

**JACQUES MILET'S *DESTRUCTION DE TROIE LA GRANT*:  
REASSESSING FRENCH THEATRE IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

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Reassessing French Theatre in the Late Medieval Period**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2009

Jacques Milet's nearly 30,000-line French mystery play, *Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant* [*Story of the Destruction of Troy the Great*], written in 1450, has been marginalized by theatre historians despite its 13 manuscripts (some with extensive illustrations) and 13 print editions dating until the mid-sixteenth century. As a play that treated its non-religious subject seriously, *Destruction de Troie* neither fits precisely with the spectacular religious cycles, nor with late medieval moralities and comedies, all genres which grew in popularity during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

However, *Destruction de Troie's* subject, the "matter of Troy," situates the play in the mainstream of the fictional universes appropriated by a range of groups--including sovereigns and their courts, civic guilds, and artists and writers of all varieties--for social and political purposes. And, the long list of surviving copies demonstrates how effectively the play captured the spirit of its time. Consequently, this dissertation uses *Destruction de Troie* as a prism through which to view the connections among political, economic, and social events, performance varieties and practices, and circulating literary and ideological concepts.

Although much of direct evidence for performance remains inconclusive, the strength of the correspondence between the performance forms, tastes, and customs near the places where *Destruction de Troie* originated and circulated, and the traces of those practices in the text and images of various extant copies, supports the idea that the play was much more representative of

the broader performance and literary cultures dominant at the time. The play's particular attention to political matters as demonstrated in its *Épître épilogative* [*Letter of Epilogue*], as well as the ideological orientation of the play's Prologue, reinforce the important relationship of performance to power. Viewed from this vantage point, a more complete picture of the culture emerges than that seen from the perspective of a few spectacular *Passion*-play performances and late medieval comedies. By establishing relationships in, around, and through Milet's dramatization, this dissertation argues that *Destruction de Troie*, far from being an exception, is in fact emblematic of trends in performance and culture in late medieval France.

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The author of *L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant* is variously known as Jacques Milet or Millet. Louis Petit de Julleville, the nineteenth century historian and bibliographer of French mystery plays--and some others, as recently as 2007--have used the spelling "Millet," but I have followed the bibliographic standard in WorldCat, which uses "Milet." The latter spelling also occurs more often in the manuscripts and early print editions of the play. In preparing this study, I have used Edmund Stengel's 1883 transcription of the 1484 first print edition (this edition is now lost) when referring to pages and line numbers. The Prologue (lines 1 through 328) is numbered separately from the play (lines 1 through 27984). When citing stage directions, which Stengel left out of his lineation, I add the letters "sd" after the line number, indicating that the stage direction occurs immediately after that line.

In cases where I quote from other versions, I use the published abbreviations for manuscripts (A, B, E, G, O, P1 through P5, Pe, and Y) and early print editions (a through m). Since these other versions are not lineated, I cite where possible the folio number, with the notation "r" for "recto" and "v" for "verso"--as in "382r" or "16v."

When quoting from Jacques Milet's prose *Épître épilogative*, I cite Marc-René Jung's critical edition, published in 1978 in the *Mélanges Rychner*. Jung's edition is paginated, but not lineated; thus I cite only page numbers.

All translations of primary documents, except where cited, are my own.

The completion of any PhD dissertation is both the culmination of years of labor, and highly dependent on the efforts of others. In my case, this includes not only the scholars with whom I engage in these pages, but also my colleagues and professors at Pitt, and most importantly, my family, who endured the periodic absences, economic uncertainties, and domestic inconveniences that seem inevitably to dog any large-scale effort like this book. I thank my dissertation advisor, Buck Favorini, for his confidence, sage counsel, and mentorship; Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, for inspiring this project and a passionate interest in things medieval; Bruce McConachie, for his enthusiasm and intellectual example; Kathleen George, for her encouragement and support, as well as her willingness to step in and fill a vacancy on my committee; Melanie Dreyer-Lude, for her friendship and keen interest in my success; Lynne Conner, for her steadfast support and advocacy during my first five years in graduate school; and all the staff of the Department of Theatre Arts (especially Pam Weid, Laura McCarthy, Jami White, and Connie Markiw), for their good humor and timely assistance on countless occasions. For her wide and immediate knowledge of sources regarding fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts, I thank Dr. M. Alison Stones of the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Pitt.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION: AN UNEXAMINED EXCEPTION

In theatre history, few periods are as long or as unenthusiastically anticipated in the classroom, as the medieval period. This state of affairs has endured for several generations, and will likely continue for more, as the period recedes further in time and remains bracketed by two of the most well-known and well-studied theatre history phenomena: Attic drama in the classical age, and Shakespearean drama in Elizabethan England. It is simply impossible to compete with these two creative manifestations of the dramatic impulse on their own terms. Moreover, the historiography of the medieval period has allowed the performance texts and forms to suffer by comparison. Either we are mourning the collapse of "organized" theatre and drama into the Dark Ages, or we are applauding Shakespeare's ability to transmute the base metal of medieval drama into the gold of *King Lear*. This narrative has been with us in the classroom a very long time. And despite our protestations to the contrary, notwithstanding our sincere explanations about the fertile and diverse medieval performance forms, when students read the texts from the Middle Ages that are generally available to them, they end up in wholehearted agreement with the story as told.

One of the goals of this study is to make available, for the first time in English, an analysis of the performance aspects and cultural importance of a play that, when properly included in theatre history, points toward some new notions of conceiving of the gap between Greek drama and Shakespeare. This study's object is a play that is an acknowledged "exception"

to several of the categories and assumptions that, to a greater or lesser degree, still structure much of our understanding and our study of the medieval period. This play, titled in its numerous colophons as *Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant*, has been generically categorized as a French mystery play, a variety of drama taking its subject from Biblical stories, the life of Christ, or saints' lives. However, *Destruction de Troie* takes its subject from the history of antiquity instead. Additionally, most surviving play texts from the tenth through the fifteenth centuries appear in one or two copies. Yet *Destruction de Troie* survives in 13 manuscript editions, two of them illustrated in full color and several owned by powerful members of the aristocracy on both sides of the English Channel. The play was also the first mystery play ever to be printed, and it was subsequently printed and reprinted for a total of 13 print editions by the middle of the sixteenth century.

So why have you never heard of it?

The answer lies in the way our understanding of medieval theatre and drama has been structured by a durable master narrative: the story of the Church's hegemony and the relationship of performance to that power structure. In the first case, the power and influence of the Church were seen to be so absolute that most other cultural phenomena, especially from the early Middle Ages, either supported that power or subverted it. Other options seemed not to be available, and only by uncovering the ways that people actually lived their daily lives did cracks appear in the conception of ecclesiastical hegemony. But these ideas had the lasting effect of bifurcating the study of theatre and drama into liturgical/sacred/religious on the one hand, and secular/profane/popular on the other. If this division seems familiar to you, that is the evidence of the continuing hold this idea has over us. In a world with Church hegemony, then, the liturgical and sacred drama helped support the power of the Church, the Church condoned and

produced it, and its purpose was primarily to educate the illiterate masses who had no other access to the mysteries of the divine. But the secular, profane, popular theatre, or "folk" theatre as E.K. Chambers called it, grew organically from the theatrical impulse of the people, rising up to challenge the power relations in humorous pieces that skewered authority, inverted religious doctrine, and allowed people's desire for self-determination to emerge harmlessly in the ludic space of the play-ground. But a play that treated a non-religious subject seriously, which, *without reliance on the Church*, attempted to outline the rules for the deployment and use of power, or craft a story that might bind a nation together in a shared mythology, while using the spectacular machinery of the religious cycle dramas--where does such a play fit in this schematic? The answer is obvious: it doesn't. That is one reason why *Destruction de Troie* has escaped detailed analysis by theatre scholars. Not just *escaped*--but it has been actively relegated to the margins and minimized as a part of the performance culture of the mid- to late-fifteenth century.

So I have the primary goal here to correct an omission in late medieval theatre history. But more is at stake than filling in a gap. This period deserves a reassessment because several extremely well-documented religious performances<sup>1</sup> have received nearly all of the critical attention. Thus the *mode* of performance, as a cultural product and manifestation, has been infused with a heavily doctrinal and abstract flavor. The existence of spectacular and well-

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<sup>1</sup> Mons (1501), *Mystère de la Passion*; Romans (1509), *Le Mystère des Trois Doms*; Bourges (1536), *Le Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*; Valenciennes (1547), *Le Mystère de la Passion* (not the same text as the Mons *Passion*); and Lucerne (1583), *The Passion Play of Lucerne* (Vince, p. 103-5).



documented religious performances has elided into the implication that inspiring religious devotion was primarily what performance in this time was *for*.<sup>2</sup> This idea, not coincidentally I think, fits very nicely with the remnants of the Church hegemony thesis.

But the corpus of extant *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts and print editions--overlapping half of the period of the "golden age" of the large-scale religious cycle play--represents an almost unexamined store of data regarding performance and its relationship to politics, history, and literature. In the following chapters, I use *Destruction de Troie* as a prism through which to view the connections among political, economic, and social events, performance varieties and practices, and circulating literary and ideological concepts. By establishing relationships in, around, and through Milet's dramatization, I argue that *Destruction de Troie*, rather than being an exception to the trends in performance and culture, is in fact emblematic of those trends, practices, and ideas. Viewed from this vantage point, a more complete picture of the culture emerges than that painted solely from the perspective of a handful of spectacular *Passion* play performances. Paradoxically, my analysis closely binds *Destruction de Troie* to the same practices and customs used by the producers of the large-scale religious plays, and I think that serves the bigger picture well. In some ways, I am seeking to bridge the gap over a specious divide: religious or non-religious, civic or courtly, dignified or ribald, the mode of expression

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<sup>2</sup> See, for an extremely recent example, the 2008 book by Donald and Sara Maddox, *Parisian Confraternity Drama of the Fourteenth Century*.

that seemed to make the most difference in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was *performance*.<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter One, I begin with a brief analysis of the historiography of the period and the past scholarship that has both helped and hindered in undertaking an analysis of *Destruction de Troie*. Then I proceed to a discussion of the extant manuscripts. I show how current methods of understanding medieval French play manuscripts are insufficient both for comprehending the similarities and differences among the 13 *Destruction* examples, and for assessing the manuscripts' relationship to a possible performance. Finally, I demonstrate how the manuscript codices themselves, as material objects, represent the crystallization of a centuries-long process of telling and re-telling the Troy story in various ways and for a variety of purposes. In the section on print editions, I argue that the history of *Destruction de Troie* in print reflects and distorts the development of modern conventions in printing, culminating in an edition that celebrates a kind of nostalgia while simultaneously proscribing and standardizing the content. In other words, print technology enables the play to look backward and forward at the same time.

In Chapter Two, I lay out the biography, reputation, and literary *oeuvre* of Jacques Milet, tracing the connections between his life and works and the larger forces at work in his world. I cover the major political and military events, as well as the social and economic shifts in France at the middle of the fifteenth century. Finally, I illuminate the cultural and artistic *milieux* most proximate, geographically and figuratively, to the creation of *Destruction de Troie*, including: the Duchy of Burgundy, with its spectacular and politically inflected performance culture;

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the mode of performance as it relates to identity in the Middle Ages, see Susan Crane's *The Performance of Self*.

