

Picturing the Story of Chivalry in Jacques Bretel's *Tournoi de Chauvency* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308)

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THE STORY OF CHIVALRY is a powerful and productive system of belief, a construct of aristocratic values recounted and illustrated in romances and chronicles and staged in chivalric feasts.¹ It is a story told by sunlight and torchlight: by day, it tells the tale of male valor inspired by the wish to be worthy of the love of a lady; by night, it tells of female desire given social worth by the lady's choice of a valorous knight.²

This story is dramatized in the festive performances of the medieval tournament. The daylight spectacle of the tournament in romance and history is well known: women in the stands view and inspire the chivalric feats of male knights. The complementary nocturnal performances of courtly games of love, however, have not yet been fully explored because they are never as fully represented. Dances, games, songs, and conversa-

tions are often treated as festive accessories. Yet it is here, in these courtly festivities, that women come forward to perform their part in the story of chivalry, to sing, dance and play out their desire under the gaze of men.

One exceptional tournament account survives, however, that gives equal weight to theatricalized courtly performances by men and women: the *Tournoi de Chauvency* by the *trouvère* Jacques Bretel.³ The *Tournoi* (4563 verses with thirty-five lyric insertions) is a free-standing, eyewitness report of a six-day tournament held in 1285 in Lorraine, a festivity that included jousting on Monday and Tuesday, a great *mêlée* tournament on Thursday, and banquets, song, games, and dancing every evening. Jacques Bretel's *Tournoi* was written to suit noble patrons of Alsace and Lorraine, the latter a province celebrated for its dancers and singers.⁴ These patrons had a taste for romances

1. Speaking of the "traditional fiction" of chivalry, Maurice Keen notes that these "values should not be regarded as hollow simply because they are celebrated with ceremony. ... [They] provided a way of looking at things equally relevant to the knight, to the author of romance, and to the historian" See Maurice Keen, "Chivalry, Heralds, and History," in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 1981), 412, 414.

2. Although clerically inspired treatises on chivalry such as the anonymous *Ordene de Chevalerie* (ca. 1220) and Raimon Llull's *Orde de Cavalleria* (ca. 1275) emphasize the Christian elements of knighthood, those conceived in a more courtly spirit of romance emphasize the relation between valor and love. In Raoul de Houdenc's *Roman des eles* (ca. 1210), the last feather in the wings bearing up prowess is "amors" (ll. 485–655). See Raoul de Houdenc, *Le roman des eles*, Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature, 17 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1983), 44–49. Elspeth Kennedy points out "the importance of *amer par amors* as a motivation for chivalric achievement" in Geoffroi de Charny: Elspeth Kennedy, "Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de Chevalerie* and the Knights of the Round Table," in *Medieval knighthood V: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994*, ed.

Stephen Church and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1995), 230–32 and 240.

3. See Jacques Bretel, *Le Tournoi de Chauvency*, ed. Maurice Delbouille (Liege and Paris, 1932), hereafter cited as Delbouille, *Tournoi*. To Delbouille's bibliography (xiv–xvii) add: the translation by Gustave Cohen, *Scènes de la Vie en France au Moyen Age* (Abbaye Saint Wandrille: Fontenelle, 1950), 25–49 (ll. 3073–4300 and 4559–64); the translation by Dominique Henriot-Walzer, *Le Tournoi de Chauvency* (Dampicourt, Belgium, 1997); the excellent summary of festive activities in the *Tournoi* by Marie Madeleine Fontaine, "Danser dans *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*," in *Le corps et ses énigmes au Moyen Age. Actes du colloque Orléans, 15-16 mai, 1992*, ed. Bernard Ribemont (Caen, 1993), 45–54 at 48; and the detailed description of refrain practice in the *Tournoi* by Maureen Barry McCann Boulton, *The Song in the Story: Lyric Insertions in French Narrative Fiction, 1200-1400* (Philadelphia, PA, 1993), 92–95.

4. "Li meilleur danseur sont en Loheraine" (The best dancers are in Lorraine), *Proverbes et dictons populaires*, ed. Georges Adrien Crapelet (Paris, 1831), 85. The dancers in Guillaume de Lorris's *carole* sing "notes lohorenges, / por ce qu'en fet en Loheraigne /

such as Jean Renart's *Guillaume de Dole* (1228?) that narrate jousts and chivalric festivities in realistic contemporary settings and that often include both historical personages and lyrics within their fictions.⁵ Jacques Bretel's account assimilates such historicizing romance models; in turn, a Picard poet, Jakemes, borrowed more than one hundred lines of the *Tournoi* chronicle to furnish descriptions of jousting in his late thirteenth-century adventure romance, *Le Roman du châtelain de Coucy*.⁶ The knights and ladies who perform in Jacques Bretel's *Tournoi*, however, are not just imitating literary prototypes: they are enacting an ideal way of being in the world.

Following Jonathan J.G. Alexander's foundational inquiry into social meanings in medieval art as "a representational matrix that both codified and strengthened social values,"⁷ I propose to examine how *mise en page* and the 15 miniatures

that illustrate the *Tournoi* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308 express and further the story of chivalry for a circle of aristocratic patrons in Lorraine.

