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Collecting and Annotating Medieval Manuscripts in the 17th Century: Political and Cultural Stakes Through a Case Study

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Session VII.2. *The Post-Medieval Lives of Manuscripts:
Tracing The Manuscripts Trade and Cultural Importance in the U.S, British Isles, & Europe*

Between the 1660' and the 1690', Louis XIV imposed a cultural policy based on the prestige of the Greek and Latin sources and sponsored by a king who eliminated, sometimes violently, all the cultural trends that were opposed to its project. And you may know the negative judgement of Nicolas Boileau about the Middle Ages. In 1674, in his *Art Poétique* Boileau spoke of “the confused art of our old Romance authors”. Thus, it is often said that the French Middle Ages were eliminated from the official culture. But studying the post-medieval life of manuscripts can help us to reconsider that. Let's have a look to the codex number 405 of the Library of Carpentras (ill. 1).



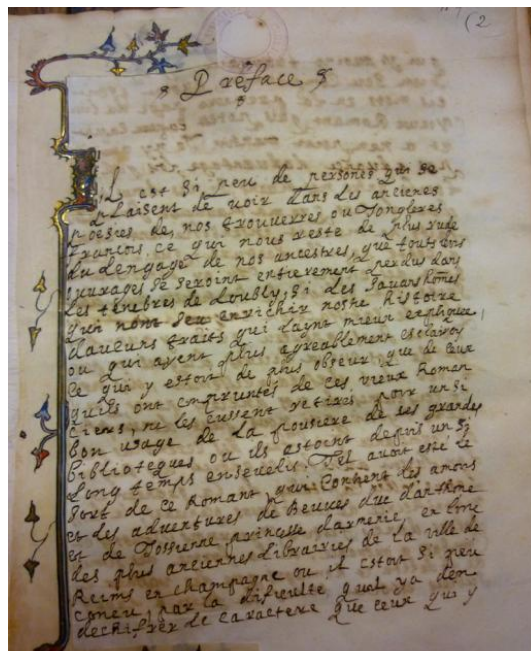
Ill. 1: Location of Carpentras – France.

When the curator brought it to me, I must say I have been horrified by the bad treatment inflicted on a medieval manuscript: somebody tore off some of its pages, cut them and pasted their marginalia on a modern title page to adorn it (ill. 2).



Ill. 2: First page of the preface introducing *Beuves de Hantone* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405, f. 2).

And he did so for a handwritten preface (ill. 3, 4 and 5).

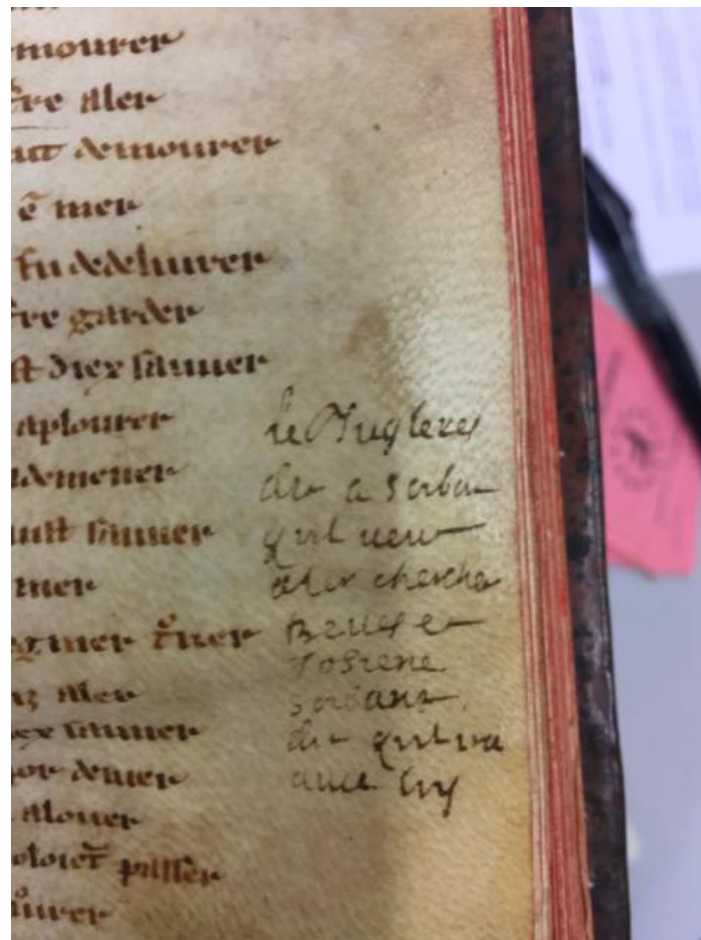


Ill. 3: First page of the preface introducing *Beuves de Hantone* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405, f. 2).



