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Grimbert (Joan Tasker), « Refashioning combat in Chrétien's *Cligés* for the Burgundian court »

Résumé – En 1455, un prosateur anonyme adapta le *Cligés* de Chrétien de Troyes (1176). Pour ses contemporains bourguignons immergés dans une culture guerrière, il fournit une description très vivante des combats en condensant l'intrigue amoureuse. Cet article confronte les versions en vers et en prose à deux moments dans l'évolution chevaleresque de Cligés : ses débuts dans la guerre menée par le duc de Saxe et sa participation en chevalier mûr au tournoi organisé par le roi Arthur.

Abstract – In 1455 an anonymous prose writer adapted Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligés* (1176). Seeking no doubt to appeal to his Burgundian contemporaries steeped in war culture, he made the combat scenes much more vivid and detailed while condensing the love intrigue. This article compares the verse and prose accounts of Cligés's performance at two moments in his evolution, as a novice in the war waged by the duke of Saxony and as a more experienced knight in a tournament organized by King Arthur.

REFASHIONING COMBAT IN CHRÉTIEN'S *CLIGÉS* FOR THE BURGUNDIAN COURT

In the mid-fifteenth century, an anonymous writer connected to Philip the Good's court adapted Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*[1] *(c. 1176) to suit the tastes and interests of his Burgundian contemporaries*[2]*. The decision to adapt Cligés* for such an audience was logical: it is quite unlike Chrétien's other romances, for it features two wars and two major tournaments, accounting for roughly 30 % of both versions of the romance, although that percentage is more striking in the prose, which is considerably shorter than its verse model[3]. In both works, the description of the combat scenes in the wars is interlaced with passages chronicling the

1 When referring to this romance in either verse or prose, I use the spelling "*Cligés*", which reflects more accurately the medieval French, but some scholars, including many cited *infra*, use the modern French equivalent ("*Cligès*").

2 The ducal library contained both Chrétien's *Cligés* (BnF, fr. 12560, which was listed in all Burgundian inventories from 1405 into the seventeenth century) and the unique manuscript of the anonymous prose *Cligés*, which was listed in the 1467-1469 inventory and is presently held in Leipzig at the Universitätsbibliothek (Rep.II.108). See P. M. de Winter, *La bibliothèque de Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne (1364–1404): Étude sur les manuscrits à peinture d'une collection princière à l'époque du "style gothique international"*, Paris, Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 1985, p. 250-251; G. Doutrepont, *La littérature française à la cour des Ducs de Bourgogne: Philippe le Hardi, Jean sans Peur, Philippe le Bon, Charles le Téméraire*, Paris, Champion, 1909; repr. Geneva, Slatkine, 1970, p. 10, 66-67, 480-494; and J. Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique ou librairies des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean de Berri, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens*, Paris, Treutel et Würtz, 1830. The prose author dedicates his adaptation of *Cligés* to "mon treshault et redoubté prince". Although the romance, dated 1454 (NS 1455), was composed during Philip the Good's reign (1419-1464), we have no proof that he actually commissioned it, but we do know that, like his forebears, he was passionate about Arthurian literature, as was his court. He loved to listen to romances read aloud and, according to a favorite scribe, David Aubert, apparently preferred prose. See C. C. Willard, "The Misfortunes of *Cligès* at the Court of Burgundy", *Arturus Rex: Acta Conventus Lovaniensis*, ed. W. Verbeke et al, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1991, II, p. 397-403 (at p. 398).

3 See L. Polak, Chrétien de Troyes. *Cligés*, London, Grant & Cutler, 1982, p. 22-35.

nascent passion between the hero and his lady: Alexandre/Soredamors, in the first part of the romance, and Cligés/Fenice, in the second part. The *prosateur*'s keen interest in describing combat for a mid-fifteenth-century audience steeped in war culture is obvious, however, when we note how much more space he devotes to these action scenes than to the love intrigue and how many more striking details he provides than does Chrétien[1]. Although we do not know how the prose *Cligés* was received at Philip's court, we can well imagine that this work, which highlights war and the tournaments that imitate it, would have appealed greatly to an audience that had experienced a nearly constant state of warfare by the mid-fifteenth century, including the Hundred Years War and the duke's incessant efforts to expand his domain and keep peace within it[2]. The greater emphasis on war in this romance (compared to Chrétien's *Cligés*) can thus be attributed partly to the process of "acculturation"[3].

When we compare the prose redactor's treatment of combat with Chrétien's, we can see that the prose *Cligés* is not simply a pale or maladroit imitation of its model, as early scholars thought[4], but rather a very skilful adaptation, involving significant changes both in emphasis

1 See N. J. Lacy, "Adaptation as Reception: the Burgundian *Cligés*", *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 24, 1998, p. 190-207, and M. L. Wallen, "The Art of Adaptation in the Fifteenth-Century *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès*", PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972, especially chapter 9, "Modernization in *Cligès*". In "Medieval Translations and Adaptations", *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. N. J. Lacy and J. T. Grimbert, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2005, 202-213 (at p. 209), M. Szkilnik notes how much the adaptors of both the prose *Erec* and *Cligés* "relish depicting military exploits".

2 In *L'état bourguignon (1363-1477)*, Paris, Perrin, 1999, repr. 2005, B. Schnerb traces the formation of the Burgundian "state" from its origins as a duchy to the height of its power under Philip the Good and its eventual decline. See also R. Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy*, London, Gazelle, 1975.