Probably copied in Metz (ca. 1310?), Douce 308 contains six works: *Les vœux du paon* (before 1312), an Alexander romance by the Lorraine poet Jacques de Longuyon; Richard de Fournival's love dialogue, *Le bestiaire d'amours* (ca. 1233) and *Response* (before 1285); Jacques Bretel's *Tournoi de Chauvency* (1285); a *Chansonnier* of 512 courtly lyrics (early fourteenth century); a fragment of the *Prophetie Sebille*; and Huon de Méry's *Tournoiement Antéchrist* (ca. 1234), an allegorical tournament of Vices and Virtues.⁸ In addition to common scribes and illustrators, the contents of Douce 308 are interrelated by three concordances between *Tournoi* refrains and *Chansonnier* lyrics⁹ and by the names of three local personages—

plus toutes notes qu'en nul raigne" (ll. 748-50); "an air from Lorraine, for in Lorraine they have more beautiful airs than in any other kingdom." (Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg (Hanover, N.H., 1983), 40-41). On the particularities of the lyric styles of Lorraine—exemplified in the 28 balletes copied in the Douce 308 *Chansonnier*—see Christopher Page, "Tradition and Innovation in BN fr. 146: The Background to the Ballades," in *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS français 146*, ed. Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (Oxford, 1998), 353-94 at 378-83.

5. See Marie-Luce Chênerie's analysis of realistic and idealizing description in "L'épisode du tournoi dans *Guillaume de Dole*," *Revue des Langues Romanes* 83 (1979): 41-62; John W. Baldwin, "Once there was an emperor...: A Political Reading of the Romances of Jean Renart," in *Jean Renart and the Art of Romance*, ed. Nancy Vine Durling (Gainesville, FL, 1997), 45-82; Michel Parisse, "La noblesse lorraine et la littérature romanesque au XIIIe siècle," *Perspectives médiévales* 14 (1988): 101-06; Rita Lejeune, *Du nouveau sur Jean Renart* (Liège, 1997), where she identifies "Jean Renart" as Hugues II de Pierrepont, Bishop of Liège (21-24). For standard editions and critical bibliography through 1992 of authors and works cited incidentally, see *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le Moyen Age*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink (Paris, 1992).

6. 105 verses of the *Tournoi*, selected from four passages, are scattered through a passage of some 466 verses in the *Chatelain de Coucy*, ll. 1010-1476; see Delbouille, *Tournoi*, notes to ll. 376-83, 393-402, 412-16, 421-25, 531-41, 695-700, 725-53, 768-75, 781-3, 1619-20, 1632-36.

7. Jonathan J.G. Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology: Uncovering Social Meanings in Western Medieval Christian Art," *Studies in Iconography* 15 (1993): 6.

8. See Mary Atchison, "The Structures and Scribe of the Chansonnier of the Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Monash University, 1995) and eadem, *The Chansonnier of Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308: Essays and Complete Edition of Texts* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, Vt., 2005), published after this article was completed. Owner signatures and library inventories show that Douce 308 eventually passed down through the LeGournay family, urban patricians of Metz, until the sixteenth century; see Debouille, *Tournoi*, xii-xiii. Atchison, "Structures," 14-15, describes the Douce 308 compilation of five booklets: the *Vœux du Paon*, the *Tournoi*, and the *Chansonnier* (Books A, C, and D) were illustrated by one artist. A second hand illustrated Books B and E—that contain the *Bestiaire d'amours* and the *Tournoiement Antéchrist*, which is preceded by the final folio of the *Prophetie Sebille*—and a related booklet (also belonging to the LeGournay family) that contains a moralized vernacular *Apocalypse* and the remaining folios of the *Prophetie Sebille* (now bound separately in London, British Library, Harley MS 4972). I am deeply grateful to Alison Stones for sending me a draft of her entry describing all the Douce 308 miniatures for *Manuscripts Illuminated in France 1260-1320*, ed. François Avril and Jonathan J. G. Alexander (London, in preparation), and to her and Martin Kauffmann for studying the Douce 308 compilation with me in Oxford in 2000. I profited greatly from the kindness of Keith Busby, who sent the pages on Douce 308 from his book *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 2002), 1: 316, 318-21; 2:539, 578, 722-24.

9. Debouille, *Tournoi*, lxxi, signals one concordance between *Tournoi* refrain (l. 4450) and the *Chansonnier*, *Ballete* 100, fol. 224r. Atchison, "Structures," 1:84-85, identifies two additional concordances in Douce 308 between motets 8 and 39 (fols. 244r and 246r) and *Tournoi* ll. 2524 and 2350 (partial concordance); she notes two additional refrains in the Mons manuscript (Mons, Bibliothèque de la ville, ms. 330-215) of the *Tournoi* (ll. 1292 and

Jacques de Longuyon and two ladies prominent in the *Tournoi*—who are mentioned as judges in the *jeux partis* of the *Chansonnier*.¹⁰ The Douce 308 compilation constitutes a complete kit of secular chivalry, for it contains a literature of recreation and edification that links a romance, a chronicle, and a moral allegory featuring chivalric exploits to elegantly refined pastimes of singing, dancing, and conversations about love and to proper names of historical personages that point to a particular audience in Lorraine.¹¹

The illustrations of the *Tournoi* in Douce 308 are specifically shaped in four ways that glorify both men and women among the local notables Bretel names in his poem: by additions made to the extravagant display of coats of arms; by selective cuts of passages from the text; by highlighting speeches by heralds and poets and talk among spectators; and by depictions of noble ladies and knights dancing.

At least one knight related to prominent families of Lorraine and neighboring regions is depicted and identified by his arms in each of the ten jousting miniatures. Henri de Blâmont—son of Jeanne de Bar whose husband, Louis de Looz, Count of Chiny, organized the tournament—appears to the left on folio 117r resplendent in his arms, “au vermeil escu / A deus saumons d’argent batu” (lines 3169–7) (Fig. 1).¹² The unvarying stance of each pair of jousting knights in the Douce 308

Tournoi is designed to exhibit their coats of arms. In real jousts, as in the tournament miniatures of Douce 308, knights carried their shield slung around their neck as they charged or strapped onto their left arm for sword fighting (Figs. 2 and 3). In the jousting miniatures, however, both knights turn their shields outwards towards the viewer, thus maximizing the display of coats of arms which are repeated on the knights’ surcoats and horse trappings. Such scenes glorify chivalric identity over action. In his account too, Bretel describes not winners and losers but the valor of each knight (l. 934; “Andoi avoient bon couraige”). There are no falling knights in the Douce 308 jousts (unlike those the same illuminator painted in the final tournament scene of the *Tournoi* [Fig. 3] or in *Les voeux du Paon*), but only moments of equal glory.