Ill. 4 and 5: Ill. 3: Preface introducing *Beuves de Hantone* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil, details (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405).

And this modern preface precedes a genuine medieval manuscript of an extent chanson de geste with modern annotations (ill. 6).



Ill. 6: Annotated manuscript of *Beuves de Hantone* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil

But then, when you have a closer look at this codex, you understand that the person who did this kind of scrapbooking had a very specific intention. I have worked for eight years to discover who did this and why. In doing so, I discovered many other codices or incunables that were reassembled in a similar way (ill. 7 to 11).



Ill. 7 to 10: a. and b.: Aix-en-Provence, Bibliothèque Méjanès, Rés. O . 45 – c. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Ye 851 – d. Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 106.



Ill. 11: Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 385.

And I could establish that these codices were made at the same time as Boileau supposed that the Middle Ages were contemptible; however, these books show that his sentiment was not universal.

The man who gave a new life to these manuscripts is Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil. Hubert Gallaup was born in 1624. He lived in Provence, in Aix, and he was a member of the Parliament of Provence for which he was the Advocate General of Louis XIV (ill. 12).



Ill. 12: location of Aix-en-Provence – France

In order to understand the reason why he reshaped medieval manuscripts into new books, we will look at a few episodes of his life.

In February 1659, the city of Aix underwent an urban revolt, and part of the young aristocracy rebelled against the President of the Parliament, the baron of Oppède (ill. 13). Although Hubert Gallaup was a personal enemy of the baron d'Oppède, he defended him and saved his life. However, it was a golden opportunity for the baron d'Oppède to eliminate one of his most dangerous political enemies. That's why he reported Hubert Gallaup to the king, as the leader of the revolt.



Ill. 13: Henri de Forbin-Maynier, baron d'Oppède, by Pierre Mignard, 1657.

One month later, Hubert Gallaup was sentenced to death in absentia. The sentence was commuted a few month later and Hubert was condemned to exile and the king ordered the forfeiture of his assets and of his charge. Hubert fled and lived in secrecy for 10 years. In 1669 he was arrested, put in jail at the Bastille, then exiled for 2 years in the region of Champagne (ill. 14). He made the codices I showed you during these 2 years of exile, in 1670 and 1671. The conviction ruined him and dishonored his family.



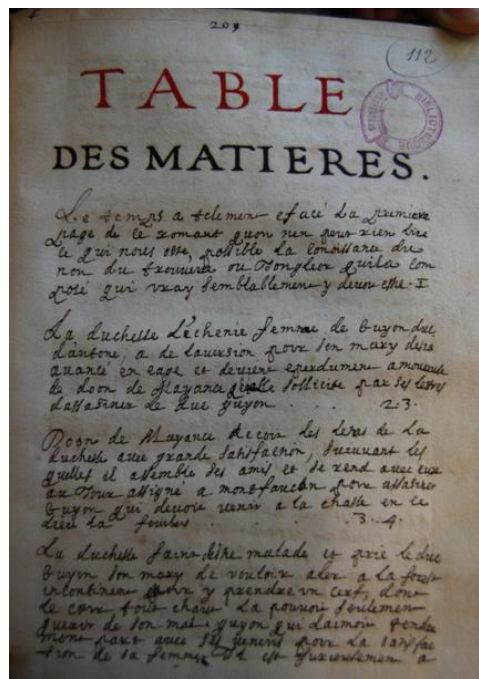
Ill. 14: location of Champagne and Provence.