3 On this phenomenon, see J. H. M. Taylor, "The Significance of the Insignificant: Reading Reception in the Burgundian *Erec* and *Cligés*", *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 23, 1998, p. 183-197. Szkilnik, "Medieval Translations and Adaptations", p. 211, attributes to acculturation the fact that the fifteenth-century adaptors of Chrétien's works took care to depict a more powerful ruler than the Arthur portrayed in the original romances. See also Szkilnik's "Le prince et le felon: le siège de Guinesores dans le *Cligès* de Chrétien et la prose bourguignonne", *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales*, 14, 2007, p. 61-74.

4 W. Foerster, who introduced the prose *Cligés* as an appendix to his edition of Chrétien's romance: Christian von Troyes, *Sämtliche erhaltene Werke*, vol. I, *Cligés*, Halle, Niemeyer, 1884, p. 281-338; and G. Paris in his review in *Romania*, 13, 1884, p. 441-446. See also Doutrepont, *La littérature française*, and his *Les mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIV^e^ au XVI^e^ siècle*, Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1939; repr. Geneva, Slatkine, 1969.

and in detail[1]. My initial foray into this field focused on the first half of the romance. It was a comparative analysis of the siege of Windsor Castle, showing how the *prosateur* brings this episode to life for his contemporaries, both by enhancing the hero's role, as Michelle Szkilnik has shown, and by adding a profusion of graphic detail[2]. Moreover, rather than having Arthur summarily execute Count Angrés, as Chrétien does, he adds a final dramatic scene of his own invention to depict the complete public humiliation of the traitor[3]. By staging the whole siege in a more vivid fashion than had Chrétien, the *prosateur* demonstrates not only that combat has great appeal for him and his audience, but also that he is a terrific teller of war tales.

The purpose of the present article is to show how, in the second half of the prose *Cligés*, the adaptor pursues his fruitful enhancement of Chrétien's take on combat. My comparison of the verse and prose accounts of Cligés's performance in two episodes that are crucial for his development as a knight will unfold in two stages. I will first consider his performance as a young but extremely promising combatant in the war waged by the duke of Saxony against the emperors of Constantinople and Germany. In a subsequent – very different – development, I will describe his exemplary conduct as a more mature knight intent on increasing his prestige by measuring himself against the best knights in a tournament organized in Britain by King Arthur.

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1 For the (increasingly positive) critical reception of this romance, see the introduction to *Chrétien de Troyes in Prose: The Burgundian* Erec *and* Cligés, trans. J. T. Grimbert and C. J. Chase, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2011, p. 9-15.

2 J. T. Grimbert, "The Art of 'Transmutation' in the Burgundian Prose *Cligés* (1454): Bringing the Siege of Windsor Castle to Life for the Court of Philip the Good", *Shaping Courtliness in Medieval France. Essays in Honor of Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner*, ed. D. E. O'Sullivan and L. Shepard, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2013, p. 95-106. See also Szkilnik, "Le prince et le felon".

3 The adaptor may have been influenced by the duke of Burgundy's brutal treatment of the towns that revolted against him (Szkilnik, "Le prince et le felon", p. 68), and contemporary events at the duke's court may have moved the *prosateur* to exploit certain motifs and episodes found in his model; see *Le Livre de Alixandre Empereur de Constentinoble et de Cligés son filz, roman en prose du XV^e siècle*, ed. M. Colombo Timelli, Geneva, Droz, 2004, p. 40-41, and her "Le *Cligès* en prose (1455), ou l'actualisation d'un ancien conte en vers", *Actes du II^e Colloque international sur la littérature en Moyen Français*, *L'Analisi linguistica e letteraria*, 8, 2000, p. 327-340.

THE DUKE OF SAXONY'S WAR AGAINST THE EMPERORS OF GERMANY AND CONSTANTINOPLE

War breaks out when the emperor of Germany reneges on his promise to give his daughter Fenice in marriage to the duke of Saxony by offering her instead to Alis, emperor of Constantinople. Cligés, as yet untested (and already smitten with Fenice), is the self-appointed champion of his uncle Alis. His stellar performance, both before and after he is knighted, highlights his astonishing prowess – increasingly against more seasoned warriors – and makes him seem even more desirable in Fenice's eyes than when the two young people fell in love at first sight.

The duke's war unfolds in three parts, with each phase highlighting different kinds of combat and pitting Cligés against different adversaries. It begins with a little improvised tournament that is followed by an informal armed struggle in which the opponents engage in combat involving ambushes and various ruses (including the Saxons' kidnapping of Fenice) before the armies confront each other in pitched battle, and it ends with a combat that has the allure of a judicial duel. The various stages of this intermittent war are interspersed with scenes charting the course of Fenice and Cligés's increasingly intimate relations, as well as the duke's growing rage over his failure to defeat Cligés and force the German emperor to respect his original promise. The following analysis highlights the first and third phases of this war, touching only briefly on the second one.