Anjou-Provence and Savoy, two of the largest and most significant centers of artistic patronage in France, as well as host to different and characteristic performance forms; and finally, the city of Orléans, place of *Destruction de Troie's* composition, and home to vital performance traditions including an annual, multi-day mystery play commemorating the lifting of the siege by Joan of Arc in 1429. These *milieux* provided the substrate out of which Milet appropriated the cultural practices he needed for the *Destruction de Troie*.

Chapter Three addresses the question of whether or not *Destruction de Troie* was actually performed. I begin with the indeterminacy of much of the direct evidence of performance, none of which I deem conclusive. However, many of the features and characteristics of the extensive cycles of illustration in two manuscripts, as well as other traces of performance such as extensive stage directions, drive towards a conclusion that it was absolutely *intended* for performance, and therefore preserves a sophisticated understanding of how performance works and how performance differs from other kinds of expression. This is not to say that I am arguing that a specific manuscript was used as a guide for performance--certainly some examples likely post-date a performance--but that the manuscripts record the consensus of author, scribe, and illustrator that the text was intended for performance and probably had been performed, in whole or in part.

In Chapter Four, I turn to the literary and ideological aspects of Milet's text, holding the play in dialogue with its accompanying Prologue and *Épître épilogative* [*Letter of Epilogue*], as well as with other literary forms and traditions circulating at the time. In particular, I focus on the ideology of national identity and Milet's deployment of signs and symbols to position *Destruction de Troie* as a chivalric genealogy for not only the leaders of France, but also for the people of France. I examine the play's possible role as a "mirror of princes," a cautionary tale

containing lessons of good governance, especially in times of strife and treachery. Finally, I analyze Milet's use of literary forms and techniques that support the idea that it is designed, at the level of line, verse, and scene, for live performance.

## 2.0 CHAPTER ONE: ASSUMPTIONS AND EVIDENCE

### 2.1 HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

*L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant* [*The Story of the Destruction of Troy the Great*], a 30,000-line play completed in 1452 by its author Jacques Milet, survives in 13 hefty manuscripts from the last half of the fifteenth century, and 13 print editions created between 1484 and 1544. The play itself is categorized by scholars as a "mystery" play, a type of performance that usually focuses on incidents from Christ's life, the Bible, or the lives of saints. In the category of mystery plays, however, two do not originate from stories based in religion: *Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant*, and the *Mistere du siege d'Orleans*. The first recounts the story of the second destruction of the city of Troy by the Greeks, and the second dramatizes the events surrounding the lifting of the siege of Orléans in 1429, and the subsequent demise of that victory's heroine, Joan of Arc. Both written around the middle of the fifteenth century, these two plays stake out two ends of a long continuum of history--one retells ancient history, and the other retells recent history.

The categorization of these two plays have been complicated by several factors. First, their titles--*Istoire* and *Mistere*--show how late medieval writers and audiences were not as interested as later scholars were in establishing a consistent set of terms and characteristics in order to accurately describe the myriad kinds of plays and performances of that time. The term

*istoire*, which meant both "story" and "history", depending on context, referred not only to long dramatizations like *Destruction* but also to brief scenes staged as part of processions, entries, or festivals. It could also mean "statue" (Godefroy 1880: IV, 478; Gouvenain 8; *Archives communales* CC 561; *Archives municipales de Lyon* BB 019, CC 0518, 0638 1; ). But *mistere*, which was spelled in a variety of ways (*mystere*, *misterres*, for example), could *also* mean short pantomimes performed at similar events as well as longer form plays. *Mistere* could also refer to a wide variety of phenomena, both performance- and non-performance-related, such as: a mystery (something hidden); ceremony; entertainment at a festival or banquet; religious service; craftsman's skill; work of art; an object created out of disparate elements; and manners or morals (Godefroy 1880: V, 348). In fact, even the most cursory search of primary documents from the late Middle Ages reveals an astounding variety of terms that meant people pretending to be other people: *actus*, *comedie*, *devotione*, *esbatement*, *histoire*, *jeu*, *ludus*, *mistere*, *monstre*, *moralitez*, *personnages*, among others (ibid.; Meredith & Tailby 296).

Second, both the *Istoire* and the *Mistere* represent virtually the only examples of plays not based on religious matter that approached their subject seriously. In other words, unlike many plays from the medieval period that mixed comic, religious, and nonreligious elements, the *Istoire* and the *Mistere* focused exclusively on serious, nonreligious subject matter. The old divisions of serious/comic, sacred/secular, and religious/profane simply do not account for plays like these (Knight 1983, 1-15). Alan Knight suggests a new rubric for sorting the bewildering variety of dramatic expression in his *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama* by creating two major categories--historical and fictional--which break down further into subcategories like Biblical history, saints' lives, and personal or institutional moralities (91). This primary divide, one that Knight argues convincingly was also alive at the time, depends on

"a distinction between works referring to historical, or reputedly historical, events and works invented by the poet for instruction or pleasure" (21). Moreover:

The criterion of truth for the history plays is their degree of conformity to past events in the real world, or, to be precise, their degree of conformity to the community's concept of past events. The history plays are not themselves the truth, but only a representation of true events by means of material images....Fictional plays, on the other hand, are not constrained to represent an external reality, but are required to represent a moral truth. (Knight 1983, 21).

Therefore religious mysteries, since they depict events from the Christian history of the world from Creation to the Judgment Day, portray the community's idea of that history in the same way that the *Istoire* and the *Mistere* depict events from pre-Christian history and extremely recent military and political history. In Knight's system, both the *Istoire* and the *Mistere* belong to the category of "profane history," as opposed to "Biblical history" or "saints' lives." But Knight's neat resolution of the conundrum posed by these two plays does not erase the distinctions that die hard. Sacred/secular, religious/profane dichotomies continue to hold sway, as we shall see. Centuries of confusion continue, driven by the assumption that an accurate set of generic categories would lead to a better understanding of medieval culture. Moreover, as Chapter Four shows, historical plays may *also* contain a moral didacticism. Hence, even Knight's efforts to make useful distinctions may unintentionally mislead.

Although usually included in surveys of French medieval drama--albeit with the briefest of mentions--the play suffers from an extremely limited profile in the secondary literature, in contrast to the mass of extant manuscript and print copies of the play conserved in libraries across Europe and North America. In many ways, the relative obscurity of Milet's *Destruction*

*de Troie la Grant* illustrates the power of the received notions that continue to structure much of the research into medieval theatre and drama. From problems in periodization (when does "medieval" end and "the Renaissance" begin?) to generic debates alluded to above (why is it labeled a mystery play when it does not feature Biblical events?), *Destruction de Troie* has fallen out of sight into the space between these categorical boundaries.

The consequences of failing to interrogate received notions of theatre criticism and historiography appear in sharp relief regarding medieval theatre and drama. When eighteenth-century scholars first began to systematically catalogue extant documents from the ninth through the sixteenth centuries, they did so partly out of the Enlightenment drive to categorize and evaluate. And their conclusions depicted the drama of the Middle Ages as literarily inferior, as an "interruption" in theatre history, or as a patternless morass. As Ronald Vince succinctly concludes: "...medieval drama was not worth explaining, and it could explain nothing; it was therefore ignored," (Vince 90). By the late nineteenth century, however, positivist history and Hegelian narratives of progress drove scholars to fill in the gap between the theatre of antiquity and the Elizabethan Golden Age. Medieval drama found an identity as both subordinate and preliminary to, for example, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in England, neoclassical drama in France, and the plays of the Spanish Golden Age. However, significant efforts to find, collate, and interpret large numbers of documents--not just plays, but also evidence of production practices and scenic elements--came to fruition near the dawn of the twentieth century, fueling monumental studies undertaken by Louis Petit de Julleville (*Les Mystères*, 1880, volumes I and II), E.K. Chambers (*The Mediaeval Stage*, 1903, three volumes) and others. Contemporary projects such as the Records of Early English Drama (REED) have continued these efforts, and indeed accelerated the ability of scholars to assess and re-assess the extant evidence. Better



access to evidence, at least in Chambers' and Julleville's cases, did not alter the underlying assumption that the drama of the Middle Ages provided the disparate elements that Renaissance dramatists synthesized into a Golden Age.

Subsequently, much of the twentieth century was occupied by a debate on the "origins" of medieval drama, generating the key studies of O.B. Hardison, Karl Young, and others who debated the role and function of liturgy in generating both religious and secular plays and practices. Thus medieval drama--given a natural ending by Chambers--now also had a beginning, passing through a muddled middle on the way to greatness. By the last quarter of the twentieth century, a dual emphasis--on performance and on cataloging--attracted a greater proportion of theatre scholars who took advantage of efforts like the REED project at the University of Toronto, and new study centers in Italy, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The rise of performance studies, and its orientation towards seeing the qualities of performance in social, political, and civic occasions helped to rejuvenate the study of medieval drama, infusing it with interdisciplinary flavor and bringing renewed focus to archival research and the re-interpretation of ancient documents (Simon xi-xx). Despite these changes, the difficulty of finding, reading, and interpreting ancient documents related to theatre, drama, and performance tends to ward off investigators rather than attract them. Where new studies have emerged, however, the methods and results are particularly enlightening. For example, *A Common Stage: Theater & Public Life in Medieval Arras* (2007) by historian Carol Symes, reads the canonical early French vernacular dramatic texts<sup>4</sup> alongside legal,

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<sup>4</sup> *Jeu de saint Nicolas* (c. 1200), *Courtois d'Arras* (c. <1228), *Le garçon et l'aveugle* (c. 1265), *Jeu de la feuillée* (c. 1276), and *Jeu de Robin et Marion* (c. 1285).

ecclesiastical, and municipal records to illuminate the utility of such texts in the vibrant public contestations of power among the ascendant nobility, the town's *échévins*, the local bishops, and abbots at the monastery of St.-Vaast.

Not every language community, however, has benefited from an organized effort to catalog and describe ancient documents. The history of medieval French theatre and drama is still very much inseparable from, and circumscribed by, its historiography. Aside from examples like Symes' re-examination and some re-editing of the earliest vernacular play texts, critical editions of French drama from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have been slow to appear.

*L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troie la Grant*, unsurprisingly, is a case in point. It received virtually no attention until the nineteenth century. Additionally, *Destruction* did not have the advantage of liturgical or religious subject matter to merit attention by the earliest pioneers. Despite the play's first appearance in the secondary literature in the middle of the eighteenth century (the brothers Parfaict's seminal *Histoire du théâtre françois*, 1735-1749) and subsequent elaboration in the late nineteenth (Julleville), its chronological distance from putative "origins" made its form (that of a multi-day cycle play) and content (dramatization of the siege of Troy) less alluring to prospectors of dramatic beginnings.

Contributing to this marginalization is the play's chronological position within a period that has undergone many shifts in conceptualization. The span of time stretching from *Destruction's* date of composition (1450) and its final edition in print (1544) bears many names: late medieval, High Middle Ages, Renaissance, and early modern. The problem of periodization is an old one, having spawned many studies in its own right that variously argue for a "cultural

continuum"<sup>5</sup> connecting the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Like a pixelated photograph, the more detail that comes to light, the more difficult it is to perceive the boundary between objects. So it has gone for drama in English, as well: the re-assessment of the primary documents bore fruit by the early 1980s. In 1982, Paula Neuss asserted:

So I shall simply say here that almost every assumption that used to be made about Early English ('Pre-Shakespearian') Drama (including the classification of it as 'medieval') has had to be questioned in the light of recent research.<sup>6</sup>

A culmination of that reassessment, Greg Walker's recent anthology<sup>7</sup> puts into the hands of teachers and students alike a volume that displays the complexity and richness of the early English dramatic tradition--one vital enough and important enough to stand on its own, without requiring Shakespeare's existence for validation.