The images in Douce 308, together with Bretel’s numerous verbal blazons, function as a roll of arms of the jousting at Chauvency. A specifically heraldic genre, rolls of arms are lists of blazons or rows of painted coats of arms which testify to pride in lineage, kinship relations, and the outlook and knowledge that define a social class.¹³ Moreover, rolls display a technical heraldic vocabulary which was already firmly established before the mid thirteenth century. As a pictorial genre, however, rolls of arms are extraordinarily static.¹⁴ In contrast, the heraldic coats in Douce

1362) with concordances in the Douce *Chansonnier* motets 3, 27 and 32 (fols. 243v, 245r, and 245v). All these refrains have concordances elsewhere, pointing to the wide circulation of such lyric materials: Debouille, *Tournoi*, lxx–lxxix; and see also Eglal Doss-Quinby, *Les refrains chez les trouvères du XIIIe siècle au début du XIVe* (New York, 1984).

10. Jacques de Longuyon appears in the *Chansonnier*, *Ieus partis* .vii., fol. 180v; Mahaut d’Aspremont and her sister Jeanne (Debouille, *Tournoi*, ll. 158 and 172) are named in *Ieus partis* .i., fol. 178r and .xii., fol. 183r; see Arthur Långfors, Alfred Jeanroy, and Louis Brandin, eds., *Recueil général des jeux-partis français*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1926), nos. CLXII, CLVI, and CLXVII; Atchison, “Structures,” 1:134; Debouille, *Tournoi*, lxxvi–lxxvii; and Eglal Doss-Quinby, Joan Tasker Grimbert, Wendy Pfeffer, and Elizabeth Aubrey, *Songs of the Women Trouvères* (New Haven, 2001), 32.

11. Atchison, “Structures,” 1:46, views Douce 308 and Harley 4972 as a single collection unified by “a continuum of time past, time present and time to come,” in which themes of secular courtly love

and chivalry fill works depicting the past (*Voeux du Paon*) and present (*Bestiaire*, *Tournoi* and *Chansonnier*), followed by themes of prophetic fulfilment in the *Apocalypse*, *Prophetie Sebile* and *Tornolement Antécrist*.

12. On historical identities and coats of arms in Douce 308 *Tournoi*, see Delbouille, *Tournoi*, lxxii–ci, and the 15 miniatures described and reproduced, xxv–xxix and pls. IV–XI. Juliet Vale demonstrates how the tournament organization reflects family ties, feudal allegiances, and geographical provenance; see Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), 4–12.

13. See Ann Payne, “Medieval Heraldry,” in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London, 1987), 55–59, and Michel Pastoureau, *Traité d’héraldique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1993).

14. See, for example, the Matthew Paris shields, ca. 1244 (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.I, fol. 171v), reproduced by Payne, “Medieval Heraldry,” 55, fig. 26.

308 are flourished at the very moment of splendid feats. The arms are thus dynamically integrated into the purpose of the poet and the illuminator: to demonstrate noble courtesy, prowess, and refinement by description of festive activities of historical persons.

For the armorial information he puts into his book, Bretel says he relies on notes he took down from heralds (l. 2107), who could read identities from heraldic arms when knights' faces were hidden under the great helm in combat. Bretel learns much from the herald Bruiant, "Pour ce qu'il suet parler a moi / D'armes et de chevalerie / Et cognut la bachelerie, / Li ai commencié a enquerre / Qui fu chascunz et de quel terre" (ll. 302–06; Because he was able to speak to me knowledgeably about arms and chivalry and because he knew the young knights, I began to ask who each was and from what land). In a charming scene, Bretel and Bruiant sit together at the foot of a pillar on Sunday, the first day of the feast, as he points out some thirty-six distinguished knights as they pass by, dancing before the ladies in the courtly *carole*

"Bruiant, et cil qui est passé
Devant ces dames a main destre
Qui atant est biaux, qui puet se estre?"
"Jaquet, c'est Perars de Grilli: . . .
Et vers sez dames par deça,
Cis chevaliers qui la passa,
C'est Walerans de Fauquemont"
(ll. 314–17, 337–39)

("Bruiant, who is that passing before the ladies on the right who is so handsome?"—"Jaquet, it's Perart de Grilli. . . . And the knight passing by the ladies over there is Walerant de Fauquemont.")

However, the illuminator of the Douce 308 *Tournoi* must have had access to supplementary information—perhaps from a herald witness or a roll of arms—since, as Delbouille notes, he paints

seven coats of arms which are not described in the text, and, twice, he corrects inaccuracies in Bretel's blazons.

Close study of the relation of the Douce 308 miniature program to the *Tournoi* also suggests that the scribe may have made specific cuts in the poem in order to produce a pictorial roll of arms without gaps for the two days of jousting. The other manuscript witness to the *Tournoi* (Mons, Bibliothèque de la ville, ms. 330–215) reports seventeen jousts (seven on Monday and ten on Tuesday), Douce 308 omits two passages of more than 700 verses describing seven jousts (ll. 1007–1568, 2021–182, some 16% of the whole poem), but illustrates fully all of the ten remaining, dividing them evenly between Monday and Tuesday. In five of the seven jousts omitted, Bretel does not supply the name of one of the knights. Were the passages removed from Douce 308 in order to eliminate jousts where the identity of one combatant was not known and where, therefore, the arms of both knights could not be painted? If so, the illuminator could apparently supplement armorial information but not supply names missing in his source.