The war is set in motion when the duke's nephew delivers an ultimatum to the emperors threatening war if Fenice is not handed over immediately[1]. As the duke's message is met with silent disdain, his nephew impetuously challenges Cligés to a joust. Chrétien emphasizes that the nephew is – like Cligés – young and not yet knighted and that the two sides are equal, each consisting of 300 men. In the brief account of their combat, they immediately confront each other as all

1 For this first phase of the war, see v. 2837-2937 in the edition published by L. Harf-Lancner, Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, Paris, Champion, 2006, and, for the prose, chapters 32-34 in Colombo Timelli, ed., *Le Livre de Alixandre.* All references to the verse and prose versions are to these two editions; Harf-Lancner uses the modernized spelling *Cligès*.

the knights and ladies in the palace rush to the windows and battlements to witness the conflict. Chrétien does not describe an elaborate tournament, but rather a *bohort*, an informal joust generally fought between squires or knights-in-training, in which the participants, equipped only with lance and shield, wear no armor[1]. Chrétien frames this confrontation beforehand with Fenice's eager anticipation at seeing Cligés joust (23 verses) and afterwards with her jubilant reaction to his success and her delight that *Amor* has chosen to have her love the most beautiful, courtly, and brave man in the world (nine verses), followed by her anguish at having to marry another (Alis), whom she does not love (31 verses). Included in the frame are a few verses recording Cligés's feelings before and after the joust: he is delighted that Fenice will see how courageous and skilled he is and prize him for that reason, and he exchanges an amorous glance with her afterwards.

Given the size and importance of this frame (over 60 verses), the *bohort* itself seems relatively insignificant, and indeed Chrétien devotes a mere 35 verses to it! When Cligés sees the duke's nephew breaking lances and routing the Greeks, he springs into action and unhorses him with one blow. The nephew remounts, determined to avenge his shame, but only doubles it as Cligés fells him a second time, effectively putting the Saxons to flight and chasing them to the river where he leaves them to soak, shamed and chagrined.

The *prosateur*, for his part, follows the general outline provided by his model but makes numerous, quite significant, changes. He is clearly intent on enhancing Cligés's prestige even more than Chrétien was and in describing the combat in substantially more detail. When the duke's nephew – here dignified with a name, Archadés – issues his challenge, Cligés's answer shows his desire to set up a *real* tournament, using armor. He tells Archadés to collect 300 of his knights and to meet him on the plain. He himself will use one-third fewer of his own men (200) and even takes care to choose the most inexperienced ones! The prose writer notes the presence of spectators, but he mentions only the German emperor, his daughter, and the ladies and maidens, and he devotes only two lines to Fenice's excitement at seeing her beloved joust and none to Cligés's desire to shine before her. Once the fighting

1 On this form, see R. Barber and J. Barker, *Tournaments. Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1989; repr., 2000, p. 29-30.

is over, the narrator notes the exchange of a sweet and amorous glance between the lovers before expanding on an important element in the speculation among the women regarding the victor's identity, one that Chrétien glosses over quite rapidly. Indeed, the adaptor scrupulously records Fenice's discovery of Alis's treacherous usurping of his brother's throne, her realization that Cligés was to be the legitimate heir, and her determination to be true to that heir as the one to whom she was actually promised[1]. The *prosateur*, clearly unwilling to follow Chrétien in using irony to question his earnest heroine's motives, considers this point to be crucial in establishing her right to enlist Thessala's help to keep herself from committing adultery by serving Alis a magic sleeping potion to convince him that he is making love to his bride[2].

The changes just described are the ones the adaptor makes to the frame of the tournament episode. As for the portion detailing the actual combat, he expands it threefold by devoting 54 lines to it, which is roughly equivalent to 108 verses. It is no longer a simple *bohort*, nor is it a full-fledged tournament of the type that fifteenth-century audiences were used to seeing. It is, rather, a *tournoi-mêlée*, the kind of scrappy confrontation used in the twelfth century when tourneys resembled wars and before they became more formal, often featuring a preliminary joust between two exceptional combatants or a series of jousts between several knights. Although Cligés and Archadés are clearly eyeing each other as eventual targets, they begin by lashing out right and left; only when Cligés observes his adversary's haughtiness does he charge

1 As in the *récits d'armes et/ou d'amour* examined by R. Brown-Grant, the adaptor's change of focus here may indicate "a renegotiation of the relationship between love and prowess" with the knight's "amorous identity and deeds of valour" functioning primarily as "a test of his fitness to rule"; see *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages: Gender, Morality, and Desire*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 16. The *prosateur*'s rewriting is viewed from a political and ideological standpoint by C. Deschepper, "De l'adultère comme résistance à l'empereur usurpateur … La convergence des intrigues amoureuses et politiques dans le *Cligès* en prose", *La littérature à la cour de Bourgogne, Actualités et perspectives de recherche*, ed. C. Thiry and T. Van Hemelryck, *Le Moyen Français*, 57-58, 2005-2006, p. 67-86, by R. Dixon, "The Wedding Reception: Rewriting the Ideological Challenge in the prose *Cligés* (1454)", *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, 14, 2007, p. 315–326, by M. Szkilnik, "Le prince et le felon", and by L. Amor, "Chrétien de Troyes en el siglo XV: la prosificación de *Cligés* en la corte de Borgoña", *Estudios sobre la traducción en la Edad Media*, Buenos Aires, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2009, p. 79-110.

2 See J. T. Grimbert, "The Fifteenth-Century Prose *Cligés*: Better Than Just Cutting to the Chase", *Arthuriana*, 18, 2008, p. 62-72.

him. With a single blow, he unhorses him before plunging back into the thick of the fray and performing wondrous feats. Meanwhile, the Saxons' struggle to get their leader remounted causes the death of as many as 40 knights or squires, for Archadés is struck back down five times by the Greeks before he is able to remount and charge back into the fray to confront Cligés anew. When Archadés lands a heavy blow on Cligés's shield, the hero responds with a stunning hit to his adversary's helmet, felling him a second time. Undaunted, Archadés remounts and for the third time charges into the fray, but Cligés pounds the Saxons so persistently that their numbers diminish, forcing them to beat a vile retreat. This is a pale summary indeed of the adaptor's lively prose, in which he enthusiastically expands on his model. As in Chrétien, Cligés unhorses the duke's nephew only twice, but in the prose, Archadés's repeated attempts to remount serve to ridicule him. Moreover, the clash between the two men and their armies is considerably more detailed – and lovingly so. This is truly combat in earnest.