Hubert Gallaup always claimed his innocence and asked for a fair trial after having been condemned on the base of a false testimony. As a representative of the justice of the king, he felt betrayed by the king's justice. This misfortune was the starting point of a reflection on the monarchic institution, its violence, its unfairness and its contempt for its own servants. Hubert understood that the divine right of the king was fallible and created conflicts and disorder in the society, instead of creating peace and harmony. The reshaping of medieval manuscripts allowed him to question the capacity of the king to maintain social harmony. The way he gave medieval manuscripts a new life is evidence of his will to resist to the arbitrariness of the king. During his exile, Hubert Gallaup copied, cut and assembled different medieval manuscripts, and he also read, annotated and commented them thoroughly. We can say that this work constitutes the modernization of medieval manuscripts in the sense that Hubert Gallaup gave them a new contemporaneity.

Let's have a look at the Carpentras codex number 405: Hubert bound together a 13th century manuscript of the chanson de geste *Beuves de Hantone* (*Bevis of Hampton*) in Old French with a modern copy the *Confort de Philosophie*. This text is a translation in Old French, by Jean de Meun, of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*

The codex shows 2 types of modernization of a medieval manuscript:

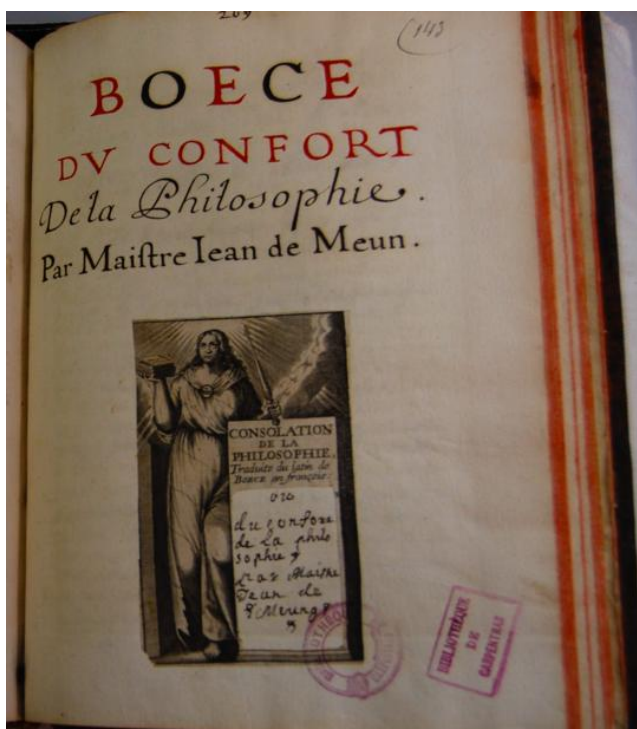
- the original medieval manuscript of *Beuves de Hantone* is updated through the addition of modern paratextual and iconographic materials (preface, table of content in modern French, modern engraving as a new front page, in the *Confort de Philosophie* as well, ill. 3, 15 to 19).
- The original manuscript of the *Confort de Philosophie*, preserved today in the Library of Reims where Hubert was exiled, is copied so that the medieval text is legible to the modern reader (ill. 20 and 21).