For drama in French, however, there is far less consensus. So the border between *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* (c. 1200: among the first French vernacular dramas) and *Cléopâtre captive* (1552: the first French classical tragedy), defines a space fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, undeniable differences permeate these two texts, and their cultural contexts reverberate with divergent forces. On the other hand, the vast space between the two plays makes it easy to

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<sup>5</sup> Tucker, George Hugo, ed. *Forms of the "Medieval" in the "Renaissance."* Charlottesville, VA: Rookwood Press, 2000. See also Woolfson, ed., *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *Aspects of Early English Drama*. Totowa, NJ: DS Brewer, 1983. p. ix.

<sup>7</sup> *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.

assume that one knows all about exactly how French culture changed from 1200 to 1542. Emphasis on the endpoints of this continuum empties out the intervening centuries.

As labels, "medieval" and "Renaissance" have enormous currency, particularly in classrooms where they signpost a collection of cultural and historical phenomena that are both easy to understand, and easily distinguishable from each other. But what these two terms mean, exactly, is far from clear, especially in reference to the time period under discussion here, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The collection of quotes below indicate that "medieval" and "Renaissance" seem to refer to *dramatic genres* rather than time periods:

Thus, medieval and Renaissance elements existed side by side and were mutually influential.<sup>8</sup>

For much of the second half of the sixteenth century, there were simultaneously in France two different theatrical cultures: the intellectuals' humanist theatre and the popular mystery and miracle plays, -- medieval and Renaissance drama side by side.<sup>9</sup>

The historian of theater must regard the sixteenth century as an age of transition when he notices the existence, side by side, of the most diverse stage forms -- the old medieval and the new Renaissance.<sup>10</sup>

Many a Renaissance and seventeenth-century dramatist witnessed medieval plays and was subsequently influenced by what he had seen.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Brockett 2003, 9th ed., p. 185.

<sup>9</sup> Runnalls in Hindley 1999, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Nagler 1954, p. 359.

<sup>11</sup> Frank 1953, p. vii.

Spread over a half-century, these quotes, while not representative of every perspective, demonstrate the stability of the medieval/Renaissance dichotomy. But what do these quotes mean? Are we discussing time periods? Are we discussing production practices? Subjects? Style? Moreover, the evident similarity among these quotes, despite the decades that separate some of them, argues that the more nuanced understanding of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has not influenced the dominant historical narrative. Additionally, there is often a tacit and powerful association between "medieval" and "religious." Glynne Wickham's oft-cited *The Medieval Theatre* (1974, 1987) despite including a great deal of material on non-religious activities, creates a conceptual framework--theatres of religion, recreation, and commerce--that nonetheless emanates from the Church's doctrine, calendar, and temporal influence. The impression given is that medieval drama is by definition "Christian drama" (Wickham 11). Another well-known work, William Tydeman's *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*, delivers a similar assumption with his argument that:

Other forces at work during the sixteenth century sought to outlaw medieval dramatic performances, not on aesthetic but doctrinal grounds. It was inevitable that, since so much of medieval drama originated in and centred [sic] on the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, Reformist zeal should demand its suppression...(239)

Here, all "medieval performance" is grouped together because of its inseparability from Catholic doctrine, or its incompatibility with Reformist ideals. Thus medieval performance compresses into the substrate out of which germinates the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. A similar act of compression occurs when publishers select what plays to include in anthologies. For example, the 2001 edition of the *Longman Anthology of Drama and Theatre*, in its section on "The Middle Ages," does nothing to dispel the idea that "medieval" is

synonymous with "Christian." The *Anthology* features four plays--*The Brome Play of Abraham and Isaac*, *Mankind*, *Everyman*, and *The Apple Tree*. All four are religious works. *The Brome Play* is a "mystery," a play taking its story from the Bible or Jesus' life. The other three are all "moralities," using allegorical figures to deliver a lesson on Christian piety. According to the critical introduction, the ribald humor of *Mankind*, becomes a particularly "effective means of illustrating the lessons taught in Mercy's opening sermon" (*Longman* 425). *The Apple Tree*, labeled a "comic variant" on the morality play, "suggest[s] that playmaking was moving away from its church-sanctioned didacticism to an aesthetic enterprise for its own sake" (*Longman* 425-6).

The *Longman* critical introduction endorses three assumptions. First, didacticism represents a defining characteristic of medieval drama; second, didacticism necessarily precludes that the effort might be aesthetic "for its own sake"; and third, morality plays, by nature, are not comic. All three of these ideas depend on external categories, and indeed, rigid dichotomies, for their sense. Didacticism is set against aesthetic value, while morality plays are set against comedies. Moreover, such criticism also creates a narrative of progression--from more didacticism to less, and hence from less aesthetic value to more. Ultimately, of course, the end of such a narrative is a play that only exists because of its aesthetic value--an artifact (goes the narrative) firmly rooted in the Renaissance Golden Age of theatre. I trace this particular set of constructions to illustrate not an overriding theme in the scholarly literature, but the legacy and durability of our inherited historical and literary perspective. After all, Alan Knight's book on genre was published in 1983--yet the *Longman* editors appear not to have taken its proposed schematic into account. The older ideas of genre die very hard: it is an inheritance which both demands due recognition, and requires a skeptical critique.

The two different states of research in anglophone and francophone early drama illustrate a range of engagement with the critique of dominant historical modes. In anglophone theatre studies, for example, the new appellation "early English drama" has largely superseded the old medieval/Renaissance dichotomy.<sup>12</sup> New critical editions appear in print nearly every year, extending and complicating the understanding of early English drama as an important cultural phenomenon, and rewriting the history of performance in England with greater independence from a progressive or reductionist narrative. Of course, Shakespeare sits like a star on the fabric of space-time, exerting an invisible force on scholarship that approaches him--yet efforts mount to forge a history of early English drama that does not *lead* to him.<sup>13</sup> As Stephen Greenblatt argues in the Foreword to *A New History of Early English Drama*, the book "does not invite the reader to imagine that the theatrical activities of several centuries were an elaborate preparation or rehearsal for the career of William Shakespeare" (xiii).

But early drama in French remains subject to categorization based on "medieval" and "Renaissance," mightily influenced by progressive historical narratives, and dependent on outdated conceptions of genre that continue to structure historical and literary inquiry. This is despite movement in French and francophone medieval studies towards a more global

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<sup>12</sup> See *Aspects of Early English Drama* (1983), Neuss, ed.; *A New History of Early English Drama* (1997), Cox and Kastan, eds.; *Records of Early English Drama* Project at the University of Toronto, including its journal, *Early Theatre*: <http://www.reed.utoronto.ca>.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Clifford Davidson's 2007 *Festivals and Plays in Late Medieval Britain*. Shakespeare does not even appear in the Index. See also, *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance* (2002) includes only 14 pages out of 387 on the Bard.

perspective. For example, the new Associate Director at UCLA's Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Zrinka Stahuljak, argues in the Center's 2008-2009 brochure that:

...it seems that medieval French studies are participating in a major shift toward, simply, medieval studies....Even projects confined to France have become increasingly transversal and collaborative....Thus, medieval French studies are becoming a part of the global picture that reflects more accurately the circulation of ideas, people, and objects in the Middle Ages...(Stahuljak 3)

Yet this shift toward globality does not prevent the remnants of early French theatre and drama from continuing to be, as Carol Symes argues, "measured and shaped by critical tools fashioned in later eras, beginning with the advent of print, with the result that valuable clues...have been obscured, further deepening the mystery surrounding the circumstances of their composition, performance, and preservation," (Symes 2002, 779). Some of these critical tools, particularly those created by performance studies scholars in the 1980s and 1990s, have widened the scope of documents under analysis, and proffered new kinds of taxonomies and criteria that illuminate the broadly performative nature of culture in the Middle Ages, and theatre and drama's often pivotal role in communities across Europe.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For information on performance studies concepts, see Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: an introduction*, 2002; Henry Bial, ed., *The Performance Studies Reader*, 2004; and Philip Auslander, *Performance: critical concepts in literary and cultural studies*, 2003. For applications to medieval performance, see, among others: John J. MacAloon, ed., *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, 1984; Meg Twycross, ed., *Festive Drama*, 1996; Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (1992), *The Medieval Theatre of Cruelty* (1999), *Death by*

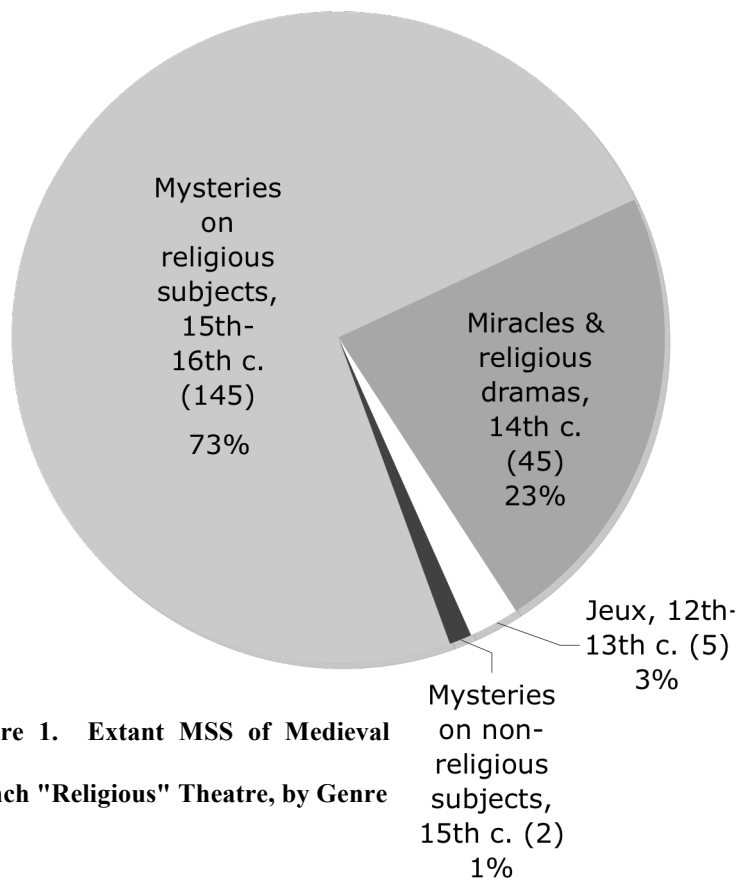


Thus I am conscious of positioning this study, concerning a particular Middle French play from the late fifteenth century--both in relation to the inherited ideas of "medieval" and "Renaissance," and to contemporary scholarship recontextualizing that divide. Concerning *Destruction de Troie*, every scholar who has studied the play has accepted the "medieval" label--including Marc-René Jung, expert on the Trojan legend in France; Alan Knight, French medievalist and theorist of medieval play genres; Graham Runnalls, well-known scholar and philologist of medieval French theatre and its source documents; and Colette Beaune, author of *The Birth of an Ideology*, who traced the development of French national consciousness in signs, symbols, and tropes.