Space does not allow more than a cursory examination of the second – more diffuse – phase of this war[1], which takes place after Alis and Fenice's wedding and underscores the Saxon leader's determination to wreak vengeance on the Greeks and to recover the woman to whom he was betrothed. Throughout this phase, Cligés continues to display his impressive skills. When he is ambushed by the duke's nephew, he pierces him through the heart with one blow and likewise slays the knight sent subsequently to "have" his head. The *prosateur* increases this second Saxon's prestige – and thus the importance of Cligés's victory – by giving him a name, Terri, and characterizing him as "la machue au duc" (p. 117). After defeating this redoubtable knight, Cligés delights in mocking Terri's stated mission by attaching the Saxon's decapitated head to his lance and donning his armor before going off in search of the two armies. Both sides are fooled into thinking that Cligés is dead, but as they engage in pitched battle, Cligés reveals his identity and proceeds to slay countless Saxons. As a last resort, the duke's men kidnap Fenice, but Cligés recovers her and handily dispatches 11 of the 12 knights who are escorting her to the enemy camp. Whereas the Saxon leader's rage over the prospect of losing Fenice to Alis seems in Chrétien's account to be a question mainly of pride and power politics,

1 For this second phase, see v. 3355-3798 of the verse and chapters 40-44 of the prose.

the *prosateur*, while scarcely neglecting these aspects, actually transforms his feelings into a veritable love passion that he has nurtured for the maiden since adolescence[1]. Consequently, in the prose, the scenes in which the duke hears reports of Cligés's various successes, especially the recovery of Fenice after her abduction, include descriptions of his heartfelt anguish.

Upon hearing that Cligés has rescued Fenice, the frustrated duke decides to challenge the Greek youth to single combat, thus initiating the final phase of his war, the judicial duel[2]. Cligés's combat in the first stage of the war was with someone of his own youth and inexperience, and in the second he defeated the best Saxon knight, but his confrontation in the last phase with the duke, a seasoned warrior, promises to be more challenging. Cligés insists on being allowed to accept the challenge, although it causes great consternation in his entourage. In Chrétien's version, Cligés's exchange with his uncle is recounted at length, and because this joust is clearly a milestone in his life, several verses describe his knighting and ceremonial arming. The *prosateur*, for his part, shortens the emotional exchange, eliminates the reference to Cligés's arming, and has Alis promptly dub Cligés. On the other hand, in the prose, the duke's challenge is rendered much more explicit and narrower in scope. No longer is it a complaint against the emperors regarding a broken promise; rather, it focuses specifically on Cligés's recovery of Fenice: the duke "le fist deffier pour comparoir personnellement devant luy en champ mortel, sur la querelle qu'il se complaindoit de Cligés, disant que a tort il lui avoit guerpie la pucelle" (p. 122). This detail emphasizes the change in focus, which is underscored when Cligés tells the herald that he accepts the challenge, as "le chevalier serviteur aux dames" (p. 123). In both texts, Fenice is brought out to witness the joust and vows to kill herself, should Cligés lose.

1 Although earlier scholars, such as Lacy, "Adaptation as Reception", Wallen, "The Art of Adaptation", and Willard, "The Misfortunes of Cligès", had rightly noted the *prosateur*'s drastic condensation of the love scenes, especially in the first part of the romance (Alexandre/Soredamors), in the second part (Cligés/Fenice) the adaptor adds a few original details that demonstrate a surprising inventiveness in this area. See J. T. Grimbert, "Love and War in the Fifteenth-Century Burgundian Prose *Cligés*: The Duke of Saxony's Passion for Fenice", *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800-1800*, ed. A. Classen and N. Margolis, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2011, p. 443-461.

2 See v. 3928-4107 of the verse and chapters 45-46 of the prose versions.

The main contrast between the verse and the prose is in the description of the joust itself. It is an excellent illustration of how differently Chrétien and his adaptor treat combat in their respective versions. Chrétien takes care to note the arrival of the spectators, after which the lance attack begins:

Qant el chanp furent tuit venu,
haut et bas et juene et chenu,
et les gardes I furent mises,
lors ont andui lor lances prises,
si s'antrevienent sanz feintise
que chascuns d'ax sa lance brise
et des chevax a terre vienent,
que as seles ne se retienent.

The *prosateur*, for his part, begins his description of the combat without preamble, and the lance attack is much more detailed and violent:

> Quant les deux chevaliers se voient prestz de commencier les armes, chascun ampoigne la lance, et tant asprement brocent les destriers qu'il samble que tout doibve fendre devant eulz; si s'entrefierent par tel vertu que lez lances brisent et que le duc wide lez arçons, et Cligés chiet de l'autre lés par lez changles du destrier qui rompent. (p. 123)

To describe the second part of the joust, the sword fight, Chrétien resorts to a series of metaphors that betray his clear lack of interest in the nitty-gritty of combat. Moreover, both his remark that the duel begins as soon as the spectators have arrived on the field and his subsequent allusion to the "onlookers" seem to indicate that he is filtering his account through their eyes. Chrétien describes the sword fight as follows, using no fewer than five metaphors or similes:

Mes tost resont an piez drecié,
car de rien ne furent blecié,
si s'antrevienent sanz delai.
As espees notent un lai
sor les hiaumes qui retantissent
si que lor genz s'an esbaïssent.
Il sanble a ces qui les esgardent
que li hiaume espraignent et ardent,
car quant les espees resaillent,

estanceles ardanz an saillent
ausi come de fer qui fume
que li fevres bat sor l'anclume,
qant il le tret de la [favarge].
Molt sont andui li vasal large
de cos doner a grant planté,
s'a chascuns boene volanté
de tost randre ce qu'il acroit,
ne cil ne cist ne s'an recroit
que tot sanz conte et sanz mesure
ne rande chetel et ousure
li uns a l'autre sanz respit.