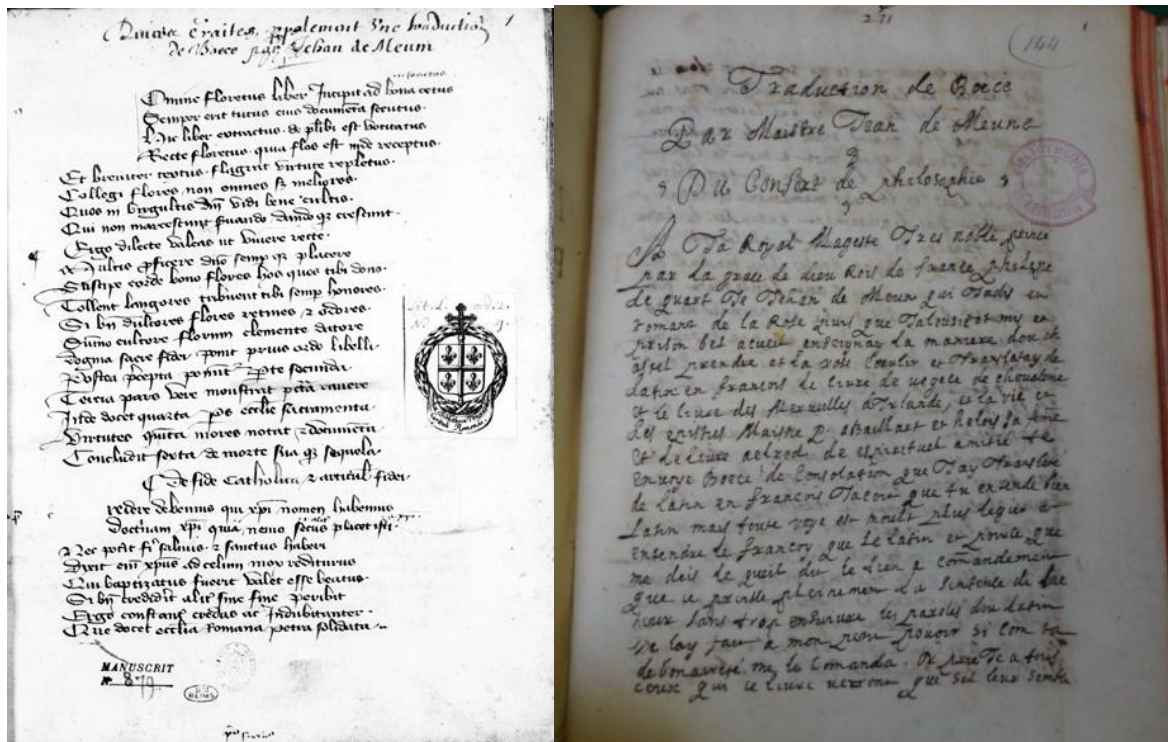
Ill. 15: Table of content by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405, f. 112)



Ill. 16 and 17: Frontispice of *Beuves de Hantone* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405, f. 6), taken from the *Ariane* by Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin (Paris, Mathieu Guillemot, 1639, first ed. 1631).



Ill. 18 and 19: Frontispice of the modern copy of the *Confort de Philosophie* by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405, f. 6) taken from the *Consolation de Philosophie* translated from Latin to French by R. P. Ceriziers, Paris, Claude Gourault, 1638.



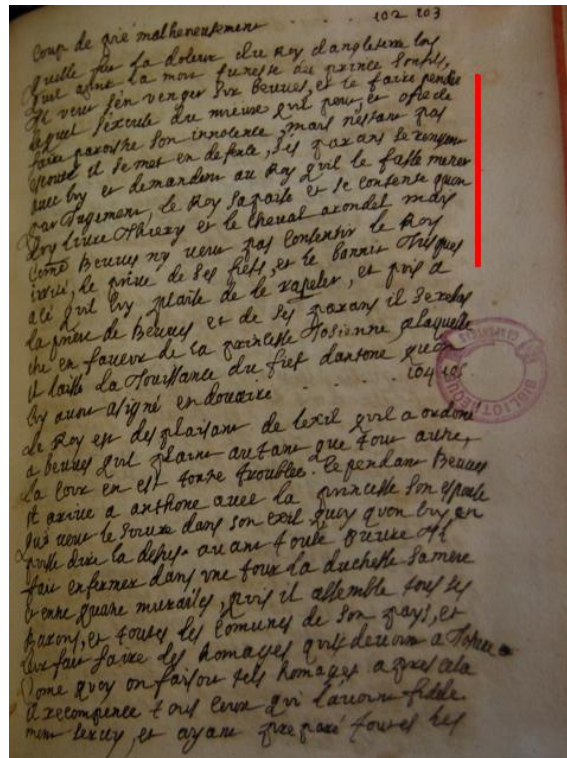
Ill. 20 and 21: *Confort de Philosophie*, Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 879, f. 1 and its modern copy by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil (Carpentras, bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405)

Apparently, these two texts have little in common: the first one is a medieval narrative fiction based on a war and love story; the second one is a philosophical dialog of the late Latin Antiquity, about destiny. Why did Hubert Gallaup bind them together? Basically, both speak of the misfortune of a character who has been unfairly condemned by a king. In fact, the *Beuves* and the *Consolation* both represent Hubert Gallaup's misfortune.