Indeed, the term "medieval" offers a useful shorthand, connoting, in the context of French theatre studies, the kind of theatre that flourished before the plays of ancient Greece and Rome began to supplant indigenous performance traditions and texts, before professional playhouses fixed the loci of production and reception into permanent buildings, before new rules on literary genres and historiography gained currency, and before monarchs and churchmen began restricting the power of local communities to produce traditional religious dramas. In addition, *Destruction de Troie* does contain much in common with medieval religious cycle plays performed in England and France from the fifteenth up to the sixteenth century: hundreds of characters, epic scope, mythic didacticism, ambitious production values, and music.

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*Drama* (2002); Michal Kobialka, *This is My Body*, 1999; and Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King*, 1998.



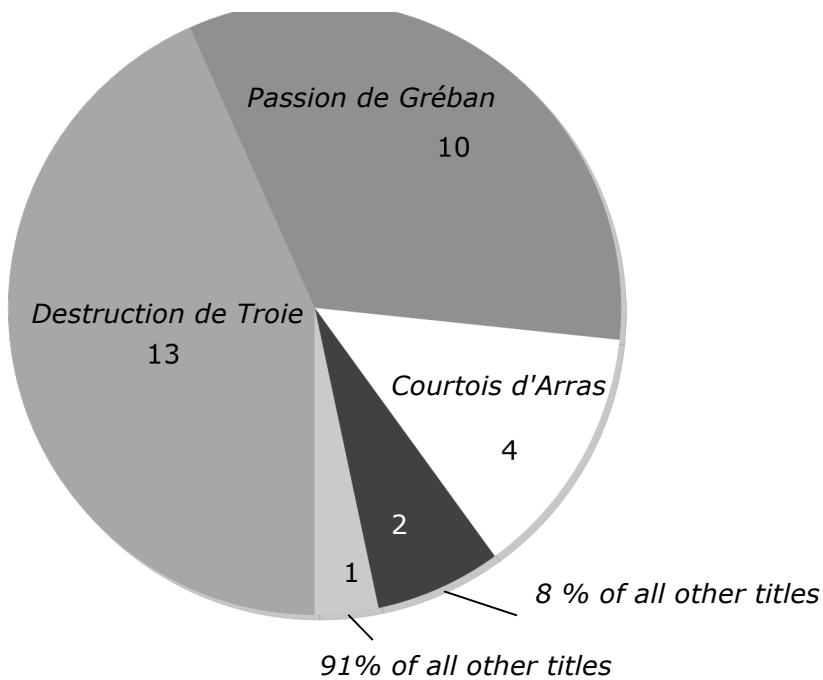
**Figure 1. Extant MSS of Medieval French "Religious" Theatre, by Genre**

However, grouping *Destruction de Troie* with medieval mystery plays has actually *circumvented* study on it, while simultaneously encouraging work on other plays. Part of the reason for this is the makeup of the category itself. As Figure 1<sup>15</sup> shows, the vast majority of the corpus of

"religious drama" in French includes mysteries focused, as Knight would say, on Biblical history and saints' lives. *Destruction de Troie* and *Mistere du siege d'Orléans* seem insignificant compared to the large numbers of plays on religious topics. Because of this, *Destruction de Troie* has always enjoyed an acknowledged exceptionality amongst French religious mystery plays (Julleville; Frank; Jung; Runnalls 1999). Yet this exceptionality has isolated it from its fellows, and it has often been left out of studies that focus on religious mysteries. One of the ways that the play is exceptional is in the number of surviving manuscripts. According to Graham Runnalls' latest bibliographic survey of known manuscripts and early printed editions of *mystères*, *Destruction de Troie* represents the single largest collection of manuscripts of any

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<sup>15</sup> Data for Figures 1 and 2 is compiled from Runnalls, *Les Mystères français imprimés*. Though focused on print editions, he does provide a comprehensive list of extant play manuscripts of the French "religious" theatre.



**Figure 2. Number of Extant MSS by Title**

known French mystery play (Runnalls 1999, 17; 178-182). A focus on different data--the extant number of manuscripts per title, for example--seems to call for an alteration in the priorities of what should be studied (see Figure 2).

According to Figure 2, a focus on plays that exist in only 1 or 2 copies (which is 99% of the total) has the effect of possibly overemphasizing the cultural importance of *singular performance events*--even though there are more of them--while minimizing a play that has shown considerable endurance over the centuries, to have survived in comparatively many copies. It is not that studying plays on religious topics is wrong; but ignoring, isolating, and minimizing *Destruction de Troie* can only provide an incomplete picture of the preferences and interests of playwrights and audiences alike.

Aside from the sheer number of manuscripts, *Destruction de Troie* is exceptional in other ways as well. The play is also one of the few to announce its own author, and the date and location of composition: Jacques Milet, 1450, Orléans. The play was among the first of the multi-day, 25,000-plus-line cycle plays to appear in written form (ibid., 126; Jung 1983, 563). Other French and English cycle plays appear nearly a generation later. In addition, the date of the first printed edition of *Destruction*, 1484, makes the play one of the first French plays to appear in print (the first printed edition of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* appeared in 1464), and it certainly was the first play to appear either in manuscript or print that dealt with the history of

antiquity, instead of biblical history, hagiography, or farcical subjects. It also spent more time in book form than any other dramatic text from the Middle Ages, spending *60 years* in print (Runnalls 1999, 126-131).

The eminent nineteenth century historian and critic of the French *mystères*, Louis Petit de Julleville, described 7 manuscripts and 11 printed editions, as well as collected the few known facts of the life of its author Jacques Milet. Milet, born in 1425, apparently hailed from a bourgeois Parisian family, earned a master of arts from the University of Paris and was studying law at the prestigious Faculty of Orléans in 1450 when he began his work. The endeavor took two years, producing a play of nearly 30,000 lines designed for performance over four days, and including over 100 separately named characters. In 1883, Edmund Stengel published a critical edition of the 1484 printed edition of the play (the original of which is now lost), in a copperplate transcription with line drawings that has served as the primary document cited by virtually all later scholars of the *Destruction* (Runnalls 1999, 127). Thomas Oliver, in his 1899 dissertation for the University of Leipzig, uses Stengel's edition to complete a painstaking, side-by-side, line-by-line comparison of Milet's *Destruction*, Benoît St.-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*. Oliver conclusively proves that the *Historia* alone served as Milet's source. Marc-René Jung, an emeritus professor at the University of Zurich, expanded on Julleville's list of editions, and counted 13 manuscripts and 12 printed editions, dated from 1452 through 1544. Graham Runnalls has since described a 13th printed edition, bringing the number of extant editions to 26 (Runnalls 1999, 127). Some manuscript versions of the play also include an additional work by Milet, the *Épître épilogative* or *Letter of Epilogue*. This address to contemporary princes, while included in few copies, offers a literary image of the

author's intent in dramatizing the work, his target audience, and the effects he sought to propagate. Jung edits and provides a text of the *Épître*, in a 1978 article.

Jung also claimed in his 1996 book *La légende de Troie en France* that he was close to completing a comprehensive critical edition of the play itself. Such an edition has yet to appear--but with 26 editions to consult, it is perhaps not surprising that there would be a delay in its completion. Nevertheless, Jung's articles on the *Destruction's* staging and its dedication comprise virtually the entire corpus of recent scholarship on the play as a performance text (Jung 1978, 1983, 1986). *Destruction* receives some attention in surveys such as Grace Frank's *Medieval French Drama*, where she dedicates about 4 pages in her section on "serious, non-religious" drama (Frank 206-210). Alan Knight sorts the *Destruction* into "historical genres/profane history" in about a page, and Lynette Muir's recent book, *Love and Conflict in Medieval Drama* (2007), quickly dispenses with its origins and ubiquity to address eponymous content. Whatever else can be said about Milet's *Destruction de Troie*, its minimal presence in the secondary literature appears in sharp contrast with its considerable corpus of extant texts. A great deal is taken for granted, I believe, when a total of 26 ancient editions comprising over 6,000 pages generates a statement like: "It remained an 'imaginary' dramatisation [*sic*] of Greek mythology. One could therefore claim that it is not a real play at all!" (Runnalls 1990, 110). The next two sections address the manuscript and print editions of the play respectively, providing an overview of the condition and characteristics of the material objects which have transmitted the play's text to us. The goal is to encounter these objects on their own terms, rather than in relation to concepts of genre or master narratives of history that, as we have seen, have not served this play well.

## 2.2 MANUSCRIPT, CODEX, AND TEXT

From one point of view, it is not unusual that a set of documents regarding performance in the Middle Ages is left underanalyzed. The consensus in medieval theatre studies is that most dramatic and quasi-dramatic texts have not yet been studied by scholars, and that archives likely hold many more relevant documents than we now realize--especially in the case of French-language works (Knight 1991, 159). In the case of *Destruction de Troie*, however, several categories of direct evidence persist today, though some types are more well-known than others: manuscript playtexts and the works accompanying them; painted or colored miniatures in two illuminated manuscripts; print editions, many with woodcuts, from the mid-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth century; and records of performance from the seventeenth century. In this section, I will describe and analyze the manuscript editions of the play. In the section following, I will describe and analyze the print editions, leaving a discussion of performance records to Chapter Three.

Marc-René Jung, one of the world's foremost authorities on the legend of Troy in the Middle Ages, published the most recent and comprehensive listing of manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie* in 1996, as part of his bibliographic work *La légende de Troie en France au moyen âge* (see Table 1).

Table 1. Jung's List of *Destruction de Troie* Manuscripts.<sup>16</sup>

| Manuscript Label | Location & Reference Number                             | Comments & Features  |
|------------------|---|--|
| A                | Aix-en-Provence, Bibl. Méjanés 418                      | Paper. 282 complete pages. Damaged. 16 pages torn out at the end, containing the 2,500 final verses. 15th century.   |
| B                | Brussels, Bibl. royale 10194                            | Paper. 549 pages written in one column. After <i>explicit</i> , inscription of owner: <i>C'est le livre de la destruction de Troye. Le quel est a monseigneur Charles de Croy comte de Chimay</i> [This is the book of the destruction of Troy. Which belongs to Msgr. Charles de Croy, count of Chimay]. Circa 1480.  |
| E                | Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 19.1.9 | Paper. 345 pages written in one column. Only contains first two days. 15th century.  |
| G                | Geneva, Bibl. publ. fr. 177                             | Vellum. 222 pages written in two columns. Illuminated frame of roots, leaves, and foliage at the beginning of the Prologue and each performance day. 15th century.   |
| <b>O</b>         | Oxford, Bod. Lib., Douce MS 356                         | Paper. 354 pages written in one column. [97 images in color.] Space reserved throughout manuscript for additional images. Scribed by Jean Fleury in Paris. Dated Dec. 5, 1461.   |
| <b>P1</b>        | Paris, BnF fr. 1415                                     | Paper. 499 pages written in one column. Some blank spaces for illustrations. On f498v, inscription of owner: <i>Ce present livre appartient a monsieur maistre Jehan Bonnart chanoyne de sainte Opportune demourant au cloistre de ladite esglise sainte Opportune</i> [This book belongs to my lord master Jean Bonnart, canon of Saint Opportune, living in the cloister of the said Church of Saint Opportune {Paris}]. 16th century. |
| <b>P2</b>        | Paris, BnF fr. 1625                                     | Paper. 149 pages written in one column. Contains the first day and 126 lines of the second day. 15th century.  |
| <b>P3</b>        | Paris, BnF fr. 1626                                     | Paper. 214 pages written in two columns. Contains the <i>Épître épilogative</i> . Dated October 15, 1464.  |
| <b>P4</b>        | Paris, BnF fr. 12601                                    | Parchment. 254 pages written in two columns. Almost 400 painted miniatures. Contains the first third of the <i>Épître épilogative</i> . 15th century.  |
| <b>P5</b>        | Paris, BnF fr. 24333                                    | Paper. 209 pages written in two columns. Includes <i>dramatis personae</i> of 102 characters at the beginning of the codex. Scribed by Jean Geneviere. Dated September 28, 1459.   |
| <b>Pe</b>        | Philadelphia, Univ. of Penn. Library, [MS Codex 658]    | Paper. 487 pages written in one column. Some verses in the last day left out; probably to permit the play to conclude with the end of the codex. Scribed by Jan Denis. Inscription by owner: <i>Ce livre est a Guillemain Maret marchand demourant [...] avant la teste noire</i> [This book belongs to Guillemain Maret, merchant, living... {probably a location}...before The Black Head]. 15th century.                              |
| <b>R</b>         | Paris, BN, Rothschild III, 4, 22-23                     | Bound in two volumes of 231 and 230 pages written in one column. Inscription of owner: <i>Se livre appartient a Perceval de Dreux,</i>   |