The *prosateur*, for his part, does not emphasize the presence of spectators, any more than he did at the outset, and replaces the impressionistic account of his model with the solid running commentary that accompanied the lance attack and that recalls a knowledgeable sportscaster describing the combat play-by-play for ardent fans[1]. The only hint we have that he is even following Chrétien in this instance is when he notes of the combatants "des heaulmes et haubers ilz font estinceller feu" (p. 123):

> Mais combien qu'ilz soient chutz, ilz sont habillement sallies sur piés et ont tost saisiez bonnes espees, du trençant desquellez il fierent l'un l'aultre en telle maniere que des heaulmes et haubers ilz font estinceller feu, et sanble qu'ilz doibvent occirre l'un l'aultre a chascun coup. Or sentent ilz pluseurs coupz lourz et pensans; chascun pense de sauver sa vie, et Cligés, qui tresbien se acquitte, ung coup donne a son ennemi tel que cliner le fait et desmarcier ung pas. (p. 123-124)

The verse and prose accounts merge at the point where the duke, furious at his inability to defeat Cligés, lands a stunning blow on his helmet, and one of Cligés's knees drops to the ground. Both authors describe the apprehension of the youth's entourage, especially Fenice who cries out and faints straightaway. Because her emotional reaction gives Cligés renewed energy, when he resumes fighting he seems fiercer and more refreshed than when he began, much to the dismay of the duke who, sensing certain defeat, attempts to negotiate a settlement. His approach

1 It is hard not to think of how, in his film *A Knight's Tale* (2011), B. Helgeland underscores the striking similarity that tourneys bear to rock concerts as popular events.

differs considerably in the two accounts. In Chrétien's, he compliments Cligés on his bravery and nobility and claims that were it not for his own desire to avenge his nephew he would gladly yield to him in their quarrel. When Cligés appears unmoved, the duke takes another tack, underscoring the contrast in their ages and experience and claiming that were he to kill the young knight he would reap no honor, whereas for Cligés it would always be a source of glory to have withstood such a seasoned adversary in only two attacks. Eventually, the duke capitulates, stating that it is his wish and desire to cede to Cligés in their dispute, but the Greek demands that he acknowledge his defeat before all present so that it will never be said that the duke did him a kindness, but rather that Cligés took pity on him.

The prose writer, for his part, takes this outcome a step further, again emphasizing the legalistic aspect of the encounter and the specific focus on Fenice's abduction and recovery. Here, the duke does not mention his nephew (who was killed before the kidnapping took place), preferring simply to underscore what he claims will be his certain victory over his opponent. If Cligés begs for mercy, he says, he will take pity on him and pardon him for "les durz desplesirz et grans inconveniendz" (p. 124-125) that the youth has caused him. Cligés, vowing never to put himself at the duke's mercy, asserts that he will see their combat through to its conclusion, "soubstenant ma querelle que injustement tu me as deffié et assailli" (p. 125). Unlike in Chrétien's account, Cligés does not have to demand specifically the duke's public surrender. The Saxon leader, "qui mieux aime vivre en deshonneur que mourir en loange", lays down his sword forthwith and solemnly intones: "Sire chevalier, je me rens a vous congnoissant que j'ay grandement offensé et mesprins envers vostre haulte noblesse. Je vous prie merci, suppliant que en faveur de gentillesse et de chevalerie vous aiés pitié de moy, et je serai vostre servant durant ma vie" (p. 125). This conclusion echoes the legalistic way the adaptor formulated the duke's initial challenge as a joust to the death regarding the complaint he had against Cligés, who in his view had wrongly kidnapped the maiden. In this way the *prosateur* underscores the fact that this joust is a judicial duel. He also reduces the duke's complaint to the question of Fenice's abduction and rescue. The outcome proves both that the duke committed a punishable offense by kidnapping Fenice and that Cligés was within his rights to recover the maiden.

In examining carefully the first and third phases of the duke's war, we have seen how the prose adaptor modified Chrétien's text by greatly increasing the number of lines devoted to combat and by adding much more detail. We have also observed that he replaces the *bohort* with an actual tournament and turns the single combat at the end into a judicial duel. More generally, we have seen how he charts Cligés's evolution from an untried youth battling a young Saxon to a more mature knight engaged in a judicial duel with a seasoned warrior. Although Cligés has certainly proved his valor in the duke's war, he wishes to put his prowess to the ultimate test by traveling to King Arthur's court where he knows he will encounter the best knights in the world; he will do so in a tournament organized by King Arthur. Continuing our comparative analysis of combat in the verse and prose versions of this romance, we turn now to an examination of Cligés's performance in that context, where he will arrive at the pinnacle of martial success.