To his display of arms, the illustrator of Douce 308 adds a parade of fantastic crests that sprout up from the knights' helmets and the horses' trappings in all but one of the ten jousting scenes. Bretel mentions crests only once in the *Tournoi*, saying that Joffroi d'Esch sports a "Creste sur hiaume asséz mignote (l. 3218; a pretty crest on his helmet). Michel Pastoureau notes that in contrast with the coats of arms, which are permanent signs of dynastic identity, thirteenth-century crests are freely-composed, temporary emblems of personal identity whose motifs are not strictly coded and which are often freely invented by artists.¹⁵ In Douce 308, the crests appear either as small knobs or fans projecting from the helms or as improbably large constructions whose figures, wings, and foliage thrust energetically out of the picture

15. Michel Pastoureau, "Désigner ou dissimuler? Le rôle du cimier dans l'imaginaire médiéval," in *Masques et déguisements dans la*

littérature médiévale, ed. Marie-Louise Ollier (Montréal, 1988), 127–140.

frame. In the crests painted on folio 119v, a figure shoots an arrow from one crested helmet towards another figure wearing a garland who dances between two birds on the other (Fig. 4). Although it cannot be known whether such crests were worn at Chauvency, their courtly motifs recapitulate the links between chivalric prowess, festive revelry, and love celebrated in the *Tournoi* and illustrated in Douce 308.

Jousting, however, is only one of the courtly performances that display noble identities. Around each exhibition of male prowess, Breteel weaves a vast tapestry of verbal, musical, and gestural performances by women as well as men. The tourneying, the speeches by heralds and poets, and the courtly songs, dances, and delightful banter among knights and ladies¹⁶—all demonstrate the significance of the relationship between women and men, dancing and jousting, love and valor.

The heralds and poets whom Breteel depicts in the *Tournoi* play an important role, for they point to noble identities, stage the chivalric jousts, and comment on the significant relation of love to prowess. While heralds announce the knights' names, battle cries, and coats of arms, they also interpret the encounters for the watching women in elegant speeches that rise like arabesques over the clanging armor and fallen knights. With tears in his eyes, one herald begs the ladies to come down from the stands and wipe the sweat from the brows of the jousting knights with the fringe of their mantles, saying, "Or esgardéz a quel escil, / Dames, cis chevalier se metent; / ... / Tout est por vos amors conquerre! (ll. 954–55, 959; See now, ladies, how these knights expose themselves to injury; all this is to win your love!)."

Such heralds' speeches are part of the vivid polyphony of sounds at the lists which Breteel excels at evoking:

Rire et jouer et grasillier
Oïssiéz dames et pucelles,

Et chanter sez chançons nouvelles,
Trompez tantir, soner tabours;
Flaiot, fretel font lors labor,
Ribaut huent et garçon braient.
Li joustour plus ne delaient,
Cheval saillent et lambel volent,
Hyraut parmi les renz parolent
D'armes li uns encontre l'autre.
Et Cuenes vint lance sour fautre,
Dedams son hiaume escrient "Oure."
(ll. 790–801)

(Laughter, playful talk, and new songs of ladies and maidens could be heard against the noise of trumpets blaring, drums beating; flutes and pipes twitter over the hoarse wordless shouts of grooms and servants. The jousting knights delay no longer, the horses start forward and insignia fly, heralds in the lists speak to each other of arms. And Conon advances, lance fewtered; inside his helmet he shouts his battle cry, "Oure!")

By what visual means does Douce 308 illustrate such proliferating soundscapes and point to the constant presence of the poet-witness? Just as Breteel glosses every joust with elegant verbal displays of ladies' commentary and heralds' speeches, so too the illuminator reflects all the verbal exchanges in the poem by pictorial effects of layering. He paints crowds of eagerly talking spectators around and behind the jousting knights. In three miniatures (fols. 113v, 117r and 120r) there are castles full of crowned ladies who do not merely gaze but who turn towards each other with animated gestures of speech. In six miniatures (fols. 111r, 113v, 114r, 116r, 117r, 119v), the small but central figure of a herald regulates the forward charge of the clashing knights, gesturing imperatively or blowing a trumpet (Figs. 1, 4). In contrast with the flat planes and tight frames of the miniatures illustrating the *mêlée* tournament at Chauvency (and those the same illuminator painted in the *Voeux*

endriers de Chrétien de Troyes à La Mort Artu (Paris, 1989), 419.

16. Philippe Walter notes the artful practice of festive conversation in his study of feasts in romance, *La mémoire du temps: Fêtes et cal-*

du Paon and for the *Chansonnier* in Douce 308), the ten jousting illustrations of the *Tournoi* bulge exuberantly out of the spaces reserved. Their borders are dynamically broken on all sides by rising crests, by spectators and heralds gesturing, and by knights galloping in front of the miniature frame. Space is broadened by scenes that repeatedly spread all the way to the edge of the folio and often deepened as on folio 117r by distant turrets, tents, banners that rise up alongside the text in the margins.

The miniature on folio 117r (Fig. 1) is even placed in a way that carries out visually the impact of the joust on the poet-witness. From the first, Bretel creates an unusual sense of immediacy by shaping his account around his own presence as a mobile spectator of the feast and as a commentator who glosses each event with speeches that express its idealizing meaning. On folio 117r, Bretel says he was leaning on a post in the stands listening to the ladies' talk between jousts. The miniature cuts the column of text at the very point where the poet reports how a charging joust broke into his pleasant reverie:

Je m'escoutai leis un pilier
 Pour antandre k'elles dixoient.
 En malz divers se devoisient
 Des baichelers les grant bonteiz
 Ansi con Diex les ait donteiz.
 Si me plut mout et anbelit
 Mais ma pansee me tolit
 [MINIATURE]
 Un chivaillier mout avenant.
 (ll. 1758–65; emphasis added)

(I leaned against a pillar to hear what the ladies were saying. They spoke variously of the great qualities with which God had endowed the young knights. It was very agreeable and pleasing to me, but my thoughts were interrupted [MINIATURE] by a very comely knight.)