In *Beuves de Hantone*, the main character, Beuves, loses the love of his king in an unfair way. While he is staying in London, Beuves participates in a horse race. His outstanding horse, Aroundel, easily wins the race. The son of the king wants Aroundel, but Beuves refuses. So the prince decides to steal the horse, but Aroundel fatally kicks him. The king of England blames Beuves for the death of his son. And Beuves is sentenced to death. Hubert Gallaup summarized this episode in his table of contents, in a way that it is a clear self-reflection of his own story (ill. 22):

“[Le roi] veut s’en venger sur Beuves et le faire pendre, lequel s’excuse du mieux qu’il peut et offre de faire paroistre son innocence. [...] Ses parans se rengent avec luy et demandent au roy qu’il le fasse mener par jugement. Le roy s’apaise et se contente qu’on luy livre Thiery et le cheval Arondel. Mais, comme Beuves n’y veut pas consentir, le roy, irrité, le prive de ses fiefs et le bannit.”

Translation: “[The king] wants to retaliate against Beuves and to hang him. Beuves tries to justify himself as best he can and proposes to prove his innocence [...] His relatives stay on his side and ask the king to prepare a trial. The king calms down and agrees that only Thiery and the horse Aroundel would be delivered to him. But Beuves refuses this offer: the king gets upset and deprives him of his fief and banishes him.”



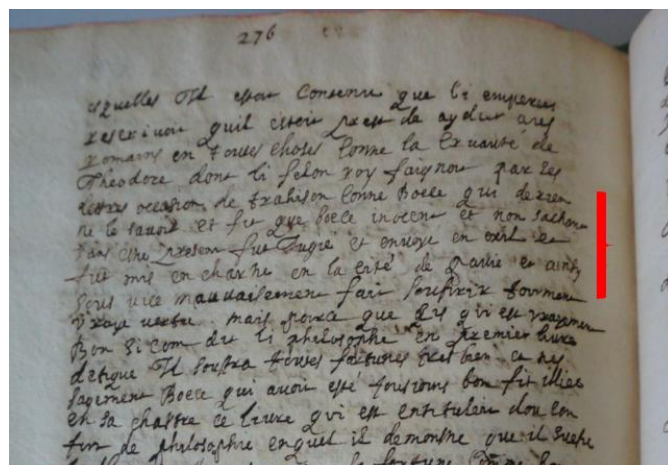
Ill. 22 : Table of content by Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil
(Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405)

The other text included in Hubert's codex, the *Confort de Philosophie*, parallels his situation strikingly.

Boethius wrote the *Consolatio philosophiae* while he was in jail after the king Theodoric arbitrarily condemned him to death. In his prologue, Jean de Meun, describes Boethius' misfortune in these words (ill. 23):

“Boece innocent et non sachant, sans estre present fut jugié et envoyé en exil et en charter en la cité de Pavie, et ainsi son vice mauvairement fait souffrir tourment vraie vertu”.

Translation: “The innocent Boethius didn't know that he had been tried in his absence. After that he was exiled and thrown in jail. Thus, Theodoric's vice badly tormented true virtue”.



Ill. 23: Preface to the *Confort de Philosophie*
(Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405)

In a request that he addressed to Louis XIV, Hubert denounced his own unfair trial in these words (ill. 24):

“Le suppliant absent, opprimé, non deffendu, fût condamné par ces Juges illegitimes, comme defaillant & contumax, à un bannissement hors du Royaume & à la confiscation de sa Charge & de ses Biens.”

“The litigant, being absent, oppressed, undefended, has been condemned in absentia by illegitimate judges to banishment and ordered the forfeiture of his assets and of his charge [of king’s attorney].”

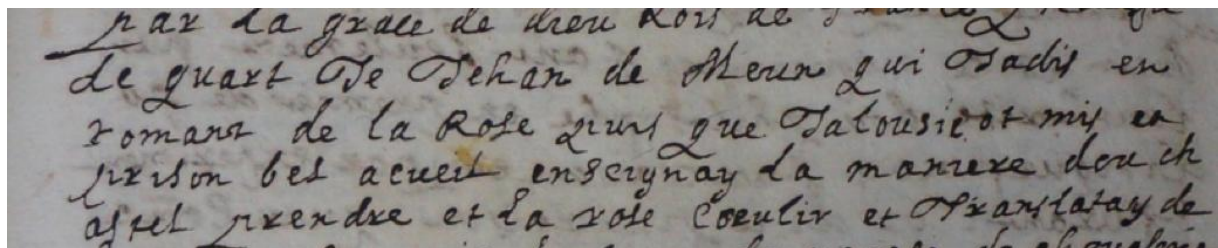
(*Request of Hubert Gallaup de Chasteuil to Louis XIV*, 1672, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, FOL-FM-6423)

