise*, it also embeds in the codex the possibility for the material text to travel.

The manner in which scribes insert Pierre and Lesparre's signatures into the folio also replicates the graphics of actual letters. The visibility of Pierre's name in particular

inserts the king into his Mediterranean realm while implicating him in the circulation of texts. Whereas the Machauldian anagram at the beginning and at the conclusion of the *Prise* delays naming Pierre, and then only through poetic word-play, his signature in the carefully designed letter format openly displays his name. In Manuscript A, the scribe

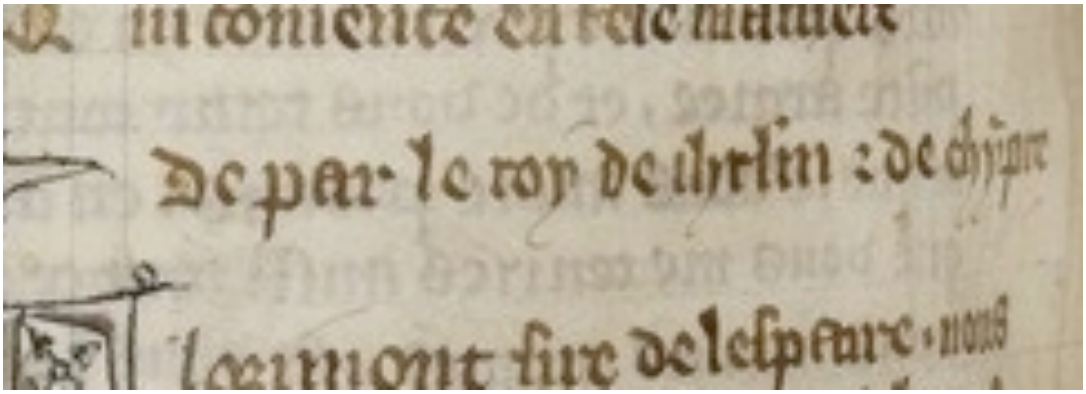

Figure 25. BnF MS fr. 1584, fol. 356v, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f734.image

offsets Pierre's name so that the title "King of Jerusalem and of Cyprus" clearly stands out on the parchment, recalling the crusader rhetoric that generally describes Pierre [Figure 25].[46] It constitutes a "présentation graphique de la remembrance" (Hurworth 115) that edifies Pierre as the inheritor of Godefroi de Bouillon, the celebrated crusade hero of the past. The letters, inserted towards the end of the *Prise*, harken back to the beginning of the narrative where the allegory of Pierre's birth names him the recipient of Godfrey's legacy. This title also reaffirms Pierre's claim to the Cypriot throne, which was long-disputed by his nephew and, according Peter Edbury, fueled Pierre's crusade as a legitimizing endeavor ("Constructing the Reign of Peter I" 355).

[46] As Angel Nicoloaou-Konnari notes, Philippe de Mézières uses the same title for Pierre in the *Songe du vieil pélérin*. "Apologists or Critics," 373.

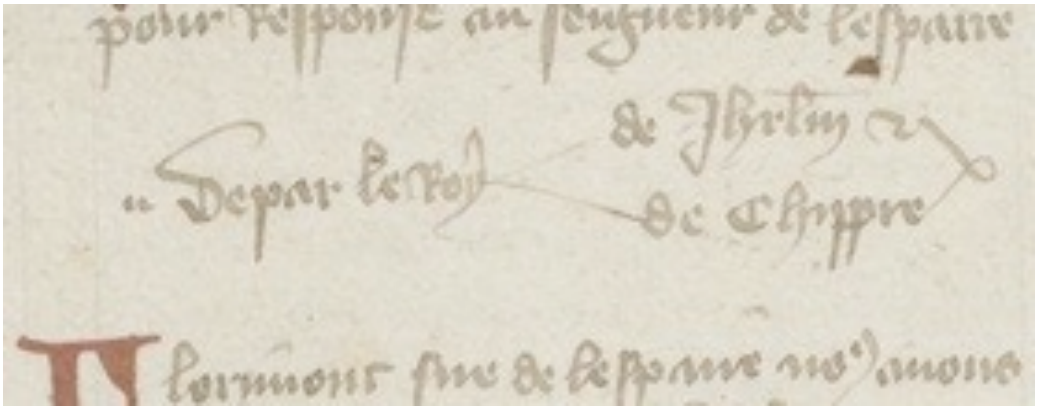

Figure 26. BnF MS français 1585, fol. 387v, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449032x/f783.image

Pierre's signature, by recalling the geographic sites of crusade ventures, thus reinforces the travel that the text format evokes. Moving beyond Manuscript A, we see that the other manuscript traditions of the *Prise* enhance the relationship between travel and the Cypriot king with creative, authentic layouts for Pierre's signature. In Manuscripts B (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 1585) [Figure 26], G (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 22546) and Vg, the scribes experiment with the graphics of the text, demarcating diagonal paths for the eye to follow. Not only does this create a dynamic visual experience, where focalization veers in several different directions, but it also graphically represents the connectivity of the Mediterranean, with Pierre's name located in between two sites of cultural significance. A king navigating Christian and Islamic

Figure 27. BnF MS fr. 9221, fol. 234 r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f491.image

worlds, perhaps Pierre is one of the unaccounted fixers of the medieval Mediterranean.[47] Manuscript E (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 9221) contains the most dramatic, though fortuitous, shift in text layout [Figure 27]. The blatant scribal error connects Pierre's name to the well-known figure of the wandering, errant knight. The scribe, neglecting to write the "P" and the "i" of the Pierre's name within the text frame, relegates "erre" to the direct line of vision. Mimicking the word-play of the anagrams so crucial to Machaut's self-naming, the visualization of the letter draws attention to the wandering travel, "errance," embedded in Pierre's name. Though an accidental linguistic sign, the error of the scribe nevertheless points to the movement of the Cypriot king, Pierre, whose very name has now become a visual playing field that negotiates textual deviances and the journeys they record.

* * *

This study of spatial and material displacement in Guillaume de Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* thus presents a variation on the narrative tactics used in the Marco Polo account. Whereas, in the *Devisement*, Rustichello da Pisa assumes the role of traveler, the poet does not participate in travel, either textual or geographical. Through his numerous narrative interventions, he continually recalls the separation between the narration and the historical journey and distances himself from the events that he recounts. The poet accomplishes this effect by abandoning the active "je" in favor of a dislocated subject that is articulated in impersonal expressions that fit poetic end rhymes, the refusal of information, and the anonymity of eyewitnesses. Instead, the experience of travel, as well as the sacrifice that marks the crusade endeavor, is located in the material. The relocation of the journey to the manuscript artifact vivifies travel by endowing it

[47] Zrinka Stahuljak develops the role of the "fixer" in the *Prise* in "History's Fixers," 281.

material and visual qualities. This effect anticipates later medieval travel histories like Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn," where the actual journey will gain new importance in narrative tactics and illustrative approaches.

Chapter Three: Landscapes of Travel and History in Jean Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn"

Jean Froissart's *chef d'oeuvre*, *Les Chroniques*, comprises four books that record major historical events, feats of arms and political proceedings that occurred between the accession of Edward II (1307) to the English throne and the death of Richard II (1400).[48] The opening of the third book of the *Chroniques*, known as the "Voyage en Béarn," was composed in 1389 and records the chronicler's travel through the region of Foix-Béarn in order to interview eyewitnesses of the Spanish-Portuguese conflict that arose during the Hundred Years War. Armed with letters of introduction from his patron at the time, the Conte de Blois, the historian departs from Pamiers in the last months of 1388. He travels along a rugged terrain that bears traces of historical events, and finally arrives at Orthez, the seat of the court of Gaston Fébus, the Conte de Foix. Espan de Lion, a knowledgeable *chevalier*, accompanies the chronicler on this journey and provides him safe passage as well as information about the landscape and, more importantly, the history embedded in it. The combination of travel and history results in the mixing of literary and historical modes of writing, which has been at the forefront of scholarly discussion about the "Voyage,"[49] particularly with regard to the narrative structure.[50] The implication of the historian in both the journey and the narrative that he will later write

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[48] For more information about the history of Froissart's life and corpus, see William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England*; Peter Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History: Truth, Myth, and Fiction in the Chroniques*; Paul Archambault, *Seven French Chroniclers: Witnesses to History*; and J.J.N Palmer, *Froissart: Historian*.

[49] One literary aspect of the Third Book that has been widely discussed is the fantastical account of Pierre de Béarn's somnambulism. For more information, see Michel Zink, "Froissart et la nuit de chasseur;" Laurence Harf-Lancner, "*Les Chroniques* de Froissart: du bon usage du merveilleux'" and "La merveille donnée à voir: la chasse fantastique et son illustration dans le livre III des *Chroniques* de Froissart;" and Sylvia Huot, "Unruly Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: Pierre de Béarn, Camel de Camois, and Actaeon in the Writings of Jean Froissart."

[50] See George Diller, "Froissart's 1389 Travel to Béarn: A Voyage Narration to the Center of the *Chroniques*," *Froissart Across the Genres*, 50-60; and William Calin's discussion of narrative interlacement in *The French Tradition*, 245.

represents a dramatic shift from the first and second books, where Froissart drew heavily from a well-known chronicle by Jean le Bel. The historian experiments in the third book with writing in his own journey as an integral part of the history to be told.

The chronicler's twofold design, where he recounts both travel and history, is addressed in Michel Zink's influential book *Froissart et le temps* (1998). According to Zink, these two narratives do not have equal value in the "Voyage" because travel affects how the itinerant chronicler presents historical information. Travel gives new value to events that the chronicler includes in his history:

> L'enquête sur ces événements exige un voyage. Mais voilà que le livre qui s'écrit devient avant toute chose le récit de ce voyage et de cette enquête, cadre dans lequel vient s'insérer le récit des événements eux-mêmes, de façon à ce que qu'ils tirent leur sens du va-et-vient entre ce qu'a vécu l'auteur et ce qu'il a appris, de la relation entre l'information et la façon dont il l'a recueillie (78).