THE TOURNAMENT ORGANIZED BY KING ARTHUR BETWEEN WALLINGFORD AND OXFORD

To elucidate the significance of the changes wrought by the *prosateur* in the verse account of this key tournament, I will begin with a brief description of how such events unfolded in reality and how Chrétien "adjusted" reality to romance. We are not sure exactly when tournaments began to be held, in part because the earliest references are to *assemblees*, which in some cases might have been simply displays of horsemanship[1]. However, it is certain that the taste for such events increased throughout the twelfth century and that Chrétien's romances were contemporaneous with the public's growing interest in them. *Erec et Enide* was actually composed around the time of the tournament that took place between

1 On medieval tournaments, see (besides Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*) J. Flori, *Chevaliers et chevalerie au moyen âge*, Paris, Hachette, 1998, especially "Les chevaliers dans les tournois", p. 131-152. See also M. Parisse, "Le tournoi en France, des origines à la fin du XIII[e] siècle", and P. Contamine, "Les tournois en France à la fin du moyen âge", *Das Ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*, ed. J. Fleckenstein, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985, respectively p. 175-211 and p. 426-449.

Gournai and Ressons, an event described in the biography of Guillaume le Maréchal, who made an excellent living from his active and highly effective participation in multiple tourneys. Historians have culled a great deal of information from Guillaume's *Histoire* in order to recreate the reality of the twelfth-century tournament[1]. Such reconstruction is necessary because Guillaume's account – part history / part fiction, like so many medieval texts – was commissioned by his son after his death, and, according to Larry Benson, it was greatly influenced by the descriptions of tournaments in Chrétien's romances[2]. As Christine Ferlampin-Acher notes: "Il s'agit d'un panégyrique d'un personnage qui trouve sa grandeur dans sa ressemblance avec les héros courtois". She adds that although caution is advised in working with Guillaume's *Histoire* as a transcription of reality, it is still possible to see how Chrétien, by stylizing reality, developed a scheme sufficiently structured to engender a *topos*[3].

The first *assemblees* were very similar to war, with two sides combating each other, but principally for material rather than territorial gain. The point, therefore, was not to kill one's opponent, but to take him prisoner, along with his horse if possible, and to ransom the lot. Because a few men were needed to guard the booty, teamwork was crucial; consequently, there was less emphasis on the performance of a single knight. Moreover, the tourneys were not particularly well organized, and they were focused mainly on the *mêlée*, in which the participants, divided between two sides and working in groups, came together in a charge, or *estor*, whose primary goal was to disorganize their opponents.

1 *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. P. Meyer, 3 vols, Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1891-1901.

2 L. D. Benson, "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*", *Chivalric Literature. Essays on Relations Between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. L. D. Benson and J. Leyerle, Kalamazoo, MI, Medieval Institute, 1980, p. 1-24. Although this article is very illuminating, I disagree that these first literary tournaments had "little narrative importance" and that they were included only "as part of the definition of a noble life" (p. 6), that they are "set pieces that stand apart from the main narrative and have little effect on the progress of the tale" (p. 16). On the contrary, they are important as rites of passage for establishing a hero's prowess, especially in relation to renowned knights.

3 C. Ferlampin-Acher, "Les tournois chez Chrétien de Troyes: l'art de l'esquive", *Amour et chevalerie dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes*, *Actes du Colloque de Troyes*, *27-29 mars 1992*, ed. D. Quéruel, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1995, p. 161-189, at p. 162. Ferlampin-Acher offers a very thorough analysis.

Thus, tourneys took place in the midst of a great deal of confusion, especially since they were not restricted to a single flat plain, as they are in Chrétien's romances, but rather ranged over a fairly large space, which could include hills and extend into towns. Moreover, the time period was not as circumscribed as in Chrétien. Often the participants just had a merry brawl until nightfall or until one side was soundly defeated. The region where most early tournaments were held was in northern France; it was not until 1194 that King Richard I granted permission to organize tournaments in England. Yet, all of the tournaments in Chrétien's romances take place in Britain. Given how gritty the twelfth-century tourneys were in reality, there was no question of a knight arriving for the event in spanking new armor and arms, and he certainly could not afford to have four different horses and four different sets of armor, as Cligés does at the tournament between Oxford and Wallingford[1]!

Now, in stylizing the reality that he knew, Chrétien transformed these events into fairly elaborate noble spectacles, with innovations including (1) the extension of tourneys from two to three and even four days, (2) the introduction of the matrimonial tournament, and (3) the extended use of fighting incognito[2]. In all of these events, a knight's prowess alone makes the difference, and everything is done to highlight that aspect. Although Chrétien does not depict tournaments in the same way in every romance, in *Cligés*, the usual pattern is that an initial joust between the hero and a knight whose reputation has already been established takes precedence. The second knight is handily defeated and sometimes taken prisoner. Then the *mêlée* begins, where the protagonist again prevails, but this time over a horde of unnamed knights.

Turning now to our analysis proper, let us consider the features that are common to both the verse and the prose accounts of this tournament before noting the divergences. We recall that after Cligés has proven his mettle as a young knight in Constantinople, he travels to Arthur's court to measure himself against knights who are reputedly the best in the world. On arriving in England, he learns that Arthur has organized a tournament to be held outside Oxford, near Wallingford. Because the tournament is to last four days, and Cligés wants to fight

1 Ferlampin-Acher, "Les tournois", p. 168.
2 Ferlampin-Acher, "Les tournois", p. 162.

incognito throughout, he sends his squires off to purchase three different sets of armor, one black, one red, and one green; he will use these on successive days, before donning on the last day the white one that he brought with him[1].