17. Bretel's report of the evening festivities on Monday (ll. 1248–382), which includes nine of the 35 inserted refrains, is cut in Douce 308 along with seven jousting scenes.

Bretel thus sets up an alternating rhythm in the *Tournoi*, shifting regularly between descriptions of knights jousting in the lists and reports of courteous talk of love. Indeed, one-fourth of the thousand verses describing the *mêlée* tournament are devoted to the ladies, love, and "Li grans deduis dou bel parler" (l. 3384; the great pleasures of fine speech).

Talk is a pastime in which all may participate: poets and heralds speak and are named in the *Tournoi*. Jousting, singing, and dancing, on the other hand, are courtly performances reserved for nobles.

Nus ne doit aler par karole
 S'il n'est chevalier ou tex hom
 Qu'il le puis faire par raison;
 Si le tient on a vilonnie
 A home de basse lignie." (ll. 292–96)

(None may dance the *carole* unless he be a knight or some such; it is not a courtesy for a man of low birth.)

The motifs of singing and dancing enables Bretel to name and display the noble personages that are his matter in charming scenes full of movement, talk, and song that punctuate the end of each day's festivities and often the beginning as well, carrying forward the story of valor and love.¹⁷

On Tuesday, knights and ladies return hand in hand from the lists singing "Trai toi arriere, fai me voie,—Par ci pascent gens de joie" (l. 2350; Draw back, make way for me—Joyous folk are passing here). They dance that night by torchlight to the sound of the *viele* (ll. 2400–05). Four ladies are named and step forward, led by four knights: they sing elegant refrains¹⁸: "Diex, donéz a mon ami—Pris d'armes, joie d'amours!" (l. 2498; God, give my friend prowess in arms and joy in love). On Wednesday, after a day of planning teams for the *mêlée* tournament, Bretel records caroling,

18. As Atchison, "Structures," 1:69, demonstrates, no music accompanies the refrains inserted in the *Tournoi* or the lyrics in the *Chansonnier*, which was "designed to be a text manuscript."

dancing, games, and eavesdrops on elegant love talk (ll. 2955–3072). Before Thursday’s tournament the guest of honor, the Countess of Luxembourg, leads a ladies’ carole singing “An si bone conpaignie—Doit on bien joie mener!” (l. 3118; In such good company, one can rejoice) while the knights gaze and comment on their beauty (ll. 3094–18), and Perart de Grilli conducts Agnès de Commercy to the tournament field as she sings “Diex qui dirai en mon país—Que j’ai amour nouvelle? (l. 3256; God, whom can I tell back home that I’ve found a new love). To close the festivities on Thursday night, Simon de Lalaing steps forward leading a lady by either hand and guides the company through two, three, or four “*tors*” (ll. 4453). Before the guests disperse on Friday after mass, the knights and ladies, all costumed with white belts, dance once again around the *loges*, the stands erected for visitors of mark (ll. 4516–19).

Such refined performances present noble identities worthy of the story of chivalry. Even the dust and sweat that begrime knights are signs of Love’s power. The battered armor and bloody injuries sustained in the tournament, depicted in the two final images of the Douce 308 *Tournoi* (Figs. 2, 3), seen as the knights return in a torchlight cortège, are occasions for joyful song:

Chantant s’en vont a mout grant joie
 Léz un jardin toute une voie.
 Et li chevalier tuit monté,
 Detaillé et haligoté,
 Blecié de cors et de visaiges,
 Si d’armes en est li usaiges,
 Les enmaignent, joie faisant.
 Une chançon douce et plaisant
 Chantoient tuit par grant deport:
*Je taig par le doi m’amie—Vaigne avant cui je
 en fas tort!*

(ll. 4121–30)

([The ladies] pass singing and in great joy past a garden. Making merry, they lead the knights all mounted, gashed and slashed, faces and bodies wounded as is the custom in combat. All sing a sweet, pleasant song, in great delight. *I hold my lady love by the finger—let him whom I wrong thereby step forward.*)

Illustrations and concordances with the *Chansonnier* expand the resonance of the songs and images of performance in the *Tournoi*. The refrain that Simon de Lalaing sings as he dances, “Dex, doneis amors a sous—Qui amors maintient muez” (l. 4450; Lord, grant honor to those who keep Love secret) recurs in the *Balletes* section of the Douce 308 *Chansonnier* (*Ball.* 100, fol. 224r).¹⁹ Dancing recurs too in the miniature by the *Tournoi* illustrator heading the *Balletes*: a man and a woman wearing garlands and clasping hands, one hand on hip, dance to the beat of a tabor player seated between them in the background (Ill. on p. 352). Five of the seven *Chansonnier* sections begin similarly with miniatures depicting men and women performing lyrics from the various genres, augmenting the overall festive effect of Douce 308.²⁰

Singing, dancing, and conversing are performances that repeatedly bring noble women to the foreground in the *Tournoi*. Women are given special importance in two dance games which are described at extraordinary length in the *Tournoi*, the *robardel* and the *jeu du chapelet*.²¹

The illustrations of dancing in the Douce 308 *Tournoi* are puzzling in two ways, however. First, although a miniature depicting women dancing the *robardel* is set on folio 123r next to the description of that dance game (Fig. 5), the artist does not illustrate the *jeu du chapelet* which follows the tournament, even though it is the high point of

19. Eglal Doss-Quinby, Samuel N. Rosenberg, and Elizabeth Aubrey, eds. and trans., *The Old French Ballette: Oxford Bodleian Library MS Douce 308* (Geneva, 2006). I thank Eglal Doss-Quinby warmly for information on the illustration of the Douce 308 *chansonnier*.