<sup>16</sup> Summarized from Jung (1996). Notes in brackets are based on my own research with the documents, and English translations of French inscriptions. A bold MS label indicates that I consulted that particular manuscript.

|   |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
|   |                                      | <i>seigneur du Blanc Fossé et de Cormeilles, gouverneur de Leusze et de Coindé, le quel a fait faire et escrire au chasteau dudit Leusze, tesmoing mon signe manuel sy mis...</i> [This book belongs to Perceval of Dreux, Lord of Blanc-Fossé, governor of Leuze and of Coindé, and which was ordered made and written at the castle of Leuze, my signature here writ as witness]. Contains the first part of the <i>Épître épilogative</i> . Signed and dated February 20, 1473 (new style). |
| Y | Yale Univ., Beinecke Library, MS 543 | Vellum and paper. Exterior leaves of each signature are vellum, interior leaves paper. 393 pages written in one column. Scribed by Jean de Nuy. Circa 1475.  |

At around 30,000 lines each, these 13 manuscripts constitute literally thousands of pages of evidence. Also notable, they share a remarkable level of similarity--excepting the notations Jung makes regarding missing verses, the play text from manuscript to manuscript differs only in the smallest details (Runnalls 1999, 126). My own research on nine of the 13 manuscripts both confirmed this substantial similarity--and uncovered consequential differences--among them.

Graham Runnalls' typology of medieval French play manuscripts offers one starting point for contextualizing such a large number of manuscripts. Understandably, Runnalls limits his classification system to "miracle" plays and *mystères* from the 14th, 15th, and first half of the 16th centuries--what Alan Knight has called "historical" plays (Runnalls 1990, 97; Knight 1983, 23-38ff, 91). Runnalls creates seven types, assigned to letters A through G. Granting that his categories are "not always clearly delineated and watertight," he nonetheless makes the point that the types correspond to the "main sorts of different play manuscripts," (99-100). Furthermore, Runnalls claims that "objective criteria relating to the manuscript itself" can be used to categorize a given document into one of the types. At the time the typology was created, Runnalls consulted all but eight of the 63 known manuscripts containing medieval French play texts. Several manuscripts contain many plays (two manuscripts alone account for 113 plays) while others exist in more than one copy. As Figure 2 shows, it is clear that *Destruction de Troie* surpasses by a considerable margin virtually all other examples of French medieval drama in



terms of the number of extant manuscripts (the *Passion* of Gréban being the only one that comes close, with 10 MSS to *Destruction's* 13).

The seven types of medieval French play manuscripts depend upon Runnalls' conception of the process of play production. First, a dramatist composes the play, "using several rough drafts," (Runnalls 1990, 98). This work of the author or scribe corresponds to type A. Then, the dramatist creates a "fair copy" of the text to be copied neatly for a variety of purposes. This "fair copy" corresponds to type B. One of the copies made from a type B could be for the actor's use; thus type C corresponds to an actor's role, comprising one character's lines and cues. Type D describes a revised or modified version of the "fair copy," type B. Type E refers to a "director's copy," which usually includes many stage directions, an abbreviated script, and possibly notations made prior to performance. Type F is a neatly copied revision of an earlier text--essentially, a marked-up type D copied over so that it looks like a type B. Finally, type G refers to a "luxury manuscript recording the text of a past performance, belonging to a patron or guild, and not intended to be used as the basis of a performance; perhaps intended for reading," (all quotes *ibid.*, 98-99). Half the manuscripts analyzed in 1990 fell into type G.

Type G manuscripts allegedly share the following characteristics: written on both sides of each folio; pages are ruled; text is evenly spaced; the stage directions, few in number, are in the center of the page rather than at the margins; no corrections to the text are obvious; and the pages are rubricated or ornamented. Since this category comprises such a large number of documents, however, Runnalls included specifics on the considerable variation within this type. For example, five type G manuscripts include multiple plays in one volume--from two, to 73. Medieval owners of type G manuscripts often signed or otherwise marked their copies (15 out of

32 examples). Type G manuscripts often featured miniatures--or space for them (14 out of 32 examples).

Given that Runnalls expects manuscripts to record snapshots of the writing process up to and including a unique instance of performance, the existence of multiple luxury copies of some play manuscripts does present a problem. He even asks the rhetorical question: "why make multiple copies of a play?" His answer is that manuscripts with text in two columns, usually featuring miniatures, were most likely created for the purpose of reading (1990, 109).

Yet of all the Type G manuscripts Runnalls consulted, *Destruction de Troie* is the only one he declares "was never performed" (ibid., 110). But the typology itself implies a different conclusion. If the *Destruction* manuscripts are similar in every significant way to other manuscripts that *are assumed* to record at least one instance of performance, it follows that the *Destruction* manuscripts were created to record *at least* one performance. The inverse, that *no* play text represents an instance of performance, is clearly false. Many of the play texts featured in Runnalls' analysis link to corresponding documents attesting to performances. Thus it seems more likely that the existence of a play text would imply, at the least, a single performance of that text, in whole or in part.

Moreover, the appearance of the *Destruction* manuscripts differs from the Type G model in some telling ways. First, most other Type G's do not contain many stage directions--yet *every copy* of *Destruction de Troie* is replete with stage directions. In consulting nine out of thirteen manuscripts (O, P1 through P5, Pe, R, and Y), I found that each copy contains over 600 separate stage directions. In a 27,000-line drama--that is an average of 1 stage direction every *45 lines*. That is a lot of material for a scribe to include if it serves no purpose. We know that at least one

scribe of *Destruction de Troie* felt burdened by the process of copying it.<sup>17</sup> In addition, these stage directions were excluded from the line count conducted by Edmund Stengel in his 1883 edition. On the one hand, this practice reflects customary procedure when editing a dramatic text. For example, editors of Shakespeare regularly leave out line numbers for stage directions. On the other hand, in the case of *Destruction de Troie*, the editor's omission obscures the frequency, length, and thus the potential importance of the stage directions. The contested relationship between text and performance in the Middle Ages raises the stakes on any discussion of stage directions in a medieval play text; by contrast, Shakespearean performance history and practices already form a vital part of the critical literature.

The typology also encourages the elision of differences among manuscripts in a single category. For example, the nine *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts I consulted vary with regards to care in transcription and ornamentation, inclusion of additional material or images, and page layout. At one end of the spectrum, P4 represents the highest quality in illumination and ornamentation, including nearly 400 colored miniatures, many with gilt frames and decorations, frequent use of crimson ink for emphasis, and careful ruling and writing on every page, even down to the final folio. Laid out on large folio sheets of vellum, both the material substrate and the quality of ink and paint (virtually undimmed by five hundred years) testify to the care, financial and otherwise, invested in this volume. The layout is consistent: dialogue is written neatly in two columns, with character names centered in the column, and stage directions written in spaces between speeches in a slightly smaller hand. Crimson ink underlines character names

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<sup>17</sup> Jehan Fleury, the scribe of O, signs his monogram, "JF a grant paine [at great pains]" after the play's *explicit*.

and stage directions throughout. This manuscript, bound with an incomplete (50%) copy of Milet's *Épître épilogative*, and including the full text of the play's Prologue, represents the most nearly complete visual and textual example of *Destruction de Troie*, as well as the pinnacle of book arts production values.

At the other end of the spectrum, Pe represents a more casual approach to scribal copying and book production. First, the codex containing the play and its prologue (but not Milet's *Épître*) also includes two other works, both religious: *Les lamentacions de Bernard* and the *Le mystère de la Passion de nostre saveur Jhesus Christ*. *Les lamentacions* begins the codex, while the *Passion* concludes it. Both of these texts are in prose, and appear to be written in the same hand as *Destruction de Troie*. Thus, in this example, the play appears to have been copied with other works--this would signal a different destiny for this copy than that of P4. In addition, written on the cheaper material of paper, in a slightly smaller folio size than P4, the Pe manuscript exhibits uneven columns, lines of writing that slope up the page, myriad grotesqueries in the margins unrelated to the story, no images whatsoever, and a tendency to write faster and more sloppily as the pages mount. Interestingly, the stage directions remain a significant portion of the text, including, like the other manuscripts, over 600 by the end of the play. And most relevant to Runnalls' typology, the play's dialogue is confined to a central column, while the stage directions largely appear either in the outside margins of the page, or simply stretch across the entire page. This layout has the effect of emphasizing the stage directions on the page, as they begin closer to the left margin than the text of the dialogues, and in some cases, long lines of stage directions nearly crowd the narrow columns of dialogue off the page entirely.

The other manuscripts (with the exception of P2, which is missing all but three lines of the prologue and contains only the first day and five pages of the second) fall between these two extremes. The O manuscript, for example, written on paper and carefully ruled to contain nearly as many miniatures as P4, only features 97 that are actually drawn in, and to a greater or lesser degree, colored in. Additionally, O does not include most of the Prologue and is entirely missing the *Epître épilogative*. Yet there is no doubt about the expense and time spared to conceive this volume, though it was never completed. The ambition of O's creators matched the aspirations of P4's creators, though unknowable circumstances prevented the completion of the plan for the O manuscript.

The other *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts fall in diverse positions within the continuum defined by the illuminated manuscripts P4 and O, and the less-carefully-copied Pe. For example, the example Y contains some elements of careful preparation and illumination. The first page of the play's Prologue coincides with the first page of the codex in which it is bound, and it is illuminated with colored leaves, flowers, and fruit. The Prologue is complete, and the play, in its complete form, follows immediately after the colophon. Gold, red, and blue paint are all used in the illumination, with the red ink emphasizing the stems of the first letters of nearly every subsequent line and the first letters of all character names. The names appear on their own lines, above sections of dialogue. The entire play is ruled in single columns, with dialogue lines beginning at the lefthand rule. Stage directions, written in a slightly smaller hand, start in between the lefthand rule and the line near the center where character names begin. At the start of the play, and at beginning of each subsequent day, the scribe left space for an illuminated initial, although the painting was never completed. Several other manuscripts also exhibit signs

of planning for further decoration. P1, P3, R, and Pe all contain space ruled for illuminated initials or for images, but the painting was never begun.