Since the tournament in Chrétien's day was focused on the *mêlée*, the joust – in which two knights engaged in single combat – was never the main feature the way it was to become in the later Middle Ages[2]. It did, however, constitute one component. In both the verse and prose *Cligés*, where the point is for the protagonist to measure himself very visibly against Arthur's best knights, Cligés will face, on each of the four successive days, a formidable challenger: Sagremor, Perceval, Lancelot, and finally Gauvain, and naturally it will be a joust in which he will endeavor to prove his worth – succeeding brilliantly. After each joust, the two sides do confront each other in the *mêlée*, but Cligés's performance is highlighted, and of course he unhorses everyone he encounters in both the joust and the *mêlée* until he meets his match with Gauvain. As is the case in all of Chrétien's romances, the hero's performance in the joust is so striking that there can be no nuanced hierarchy from poor to excellent among the participants. The only distinction is between the best knight and the others. Cligés manages to defeat Arthur's three finest knights and is proving a redoubtable opponent to Gauvain when their combat is abruptly curtailed by a worried King Arthur. Moreover, as spectator commentary confirms, Cligés is also in competition with himself, that is, with his own performance as another knight in different armor fighting incognito on the previous day(s).

Having noted the features of the tournament in *Cligés* that are common to the verse and prose accounts, we turn now to the differences[3]. The most striking way by far in which Chrétien's description stands out is in the amount of spectator talk that is featured. Except in the combat with Gauvain, which ends prematurely and is followed by the revelation of Cligés's identity, the fighting itself is nearly dwarfed by the amount of comment and speculation in which the onlookers indulge at all points: (1)

1 This episode unfolds over v. 4575-5053 in the verse and chapters 48-52 in the prose.

2 Contamine, "Les tournois en France à la fin du moyen âge", and Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 122-124.

3 Many of these differences are distinct from the ones noted by C. J. Chase in "Swordplay and wordplay: tournaments in the Burgundian prose *Erec*" (included in this volume), but our readings are complementary.

before the joust begins, when they gaze wonderingly upon the unknown knight, marveling that anyone would even dare respond to the knight who has issued the challenge (Sagremor, Lancelot, Perceval), (2) during the joust, as they admire the challenger's skill in defeating his renowned opponents, and finally (3) after the *mêlée* on the first three days, when, following Cligés's disappearance, they search for him high and low.

The *prosateur*, who is clearly fascinated by the details of combat and assumes quite reasonably that his audience shares that interest, reduces considerably the amount of spectator talk, but because Cligés is purposely concealing his identity, at least a minimum of the audience speculation found in the verse must be retained. Chrétien, for his part, does not seem particularly interested in the fighting, and, given the importance he accords in his romances to the opposition between appearance and reality, he is pleased to filter the combat descriptions through the onlookers, who in some cases actually take over the narration by providing a running commentary in which, more often than not, they reveal how utterly and comically clueless they are. The following chart compares how much space is given over to combat (joust, *mêlée*) vs. spectator talk in the verse and the prose and approximately how much is devoted to each joust and *mêlée*; in the case of Gauvain, there is no *mêlée* because Arthur ends that confrontation prematurely.

Chrétien (verses)				
	joust	*mêlée*	spectator comment and speculation	
Sagremor	11	18	28 (before, during)	+ 35 (after + search)
Lancelot	17	12	21	+ 4
Perceval	11	31	4	+ 29 (realization that challenger is same)
Gauvain	36	–	4	
TOTALS	75	61	114	**+ 68**

Prosateur (lines: 1 prose line = approx. 2 verses)				
	joust	*mêlée*	spectator comment and speculation	
Sagremor	3.5=7	19=38	0.5=1	+ 2.5=5
Lancelot	2=4	13=26	4=8	+ 2=4

Perceval	4=8	11.5=23	0	+ 5=10
Gauvain	15=30		10.5=21 (court's reaction mixed with descriptions of combat)	
TOTALS	49	87	30	+ 19

Since by the fifteenth century the joust had become much more important than it had been in the twelfth century, we might have expected the *prosateur* to devote more space to it than to the *mêlée*; yet, it is quite the opposite. But if the descriptions of the joust are shorter in the prose, it is because Cligés dispatches his challengers with greater alacrity (than in the verse) before plunging into the *mêlée*, where his performance is just as spectacular, for he delivers a resounding defeat to all who assail him. And if the *mêlée* portions of the tournament are longer in the prose than in the verse, it may be that the *prosateur* understood the appeal they would undoubtedly have for his contemporaries steeped in war culture. Indeed, for their greater resemblance to war, deeds in the *mêlée* were ranked higher than those of the joust by Geoffroi de Charny, the theoretician of fourteenth-century chivalry[1].

As is clear from the chart, in the two accounts, Cligés's confrontation with Gauvain is the climax of his performance. Both authors devote about the same amount of space to that combat, but the *prosateur* reports a portion of it through the wondering – and increasingly concerned – eyes of Arthur and his court. If in this respect the adaptor is imitating Chrétien's technique, he nevertheless offers a contrast in that his spectator-reporters are totally reliable. We should note that although Cligés's thoughts of Fenice frame the tournament episode in both accounts, it is only in the prose that the hero derives extra strength from thinking about her while he is fighting Gauvain. Other such romantic inserts – thoughts of Fenice – occur in other parts of the prose romance. They are innovations by the *prosateur*, who may well be trying not simply to imitate Chrétien's style, but to build on it, although as stated earlier, he devotes much less space to the love intrigue than does his predecessor[2].

1 R. W. Kaeuper and E. Kennedy, *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny. Text, Context, and Translation*, Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 1996, p. 84-91.