20. Atchison, “Structures,” 1:119–32 discusses the *Chansonnier* miniatures in relation to its generic organization.

21. Delbouille, *Tournoi*, lxxi–lxxii. See Joseph Bédier, “Les plus anciennes danses françaises,” *Revue des deux mondes* 31 (1906): 398–424.

the courtly entertainments. Instead, he ends his *Tournoi* program with two miniatures of the gory *mêlée* (Figs. 2, 3). Second, although fourteen of the illustrations are tightly correlated to the adjoining text, the artist inserts one unrelated courtly dance scene between two jousts on folio 113r (Fig. 6). I believe the selection and placement of these illustrations in Bretel's poem actually enhances its alternating rhythms in ways that demonstrate visually and verbally the significant relationship between arms and amor.

Although the women's dance games—mimes on courtship themes, danced in character with props—seem to fit smoothly into the courtly entertainments, in content they are transgressive, for they represent erotic scenes where a lady's beauty and sexual desire are not initially bound by love directed toward a knight of noble worth. Both games begin in a moment of lull in the feast, as if playful sexual fantasies erupt at a point where the social constraints of courtesy are weakening. The *robardel* comes as a surprise just as the Tuesday evening's feast begins to wane near midnight (ll. 2528–32); the *chapelet* is one of seven games suggested during a pause when wine is served after a first round of revels. Yet although they appear to disrupt the courtly order of the feast, enactment of the dance games restores festive decorum.

The *robardel* (l. 2562, *rombertet* in Douce 308; the little thief) is a pantomime in which a shepherd dances, leaps, and finally steals two kisses from a shepherdess. Unlike the decorous steps of the courtly *carole*, the dance movements of bodies in the *robardel* reflects the downwards shift in social class defined by the characters. Openly erotic and acrobatic, the game loosens decorum, gestures, and music.²² Bretel notes the shepherdess' well-shaped body beneath her petticoat where little bells draw attention to each coquettish wriggle

(ll. 2535–39, 2549). The shepherd leaps vigorously, thrusts his gloves behind his back, cocks back the points of his broad hat, juggles an apple, and slaps the ground with his hands (ll. 2550–65). Bretel then highlights the excitement of a physical touching very different from the polite etiquette of courtly procession and dance in the *Tournoi*, where men and women gracefully link fingers.

Car quant il sant la pucelete
Les rains, le pis, la memetele,
Adonc il samble qu'i soit rois.
De fin orguel s'en va si rois
Qu'il ne touche n'a ciel n'a terre...

(ll. 2567–71)

(When he touches the maiden, her flanks, her chest, her little breast, then he thinks he's a king. He's so puffed up with pride that he doesn't touch heaven or earth.)

At last the shepherd steals the long-awaited kiss, then another: "Au retourner deus fois la baise / Ainsi qu'elle fust point avisee" (ll. 2574–75) and laughter begins as everyone says that the kiss was taken betimes (l. 2578: "Que li baisiers fu de saison").

The *robardel* permits spectators and readers the spectacle of overt erotic pleasure by displacing it down in the social scale and by naming it a "moquerie" (l. 2562), a game where transgression ends in laughter (l. 2576). The onlookers are held to respect by the announced identity of the shepherdess: she is Agnès, daughter-in-law of the Lady of Florenville, named with six other noble women as noted guests (ll. 177–83). Order, however, is not restored by laughter at the end of the *robardel*, for Bretel has failed to realize that the "shepherd" too is a noble woman, Jeanette de Boinville. Cross-dressing is made an important matter: the twenty-four lines of laughing conversation between Bretel and a youth about this trick (ll. 2479–2602) nearly

22. I am grateful to Jonathan J. G. Alexander for giving me his article that describes "aspects of class differentiation in the images of the shepherd dances" in Nativity scenes and the dangerous, transgressive imagery of the couple or solo dance that flaunts uncontrolled sexual desire: "Dancing in the Streets," *The Journal of the*

Walters Art Gallery 54 (1996): 147–162 at 153, and for the references that accompanied his plenary address, "Dancing and Singing: Skills Commendable in a Woman?" presented at *The Medieval World in Motion*, CUNY Graduate Center, 28 February 1997.

equal the twenty-seven describing the dance game itself (ll. 2549–75).

The *robardel* illustration restrains the erotic play of the text, showing the dancers hands on hips but in a decorously erect posture, although its placement over the line “Si balle et danse et hue & tume” (l. 2563; He dances and prances and hoots and somersaults) points to frisky movements in the poem. The artist adds elegant details more suited to the dancers than the characters: the shepherdess wears a garland and prinks in a mirror; the shepherd’s broad, two-pointed hat and robe are touched up with linings of vair. But where Breteel describes accompaniment by a vielle, played gaily by a noblewoman, Perrine d’Aix (ll. 2547–48), the miniature shows a man thumping a humble tabor.

Once again layering his miniature with dialogic effects, the illustrator packs three lively encounters into his pictorial space, involving spectators, performance, and commentary. Rather than depict the seated knights and ladies mentioned in l. 2546, he frames his image with rows of two dozen eager squires, flocking around to gaze at the shepherdess (ll. 2540–41; “Escuier furent par trou-piaus, / Que volentiers la regardoient”). Against a refined, gilded background, the dancers dominate the scene by their size, facing stance, and dynamic arm movements. Finally, the poet-witness reappears: Breteel and his partner gesture in the center rear of the miniature opposite their excited conversation in the adjoining column: “Que elle est fille, non pas filz. /—“Tu me gaibes.”—“non fais, por voir!” (ll. 2592–93; “She’s a daughter, not a son.”—“You’re fooling me.”—“Indeed I’m not!”).