A trial *in absentia* ordered by the king and an exile that led to prison are the common elements of Hubert and Boethius’ misfortune. This parallel between Hubert’s request and Jean de Meun’s prologue clearly suggests that Louis XIV is a new Theodoric. Thus Hubert’s modernization of old manuscripts was clearly linked to his individual project of consolation. But it was also an opportunity to criticize the justice of king Louis XIV. So, the post-medieval life of manuscripts can fulfil a political purpose.

We can go further and note that Jean de Meun proposed a new perspective on Boethius’ work: he clearly suggested that his own romance, the *Roman de la Rose*, could be an alternative model to Boethius’ *Consolation*. In his prologue, he wrote about himself (ill. 25):

“Je, Jean de Meun qui jadis, en romant de la rose, puis que Jalousie mit en prison Bel Accueil, enseignay la manière dou castel prendre et la rose cueilir.”

“I, Jean de Meun who once, in the Roman de la Rose – for Jealousy threw Courtly Greeting in jail – taught the way to take the castle and to pick the rose.”



Ill. 25: Preface to the *Confort de Philosophie*
(Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 405)

In those few words, Jean de Meun draws a parallel between his romance and the *Consolation of Philosophy*: if the jealousy of other people can lead you to jail and misfortune, searching and picking the rose can lead to the happiness of « choses entendables », the happiness of “intelligible things”, that is to say an intellectual happiness. In doing so, Jean de Meun implies that a poetic fiction can have the same consolatory power as a philosophical reflection. Misfortune can also be communicated by poetry. Jean de Meun says about Boethius:

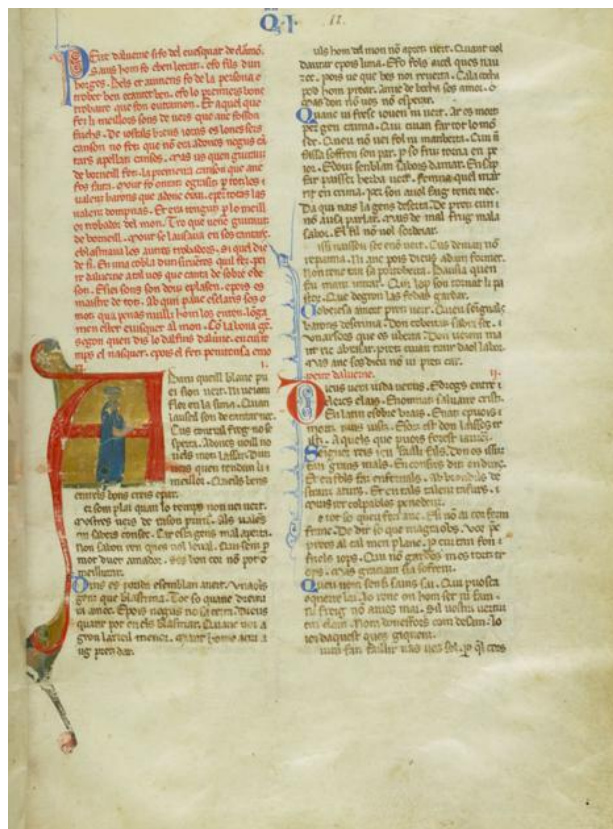
“Il sentoit la douelur de sa mescheance sil com il apert en sa maniere de son parler.”

Translation: “He could feel the pain of his degradation, and we can feel it through his way of speaking as well.”