Froissart does not limit the "Voyage" to a mere record of historical events, but rather he places new importance on the narration of his inquest and the travel that facilitates it. Instead of interpreting the third book as a chronicle into which Froissart inserts a travel account, Zink shows that the "Voyage" is above all a travel narrative, a "récit de voyage," in which the chronicler inserts historical episodes. More specifically, Froissart's personal experience on the route endows recorded events with meaning that they do not inherently possess. Zink further details that the narrative places emphasis on the author and his experiences, bringing the historian's fieldwork into sharper focus and ultimately heightening interest in the narrative (66 and 74-75). The conclusions that Zink draws suggest that travel is important inasmuch as it relates the chronicler's personal

experiences and reactions. It gives "un sens aux événements relatés à travers la perception particulière qu'en a eue l'auteur et la façon dont il en a été informé, à travers, en somme, son expérience *autobiographique*" (75). For Zink, the travel narrative aspect of the "Voyage" drives a primarily self-reflexive project where the chronicler's quest for information develops into a personal memoir.[51]

While Zink downplays the relationship between history and travel in favor of autobiography, I assert that Froissart draws on travel narrative primarily to enliven history. The act of recording the journey in pursuit of the past recalls the ambitions expressed in Rustichello's narration of Marco Polo's travels, where the organizer presents himself as a traveler of the written word. Whereas Rustichello sought to assert writing as a great adventure, Froissart's history reflects his actual journey through the mountains of Foix-Béarn. The details of the chronicler's physical journey charge his narration of historical events with emotion and suspense, reflecting what Hayden White terms a story type ("Historical Text as Literary Artifact" 52). He explains that because historical events by themselves are value neutral and unknown to readers, historians often arrange events into a story type to familiarize distant events. The historical narrative, White maintains, mediates between historical events and more symbolic structures, thereby creating opportunities for the synthesis and interpretation of facts:

> As a symbolic structure, the historical narrative does not reproduce the events it describes; it tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges our thought about the events with different emotional valences (52).

[51] The memoir quality of the "Voyage" has been debated elsewhere. See Daniel Poirion, *Litérature française: le moyen âge II: 1300-1480*, 200.

In the "Voyage," the narrating chronicler continually mediates between the historical events that took place in Foix-Béarn and the more familiar story type of travel, which here entails Froissart's quest alongside his companion, Espan de Lion. The mediation of these two narrative layers endows otherwise neutral episodes with emotional value, creating an effect of suspense by anticipating events that have yet to be discovered. The chronicler's description of landscape brings travel and history together and indicates a new interpretation of events. Direct references to the rugged terrain, as well as the difficulty in traversing it, establish geographical travel as the story framework. At the same time the descriptive images of land recall the underlying political issues of the Foix-Béarn history: seigniorial territory, economic power, disputed lineage, and jeopardized legacies.

This chapter will discuss how the chronicler's graphic descriptions of geography and landscape outline his journey and anticipate the fragile political situation that he will eventually uncover.[52] Distinctive from the *Devisement* and the *Prise*, Froissart's "Voyage" introduces into our study of travel histories an innovative traveling historian who, in reflecting on his personal experiences and historical discoveries over the course of an actual journey, weaves together history with ongoing political conflict. Froissart transforms himself into an adventurer by explicitly linking travel and writing, where the story of the pursuit foregrounds the history of Foix-Béarn. I therefore refer to Froissart as a chronicler and as a traveler because he assumes both these roles in his account. This link vivifies history; it brings historical events out of the past and inserts them into the lived experience of the travelling chronicler. Similar to Rustichello, the malleable

[52] Contrary to early scholarship that finds "no attempt to convey to the reader the appearance of the countryside," this study places new importance on the description of the countryside as a narrative strategy to frame history. See A.D. Diverres's introduction to Jean Froissart, "Voyage en Béarn," xxv.

language of travel comes to serve as a vehicle for implicating journey in the writing process. Description of landscapes builds political geographies that trigger the chronicler's interest in the heir to the Foix-Béarn legacy. Certain images from the Froissart manuscript tradition insert the mobile chronicler into the physical context of the journey and the transmission of information. Deviating from the well-known images of the first two Books of the *Chroniques* that depict large-scale sea voyages, artists of select manuscripts of the third and fourth books illustrate the chronicler as a travelling subject of the historical text. Narrative and image do not limit the role of travel to recounting the past, but rather manipulate it in order to offer a subjective interpretation of events and the role they will play in history yet to come. These elements demonstrate how Froissart's history draws its relevance not from honoring the knightly classes but, in the true spirit of reportage,[53] from highlighting how past events impact the current political climate and shape the future.

"Tout en chevauchant": The Language of Travel and Writing

At first glance, the relationship between travel and writing in the "Voyage" appears to be merely one of facilitation, whereby the journey gives the historian access to the material necessary for writing. Yet, as we witnessed with Rustichello in the *Devisement*, Froissart plays with terminology so as to fuse the physical experience of travelling with practice of writing. In Froissart's textual world, terms like "marches," "chevaucher," "passer," and "poursuivre" fold travel and writing into a single enterprise while the blurring of terrain and time creates a topography of the writing experience. The real "va et vient" of the Béarn passage is the reciprocity created between travel and

[53] For more on Froissart and *reportage*, see Peter Ainsworth's introduction in *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*, vii-viii*;* and Jean Pierre Tucoo-Chala, "Froissart dans le Midi Pyréen," 130-131.

writing, where the quest for information becomes part of the history to be told. In another way, the historian's physical experience on the road determines the limits of the historical text. He also depends on his guide to elucidate the terrain he crosses and to explain events that occurred there. The journey thus determines the scope of the written narrative both in the information that it accesses and the knowledge that it denies. The historian must climb mountainous paths, cross rivers and overcome obstacles—elements of physical travel that create a tangible text.

Froissart deliberately intertwines his travels with the gathering of historical information, thereby fully encapsulating the concept of travel histories where approaches to recording history physically locate subjects in the terrain of an actual journey. In contrast to the *Devisement*, where the organizer proposes a textual alternative to Marco Polo's actual journey, and the *Prise*, where the poet divorces himself entirely from Pierre de Lusignan's historical crusade venture and the eyewitnesses who experienced it, Froissart positions himself and his key witness, Espan de Lion, in the actual journey through Foix-Béarn. In retrieving knowledge about past events, the chronicler frames his account within the travel experience so that we discover new information alongside the travelling historian and his companion. This new emphasis on the journey, as both the topic and the framework of the narrative, implicates Froissart in the travel experience and in an interpretive process that collapses the distance between the past and the present political climate.

The parallel between the historian's writing project and travel through the Foix-Béarn region opens the third book of the *Chroniques*. The chronicler retraces the "marches," the mountainous climb of the journey, while reflecting on the ordering of

these travel experiences in the narrative. This is how the narrating first person, later to be defined as "Je, Jehan Froissart" (1:123),[54] transitions from Book II to describing the preparations for his departure to Béarn: "Je me sui longuement tenu a parler des besoignes des loingtaines marches, mais les prochaines tant qu'a maintenant m'ont esté si fresches et si nouvelles et si enclinans a ma plaisance, que pour ce je les ay mis arriere . . . " (1:103). We already see Froissart linking geographical terrain with written history. Here, the "loingtaines marches" represent past tales recorded beforehand in Book II, which he puts aside in order to turn to his subsequent travels—"prochaines [marches]"—that he will now write down—"mettre arriere." "Arriere" refers to both writing and space, blending the language of travel with the initial description of the writing process and implying a forward movement; as the chronicler puts things to writing, he will subsequently advance in his journey.

The chronicler also calls attention to the relationship between time and distance. "Fraîches" and "nouvelles" denote the innovative quality of the narrative as well as the proximity of the chronicler's experience, described as ". . . une actualité proche dans l'espace aussi bien que dans le temps . . ." (Zink 64). The newness of the journey contrasts with the remoteness of the historical events that travel accesses, creating a narrative where the past and present come together. The "prochaines [marches]" look ahead to new adventures and the knowledge that they will uncover. The alliteration of "loingtaines" and "longuement" further underscores the association of time and distance by linking the geographical space of travel to the length of the narration. In describing his writing process, the chronicler draws particular attention to space and time as determinants of both travel and historical narrative.

[54] All citations are from Peter Ainsworth's edition of *Les Chroniques*, Livre III.

Subsequent descriptions of physical travel set the "marches" of the chronicler's journey into motion. For instance, throughout the narrative the recurring verb "chevaucher" describes movement that propels the historian across physical landscapes in his quest for information. "Chevaucher" generally pertains to ambulatory movement, but for Froissart, it extends to the chronicler's work of gathering and ordering information: "Et tant traveillay et chevauchay en querant de tous costez nouvelles, que par la grace de Dieu, sans peril et sans dommaige je vins en son chastel a Ortais ou pays de Berne le jour Sainte Katherine que on compta pour lors en l'an de grace mille troiscens quatrevins et huit" (1:104-105). The chronicler works, "traveillay," and rides, "chevauchay" to facilitate his inquiry—"querant." The physical travel that these first two terms evoke leads to information that the historian will later use to build his narrative. The use of travel vocabulary to describe the process of writing history blurs the boundary between the two experiences. The chronicler further underscores the overlap of history and travel by locating relevant accounts, "nouvelles," in geographical space "tous costez." The chronicler's discovery of history depends on his own widespread travel, where he can retrieve information from all sides of his path.

Passage, as opposed to destination, punctuates this journey, which further pulls together images of actual travel and references to historical discourse. "Passer" denotes both time and space, and so the use of this verb to describe travel events also reflects on history and the role that movement plays in retelling it. The most noticeable manipulation of the double meaning of "passer" occurs when the chronicler names himself as the speaking subject: "Je sire Jehan Froissart fay narracion de ces besoignes pour la cause de ce que, quant je fus en la conté de Fois et de Berne je passay parmi la

terre de Bigorre. Si enquis et demanday de toutes nouvelles passees desquelles je n'estoie point enformez . . . " (1:123). The passage through Bigorre, "je passay," alliteratively places the "nouvelles passees" in the context of the journey so that the narrated history absorbs the movement of geographical travel. "Passer" simultaneously signals physical passage and the historical past, echoing the work of the chronicler who presents himself as both subject and traveler. "Passer," as well as the conflation of travel and narration in the historian figure, affirms the influence of travel in shaping the historical narrative.