2 Interestingly, Charny mentions the prowess that a lady's love may inspire in her knight and her justified pride in his excellent performance: Kaeuper and Kennedy, *The Book*,

One significant contrast between the verse and prose accounts of this tournament is that in the earlier romance Cligés systematically makes a prisoner of every knight he defeats, whether in the joust or the *mêlée*. Taking prisoners for ransom is a practice that was abandoned in the thirteenth century. Although there is no talk of ransom in the verse romance, Cligés does take prisoners, who dutifully seek him out after each segment of the tournament. In the prose, on the other hand, the protagonist does not take a single prisoner, a detail that reflects how the tournament had evolved by the mid-fifteenth century into an activity that was much less warlike and mercenary than it had been in the twelfth century. This does not mean that fifteenth-century Burgundy did not have its mind on war – far from it[1]. But by that time, pageantry had progressed to the point where tournaments could be seen essentially as displays of horsemanship and prowess. The tournament as pageant appeared in its most elaborate form in 1430 during the festival that Philip the Good organized for the formal entry into Bruges of his new duchess, Isabel of Portugal[2]. The duke, who presided over one of the most splendid courts in Europe[3], sponsored numerous tourneys, the protocol of which was strictly defined, in part by the romances that the dukes had in their extensive library, such as those of Chrétien[4]. It was in 1430 as well that, in the most striking case of life imitating art, Philip created a special order of elite knights known as the Order of the Golden Fleece, which, like Edward III's Order of the Garter in England

p. 94-95, 120-123.

1 Taking prisoners was a key component of waging war at the time, and the ransoms paid for their freedom helped defray costs. See R. Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

2 See the description in Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 1-2. According to Contamine, "Les tournois", p. 427 and 439, the jousts of St. Denis in 1389 for the entry of Charles VI's queen, Isabeau de Bavière, into Paris, ushered in the golden age of tournaments, which he situates between 1380 and 1530.

3 The classic study is R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, *The Apogee of Burgundy*, London, Longmans, 1970; repr. Woodbridge, Brewer, 2002. See also Schnerb, *L'état bourguignon*.

4 Tournament festivals, like the spectacular and richly documented one in Le Hem, Picardy (1278), regularly featured characters from Arthurian romance. See N. F. Regalado, "Performing Romance: Arthurian Interludes in Sarrasin's *Le Roman de Hem* (1278)", *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. E. B. Vitz, N. F. Regalado, M. Lawrence, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2005, p. 103-119. For other instances of life imitating art, see Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 107-137.

(1348) and Jean II's Order of the Star in France (1351), was modeled on Arthur's Knights of the Round Table and in direct imitation of the fourteenth-century romance *Perceforest*[1].

Since Philip created his chivalric order just a short time before the prose *Cligés* was composed (1456), it is possible that if our *prosateur* adheres as closely as he does to the general form of Chrétien's account of the tournament between Wallingford and Oxford, it may be because he felt a certain nostalgia for these events as they were described in his famous predecessor's romances. Such feelings may also explain in part his decision to depict the *tournoi-mêlée* in the freer form it had in Chrétien's day, rather than in the more organized, codified form it took in the great tournaments of the later Middle Ages, where knights from two sides challenged each other in an enclosed space[2]. Of course, there were limits to the adaptor's nostalgic impulse. Having little interest in irony, he drastically reduced the amount of *unreliable* spectator commentary found in Chrétien's account of the first three jousts, while actually interlacing the description of the joust between Cligés and Gauvain with *reliable* commentary. Moreover, because the taking of prisoners at tournaments had long been abandoned, the adaptor refused to allow his noble Greek protagonist to revert to that mercenary tactic[3].

In refashioning Chrétien's tournaments for the court of Burgundy, the prose redactor did not alter his model as much as he did when he reworked the duke of Saxony's war on the emperors of Germany

1 See D'A. J. D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325-1520*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 198. Charny's *Livre*, which sought in part to reform chivalry, helped define the purpose of Jean's Order. Kennedy claims that parts of this treatise were also likely influenced by literary models such as *Lancelot do Lac*; see Kaeuper and Kennedy, *The Book*, p. 67-74. In the introduction to his English translation of *Perceforest: The Prehistory of King Arthur's Britain*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2011, N. Bryant calls this romance "an encyclopedia of chivalry", as much a manual as Charny's *Livre* (p. 3). Bryant notes that Philip the Good commissioned the only complete surviving manuscript of *Perceforest*, produced by the renowned scribe David Aubert, adding that it is not surprising that the romance appealed to the Burgundian court, since "the author has many flattering and enthusiastic things to say about the lands that formed the 14th- and 15th-century Burgundian domains" (p. 24). See also *L'ordre de la Toison d'or, de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430-1505): idéal ou reflet d'une société?*, ed. C. Van den Bergen-Pantens, Turnhout, Brepols, 1996.

2 See Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 122-124.

3 Charny cautions that desire for gain should not obscure the ultimate goal: fighting for honor and glory; see Kaeuper and Kennedy, *The Book*, p. 98-99.

and Constantinople (or King Arthur's siege of Windsor Castle[1]). To explain this unexpected similarity I have suggested nostalgia on the part of the *prosateur*, who is casting a backward glance and inviting his contemporaries to do likewise. But we could also attribute it to another important fact: when Chrétien chose to depict his tournaments as more noble than they were in reality, he was, as Benson suggests, actually anticipating the evolution that these events would take in the centuries following[2]. It is thus that the gaze of each author – one looking forward and the other backward – met in the middle.

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1 See n. 2 p. 355.
2 Benson, "The Tournament", p. 23.