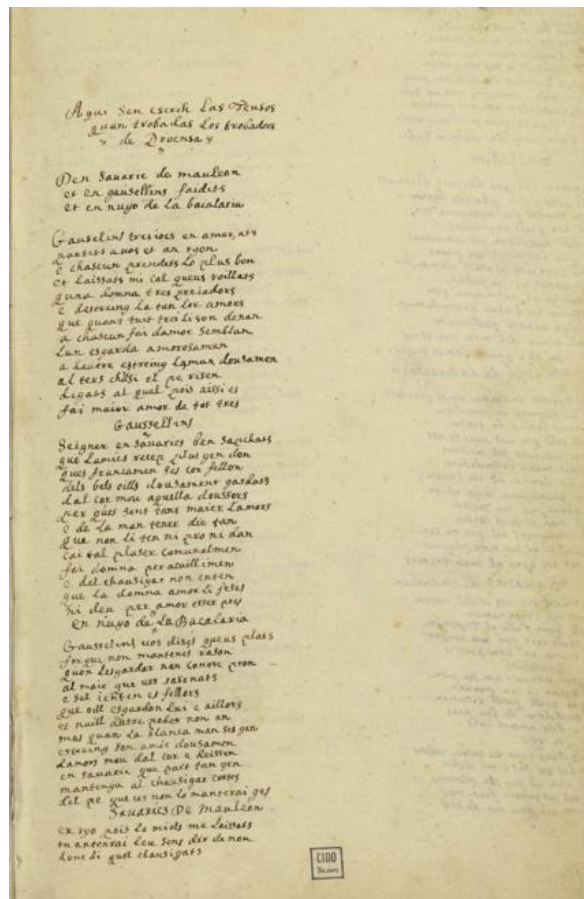
By creating the textual diptych *Beuves de Hantone / Comfort de Philosophie* Hubert Gallaup follows and renews Jean de Meun's suggestion that fiction and poetry can help to understand the cause and the mechanism of misfortune and can help to overcome grief. Thus, the Middle Ages and their old manuscripts are suppliers of a wisdom to fight against the abuse of power and the arbitrary decisions of the king.

But for Hubert and his brother Pierre the Middle Ages and its poetry were an inspiration in which they found an ideal model of justice, older than the absolute monarchy: the model of the Provençal Courts of Love of the 13th century. The brothers developed the idea that the Courts of Love of the troubadours were not a place where educated aristocrats had courtly leisure. They were Parliaments of Love in which male and female troubadours were judges, lawyers or court's clerks. They were ruling a real tribunal where trials were conducted. It was a serious matter.

Hubert and Pierre are the authors of the first critical edition of the troubadours. This edition has never been printed, but it is preserved in the Library of Béziers. This edition is based on a chansonnier that Hubert and Pierre consulted in the Library of the king after their exile. It is the chansonnier I, preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (ill. 26). In their edition, Hubert and Pierre give an anthology of poems in Occitan, their translations in French and a critical commentary for each troubadour (ill. 27). Significantly, Pierre and Hubert inverted the *cansos* and the *tensos* of the original manuscript, so that their edition opens on the section of the *tensos* (ill. 28). Highlighting the *tensos* in their modernized chansonnier allowed them to justify the idea that poetry is juridical in nature.



Ill. 26 and 27 : Chansonnier I, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. 854 ;
Chansonnier Gallaup, Béziers, Médiathèque occitane, ms. 13



Ill. 28: First page of the Gallaup chansonnier (the tensos section)
Béziers, Médiathèque occitane, ms. 13

In fact, a *tenso* is a dialog between two or three troubadours in which they try to find a solution to a love problem. Pierre and Hubert also considered love casuistry as a way to solve human conflicts and to establish harmony in society. In their vision, love is the cornerstone of an idealized conception of justice. Establishing love meant establishing justice. Pierre Gallaup is very clear about that: in a letter written in 1696, then in a treaty published in 1701, he states that the *tensos* that he read in the chansonnier of the king's library are the first and original model of legal debate in France. The Courts of Love were tribunals led by women, whose function was to solve any kind of conflict (ill. 29):

“Et c’est dans ce manuscrit que j’ay trouvé une preuve entière de tout ce que j’avance dans cette lettre [...]. [Elles] ne se contenterent pas seulement d’agiter semblables questions sur lesquelles nos troubadours avoient composé leurs tensos elle étandirent leurs juridictions sur toutes les querelles qui arrivoient.”

Lettre de Pierre Gallaup de Chasteuil à Cardin Lebret, 1697 ou avant
(Nîmes, Carré des Arts, ms. 217).

“It is in that manuscript that I found the evidence of what I say in this letter [...]. [The ladies who ran these Courts of Love] not only debated the questions raised by the troubadours in their tensos. They also extended their jurisdictions to every kind of conflict”.