The ever-present Espan de Lion, whose lively conversation provides the chronicler with the information he needs to construct his narrative, anchors history in landscape. Physical movement, again evoked by "chevaucher," incites conversation that will later prove to be fundamental to unearthing specific information about hidden histories. Vivid references to geographical travel frame the historian's interview with Espan, even from their first interaction: "En chevauchant, le gentil chevalier, puis que il avoit dit au matin ses oroisons, il se desduisoit le plus du jour a moy en demandant nouvelles; et aussi quant je lui en demandoie, il m'en respondoit" (1 :128). Movement along the itinerary to Orthez, marked by "en chevauchant," provides important opportunities for conversation. The continual exchange of "nouvelles" occurs within the particular timeframe of the travel context, "le plus du jour." Travel facilitates the chronicler's encounter with historical sites that in turn prompt ongoing dialogue with Espan.

The chronicler later upholds the importance of time in the history project, once he has already collected substantial information about chivalric deeds and political tension.

The transfer of Espan's testimony depends on the temporal constraints determined by the geographical itinerary to Orthez. The chronicler enjoys the *chevalier*'s tales so much that at times, the path is too short:

> Moult me tournoient a grant plaisance et recreacion les comptes que messire Espaeng de Lion me comptoit, et m'en sembloit le chemin trop plus brief. En comptant telles aventures passasmes nous le Pas au Larre et le chastel du Marteras ou la bataille fu, et venismes moult pres du chastel de Barbesen qui est bel et fort, a une petite lieue de Tharbe (1:167-168).

The chronicler describes the geographical itinerary, "le chemin," in temporal terms, "trop plus brief." Not only does the historian maintain the importance of the travel framework in the description of writing history, but the blending of landscape and time also reflects how travel vocabulary comes to describe the interviewing process that distinguishes the "Voyage." The positioning of "aventures" next to "passasmes" further underscores the imbrication of travel and time in the narrative. "Passer," with its temporal and mobile connotations, refers to past adventures as well as to the movement through Pas au Larre and the castle of Marteras.

As the travelling companions continue on their path to Orthez, they have more time to continue their exchange and furthermore, they encounter physical landmarks that pinpoint specific historical events. The chronicler describes these types of encounters with the nuanced meaning of "passer," which occurs on the first day on the road: "Au departir de la cité de Paumiers, nous passasmes le mont de Cesse qui est moult traveilleux et malaisié a monter, et passasmes delez la ville et chastel de Ortingas qui est du roy de France . . ." (1:128-129). "Malaisé" and "traveilleux" recreate the vigor and difficulty of

the historian's horseback trek. "Passasmes" alludes to the movement that will unearth the history embedded in the landscape. Espan de Lion finally satiates curiosity about these anticipated events, divulging information about the taking of Ortingas, which Froissart then inserts into the narration as a historical event.

The travelers' passage to the city of Casseres continues in this vein and includes a more concrete example of the history contained in this distant site. This history only comes to light once the travelers take a tour around the city, contemplate its past and confront the events that have left physical traces on its surface: "Nous passasmes au long de la ville et venismes a une porte qui siet devers Palaminich, et passasmes oultre et venismes sur les fossez. Le chevalier me monstra un pan du mur de la ville et me dist . . . " (1:135). The companions' passage alongside the city walls, "nous passasmes au long de la ville," and through its gates, "passasmes oultre," galvanizes the *passé* of the site. Espan then shows the historian a new part of the city wall, which was constructed after it had been destroyed during a skirmish between the Conte de Foix and the Conte d'Armignac. Physical contact with this site accesses the violence of its past and, as we shall see later in the chapter, shows how the chronicler uses landmarks to convey his concern about current political unrest. The physical passage around Casseres transports the chronicler to another place and time where he discovers the turbulent history between the Foix and Armignac families.

Pursuit is yet another term that refers both to physical travel and the construction of the historical narrative. The historian's arrival at Orthez and first encounter with Gaston Fébus confirm travel as the means of pursuing and finally accessing information. But the chronicler goes further to suggest that it is movement that renders his project

truly exceptional. According to the historian, Fébus himself praises both the creation and, most importantly, the journey that made it possible: "Et je meismes quant je lui demandoie aucune chose, il le me disoit moult volentiers, et me disoit bien que l'istoire que je avoie fait et poursuivoie seroit ou temps a avenir plus recommandee que nulle autre" (1:105). The history gains renown because it is the product of the historian's making, "je avoie fait," and pursuit, "poursuivoie." The latter term, while it relates to reportage, also pertains to the historian's journey through the region in search of Orthez and the infamous lord who holds it, Gaston Fébus. Using Fébus's voice, the chronicler implies that it is this rare account of the Conte de Foix, as well as the physical pursuit of it, that will make the recorded history "plus recommandee que nulle autre." The chronicler thus implicates his most important eyewitness in his reaffirmation of the relationship between travel and history.

The insistence on pursuit as a driving force for both the journey and the historical narrative articulates the role of the traveller in travel histories. The traveller, as exemplified by the mobile chronicler in the "Voyage," becomes emblematic of the writer who seeks out stories and then creates dynamic and engaging narratives. Rustichello performs this task in part by highlighting the metaphorical relationship between travel and writing, yet the textual travel that he offers is not grounded in his own experiences, nor the actual events of the journey. The travelling chronicler of the "Voyage," on the other hand, embodies the transformation from writer to adventurer because he physically embarks on a quest through Foix-Béarn and records his travel experiences as part of the narrative.

The chronicler again discusses his pursuit with the coupling of "faire" and "poursuivre," which reoccurs during the chronicler's response to another key witness: Espan de Lion. Again, the direct reference to pursuit captures the effort to preserve both past events and the more recent journey. The chronicler reflects on this dual objective, supplementing and eventually supplanting Espan's compelling testimony with an affirmation of the importance of physical pursuit. He states:

> . . . que vos paroles me sont agreables et que elles me font grant bien endementres que vous les m'avez comptees, et vous ne les perdez pas, car toutes seront mises en memoir et en remembrance, en histoire et en cronique, tout ce que je faiz et poursui, se Dieu me donne que a santé je puisse retourner en la conté de Haynault et en la ville de Valenciennes dont je suis natif (1:182).

The chronicler explains to Espan that his words will not be lost, but remembered "en histoire et en cronique." Froissart then shifts away from the importance of the testimony to focus on his own experience, "tout ce que je faiz et poursui." This intervention suggests the replacement of eyewitness testimony with an account of what the historian did and pursued firsthand—geographical travel throughout Foix-Béarn and the excavation of the history embedded in the landscape. The final words of this response reiterate the primacy of travel in the construction of history. The chronicler foregrounds the journey as a past event that makes up the topic of the current narration. Only the successful return to Valenciennes in Hainaut will allow the chronicler to put these events into writing. Yet the role of travel projects into the future as the experience that will determine the final written document. The deliberate manipulation of language to

associate travel and writing reinforces the relationship between landscape and history, framing the historian's quest to discover more about the Béarn inheritance.

Political Geographies and Landscapes of Violence

In crafting a particular mobile approach to historical narrative, Froissart takes account of his audience's particular concerns and manipulates the descriptions of travel landscapes accordingly. To the late medieval aristocratic reader at the height of the Hundred Years War, land was the site and the source of violent conflict, where decades of bloodshed on continental Europe challenged territorial boundaries, reassigned feudal lordships, and scarred the landscape. While much of the *Chroniques* celebrates knightly exploits and great feats of arms, the "Voyage" complicates the chivalric ideal first by placing a travelling writer in the literal seat of the knight, and second by providing vivid examples of the more unsavory consequences of territorial disputes and a warring knightly class. Such political issues extend to the representation of land in the "Voyage," where the passing descriptions of territory in Froissart's journey address the problem of "héritage" or legacy.

The region of Foix-Béarn presents the historian with an ideal opportunity to explore this issue because of the tension between the noble houses of Armagnac and Foix, the latter having disputable lineage that threatens the county with future conflict. This uncertain fate creates a climate of discomfort that the travel framework intensifies. The chronicler does not immediately present this problem, but rather he slowly lets the facts unfold over the course of his journey across Foix-Béarn—the very land that constitutes Gaston Fébus's jeopardized legacy. The connection between landscape and inheritance initiates a notion of territory that drives the chronicler to pursue the dark

event that first created the troubling situation: the sudden, mysterious death of Fébus's young son and heir. While elsewhere scholars have commented on the "suspended narration of Gaston's only son" as a "dramatic goal to the journey and to the text" (Diller, "Froissart's 1389 Travel to Béarn" 50), studies have not explored how vivid descriptions of landscape and the physical traces of violence lay the groundwork for suspense concerning the disappearance of the Foix-Béarn heir. The chronicler's manipulation of landscape portrayals to discuss violent events distinguishes the "Voyage" from the *Prise*, where the poet's deliberate distancing from the site of the crusade prevents him from discussing violence in a vivid manner. Instead, the violent history of Pierre's crusade emerges in the manuscript traditions of the *Prise*, where large-scale images of the assault on Alexandria and the material of the parchment evoke the brutality of the conquest. In the "Voyage," however, the narrated description of territory and the physical impact of war, as well as eyewitness dialogue that confirms the violent nature of the events, translate the historian's reportage into a dangerous quest.