On the one hand, these variations could be interpreted within a broad definition of Type G. They definitely all share features like writing on both sides of each folio, evenly spaced text, some ornamentation, and the presence of (or space for) images. On the other hand, the organizing principle of the typology--conjectured production processes--means that Type G manuscripts represent a conceptual endpoint--the gift manuscript to a patron following a performance. But the condition and features of some of these manuscripts, as enumerated above, do not illustrate, in my view, gift-manuscript qualities. This is especially true given the presence of P4 and O in the grouping, which clearly do demonstrate the planning, attention to detail, and quality execution expected in gift manuscripts. Manuscripts O and P4 stand apart, to a greater or lesser degree, from the other *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts. This does not mean that no other *Destruction* manuscript could have been created for an aristocrat interested in the Troy story--certainly Y appears to have been carefully executed--but that grouping all of the manuscripts together *on conceptual grounds alone* elides material differences that demonstrate a more complicated picture than the typology--and its consequent conclusions--would admit. Manuscripts sharing a general form do not necessarily share intentions or origins.

Thus, after Runnalls, I would classify examples O and P4 as the most *typical* instances of Type G, with the manuscripts P1, P3, R, and Y also belonging to Type G because of the evidence that additional decorations were intended for these copies. However, Pe, P5, and P2 do not fit within Type G; but they also do not fit in any of Runnalls' other categories. Pe possesses stage directions that go across the whole page, effectively reducing the visual weight of the dialogue in direct contrast to P4 and O. P5, as we shall see, includes a *dramatis personae*, as well as

marginal stage directions and emendations to the dialogue. P2, because it is missing so much of the text, has an indeterminate relationship to type G. So it, conceivably, could belong to another of Runnalls' types. Moreover, the nature of these differences among this group of manuscripts seems to indicate that while some manuscripts probably post-dated a performance event (the Type G examples: O, P1, P3, P4, R, and Y), but that others may have *preceded* such an event (as in Pe, P2, and P5). This possibility has been effectively excluded from consideration by Runnalls' typology.

The example of P5 is a particularly good one of the kinds of differences that the typology tends to obscure. It, alone among the manuscripts, includes a five-page *dramatis personae* that precedes the prologue and coincides with the first page of the codex. The list is clearly labeled, and grouped in a deliberate way:

Sensuit les nom des personnages de ceste presente destruction de troye la grand

...

premiere les noms des troyans

...

Sensuit les noms des rois ducs princes et seigneurs qui viendrent donner secours a ceulx de troye

...

Sensuit les noms des femmes qui donneront secours a ceulx de troye

...

Sensuit les noms de grecs (P5, f. 5v-7r)

[Following are the names of the characters of this present work Destruction of Troy the Great

...

First the names of Trojans

...

Following are the names of kings, dukes, princes, and lords who will come to give aid to those in Troy

...

Following are the names of women who will give aid to those in Troy

...

Following are the names of Greeks]

The list is comprehensive, containing all 102 speaking parts, including "Apollo ydole" and "le sagitaire de diomedes"--the statue of Apollo who speaks to Achilles and Calcas, and the Centaur killed by Diomedes. The scribe has also added a commentary at the end of the list, a question and response:

Comment des personnages dessusdits      Centaine ij psonages (P5, f. 7v)

[How many characters stated above?    One hundred two characters]

This extra sentence seems to express amazement and disbelief, simultaneously. Why comment on the number of characters? Perhaps the practice of so many speaking parts was an unusual practice--it was at least unfamiliar to this particular scribe. In any event, the fact of an extant *dramatis personae* and its accompanying commentary in P5 points toward a special concern regarding the number of speaking roles in the play and the importance of dividing the characters by allegiance--who fought for Troy, who fought for Greece.

A list of characters is not the only aspect differentiating P5 from its brethren. The scribe of P5 included stage directions in two different ways: as part of the flow of the dialogue, indented, underlined, and centered in between speeches; and as underlined notes in the margins, outside the columns of dialogue. The marginalia continue throughout all 209 folios, and occasionally include corrections indicated to replace sections of crossed-out text. No other manuscript features as many marginal notes, or as many textual corrections. P5 is also one of three manuscripts that I consulted (the others being R and P4) that consistently and clearly mark a "Pause pour disner"<sup>18</sup> halfway through each of the four performance days.

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<sup>18</sup> "Pause for dinner." P5 spells "pause" as "pose."



The nine manuscripts I was able to consult also vary in what other works appear in their codices alongside the play. All nine contain some portion of the prologue, though P2 is missing all but three lines, and P1 is missing 80% of it. In O, the three final lines of the prologue have been deleted and two new lines substituted, "Icy fine le prologue/de cest livre [Here concludes the prologue/of this book]" (O, f. 3v). The other six contain the Prologue intact. Only three contain any part of Milet's *Épître épilogative*: P3 contains the entire letter, while P4 contains the first third, and R just over half. But some manuscripts are bound with works not by Jacques Milet. For example, the Pe codex, as we have seen, includes two prose works, *Les lamentacions Saint Bernard* and a 1398 version of *La passion de Ihesu Crist nostre sauveur*. Manuscripts Y, P1, and O also contain a verse poem, in stanzas, that begins after the play's *explicit*. The bibliographical entry at Yale labels this poem a *chanson* entitled *Jason et Hercules*. However, the first line, "Jason et hercules vers colchois sen alloient [Jason and Hercules to Colchis set out]" (Y) matches the first line of the stanzaed poem in P1 and O. There, *incipits* in both manuscripts give more information about this particular poem:

Llstoire de Troye selond daire et dictis...(P1, f. 493v)

[The Story of Troy according to Dares and Dictys...]

Cy commence toute la substance de lystoire de troye par ryme selond dares et dithis... (O, f. 352v)

[Here begins the essentials of the story of Troy, in rhyme, according to Dares and Dictys...]

The names Dares and Dictys signal the presence of a complicated lineage of narrative translation, transformation, and summation, in which multiple threads converge in the Y, P1, and O codices. Embodied in these three books are pieces of a Trojan genealogy stretching back to

the seventh century AD and extending forward in time to the 18th century, when many truth-claims about the history of the Trojan war finally collapsed. Dares and Dictys--who may or may not have existed--were allegedly writers of eyewitness accounts of the Trojan War, Dares on the Trojan side and Dictys on the Greek (Benson 3). These accounts first surfaced in Europe between the fourth and sixth centuries AD. Dares, called the Phrygian, became known through a Latin translation entitled *De Excidio Troiae Historia*. The prefatory letter, an exceedingly unlikely document--written by a Cornelius Nepos to Sallust, claims that the *Excidio* is a Latin translation of an original Greek manuscript discovered in Athens. At the end of the letter, the writer suggests that Dares is a far "more reliable historian than Homer" since Homer had made the insane claim that gods and mortals fought side-by-side (Meek xii). Likewise, the preface to Dictys of Crete's *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* also seeks to bolster its own credibility, claiming that *Ephemeris* is a Latin translation by Lucius Septimius of Dictys' soldier's journal. Supposedly written in Phoenician characters, buried in Dictys' tomb, and unearthed at the tomb's collapse, the Roman Emperor Nero ordered its transliteration into Greek (Meek xii).

Despite questionable provenance, these two accounts by Dares and Dictys formed the basis for several later re-tellings of the Troy story, including the Latin verse versions of Joseph of Exeter (*De Bello Trojano*, c. 1188) and Albert de Stade (*Troilus*, 1294). Dares and Dictys also inspired vernacular narratives as well: the first one to combine the two was the French *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, written sometime between 1160 and 1180 (Benson 4; Meek xiii). The appearance of the *Roman de Troie*, occurring contemporaneously with other *romans antiques*, marked "the decisive entry of classical subject matter into French literature" (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 2). Classical subjects had existed for many centuries, in Latin and in the educational milieu--and Latin of course would persist as a significant medium for

communicating secular and religious texts (Jung 1996, 331). Indeed, the Latin versions of Dares and Dictys would also eventually spawn French translations (ibid.).

The process of translation from Latin to the vernacular, however, was not a simple matter of exchanging one language for another. Instead, vernacular authors both interpreted the classical stories and creatively infused them with elements taken from local literary traditions, folklore, and myth. Thus it is more accurate to describe the *transformation* of classical stories into vernacular literature. In this new medium, these stories reached new courtly and aristocratic audiences by the second half of the twelfth century (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 2-3, 15). But Latin still served an important role in circulating the Troy story, even after vernacular versions appeared. For example, a hundred years after Benoît's *Roman de Troie*, a judge from Messina, Guido delle Colonne, wrote a prose Latin translation of the *Roman--Historia Destructionis Troiae--* that aimed to "transcribe the truth of this very history" and remove the "fanciful inventions" of poets who preceded him (Colonne, prologue, ll. 17-19). Colonne also invoked the eyewitness authority of Dares and Dictys, naming them "the most trustworthy reporters of those things which they saw," though he did not use either the Dares or Dictys text (ibid., l. 43; Meek xviii; Jung 1996, 563).

Colonne's *Historia* (240 extant manuscripts) and Sainte-Maure's *Roman* (58 extant manuscript or manuscript fragments)--the former viewed as history, the latter as romance--thus played a large role in disseminating the Troy story throughout France and Western Europe during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries (Meek xiv-xvi; Benson 4-6; Jung 1996, 563-4). Jacques Milet, who earned a Master of Arts at the University of Paris and a degree in law at the University of Orléans, likely encountered both works as part of his scholastic and legal education (Julleville I, 315; Tivier 189). In creating *Destruction de Troie*, however, Milet

exclusively consulted Colonne's *Historia* (Jung 1996, 602). Where Colonne differs from Sainte-Maure, Milet follows Colonne; and in no case where Colonne omits an event included in Sainte-Maure does Milet include it (Oliver 11). Thus scholarship confirms what the play's colophon tells us--that it was "translatee de latin en francois [translated from Latin into French]."<sup>19</sup>

Thus *Destruction de Troie* represents multiple levels of translation and interpretation, in the same way that the poem accompanying the play in three of its codices crystallizes similar acts. In the case of the poem, fifteenth-century demand for shorter, less expensive versions of the Troy story--especially in Burgundian circles--led a poet-craftsman to compose, in alexandrine verse, a summary of the main points of the *Historia*. The poem is variously labeled by its first line, "Jason et Hercules vers Colchois," or titles such as "L'abregié selon Daire et Dithis," "L'abregié de Troie," or other variations like those seen in our example quotes above (Longfors I, 174-5). The poem's most recent bibliographer and critic, Marc-René Jung, titles it *L'Abregié de Troie*. Popular in the late fifteenth century--and thus directly contemporaneous with the creation of the *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts-- *L'Abregié* is conserved in at least 25 manuscripts, including the three where it accompanies *Destruction* (Jung 1996, 596-99). But the author of this poem, unlike the author of the play, is unknown.

The anonymity of the author--a not uncommon status in the Middle Ages--appears not to have impeded its swift dissemination. The anonymous poet used a French translation of Guido created in 1459 in the Duchy of Burgundy, and by 1461 the poem was copied in Paris (Jung 1996, 582-3, 597-8). Moreover, the poem's extant manuscripts show a pattern of inclusion with texts associated with the Burgundian and French courts. Accompanying French and Latin

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<sup>19</sup> This part of the colophon appears in all 9 of the manuscripts I consulted.

versions of Guido's *Historia*, other *romans antiques* (like the *Roman de Thèbes*), legal justifications for Burgundian ambitions, chronicles of Flemish and Burgundian courts, vernacular poetry (much of it dedicated to Burgundian nobility), the poem appears as a kind of literary nimbus--emanating from the centers of late medieval French power and inflected with political and historical validity.