Ill. 29: The Parliament of Love,
in *Discours sur les arcs de triomphe dressés en la ville d'Aix* by Pierre Gallaup de Chasteuil
(Aix, Jean Adibert, 1701, detail, engraving by Jean-Claude Cundier, p. 16 -17).

Stating that the medieval occitan poetry gave birth to the French parliamentary system was a way to give the members of the *Parlement de Provence* an older and stronger legitimacy to make justice than the one of the French king.

Pierre Gallaup also gave women a central role in the Parliament of Love: according to him, women guaranteed that this ideal system would work efficiently and would provide peace and harmony in the French society. When Pierre Gallaup describes the medieval Parliament of Love, he stresses the fact that women and men shared the same functions:

“Je forme [...] une *Cour Mi-partie*, comme l'étoit celle d'Aix, & je place les Présidents & les Presidentes, les Conseillers & les Conseilleres alternativement les uns avec les autres puisque je vois dans mes manuscrits que dans ces sortes de Jugemens les Dames decidoient conjointement avec les Seigneurs.”

Pierre Gallaup de Chasteuil, *Discours sur les arcs de triomphe dressés en la ville d'Aix*, p. 30.

“I describe [...] a court divided into two equal parts, as the Court of Aix used to be. And I put the Presidents and the parliamentary counsels, all men and women, alternating the one gender with the other, for I observe in my *manuscripts* that in that kind of trial, ladies made decisions together with the lords.”

At the time of Pierre Gallaup, women had no access to juridical functions. But following the example of the medieval Parliaments of Love, he proposed that juridical careers would be equitably shared between men and women. And it was obviously an audacious proposal.

Thus, reading and reshaping a medieval *chansonnier* led Pierre Gallaup to comment on the juridical status of women in the civil law. The project of equality between men and women was linked to a broader reflection of the monarchic institutions. First, Pierre Gallaup's *Treaty* was dedicated to Louis XIV's grandson, that is to say to the future king. This means that his proposal for a juridical equality of genders was a political program, to say it shortly. But Pierre Gallaup also criticized the salic law that kept women away from the French throne, and he concluded from the example of Debrah, who is the only female judge in the Bible, that the law must be reformed to modernize the civil society:

“One ne doit pas disputer qu'elles ne doivent être mainteues dans une sorte de jurisdiction [...] [où] elles sont privées de toute fonction publique”.

“It is indisputable that women can not be kept in a state of juridic inferiority [...] that deprives them of any public office”.

Such a position was typically libertine free-thinking and very controversial. It caused violent reactions, especially from the most conservative fringe of the intellectuals of the time. Pierre de Haitze was Pierre Gallaup's most violent opponent: in several pamphlets he attacked Pierre Gallaup. In one of his replies, Pierre proposed, in a provocative way, to put an end to the celibacy of the priests. This proposal was the logical consequence of his idea that social harmony had its roots into the relation of love between men and women. To sum up Pierre Gallaup developed the idea that a virtuous society was possible, based on the practice of poetry and on a juridical economy of morals, that was definitely independent of any transcendental reference to God. In doing so, he defended a new model of government based on the equality of the genders, and a decentralized vision of the State. In fact, it was a sharp critique of the theologico-political order of the French absolute monarchy.

In conclusion, we can say that Hubert and Pierre Gallaup have been major actors in the diffusion of the Middle Ages in the 2nd half of the 17th century. They gave medieval manuscripts a decisive afterlife. In my paper I have tried show that under the reign of Louis XIV, medieval manuscripts were not only read, but they were also modernized and commented on in order to be integrated into a political reflection. The Middle ages has been considered an efficient and legitimate starting point to build a counter discourse and a counter culture to the official power. Thus, surprisingly the Middle Ages gave free-thinkers arguments for a feminist theory of government. But actually, it shouldn't be a surprise. The work of the Gallaup brothers on the medieval manuscripts have been made invisible and silenced by the official culture, mainly because of their subversive power. Nonetheless, my research shows that this counter culture has been underestimated, or even worse: ignored, whereas it fed the gallant and the libertine intellectual milieu which continuously worked on the Middle Ages at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. The study of the postmedieval life of manuscripts is a productive way to reappraise the status of the Middle Ages in a century that still has the reputation of ignoring this important period.

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