The first step in this quest begins with the association of land with seigniorial families. Descriptions of landscape do not just provide context for the historian's journey, but also have symbolic meaning as the principle component of legacy. Narrated geography transforms the setting of the historian's journey into a visualization of regional politics:

> Entre la conté de Fois et le païs de Berne gist la conté de Bigorre, laquele est toute du roy de France et marchist au païs thoulousain d'une part, et au conte de Comminges et de Berne d'autre part. En la conté de Bigorre gist le fort chasteau de Lourde qui tousjours s'est tenu angloiz de puis que le païs de Bigorre fu renduz

> au roy d'Engleterre et au prince pour la redempcion du roy Jehan de France par la traittié de la paix qui fu traittié a Bretigny devant Chartres, et confermee depuis a Calais, si comme il est contenu ci dessus en nostre histoire (1:119-120).

The vast region of Bigorre lies in between the two territories held by Gaston Fébus and borders two other regions—one belonging to the King of France and the other to Toulouse. While these details are necessary to create the illusion of accuracy, the care in naming rulers and treaties also directs attention to the issue of seigniorial power and the role it plays in the historian's inquest. In presenting landscape as territory, the chronicler announces seigniorial legacy as a central issue that he will pursue.

The chronicler's articulation of the itinerary initially privileges the discovery of historical information embedded in geography, only to then shift focus to identify the lord of this traveled region: "En ce temps que je emprins a faire mon chemin et de aler devers le conte de Fois, pour tant que je ressoignoie la diversité du païs ou je n'avoie onques esté ne entré . . ." (1:127). The "chemin" takes the historian across varied terrains in pursuit of the Conte de Foix, whose legacy becomes the goal of the journey and the narrative. The articulation of the chronicler's path places within the landscape the Conte de Foix, who is at once a ruling lord and the chronicler's destination. An aura of mystery also envelops the country, which the chronicler describes as an unfamiliar and diverse place that he has yet to discover. However, in contrast to Marco Polo's narrative, which marveled at diversity, here diversity is feared: "je ressoignoie la diversité." The description of the departure along the itinerary anticipates the dark secret that will only come to light once the journey to Fébus, the infamous lord described by the chronicler in geographical terms, is completed.

Once on the road, the chronicler sculpts the landscape in order to heighten awareness of both the physical surroundings and the political alliances that shape nearby territories. Descriptions of natural landmarks serve this double task because they frequently mark boundaries between territories while tracing out Froissart's itinerary. For instance, the chronicler evokes the Garonne River as a landmark for the journey: " . . . et puis entrasmes en la terre le conte de Comminges et d'Armignach au léz devers nous, et d'autre part la Garonne siet, qui est la terre au conte de Fois" (1:139). The image of the Garonne locates the travelers in a specific place within the vast space of Foix-Béarn and also marks the political division of territory between the Conte de Foix, the Conte de Comminges and the Conte d'Armignac. The description of the natural landscape thus serves to map out the competing seigniorial regimes of the region. Passage through this political geography allows the chronicler to grasp the physical limits of Fébus's territory and the neighboring forces that threaten it.

While the natural splendor of the Garonne adds color and life to the historical account, man-made landmarks provide more concrete barriers between territories at the same time that they assert seigniorial presence. The narration of Froissart and Espan's travel just outside of Palaminy includes an account of a fortified town and mountain castles. These manmade landmarks represent physical signs of seigniorial legacy that emphasize territorial divisions, which are already carved into the rustic landscape. The historian ventures farther along the mountainous passage and takes note of the important and impressive political strongholds that he encounters there:

> En chevauchant nostre chemin me monstra le chevalier une ville assez forte et bonne par semblant qui s'appelle Marteras le Toussac, la quele est au conte de

> Comminges. Et d'autre part la riviere sur les montaignes me monstra il deux chasteaulx qui sont au conte de Fois, dont li uns s'appelle Montmirail et l'autre Monclare (1:139).

Espan de Lion also directs attention to these landmarks, which suggests the importance of the constructed landscape in the political history that he has yet to relate during the journey. The chronicler thus weaves together the geographical space, the politics of the region, and the narration of history to reshape the adventure in Foix-Béarn into a veritable quest for knowledge. Through this process, we see fully the function of the travel account in late medieval writing as a strategy to draw attention to the writer's role as an adventurer.

The image of the river reoccurs as the chronicler progresses deeper into the region, reinforcing the double role it plays as a landscape detail and as a landmark of seigniorial territory. When the companions pass Mount Pesath, the chronicler identifies the river as the Garonne in order to anchor the travel in a specific geography. At the same time the river physically divides the territory of the Conte de Foix from the land of the Conte d'Armignach. The precision of this description thus builds a tangible space for the companions' travel while alluding to the neighboring force that threatens the Foix-Béarn legacy:

> En telz paroles et devises nous chevauchasmes tout le jour contremont la riviere de Garonne, et vey d'une part et d'autre la riviere pluseurs beaux chasteaux et forteresces; tous ceulx qui estoient par de la, a la main senestre, estoient pour le conte de Fois, et cilz de par ça devers nous estoient pour le conte d'Armignach (1:140).

The chronicler and Espan exchange "paroles et devises" while on horseback, a familiar scene that associates the gathering of information with movement. The more concrete context of this experience, "la riviere de Garonne," sculpts the background where the journey takes place and, as a waterway in flux, animates the terrain. "Contremont" visualizes the height of the mountain scene and vivifies the companions' upward climb of the mountain path.[55] These elements maintain travel as a central topic of the narrative. Yet as the chronicler continues the description of the scene and, observing the impressive seigniorial castles and territory "d'une part et d'autre la riviere," the Garonne transforms into a marker of political division. The natural landmark visually partitions the opposing strongholds: the left belonging to the Conte de Foix, while the Armignac territory lies directly next to the travelers. The chronicler manipulates the description of landscape to further emphasize the actual travel through a politically-charged terrain that gives contour and texture to history.

The travelers' progress on the path to Orthez results in the accumulation of more information about Gaston Fébus and his territory, which allows the chronicler to bring the question of legacy into sharper focus. Thus when the travelers depart from the region of Comminges, they learn more about Fébus's family, the terrain that belongs to them, and the political web that ties these personages and places together: "En chevauchant je regarday et vy par dela la riviere un tresbel chastel et grant, et bonne ville par apparance. Je demanday au chevalier comment ce chastel estoit nommé. Il me dist qu'on l'appelloit Montesplain" (1:142). "Chevaucher," yet again, recalls the physical aspect of the historian's quest, but this time it triggers a series of small histories provided directly by

[55] "Contremont" generally designates "vers le haut," but in the particular context of the travel through Béarn this refers to the mountains that the travelers climb along the way. See the *Dictionnaire du moyen français*.

Espan. The brief description of the castle instigates extensive conversation about seigniorial alliances and exploits, including Espan's service for Charles of Spain. The travellers' encounter with new terrain thereby inspires stories about the lord who possesses it: Fébus's cousin Roger of Spain who, like Espan, served Charles of Spain. Espan reads the landmark for feudal and familial relationships, tracing out a vast network of feudal connections in which the house of Foix-Béarn participates. With the assistance of his knowledgeable interlocutor, the chronicler relates the conflicts that define these political relations and affiliates them with the land that preserves their history.

The historian benefits from travel not just to gather information, but also to assign different degrees of value to that information. His accumulation of detailed images of landscape, as well as the territorial feuds discovered during the journey, creates a sense of pursuit to learn more about Fébus and the implications that these conflicts currently have on his domain. This effect intensifies as the travelers venture deeper into the Foix-Béarn territory and discover more landmarks that testify to Fébus's power. The companions leave Saint Goussens and continue on the path to Orthez:

> Aprés disner nous montasmes a cheval et partismes et preismes le chemin de Lourde et de Mauvoisin, chevauchasmes unes landes qui durent en alant devers Thoulouse bien .xv. lieues, et appell'en ces landes Lane de Bouk, et y a moult de perilleux passages pour gens qui seroient advisez. Emmy la Lane de Bouk siet le chastel de Lamesen qui est au conte de Fois, et une grosse lieue ensus la ville de Tournay dessoubz Mauvoisin, le quel chastel le chevalier me moustra . . . (1:143-144).

The chronicler's description of the dangers of the route attests to the physical geography and to the actual risks involved in traversing it. The systematic plotting of towns provides details that pull the chronicler further into the journey and more importantly, into the land belonging to the Conte de Foix. The more the chronicler reveals about the topographical background of his travel, the more it alludes to the immensity of Fébus's territory. The mapping out of the vast territory communicates the stakes of the Foix-Béarn legacy even before we learn for certain that it is in jeopardy.

This political map visualizes seigniorial power, yet it is geographical travel that permits the chronicler to confront territorial divisions. "Héritage" transforms from being an abstract concept of cartographic representation into a tangible entity marked by physical boundaries. Regional frontiers give shape to local politics and anticipate neighboring feuds, which are in turn expressed through the description of damaged and abandoned castles along the route. The chronicler takes care in outlining these boundaries when describing the *chevaliers* from Lourdes, men who have a documented reputation for overstepping their boundaries and creating trouble. It is this problematic history that incited the Prince Noir to journey to Lourdes, the account of which the chronicler weaves into his passage through Bigorre (1:123). The territorial boundaries that define this past episode foreground later skirmishes in that same region and serve as a mirror of the chronicler's own experience in the landscape. Lourdes was a worthy destination for the Prince Noir because it was described as a powerful and strategic site that also had an intriguing history:

> Quant il fu venu jusques a Lourde, et il ot bien advisé et ymaginé la ville, le chastel et le paÿs, si le recommanda moult grandement, tant pour la force du lieu

> que pource que Lourde siet sur frontiere de pluseurs païs, car ceulx de Lourde peuvent courir moult avant ou royaume d'Arragon et jusques en Casteloigne et Basselonne (1:124)

Inhabitants divulged information about the site in order to encourage the prince to visit, "le recommanda moult grandement." The power of the site, "la force du lieu," derives from the detailed descriptions that provoked the prince to imagine the town and especially the landscape, "le paÿs." The "force" also geographically refers to the strategic location of the castle at the intersection of several frontiers, which enabled the chevaliers of Lourdes to ride out in several directions. Physical boundaries partition seigniorial territories and give definition to legacy, but such barriers ultimately prove to be useless in the turmoil of a warring knightly class—both in the distant past and in events yet to unfold. The interest in landscape goes beyond the travel context and now begins to frame the particular pursuit of information about violent disputes over territory.