Thus, the poem and the play both partake of a politically relevant fifteenth-century French interest in the Troy story, and how that Troy story might relate to (figuratively and literally) and inspire the nobility of the time. Occupying a materially diverse array of codices, straddling narrative and dramatic forms, partaking of poetic and prosaic modes, and descended from a shared source, these two works contain, transform, and transmit one of the most important narratives in medieval France: the story of Troy. The codices possessing both the poem and the play embody the paradox of shared source material shaped into different forms and then packaged together, as if to represent two perspectives on the same story. The poem draws on the "eyewitness" testimony of Dares and Dictys to offer the "truth of this very history," by contrast to the dramatization's appeal to the taste for romance and chivalric triumph and loss.

The existence--and the inclusion--of other works by Jacques Milet with manuscript copies of *Destruction de Troie* provide additional evidence about the play's creation and its intended audience, purportedly from the author himself. The Prologue, included in part or in whole with every manuscript copy, appears to have been regarded as an integral part of the play. In much the same way that prologues to other medieval plays like *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* and *Everyman* as well as to other literary works, both anticipate the text and orient audiences to it, so Milet's Prologue provides a frame for understanding the form and purpose of *Destruction de Troie*. Of course, *Destruction de Troie* is in no way dependent on its Prologue in order for

readers and audience members to comprehend the play proper. But the Prologue does offer additional information about the author's orientation towards his work. In the most elaborately decorated and illuminated manuscript, P4, the Prologue begins with its own *incipit*, underlined in red ink:

Sensuit le prologue de listoire de troye  
auquel est contenu larbre de la lignee  
de france (P4, f. 1r)

[Here follows the prologue of the story of Troy  
in which is contained the Tree of the Lineage  
of France]

Immediately the text signals a primary concern for national genealogy: the creation of a lineage for a country. According to this titling, the prologue has two purposes, to introduce the story of Troy and to explicate a metaphor for French history: the "tree" of its heritage. Not every manuscript copy is as clear as P4--two manuscripts are missing 90% of the Prologue (P1, P2)--and many of the others simply begin with the Prologue's first line, "En passant parmi une lande." Manuscript P3, however, includes a virtually identical, crimson-underlined *incipit*:

Sensuit le prologue de listoire de  
Troye en la quelle est contenu  
larbre de la lignee de france (P3, f. 1r)

[Here follows the prologue of the story of  
Troy in which is contained  
the Tree of the Lineage of France]

In later print editions, as we shall see, this *incipit* transforms into an image--of a tree at whose roots lay the weapons of the Trojans, and at whose crown hangs a shield bearing the royal fleur-de-lys of the Valois.<sup>20</sup>

Far less ubiquitous than the Prologue is the *Épître épilogative* appended only to P3, P4, and R. Only in P3 does the *Épître* appear complete, though the text of all three is extremely similar, even in R and P4 where it is significantly truncated (Jung 1978, 251). Positioned in all three cases after the play text, the *Épître* outlines the goals and the existence of its author in the most explicit terms:

En ensuyvant les honorables coustumes des anciens orateurs, dictateurs, et historiens, à la fin et accomplissement de ceste histoire, qui est appellee l'Istoire de Troye, je Jaques Millet, compositeur d'icelle, voulant et desirant de tout mon pouoir icelle histoire estre agreable, acceptable, convenable et recevable à toutes gens de tous estas, premierement toutteffois à la haultesse et sublimité des tresnobles princes de France... (Jung 1978, 251)

[In following the honorable customs of the ancient orators, speakers, and historians, at the end and completion of this story, called the Story of Troy, I, Jacques Milet, adapter of this story, wishing and desiring with all my power that this story be agreeable, acceptable, convenient, and received by all people of all estates, first of all to the highness and sublimity of the very noble princes of France...]

Here Milet claims two kinds of authority. First he situates himself as one of the "ancient orators...and historians" who, he argues, had a custom of explaining themselves that their work

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<sup>20</sup> The print editions including an image of this type include a, b, c, f, g1, g2, h, and m.

See Table 2, p. 47-8.

be received in the intended way. Second, he claims the title of "compositeur" of the story, giving him the ability to speak on behalf of the story's purpose and intentions. "Compositeur," which in modern French means "composer" (as in music) or "typesetter," in the fifteenth century instead meant "mediator," or "moderator," one who resolves or regulates disputes or debates (Hindley et al. 138; Godefroy II, 211). In this case, especially given the context of a translation from Latin to French, a "compositeur" thus mediates between the original content in Latin, and the resulting dramatization in French. In contemporary parlance, such an act reflects the intellectual work of adaptation: making the content suitable to new requirements or conditions. In this case, the Latin narration of Colonne's *Historia* becomes the French dialogue and stage directions of Milet's *Istoire*. In the same way that the poem and play participate in a larger tradition of appropriation of the Troy story, Milet's Prologue and *Épître* contextualize the play's genesis and sketch its intended influences--concentric circles of cultural significance, emanating from the play and its source, and traced by the resulting texts.

Further, Milet's *Épître* opens a window into his own mixed purposes and the mixed abilities of the diverse group of potential readers and audience members in the mid-fifteenth century. The written *Épître*, included in only three manuscripts likely to have been intended as gift manuscripts (P3, P4, R), was probably a document aimed primarily at the upper classes. In other words, the *Épître* was targeted to the class most likely to be able to read, and most likely to benefit from the political lessons that the letter highlights in the play. For aristocrats, then, Milet's *Épître* acts as a didactic coda, seeking to point out what the discerning upper class reader or viewer might have missed. But Milet's mention of the lower classes--"all people of all estates"--is puzzling in a written document of limited circulation that would have very rarely encountered any members of those classes. Yet the quote above from the *Épître* shows Milet



singling out the lower classes for reception of the "Story of Troy" rather than the *Épître*. One of the only ways that the lower classes would have had access to such a long dramatization would have been through performance, as very few members of society at large could have possibly afforded a book the size and cost of a typical *Destruction de Troie* codex. From our point of view, Milet seems to be mixing up his forms and his audiences: he mentions the play and the lower classes in a letter supposedly aimed only at the upper class that the lower classes would hardly have been able to read and interpret. I believe this confusion dissipates in the context of an overall design that the play would have been performed publicly, while the Prologue and the *Épître* would have been mostly read by the elite consumers of the book copies created either before or after the public performance. Thus, each of those elite consumers would have taken delivery of a book created *because of* a performance. The references to the lower classes and their reception of the "Story of Troy" therefore exist without confusion alongside more direct addresses to the purchasers of the codices themselves. The dual mode of address strengthens the idea that the manuscripts were contingent on public performances of the play, rather than guides for imaginative recreation of the story.

The manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie* demonstrate a far greater diversity than that implied by Runnalls' typology. The most striking divergence, of course, is the significant number of stage directions, and their consistency across *all manuscripts*. However, the O and P4 examples most closely align with his Type G: sumptuous gift manuscripts, with illuminations and illustrations, created for a powerful aristocratic patron. The typology, however, fails to account for the nature and number of illustrations in both O and P4, thus obscuring the importance of such images and their relationship to performance events, both real and imagined. The Y example, though not illustrated, shows a greater level of decoration than all the remaining

copies, suggesting a fairly wealthy original owner or commissioner. The P1 and Pe examples, showing considerably less care in the transcription (P1 is missing most of the Prologue), also bear inscriptions of non-aristocratic owners: a cleric and a merchant, respectively. The R example, created for a minor noble, Perceval de Leuze, also contains the *Épître épilogative*, as does the P3 example. The presence of the dedicatory epistle, which was primarily aimed at the ruling class (see Chapter Four), as well as the space left for never-completed illustrations in both R and P3, suggests these copies were made for members of the aristocracy. The P5 example contains a *dramatis personae*, along with numerous corrections and emendations both of dialogue and stage directions, suggesting a closer relationship between this manuscript and a putative performance. In addition, P2--missing all but three lines of the Prologue and almost all of the last three performance days--is missing too much material to get a strong sense of its ownership or possible relationship with performance. However, a heavily used document--handled by the numbers of people needed to mount a performance of *Destruction de Troie*--might exhibit a similar degree of damage. Finally, Runnalls' typology simply does not account for the examples Pe, P2, and P5, which show characteristics not accounted for in Type G, or in any of the other types. Therefore, the manuscript corpus of *Destruction de Troie* shows evidence of ownership by several levels of society; deliberate attempts to speak to upper and lower class readers and audiences; repeated and consistent visual and textual evidence of performance; differences among manuscripts that could be attributed to points of origin either pre- or post-performance; evidence of varied degrees of usage; and a history of scribal copying from 1450 through the beginning of the sixteenth century.

### 2.3 PRINT, TEXT, AND IMAGE

At the same time that scribes were copying and re-copying manuscript versions of *Destruction de Troie*, the printer Jean Bonhomme in Paris produced the first print edition of the play in 1484. By 1544, printers in Paris and Lyon had produced a total of 13 print editions, all virtually identical in content. Graham Runnalls, in the most recent bibliography of extant religious *jeux* and *mystères*, identifies the 13 editions and the quantity and locations of the various copies (see Table 2). In almost every case, where the title and colophon are reproduced, they appear nearly exactly the same, usually with only the details for the printer and the printing date changed. The one exception is that in 1544, the printer attributed the work to Jehan de Mehun [*sic*]. Jean de Meun was a prolific author and translator, known for his contributions to the *Roman de la Rose* and his versions of works by Boethius (*Consolation de la philosophie*) and the *Lettres* of Abelard and Heloise. Since he also shared his initials with Jacques Milet, the transposition of their names is perhaps an understandable mistake (Zink 241-7). Moreover, the mistaken attribution to a famous author of a previous generation suggests that the 1544 printer had a high opinion of *Destruction de Troie*. This error notwithstanding, *Destruction de Troie*'s appearance in print so near to the first installation of a printing press in France (1470)<sup>21</sup>, and its reissuance in new editions well into the sixteenth century argues for a cultural significance and popularity that has heretofore been unrecognized by scholars.

Below, Table 2 demonstrates that *Destruction de Troie* spent nearly a century as a book. As we know from the play's colophons, the earliest manuscript appeared around 1452. The first print edition was issued in 1484, and the last known produced in 1544. Whatever the reasons

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<sup>21</sup> Sot 343; Hirsch 15.

that these printers ultimately decided to reissue editions of *Destruction de Troie*, their efforts kept the work in circulation. This history makes *Destruction de Troie* an extremely unusual medieval play, but less unusual as compared to examples of vernacular literature or even Latin classical titles appearing about the same time.