Noble identities are restored to their place of honor, but cross-dressing leaves Jacques Breteel—and the story of chivalry—in a quandary. The *robardel* ends on an unresolved note of tension: these playful women have ended up with no male

partners. Their story seems incomplete: the poet’s imagination continues to “correct” what he has seen: “—Longue piece m’a fait cuidier / Que ce fust aucuns damoisiaus / Qui ci feïst sez enviaus” (ll. 2600–02; I believed for quite a while that this was a young man playing his tricks here.)

Le jeu du chapelet on Thursday is the last and finest of the courtly entertainments Breteel describes by its length, its ten inserted refrains, and its position near the end of the poem (117 lines, ll. 4181–297, fols. 136v–137v). It too begins with the transgressive figure of a noble woman dancing alone: “... commant / Faisoit ainsi seule son tour / Si cointe et de si noble atour, / Et jouoit de son chapelet / Sans compaigne, sanz amiet?” (ll. 4226–30; ... how it happened that she danced alone clad with such noble elegance and playing with her garland, without a companion, without a lover?).

Elaborate preliminary courtesies heighten the significance of this game, as if it were a secular rite. After a first round of revels when *chansons de geste* were sung to comfort those wounded in the tournament (ll. 4167–80), the whole company selects Beatrice, Countess of Luxembourg, the woman of highest standing in the company, to dance the *jeu*. Four knights request her performance in a courteous speech. After her laughing assent, they lead her, arms around her waist, in a promenade around the room, displaying her to all before taking their seats: (ll. 4212–13; “Devant touz amenee l’ont / Si que chascunz la pout veoir”).²³

The lonely lady has a minstrel partner, however, a *vielle* player who plays a prominent role. In an extended dialogue of refrains,²⁴ he questions her sexual autonomy and offers to find the lover she requires.

“Douce dame, voléz baron?”

“Naie! Se je ne l’ai tres bon, je i avroie damage

23. There is a charming illustration of just such a courtly promenade in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 264, fol. 172r, at the bas-de-page, reproduced in the facsimile edition of M.R. James, *The Romance of Alexander: MS. Bodley 264* (Oxford, 1933).

24. Robert Mullally defines the *Tournoi* refrains of ll. 4233–36, 4249–54 as a prototype ballade with repeating rhymes in the second section of each stanza: Robert Mullally, “Balerie and Ballade,” *Romania* 104 (1983): 533–38.

J'ain miex mon chapelet de flors que malvais mariaige.”

“Trez douce dame, il est trovéz

Si fait com vos le demandéz.”

“Biaus sire, et car le m'amenéz la jus en cele herbaige

Je m'en vois, vos m'i troverès seant sor le rivage!” (ll. 4248–54)

(“Sweet lady, do you want a lord?” – “No! If I don't find a good one, I would be worse off. I love my garland of flowers more than a bad marriage!” – “Sweet lady, someone has been found who is everything you ask.” – “Fair lord, bring him down there in the meadow! I'm leaving, you'll find me sitting on the bank!”)

The *mise en page* of Douce 308 reinforces this brisk dialogic rhythm by setting off each of the six groups of lyric refrains in the *chapelet* visually by a subsequent decorated initial that marks a shift in “voice.”

The social dimensions of the dance game are made explicit as the minstrel penetrates into the audience, searching up and down the rows of spectators for the partner whose prowess makes him worthy of the lady's desire. He picks André d'Amance, favoring this knight who had distinguished himself at the tournament by rescuing the horse of the tournament host, the Count of Chiny (ll. 3961–97). Courteously leading the bashful knight first by the tunic then by the sleeve, the minstrel draws the knight into the dance and presents him to the lady: “Dame, ves ci le bachelor; De proesce ne sai son per” (ll. 4289–90; Lady, here is the young knight; I do not know his equal for prowess). She expresses relief and pleasure, as she leads the knight away: “Chantant l'ammaine a mout grant joie: La merci Deu j'ai ataint—Se que je voloie” (ll. 4295–96; Singing she leads him away in great joy. Thank God I have accomplished what I wished).

Abundant dance terms in the *chapelet* tell us much about the social significance of such performances. In contrast with the boisterous *robardel* shepherd, the countess dances throughout in a fluently restrained manner, well suited to the noble character she plays. After singing the exchange of refrains cited above, she brings her hands to her sides, and, in a gracious, polished style (“bien se polist”; l. 4256) she turns and runs “le petit pas” (l. 4256), dancing while she mimes thoughts of love (ll. 425–59; “...dançant / De fois en autres va pansant / Ainsi come d'amors esprise”). No medieval choreography has been found to tell how such movements could have been put together and performed: the earliest known treatise on dance is Domenico da Piacenza's *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi* (ca. 1416). Yet Bretel's descriptions show that elements of ceremonious etiquette—bowing, saluting, leading, approaching, turning towards and away, hooking fingers, joining hands, and presenting garlands—are fundamental to the gestural code of early choreography.²⁵ Bretel notes the countess's trained skill in such stylized gestures at the end of her dance, where she takes the knight's hand (ll. 4293–9; “Celle qui est tres bien aprise / La main dou chevalier a prise”).