The threat that the chronicler foregrounds in the account of the Prince Noir becomes a reality in Espan's later account of the region. The dangers of the route multiply and Espan discloses more micro-histories that reveal the physical impact of violence on the landscape. For the travelers, the rocky terrain and the swift river represent small inconveniences next to the peril that burnt fields, ruined structures, and pillaged towns elicit. Accounts of disputes between warring chevaliers do not just entail past events for the chronicler's project—they especially allude to the damage that the violence inflicts in the present and may continue to inflict on the landscape. Danger of conflict accompanies the depiction of territory, thereby conveying the insecurity of the Foix-Béarn legacy. Espan's account of Pierre Ernault de Berne and the harm that his

band of chevaliers caused in the vicinity serves as a preliminary example that links violence to landscape:

> Cil compaignon de Lourde avoient trop beau courir ou ilz leur plaisoit, et chevauchier. Assez pres de la, si comme je vous ay dit, siet la ville de Tharbe que ilz tenoient en grant doubte, et tindrent tant que ilz se mirent en patti a eulx. En revenant de Tharbe a leur fort siet un grant village et une bonne abbaie ou ilz firent moult de maulx, que on appella Guiors, mais ilz se mirent en patti a eulx (1:126).

The companions from Lourdes, riding out with Pierre, harassed the city of Tharbes and frightened the inhabitants. The chevaliers managed to extort money from the town before taking any drastic measures; however the neighboring village was not so fortunate. Pierre's clan severely damaged an abbey, "ou ilz firent moult de maulx," and Espan's account of this horrific deed visualizes the impact of violence on landmarks and the danger of warring chevaliers, who resorted to attacking a religious establishment for financial profit. The image of the abbey in this account represents just one of many landmarks whose visible damage colors the history of these exploits in an unfavorable light.

Espan more concretely roots other incidents in the landscape that he encounters with the chronicler. The castle of Ortingas holds a particularly disturbing history of deceit and underhanded trickery. Pierre d'Auchin won the fortress from the French using shocking and dishonorable tactics: he hid with his men while his valets, pretending to offer wine to the town watchmen, persuaded them to open the city gates. The valets whistled and Pierre's clan descended upon the unsuspecting guards, snatching up the

keys to the gate and killing all those standing in the way. After this "victory," Pierre and his companions were then free to roam the countryside, leaving a path of destruction that Froissart and Espan will later discover:

> . . . et couroient, il et ses gens, bien souvent jusques aux portes de Carcassonne ou il y a d'illec .xvj. grans lieues, et adommagierent moult le païs tant par les raençons des villes qui se rachetoient comme par pillages qu'ilz faisoient sur le païs (1:131-132).

The narrative pairs the term "païs" with violent acts on two distinct occasions: "adommagierent moult le païs," and "pillages . . . sur le païs." The reoccurrence of "païs" in the description of destruction emphasizes the physical damage done to the land. Espan unearths this historical episode when he passes by the castle where the fighting first began, further underscoring the connection between travel, territory, and conflict. The extent of the destruction, reaching all the way to Carcasonne, heightens the historian's anxiety concerning the fate of Foix-Béarn. Like the other seigniorial territories of the region that endured violence and destruction, Fébus's land is at risk.

Pierre d'Auchin, together with "ceulx de Lourde," continued to pillage the land and leave traces of violent conflict, but the chronicler eventually shifts focus to two other chevaliers: Ernauton de Sainte Colombe and le Bourch de Carvellac. Together with over fifty armed "bonnes gens," they left Lourdes and made their way through the mountains to Toulouse. Their journey drastically altered the landscape along their itinerary: "A leur retour ilz leverent es praeries grant foison de bestail, vaches et buefs, pors, moutons et brebis, et prindrent moult de bons hommes ou plat païs et tout ramenoient devant eulx" (1:160). The companions removed the animals and the working men from the prairie, an

adverse yet common consequence in a region marked by political instability. The description of the looting suggests how violence changed the shape of the land. Without the farmers and their stock, the country truly became a "plat païs"—flat, inert and lifeless prairie land. The marauding band of chevaliers took control of the territory and transformed its physical surface for the worse: "ceulx de Lourde se contenoient et chevauchoient le païs."[56] The flattening and the forceful containment of the territory represent the negative physical and economic impacts of a warring knightly class.

Espan's account of the next episode in this history reaffirms the role of land in visualizing and preserving the violence of past conflict. Perceiving the threat of the destructive knights from Lourdes, a captain of Tharbe, Ernauton Bissette, appealed to the seigneur de Benac and to other lords and knights of Bigorre for aid. Together with men from Bigorre, Bissette rode out against "ceulx de Lourde" and finally, the Bourche de Carvellac and the sire de Benac confronted each other on the bridge and the fields in between Mauvoisin and Tournay. The skirmish took place on the very path that Espan and the chronicler would later travel. Espan makes the connection between the tumultuous history and the landscape that presently lies before them: "Droitement sur le pas ou nous chevons maintenant qu'on dit au Larre, ilz se trouverent. Et tantost comme ilz se virent, tost descendirent de leurs chevaulx, et les laissierent aler paistre, et attincterent et appointerent leurs lances . . ." (1:162-163). The current footsteps of the travelers approach the site of past conflict on the path "au Larre." The preservation of the site puts the chronicler and his companion into contact with the fight between Carvellac and Benac. The proximity of past actions, "chevons," with the present "chevaulx" fuses the historical event to the ongoing journey. Espan reaffirms this relationship by

[56] Ibid.

continuing to evoke the geographical space of the history that he recounts: "Et la furent une espace en ferant et poussant de leurs lances l'un sur l'autre . . ." (1:163). "Et la" denotes the space with which Espan and the historian presently have contact. Yet this space is also the site of past conflict—"la furent une espace en ferant et poussant de leurs lances." "La" brings together the geographical space of the journey and the context of the history that Espan recounts.

The fighting between the two camps escalated and over the course of several hours, two celebrated chevaliers were killed: Montgaut de Sainte Basille on the side of Lourdes, and Ernauton Bissette from Tharbe. The participants carried each man back to his homeland for burial, yet they also labeled the site of the conflict with a physical marker of remembrance. Espan recounts: "Si emporterent ceulx de Lourde le Mongaut tout occis, et li François a Tharbe Ernauton Bisete. Et pour ce qu'il feust remembrance de la bataille, on fist la une croix de pierre ou ces .ij. escuiers s'abatirent et moururent. Vela la, je la vous monstre" (1:165). Espan directs the chronicler's attention to the stone cross that marks the site of the past battle. This marker commemorates the chevaliers who lost their lives but also concretely anchors the historical event in the space where it took place. The chronicler's inclusion of the stone cross in the description of the companions' passage through the "pas au Larre" defines the itinerary but also elicits an emotional response. The tragic loss of life inspires the travelers to say a prayer for the dead, as the chronicler describes: "A ces motz cheïsmes nous droit sur la croix, et y deïsmes chascun pour les ames des mors une patenostre" (1:165). Espan and the chronicler go directly to the landmark to pay tribute to the lost souls. This detail provides a counter example to the celebration of knightly feats of arms that one finds elsewhere in

the *Chroniques* and for which Froissart is more commonly celebrated. Here he confronts us instead with a grim reminder of the human cost of war.

The chronicler capitalizes on the disquiet that comes from reflecting on these disputes in order to call attention to the aura of mystery draping the region. His survey of landscape from the entrance to Pas au Larre, the passage that opens onto the region, does not clarify geography, but rather imbues the region with strangeness: "Adonc advisay je et regarday le païs. Si me sembla moult estrange, et me tenisse pour perdu ou en tres grant aventure se ce ne feust la compaignie du chevalier" (1:159). We find, once again the malleable language that moves between travel and writing. This observation pertains to the obstacles of the journey, where "se tenir" evokes the physical quality of travel and "aventure" suggests the challenges encountered along the way. Yet the context of territory frames the travel adventures with the dangers of a region at war. This foreboding, underscored by the chronicler's description of the strange country, presents a troubling reality that the historian eventually recovers. Espan's animated company permits the gathering of information, but also sets the tone of the "Voyage," where landscapes preserve a physical record of past territorial disputes and the mapping of political factions reveals the potential for future conflicg. Froissart's travel history, where his journey through Foix-Béarn uncovers facts about the region's past, thus also looks forward to consider how past conflict shapes the current political climate and the fate of the traveled region.

In Pursuit of Béarn's Lost Heir

Progress towards Orthez gives shape to the quest and the rapid dialogue exchange between the two companions quickens the pace from the earlier, more leisurely

conversation, thereby amplifying the movement of the journey. The chronicler, having absorbed territory and conflict as primary concerns of the narrative, is now poised to pursue the issue of legacy in the Foix-Béarn family with his companion. The query starts to unfold when the historian finally gets a glimpse of Fébus's cold authority and interrupted line of succession. Espan recounts a history that includes Fébus's lengthy imprisonment of his own cousin, who also happens to be his heir. The chronicler responds with surprise because, having just traveled through a precarious landscape charred by Fébus's enemies, he learns that Fébus is actually dependent on them. His reaction to Espan reflects his astonishment: "Comment, sire? . . . n'a donc le conte de Fois nul enfant, que je vous os dire que le viconte de Chastelbon est son heritier?" (1:173). Here the chronicler deliberately draws attention to the impact of his travels on his understanding of how history should unfold. Although the historian does not acknowledge the strangeness of the incarceration of Fébus's own heir, his need to confirm the state of Fébus's legacy produces a tone of bewilderment and alarm. This response upholds legacy and the disputes that arise from it as a central concern of the narrative—an issue that landscapes of travel and evidence of war have already rendered familiar and tangible.

Curiosity about this remarkable news increases with the deferral of information about Fébus's son, who normally would inherit the Foix-Béarn fortune. The historian pursues information about the young heir, only to have Espan refuse testimony: ". . . ce ne sera pas maintenant car la matiere est trop longue, et nous sommes a ville, sicomme vous vëez" (1:174). The travelers arrive at the city of Tharbes, leaving no room for discussion of the long "matiere" of young Fébus's fate. Whereas the open road facilitates

endless conversation, the arrival to a city brings it to an end. Travel thus performs two distinct functions: it allows the historian to retrieve facts for his narrative and it denies access to events at key moments. The multifaceted purpose of the travel framework represents a delicate tension between divulging and denying information. The resulting suspense escalates the investigation of knowledge that the journey defers.

The relationship between landscape and historical accounts persists as Espan continues to deny information about Fébus's son and exacerbates the chronicler's anxiety about the lack of a proper heir. As in the previous example, the resolution to this mysterious event hinges on the arrival at the city where it took place: "La matiere est trop piteuse; si ne vous en vueil point parler. Quant vos vendrez a Ortais vous trouverez vien, se vous le demandez, qui le vous dira.' Je m'en souffri a tant, et puis chevauchasmes et venismes a Morlens" (1:187). The first interview about the topic of Fébus's son comes to an end because the "matiere" is too long; here it is "trop piteuse" and so Espan lacks the courage to address it. In both instances, the travel context determines the eventual discovery of the intriguing event. Here, the journey stands in between the historian and the truth because history requires travel to the location where events took place. This distance, in addition to the historian's mention of his suffering, further underscores the suspenseful tension between travel and history. Despite the chronicler's lengthy journey, certain facts continue to elude him and fuel his onward trek to Orthez, where he hopes to find an eyewitness who can satisfy his curiosity.

The rapid dialogue reaches new heights with the companions' arrival at Morlens, where Espan and the chronicler speak in direct discourse without any lengthy narrative intervention. In the following conversations, the historian learns more about the

relationship between the Count of Foix and the Duke of Berry and declares his intention to return to Hainault to write down his newly acquired knowledge. Despite his eagerness to record these important political interactions, he comes back to the subject of lineage that was earlier beyond his grasp:

> " . . . Mais je [Froissart] suis trop courrouciez d'une chose."
>
> "De la quele?" dist li chevaliers.
>
> "je la vous diray, par ma foy, que de si hault et si vaillant prince comme le conte de Fois est, il ne demeure nul heritier de femme espouse."
>
> "M'aït Dieux non," dist li chevaliers, "car se il en eust un vivant, si comme il ot une foiz, ce seroit le plus joieux seigneur du monde, et aussi seroient tous ceulx de sa terre."
>
> "Et demoura donc," di je, "sa terre sans hoir?" (1:182).

The chevalier and the chronicler exchange quick dialogue to bring attention to the pressing question of the Count of Foix's legitimate heir who, we now learn, has died. The chronicler and his companion do not expand on this tragedy and, generating concern and suspense, they only tell us more as they gather evidence over the course of the journey. The dialogue, while underscoring the necessity of legitimate lineage, also connects the jeopardized legacy to land, as expressed by Espan's reference to the inhabitants of Foix-Béarn—"tous ceulx de sa terre"—and by the chronicler's urgent question—"sa terre sans hoir?" The travelers' dialogue continues to make reference to land when Espan suggests that Fébus's illegitimate sons might fill the role of inheritors. The historian's response further highlights territory as the foundation of the Foix-Béarn legacy: "Sire . . . je le vueil bien, mais ce n'est pas chose deue ne raisonnable, de bastars

faire hoirs de terre" (1:182). There is no heir to Fébus's "terre," the land that frames the historian's travel and represents inheritance. The formulation of this problem recalls the prior landscapes that the historian already travelled and catalogued, providing a physical account of the stakes of the historian's quest. Without a legitimate heir to protect the territory and maintain boundaries, the landscapes that the historian just traveled may continue to be at risk to marauders and political schemes. The chronicler cultivates interest around the disappearance of Fébus's son in elaborating how the vast "terre" of Foix-Béarn hangs in the balance.

The historian presses on towards Orthez in search of answers, which only results in the discovery of more information that pushes legacy to the forefront of the historian's pursuit. On the route to Morlens, Espan shares his knowledge of events from the remote past, which frames the current problems facing the Foix-Béarn region. The historian, eager to learn the origin of the great conflict between the Foix and Armignac families, receives information about an unusual shift in lineage that occurred nearly one hundred years ago. The Count of Béarn at that time, who was also named Gaston, had only two daughters: the elder married to the Count of Armignac and the younger to the Count of Foix. During a skirmish with the King of Spain, the Count of Béarn appealed to his sons-in-law for military assistance. The Count of Foix answered the call, while the Count of Armignac sent heralds to announce his inability to assist his father-in-law. As a result, the Count of Béarn disinherited the Count of Armignac, favoring the Count of Foix who helped defend the family legacy. Espan de Lion gives a secondhand account of the Count of Béarn's discourse:

> Beau filz, vous estes mon filz bon, certain et loial, et avez gardé a tousjours mes mon honneur et l'onneur de mon païs. Le conte d'Ermignach, qui a l'ainsnee de mes filles, s'est excusez a mon grant besoing et n'est pas venu defendre ne garder l'erotaige ou il avoit part, pour quoy je di que tel part qu'il y attendoit de la partie ma fille sa femme, il l'a forfaite et perdue. Et vous enherite de toute la terre de Berne aprés mon decés, vous et voz hoirs a tousjours mais. Et prie et vueil et commande a tous mes habitans et subgiez que ilz seëllent et accordent avecques moy ceste heredité, beau filz de Fois, que je vous donne (1:186).

Espan directly quotes the Count of Béarn and, while the Count's speech deals with an episode that occurred "anciennement" (1:183), it nevertheless foretells the problems that now threaten Foix-Béarn. The discourse highlights the need for a strong, courageous heir who will defend Foix-Béarn at all costs. The Count of Béarn destines his legacy to the Count of Foix as well as to his "hoirs a tousjours mais." This articulation of inheritance seemingly foretells the current lack of an heir, where "tousjours mais," a derivative of "désormais," projects a stable lineage indefinitely into the future. However, as we later learn, this stability, in a world where legacy is "forfaite et perdue" regardless of legitimacy and lineage, is actually unattainable. In this light, the isolation of "mais" denotes an adversative expression that reflects the Count's anxiety. The sons of Foix will forever inherit the territory but—except—in the case where direct lineage comes to an abrupt halt. Espan's account of the incident that initially pitted the Count of Foix against the Count of Armignac explains the past conflict between the two families while anticipating the future instability that will arise when the heirs of Foix have died out.

When the historian finally reaches the Béarn court, the connection between itinerary landscapes and legacy reaches a sudden, dramatic climax. The castle at Orthez represents the landmark at the end of the long journey and the center of Fébus's territory. Here, he finally has the opportunity to interview knowledgeable people and uncover the mystery behind the tragic loss of the young heir. At first, Froissart gains information about foreign battles, but he does not elaborate on these episodes and instead turns his attention to the mystery of Fébus's missing heir:

> Je tendoie fort a demander et a savoir, pour tant que je veoie l'ostel du conte de Fois si large et si plantureux, que Gaston le filz du conte estoit devenus, ne par quel accident il / estoit mort, car messire Espaeng de Lion ne le m'avoit voulu dire (1:192-193).

The historian conveys the grandeur of the castle, "si large et si plantureux," underscoring the value of the inheritance and confirming the link between geographical location and historical information. Furthermore, the description of his pursuit of information, "tendoie fort," echoes the physical character of travel in the "Voyage." The mention of Espan's unwillingness to share the details of the heir's disappearance again achieves a suspenseful effect, underscored by the notion of "accident." The chronicler's inquest, even after his arrival at his final destination, continues to recall the role that his own travel plays in unearthing the truth behind this mystery. Espan and Froissart's journey through Foix-Béarn has reached its conclusion, but the narrative of young Fébus's enigmatic death has yet to conclude. Nevertheless, the chronicler's physical presence at the historical site is necessary to interview witnesses and discover the true story of the interrupted Foix-Béarn legacy.

At length, after the historian "tendoie fort a demander et a savoir" (1:192), the historian finds an eyewitness—"un escuier ancien et moult notable homme" (1:193)—to relate the tragic story in full and the mystery of the death of Gaston Fébus's son comes to light. The goal of the chronicler's inquest is finally achieved at the final destination of his long and arduous journey. Yet the resolution of the narrative does not quiet concerns about the Foix-Béarn legacy, but rather augments them. The historian laments the cruel justice of the Count of Foix who, we now learn, imprisoned and later fatally wounded his only son. Equally important, the chronicler reminds us of the danger that accompanies unstable lineage:

> A ouïr compter le compte a l'escuier de Berne de la mort au filz du conte de Fois, os je et prins a mon cuer grant pitié, et le plains moult grandement pour l'amour du gentil conte son pere, que je veoie et trouvoie seigneur de si haulte recommendation, si noble, si large du sien donner et si courtois, et pour l'amour aussi du pays qui demouroit en grant contempt et par defaulte d'eritier (1:203-204).

The end of this quest for information about Fébus's son only serves to highlight a larger problem—without a legitimate heir, the territory is open to political instability and violence. In traveling and writing the landscape, the historian takes careful account of the Foix-Béarn territory to convey the risk of gruesome conflict.

The preoccupation with inheritance in this particular context therefore speaks both to travel and politics. The historian may have uncovered the truth about the loss of Gaston Fébus's heir, but ultimately remains dissatisfied because of the likelihood of future strife. Travel exhumes history of the region and reminds the chronicler of the

frequency of seigniorial disputes. As the historian himself points out, " . . . mais cil d'Armignach sont trop fors, et ainsi seroit donc tousjours cil païs en guerre" (1:183). The conclusion of the quest narrative fails to resolve the peril of the current situation, which could lead the country into a state of permanent conflict. The chronicler's suspenseful build-up of young Fébus's fate creates more uncertainty regarding the future of the Foix-Béarn territory and confirms fears of future war instead of dispelling them. Froissart's "Voyage" is revolutionary in that it does not seek to explain current events or to learn from past models, but rather it stretches outward as a history in the making. The journey comes to an end but the future of Foix-Béarn, the history that has yet to unfold, remains disturbingly unclear.