As the *jeu du chapelet* ends, readers may yearn for an accompanying miniature which the *robardel* miniature may lead them to anticipate. The miniature program ends, however, with the emphatic repetition of tournament images on folios 131r and 132v where coats of arms are overpainted in streaks of blood. Everything placed after the tournament thus serves as a picturesque gloss, showing love as the source of the prowess exhibited in these final illustrations. The bloody imagery of the two *mêlée* miniatures remains vivid before our eyes as our ears and minds are filled with the lyrics of the *jeu du chapelet*, where the lady guest of highest standing at the feast takes

25. I am indebted to the late William Burdick, historical dance researcher and choreographer for the Metropolitan Opera, for illuminating advice on evaluating the dance games in the *Tournoi*. On the relation of the dance to the history of manners

and on body posture in dance treatises and courtesy books, see Mark Franco, *The Dancing Body in Renaissance Choreography* (c. 1415–1589) (Birmingham, AL, 1986).

the hand of a knight who won high honor in the tournament. Bretel makes these meanings explicit immediately after the *jeu du chapelet*. The room falls silent as the poet begins his concluding speech, “un sarmons d’armez / Mellé d’amors et de ses charmes” (ll. 4309–11; a speech about prowess mingled with the charms of love). Citing the examples of Aeneas and Lancelot, Tristan, Palamides, and Paris, Bretel affirms the story of chivalry: “Bachelier doit a droit amer...Si l’an doblerait sa puissance / Et sa proesse et sa vaillance” (ll. 4379, 4391–92; A young knight must love truly...Thus his power, his prowess, and his valor will be redoubled”).

There is a dance scene, however, in a far-removed miniature on folio 113r (Fig. 6). It depicts a garden where a crowned lady dances between two men. With impeccable etiquette, she raises her hands to touch the fingers of her partners, who turn towards her, outside hands on their hips in the familiar dancing pose.²⁶ She looks towards her right, at the man wearing a garland. To the left rear, a musician plays a rebec or *viele* (the instrument mentioned in both *robardel* and *chapelet*). Although readers of Douce 308 may remember this image as they come to the *jeu du chapelet*, a number of details distinguish this scene from the poem, where the lady holds the garland in her hand and dances alone and where the *viele* player interacts with the lady and knight, while the miniature places him off behind a tree and gives the lady a second partner.

This is the most perplexing of the fifteen miniatures of the *Tournoi*, for, exceptionally, it is

unrelated to the matter of the immediately adjacent text. Extending below the bottom of the left column, it fills a four-line space left at the bottom between the last line of the account of the third joust, which ends “Ce fut proesse de vassalz! (l. 724; this was a valiant exploit!—and the fourth, which begins with a decorated initial at the top of the right column (l. 725).

The artist apparently wanted to fill the four-line space remaining at the bottom of the left column on folio 113r, but the adjacent jousts were already provided with illustrations.²⁷ On folio 187r, this same artist filled in a four-line gap in the Douce 308 *Chansonnier* repertory of *jeux partis* with a scene of knights storming the flowered wall of a castle of crowned ladies.²⁸ This miniature too is unrelated to the adjoining lyrics but is generally appropriate to the courtly themes of Douce 308. In like manner, the dance scene on folio 113r, unframed from the narrative, can be read as pointing to all the dance scenes of the *Tournoi* reveals while it anticipates the climactic *jeu du chapelet*.

The dance miniature of fol 113r is the exception that proves the rule, the order of the whole. It is a visual interlude that amplifies the festive ambiance and dialogic energy of the whole *Tournoi*: knights joined in combat before poets, heralds, and ladies who comment on their prowess; knights and ladies linked in song and dance, and finally, dance games where women disguise their social selves to dramatize threats to courtly practice—unbridled sexuality, a woman alone—and then to affirm the love that inspires

26. Compare Simon de Lalaing leading two ladies (*Tournoi*, ll. 4444–53); see Marie-Madeleine Fontaine, “Danser dans *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*,” in *Le corps et ses énigmes au Moyen Age*, ed. B. Ribemont (Caen, 1992), 50–51. Mélusine Wood cites *estampies* performed by one gentleman and lady or one gentleman between two ladies in *Historical Dances (Twelfth to Nineteenth Century): Their Manner of Performance and Their Place in the Social Life of the Time* (London, 1952, repr. 1982), 12–13 and fig. 5—the famous frontispiece to Guglielmo Ebreo’s treatise on the dance, *De Practica seu arte tripudi* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f. it. 97, 1463)—which shows a posture identical to that of Douce 308, fol. 113r; reproduced also in Mary Clark and Clement Crisp, *The History of the Dance* (New York, 1981), 119.

27. Penwork initials articulate each joust in Douce 308; corresponding miniatures are placed at the head of an account (fols. 112r, 114r, 117r) or at a climactic midpoint (fols. 111r, 112v, 113v, 116r, 118v, 119v, 120r), followed by a second decorated initial. Twice, the scribe left two lines blank at the bottom of a column before a midpoint miniature placed at the top of a subsequent column (fols. 115v, 119r).

28. Atchison, “Structures,” 1:128–29, 147; 2: “The Manuscript Examples,” fol. 187r.

valor. The rich display of heraldic identity, chivalric feats, elegant talk and well-performed dances in the miniatures of Douce 308 affirms the story of chivalry and the social values and beliefs of its

readers, celebrated in Jacques Bretel's final *sarmon*: "D'amors vient mainte jantil euvre" (l. 4403; From love comes many a noble deed).²⁹



Illustration for the *Chansonier balletes*.
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308, fol. 210r

29. It is a pleasure to thank many colleagues for invaluable advice on the Douce 308 *Tournoi*: Jonathan Alexander, Régine Astier, William Burdick, Keith Busby, Mark Cruse, Peggy Dixon, Eglal Doss-Quinby, Martin Kauffmann, Marilyn Lawrence, Mariana Regalado, Donald Perret, Miri Rubin, Eric Salehi, Lucy Freeman

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