Framing the Travelling Historian

The vast manuscript tradition of Froissart's *Chroniques* includes several *de luxe* copies that integrate the topic of travel into the illustrative cycle.[57] These miniatures highlight the fundamental role that travel plays within the historical events that Froissart records. Attempts to visually capture naval forces, sea voyages, and maritime battles persist in the two major manuscript traditions of the *Chroniques*: the earlier branch dating from the first half of the fifteenth century in Paris, and the later tradition from the latter half of the fifteenth century in Bruges. Early scholarship on Froissart manuscripts tended to discuss the traits unique to each tradition, but more recent art historical studies of voyage imagery establish a link between the two of them. The continued portrayal of distant historical journeys in Parisian and Flemish manuscripts represents shared imagery

[57] Out of the 160 surviving manuscript volumes, 64 contain illustrations. Godfried Croenen, "Froissart Illustration Cycles," 645.

and attests to the late medieval aristocratic interest in Troy.[58] The mythical narrative of Aeneas's Mediterranean voyage performs a legitimizing task for certain seigniorial legacies—an issue that, as discussed earlier, preoccupies the historian throughout the "Voyage."

What has been ignored in studies of voyage imagery is the artistic shift in certain manuscripts of Books III and IV that turns to the historian's own adventures rather than exclusively depicting past chivalric adventures. Here, the journey of the chronicler replaces historical voyages as the subject of miniatures, particularly at the outset of the "Voyage." Amidst the numerous images of the larger history, rare but poignant cues of the itinerary through Foix-Béarn offer an interpretation of the central role that Froissart's journey plays in the historical narrative. Artists locate the travelling historian in the field of his quest in order to visualize how historical information is gathered and synthesized. The portrayal of Froissart in the context of his journey harkens back to the mediative function of the travel framework in the "Voyage." The visual display of the collection and transfer of information bolster the mediation where the travel story type familiarizes distant histories for readers. Miniatures from Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 865; London, British Library Harley MS 4379-4380; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 130 B21; and Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 5189 show how artists from different production sites and time periods engage with the historian's journey and the transmission of information that it allows.

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[58] See Valentina Mazzei, "Reading a Frontispiece: Besançon 864," and Katariina Närä, "Some Burgundian Manuscripts of Froissart's Chroniques, with Particular Emphasis on British Library Ms Harley 4379-80." For more information about voyage imagery in the manuscript traditions of other chronicles, see Anne D. Hedeman, *The Royal Image: Illustrations of the Grandes chroniques de France, 1274-1422*.

Figure 28. Besançon MS 865, fol. 201r, detail.
http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/browsey.jsp?img0=i&pb0=Bes-2_201r&GlobalMode=facsimile&div0=ms.f.transc.Bes-2&disp0=pb&panes=1

The extensively illustrated Besançon manuscript, dating from the first half of the 15th century and probably produced in Pierre de Liffol's atelier,[59] comprises the first three books of the *Chroniques* in two volumes. In Besançon MS 865, the "Voyage" opens Book III and announces a heightened attention to artistic detail that is absent in the preceding books. Despite the insertion of Book III in the middle of the second volume of this copy of the *Chroniques*, artists elaborately decorate the first folio of Book III with a red and blue frame, extensive floral marginalia, a large decorated initial, and a prominent miniature [Figure 28]. This illustration displays events that mark the story of the chronicler's journey to Orthez. In the center, Froissart leaves his patron Guy de Blois and to the left, Froissart appears again—this time genuflecting before the majestic figure

[59] For more information about the production context of this manuscript, see Godfried Croenen, Mary Rouse and Richard Rouse, "Pierre de Liffol and the Manuscripts of Froissart's Chronicles."

of Gaston Fébus. Unlike the common *quadrillé* that adorns the first folia of both the first and second books of the Besançon manuscript, here the action takes place within a single frame. The lack of a visual border in between episodes creates a unique, cinematographic effect, where the chronicler appears to move across the scene. Anchored in a natural setting with rocks and trees, the artists recreate the rugged landscape of Foix-Béarn in lieu of the more commonplace courtly backdrop that usually frames first encounters between poet and patron.

The fighting figures in the foreground of the scene, presumed to be Gaston Fébus's feuding cousins, inscribe physical violence into the landscape, mirroring the association of conflict and territory that the chronicler develops in the narrative text. The image recreates the historian's journey and his subsequent discovery of historical events, particularly those that involve dispute over seigniorial territory. The rubric below the miniature also calls attention the chronicler's travel and how it familiarizes a complex and volatile political climate. It reads: "Comment sire Jehan Froissart enqueroit diligemment comment les guerres s'estoient portees par toutes les parties de France."[60] This paratext suggests that the travel story provides access to historical information about wars across the continent. The historian "enqueroit," undertaking a quest that takes him across Foix-Béarn in search of eyewitness testimonies. This story supersedes the history of the "guerres" and, because vast landscapes characterize both the journey and the site of conflict, the account of the chronicler's itinerary approaches the setting of history. As in the narrative text, the chronicler's travel experience and writing process become part of the story to be told—this time, in image. Froissart travels a vast geography that visualizes the larger space of historical events, which take place in "toutes les parties de

[60] This transcription is from the *Online Froissart*.

France." Together, miniature and rubric announce Froissart's journey as the central story of the third book.

A celebrated manuscript from the Burgundian *milieu*, British Library Harley MS 4379-4380, also frames the journey of the historian alongside paratextual signifiers of travel.[61] This copy claims an important place in the library of Philippe de Commynes, a late medieval historian who experimented with memoir and subjectivity and followed Froissart's example in pushing the limits of the history narrative.[62] The two volumes of this manuscript date from 1470-1472 and were produced Bruges. This copy only contains the two parts of Book IV and, as the most heavily illustrated copy of any manuscript of the *Chroniques*, it contains extensive travel imagery. Two artists collaborated to produce this manuscript: Le Maître du Froissart de Philippe de Commynes, an "immigrant artist" trained in Paris (Kren and McKendrick 261), and Le Maître de la Chronique d'Angleterre, whose involvement with the decoration of Philippe le Bon's *Histoire Troyennes* would have familiarized him with a wide range of visual travel vocabulary.

Figure 29. British Library Harley MS 4380, fol. 27r, detail.

[61] For a complete description of B.L. Harley 4379-4380 and inventory of Philippe de Commynes's library, see Le Guay, *Les Princes de Bourgogne Lecteurs de Froissart*, 31-38.
[62] See Irit Ruth Kleiman, *Philippe de Commynes: Memory, Betrayal, Text*.

Of interest here is the extent to which the Harley artists draw on the historians' presence in the field, developed in Book III, when decorating Book IV. The theme of the historian as traveller gains new importance in these illustrations of Book IV, showing the continued impact of the narrative strategies of the "Voyage" on the later histories of the *Chroniques*. The artists of the Harley manuscript first spotlight the travelling historian when depicting a passage on fol. 27r of Harley 4380 [Figure 29], from the second part of Book IV. The chronicler occupies the center of the miniature and, while on horseback, gestures towards his interlocutors, Jean de Grailly and Guillaume de l'Ile. The background of the scene includes details of rocks, trees and landmarks that trace out the chronicler's itinerary. The visualization of this conversation in the historian's field harkens back to the narrative strategies of the "Voyage." The collection of eyewitness testimony requires travel, but it is the journey itself that informs the reception of historical events. The line immediately below the image begins with a decorated letter and spells out "en chevauchant," recalling the repeated allusion to physical travel in the narrative text. In textually labeling the historian's conversation as a mobile exchange, the text layout complements the miniature in asserting the overarching story of Froissart's journey.

Figure 30. British Library Harley MS 4380, fol. 34v, detail.

The next image on fol. 34v [Figure 30] similarly portrays the travelling chronicler alongside his interviewee, Henry Crystead. The landscape in the background, which includes details of mountains and castles, again roots the chronicler in the geographical context of his journey. The rubric beneath the miniature does not describe the miniature but instead announces the next event in the narrative sequence: "La devise du voyage et de la/ conqueste que le roy richard/ dangleterre fist en yrlande." While the rubric actually refers to events yet to be recounted, visually it functions as a label for the miniature immediately above it. The layout again makes a discernable connection between image and rubric, where the word "voyage" appears just below the conversant figures. The rendering of the chronicler's journey actualizes the travel that also pertains to King Richard's conquest of Ireland. This relationship anticipates Froissart's future journey to England where, modeling the approach outlined in the "Voyage," he will acquire more information about this historical invasion from other engaging eyewitnesses.

Artists of other Burgundian manuscripts also insert the travelling historian into scenes that implicate both his own journey and the larger history that he aims to record. In the opening miniature of Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 5189 (fol. 1r) [Figure 31], a

Figure 31. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 5189, 1r, detail.
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007511v/f19.image.r=froissart 5189.langEN

cleric opens a large red book for a king, who is seated on a colorfully decorated throne. On the one hand, the viewer associates the cleric with the poet, holding a book before the sovereign in a gesture of offering. On the other hand, this miniature also presents a coronation scene, where bishops place the crown on the king's head and the surrounding courtiers serve as witnesses to the illustrious event. The image simultaneously invites both of these interpretations, which artistically links the prominent themes of the "Voyage." The viewer encounters the issue of legitimacy and inheritance, culminating with the crowning of a new sovereign, alongside the cleric and his book—an association that visually recalls the chronicler's pursuit of Béarn's heir in the narrative text. Furthermore, if we consider evidence from the sister manuscript of Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum MS 15.6, this scene specifically portrays the coronation of John I of

Aviz who controversially ascended to the throne after his half-brother, King Ferdinand I of Portugal, died without male issue.[63] The prominence of this coronation scene firmly places the manuscript in a Burgundian context, since the Duke of Burgundy wedded King John's eldest daughter. The miniature links the ongoing political disputes that face the Burgundian legacy with similar issues that Froissart explores in the "Voyage," which deal with the instability of the Fébus line. Movement, the other principal theme of Book III, is conveyed in the composition of the miniature. An architectural structure divides the scene into two distinct parts: an interior court and an exterior space of travel. Two men pass through the portal that separates these realms, simultaneously conversing and moving in a manner that recalls the itinerate conversations of the chronicler. Beyond the doorway, the depiction of a pathway cutting through natural landscape evokes the itinerary traveled before the arrival to court. These visual cues implicitly retrace Froissart's past travel while linking it to the issue of inheritance that characterizes the neighboring scene.

[63] Dirk Schoenaers draws this connection between the Antwerp and Arsenal manuscripts. See "History of Conflict or Manual of Conduct? Continuity and Change in the Illustration and Interpretation of Book III of Froissart's *Chroniques*," 112.

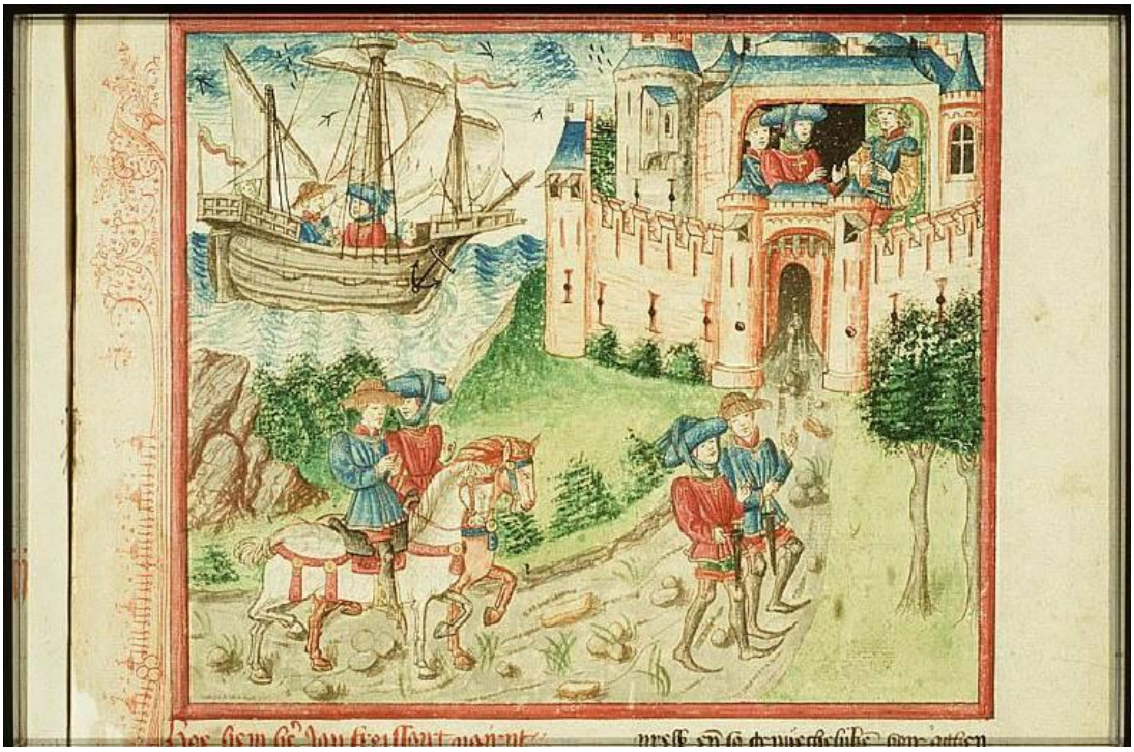

Figure 32. Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 130 B21, fol. 1r, detail.
http://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_130b21%3A001r

The opening miniature of Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 130 B21 (fol. 1r) [Figure 32] that introduces Book III also displays the chronicler's progression from exterior to interior, but with emphasis on the outward space of travel. This space includes the detail of a ship in the background, voyage imagery that inserts travel into the scene and juxtaposes the main focus of the image: the chronicler's journey. The image closely reflects the textual rendering of Froissart's activities because it includes a depiction of Espan de Lion. Here, the artists animate the chronicler's journey in portraying the traveling companions on horseback in the left foreground, then again on foot on the right side. The display of the travel in progress echoes the cinematographic effects achieved in the Besançon manuscript, where we see two stages the chronicler's journey within the same frame. The artistic treatment sets the companions' conversation into motion on the rocky path through the Foix-Béarn region. The particular geographical context of the

adventure comes into sharper focus with the illustrated destination of the castle of Orthez. At the end of the path the Count of Foix, earlier announced in the narrative as the destination of the chronicler's journey, waits on the balcony. This illustration gives a visual component to the graphic description of the chronicler's journey alongside Espan in the narrative. Textual and visual cues for imagining the travelling companions' conversation and the historical sites on their itinerary build a captivating and suspenseful historical narrative. Image and text therefore work together to bring the history writing process to life.

* * *

Text and illustration both testify to the authorial and artistic interest in Froissart and Espan's journey across Foix-Béarn. In this chapter, I have highlighted the pervasiveness of geographical travel in Froissart's "Voyage en Béarn" to identify the role of the chronicler's journey as intrinsic to the discovery and understanding of history. The travel account shapes the narrative and mediates unfamiliar events and places. The chronicler relates personal stories that take on both textual and visual forms. In turn, these stories make the unfamiliar issues of larger history relevant and accessible. The chronicler's careful inclusion of landscapes facilitates this type of storytelling; first, by using descriptive language that fuses travel and the historical inquest and second, by conveying a strong visual and physical history that is mapped on a present landscape. Froissart's contact with the traces of this violent history and his reaction to them create a strong emotional bond between the material and the chronicler. The geographical displacement of the "Voyage en Béarn" thus differs from the narrative and spatial effects of Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* and Machaut's *Prise d'Alixandre* in that travel is

experienced through the perspective of the writer. The chronicler's perspective on history and the current journey is also unique in its insight into how feudal tensions and disrupted lines of succession might play out in the years to come. Looking forward, Froissart's medieval audience joins him in thinking about the role of legacy in recent politics and how to recover from the violent damage it inflicted on landscapes across France.

Conclusion

In this study of travel histories, I have discussed literary variations on the theme of displacement in late thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth century works that are specifically concerned with narrating lived travel experiences. My initial interest was to uncover how medieval writers and bookmakers captured the lived travel experience. To this end, this study has deliberately limited the scope to texts that deal with lived travel rather than extend the frame to consider romance adventures or allegorical travel writings because this specific category of works, which I identify as travel histories, merits our attention because of the innovative strategies used to put travel stories into writing. These strategies that I have privileged include the deliberate positioning of subjects in both textual and geographical travel and the somewhat surprising and counterintuitive distancing effect produced when the moments of narration and history divide. The maneuvering of the witnesses, historians, and/or travelers who take on different roles in the texts of this study redirects attention from actual travel to the process of writing about travel as a means to assert the importance of the displaced travel experience that passes from the travelling adventurer to the experiential writer. My analysis of the effects of these various forms of displacement has shown that the development of travel writing in the late medieval period went beyond registering the history of the travel subject to explore the processes, techniques, and possibilities linked with retelling past adventures for a reading public. Strategies were not simply adopted to be informative; rather, narrative manipulations served to elicit awareness of the travel experience as displacement. Readers travel vicariously with medieval adventurers because they have the same disconcerting experience that enables them to think about historical figures and

past events in different ways. By incorporating select travel manuscripts into this study, I have also found that key visual and material elements bolster the disconcerting encounter fostered by the narration of medieval histories. The blending of approaches from literary and manuscript studies has led me to conclude that medieval writers and bookmakers increasingly discovered in travel writing opportunities to connect material and narratives in innovative ways that secured a crucial role for the material artifact in capturing past travel.

Travel histories reveal a continued effort to experiment with text, image and travel. More specifically, the effects of particular narrative techniques and material contexts invite reflection on the relationship between the lived travel experience and the book that records it. The results of this study have shown that in the negotiation of two levels of narrative, more generally known as the narration and the story, the writer takes on the role of a literary traveller that is one who seeks out histories and then creates narrative terrains. But this adventure is precisely that of writing about travel rather than the actual travel experience. The transformation from writer to traveller is accomplished by blending approaches to history writing with the travel subject, forming what I have called travel histories. These histories, recounted from distant and ever-changing points of view and preserved in lavishly illustrated French manuscripts of the late medieval period, reflect an interest not only in preserving a record of past journeys, but also in shaping the experiences of that journey as expressed in text and image. This experience ranges from textual travel, where reading the travel account in mobile manuscripts recreates movement, to visualizing the actual geographical terrain of the historian's past journey.

These various forms of displacement add to our understanding of the role of narrative in travel literature. The relationship between reading, writing and travel is generally associated with the autobiographical structure of the travel narrative genre, where the traveller serves as the narrator, yet this study shows early examples where it is precisely the experimentation with the subject's distance from past journeys that creates an affiliation between writing and travel. It is only in Froissart's "Voyage" where this separation is dissolved and the chronicler inserts himself into the journey. The narrating and travelling chronicler serves as a prototype for the travel narrative and yet even in this instance his travel companion helps him navigate new terrain by marking the landscape with tales of past events that can only be seen when narrated. Beyond the scope of this dissertation, other medieval travel histories also exhibit elements of the displacement and merit further attention. Of particular interest is Jean de Mandeville's *Livre des merveilles du monde* where the adventurous knight does not actually participate in the past journey and instead represents an early example of an armchair traveler, a variation of the organizer in the *Devisement*. The structural anomalies of these histories contribute to medievalist scholarship on travel writing, which until recently has been largely involved in cultural discussions that aim to debunk orientalist interpretations of medieval travel accounts. The displacement inherent to travel histories provides structural evidence that also complicates the role of medieval texts in the western discourse of the Other. The fractured, distant and mobile perspectives examined in this study of travel histories complicate the role of the subject, which ultimately does not reflect the stable position of a western observer. Instead, these distinctive narrative strategies entail a literary

endeavor that invites continued reflection on the relationship between past experiences and the books that record them.

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