**Table 2. Known *Destruction* Early Print Editions, after Runnalls.<sup>22</sup>**

| <b>Edition</b>                  | <b>City</b> | <b>Printer</b>                     | <b>Date<sup>23</sup></b> | <b>Extant Copies/<br/>Fragments</b>  | <b>Features</b>   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| <b>a</b>                        | Paris       | Jean Bonhomme                      | May 12, 1484             | Complete copy now lost. Fragments only extant in Paris, Cambridge, and Kiev. | Basis for 1883 transcription by Edmund Stengel; this transcription is currently only copy in circulation. Title records precise date of composition given in several manuscripts. |
| <b>b</b>                        | Lyon        | Guillaume Le Roy                   | 1485                     | 3 copies known. One missing 16 ff.   |   |
| <b>c</b>                        | Lyon        | Mathieu Husz                       | Jan. 5, 1486<br>(n.s.)   | 3 copies known.  |   |
| <b>d</b>                        | Lyon        | Mathieu Husz                       | Dec. 5, 1488             | 1 copy known.  | Runnalls notes play is incomplete. However, my examination of the single copy indicates it is as complete as the 1484 edition.  |
| <b>e</b>                        | Paris       | (Jean Bonhomme?)                   | April 28, 1490           | 1 copy known.  |   |
| <b>f</b>                        | Lyon        | Mathieu Husz                       | April 15, 1491           | 4 copies known. One missing 16 ff.   |   |
| <b>g1</b><br><b>g2 (vellum)</b> | Paris       | Pierre Driart (for Antoine Vérard) | May 8, 1498              | 4 copies known.  | Edition has two variations, one in a small format on paper, and one in large format on vellum. In the   |

<sup>22</sup> Chart is a summary of the information contained in *Les Mystères français imprimés* (1999), pp. 126-131. Bolded edition labels indicate I consulted an example of that edition.

<sup>23</sup> Specific dates are given where the edition itself pinpointed a completion date for printing.

|                                |       |                                |                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
|                                |       |                                |                      |  | London copy (vellum), the 2nd half of the colophon was scratched out.    |
| <b>h</b>                       | Lyon  | Mathieu Husz                   | Feb. 20, 1500 (n.s.) | 2 copies known.                        |  |
| <b>i</b>                       | Paris | Michel Le Noir                 | Oct. 3, 1508         | 1 copy known.                          | First edition in smaller format.   |
| <b>j</b>                       | Paris | Veuve Trepperel and Jean Janot | ca. 1512-1519        | 3 copies known.                        | Inventory of Janot's print shop shows at least one unsold, unbound copy. |
| <b>k</b>                       | Paris | Philippe Le Noir               | ca. 1525             | 1 copy known.                          | Missing the colophon.  |
| <b>l</b>                       | Paris | (Philippe Le Noir?)            | Mar. 22, 1526        | 2 copies known.                        | Title records precise date of composition given in MS Pe.                |
| <b>m</b>                       | Lyon  | Denis Harsy                    | 1544                 | 6 copies known.                        | Printed in roman type. Falsely attributed to "Jehan de Mehun".           |
| <b>TOTAL COPIES/FRAGMENTS:</b> |       |                                |                      | 31 nearly complete copies; 4 fragments |  |

Underlying this catalog of early printed books is the broader history and development of printing in France, and the cultural uses to which authors and printers began to put the new technology. Several of these trends are embodied in the text and physical artifacts of the extant examples of the editions listed above, which shed some light on the perspectives that late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century printers and readers might have had on *Destruction de Troie*.

The printing industry in France was dominated at first by academically trained men, who worked on the first printing presses installed in the neighborhood around the Sorbonne, the University of Paris. The University had helped to control and nurture the manuscript book industry as its chief regulator and customer, and as with many aspects of the new technology, the patterns associated with hand-made book production shaped the early print industry (Hirsch 19; Rouse 328-332). In fact, the division in this Chapter, where I conceptually divide my analysis into two, addressing first manuscript books and then printed books, is unquestionably a modern distinction. It is highly unlikely that fifteenth century book purchasers would have made as much of the *conceptual* differences as I and many others have. Instead, differences between the

two book forms typically mattered most with regard to the difference in monetary value between the two types (Bekker-Nielsen 163). In addition, the transition from manuscript to print was neither immediate nor complete, and "rarely dramatic" (Hirsch 1; Rouse 328). For example, at least three manuscripts (P1, R, and Y) have been definitively dated to *after* the arrival of the printing press in Paris, demonstrating the continued existence of scribal workshops into the early sixteenth century (the earliest possible date of the P1 MSS). The first printers modeled their earliest editions after manuscript books, designing type to appear similar to handwritten letters, using the same abbreviations, copying a model text like a scribe, and borrowing the form of the manuscript codex itself to contain the printed pages (Hirsch 1; Hindman 2). Of course, this is not to refute the many social and cultural changes both wrought and accelerated by the advent of print, a thesis articulated most strongly in Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as Agent of Change*. Rather, the relatively narrow band of time that constitutes the life of *Destruction de Troie* in print requires a "more refined characterization of the early years of print culture" (Hindman 2). In other words, the history of *Destruction de Troie* in book form provides a kind of case study that sharpens both the similarities and the differences between the production and use of manuscript books versus their printed counterparts.

The presence of so many extant copies representing over a dozen editions signals that *Destruction de Troie* enjoyed a high degree of popularity among book customers at least in Paris and Lyon. As Hirsch argues:

We can for example be reasonably sure that a book was not reprinted, certainly not by the same printer, except where there was evidence of an unsatisfied demand. For this reason the publishing history of a text constitutes the best index for its popularity and the most objective measurement of literary taste. (125)

Some of the reprints are obvious from Table 2. For example, Mathieu Husz at Lyon printed *Destruction de Troie* a total of four times from 1486 to 1500. However, the different last names in Table 2 conceal additional incidences of reprints. Edition b, though printed at Lyon, is a copy of edition a. Thus the first edition was reissued twice--once by an out-of-town printer, and once by the original printer (edition e). Editions i, j, k, and l all originated in the same *libraire*<sup>24</sup> family. The Trepperels were a very well-known family of booksellers, who either married into other bookselling families or passed the family business down through the generations (Runnalls 69-70). In any event, edition i's printer Michel Le Noir was the son-in-law and brother-in-law of the printers of edition j (the widow Trepperel and her son-in-law Jean Janot). The printer of editions k and l, Philippe Le Noir, was the son of Michel Le Noir and Macée Trepperel. While this tangle of family relationships seems confusing, the important idea is that this single family produced four editions of *Destruction de Troie*. Indeed, the Trepperels, and in particular Jean Janot, made the publication of mystery plays a bit of a signature line of business (Runnalls 1999, 52, 69-79). Though it was not a significant percentage of their business, their work nonetheless accounted for a significant portion of the mysteries which were actually printed (ibid. 32-3)<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> This word means "bookseller." However, not all booksellers were printers, and not all printers were booksellers. Thus a *libraire* might include an *imprimerie*, but not necessarily. Some printers worked as subcontractors to booksellers (as in the case of Vérard the bookseller contracting with the printer Pierre Driart) while other booksellers, like the members of the Trepperel family, were also printers (Runnalls 1999, 25-6).

<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Trepperel clan was also responsible for an important sixteenth-century (printed between 1502 and 1511) collection of 35 plays, including a significant proportion of

So far, we have accounted for eleven of the thirteen known editions as examples of originals and *reprints*. The nine repeated impressions, even more so than the number of editions, testify to the popularity of *Destruction de Troie* up to 75 years after its composition.

Of the remaining editions, g1 and g2 were commissioned and supervised by Antoine Vérard, one of the most financially successful and well-known Parisian *libraires* at the end of the fifteenth century (Winn 9-10). Printed using exactly the same plates, the two editions represent examples of Vérard's business model, wherein he exploited "two coexistent systems of exchange: commerce and patronage" (Winn 9). Essentially, printing technology allowed Vérard to offer cheap, small versions of books (g1 is in quarto, for example) while customizing folio versions printed on vellum, and subsequently painted and decorated *to look like manuscripts* and thus attract wealthy aristocratic patrons (g2). The extant example of g2 in the British Library was very likely acquired by Henry VII of England, though it does not seem to have been decorated especially for him (Winn 142-153).

The first print edition of *Destruction de Troie* shows its debt to hand-made book production while setting a new standard for how *Destruction de Troie* would be perceived up to the present day. In 1883, before the single extant copy of this edition was lost, the German philologist Edmund Stengel published a hand-written, lineated critical edition that also includes copper-plate reproductions of the original woodcut illustrations. This "critical edition" features a nearly precise transcription of the text, though Stengel did alter parts of the original text, to

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farces and *sotties* (Harvey 8). Thus the Trepperels published religious mysteries, *Destruction de Troie*, and a variety of comic plays. It seems drama, often previously produced and of a variety of genres, held some kind of special interest for this particular family of printers.



provide consistency in spelling and to correct errors in the compositing such as transposition or letter inversion (for example: *daccort* instead of *dactort*, *serviteurs* instead of *szrviteurs*, *sans* instead of *saus*). In all, Stengel records 119 changes in his *Vorwort* [*Foreword*]. Of course, any conclusions we draw from this facsimile should be viewed as refracted through nineteenth-century critical practice. However, since Stengel's edition is the only example of the text of *Destruction de Troie* available in circulating collections worldwide, it is literally the only way to access the text of the play without traveling to special collections and archives in Europe and the United States. As a result, Stengel's facsimile of the first edition has exerted an influence out of proportion to its status as one edition among many.

Since it is impossible to know whether or not Stengel may have made other, unremarked alterations to edition a, I shall proceed cautiously with an analysis of the presentation of text and images within his edition. The first page of the edition contains the beginning of the Prologue, with a woodcut image taking up the top third of the page. The woodcut shows a line drawing of a garden landscape containing a distant house, a tall tree in the foreground, and three figures--a young girl, handing a pickaxe to a man, and the man bending over the roots digging at them with the pickaxe. Three shields appear in the branches of the tree, the central one featuring three fleurs-de-lys. The image illustrates the *mise-en-scène* of the Prologue, as well as a *sequence* of events, in the doubled image of the male narrator: the narrator meets the young girl, and the narrator digs at the roots of the tree. This image sets the pattern for the kinds of images that appear in this edition: woodcuts with an economy of line that depict a key moment or series of moments from the action occurring on or around the same page where the image appears.

In the early days of printing, the same people who were part of the bookmaking business--with the notable exception of manuscript illuminators--became part of the new industry (Rouse

328-9). The continuity underlying the shift from handmade to printed books centered on the *libraire*, the bookseller:

The *libraire*...who had contracted with the patron and subcontracted with the artisans to make manuscript books became the *libraire*-publisher who subcontracted with the printer to make printed books (Rouse 331).

One of the areas, then, that underwent a relatively large change was the relationship of word to image in illustrated books. Of course, not all of the *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts were illustrated; but those that were either realized or planned to realize hundreds of images comprising a detailed and colored pictorial accompaniment to the text. In the case of edition a, and the other editions that included illustrations, the detail of individual images and the density of picture to text have been significantly reduced.

In Michael Camille's analysis of a similar phenomenon, comparing illuminated manuscripts of the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* [*Life's Pilgrimage*] with its illustrated print editions, he argues that the transformation of manuscript illuminations into woodcuts in printed books "creates a standard series" that has a consequently wider influence than individual manuscripts ever could (Camille 265). In fact, Graham Runnalls has calculated, using the example of Jean Janot's (edition j) extant inventory list, that the typical print run was between 600 and 700 copies, with some titles having runs as large as 1,200 (Runnalls 1999, 46-7). The potential for a wide geographic influence, as well as the creation of a "standard" look for a particular text, are obvious. Moreover, Camille's analysis shows how the transfer of imagery from the painterly surface of the illuminated page onto the framed black-and-white schematic of the printed page "reduces the visual complexity of the narrative" and allows it to function as a

more "efficient communication" of the most important information for understanding the story (Camille 262-9).

This phenomenon can be seen in operation in various print editions of *Destruction de Troie*. The P4 manuscript has almost 400 colored drawings, depicting a wide range of settings, characters, and incidents. By contrast, the print editions feature between 0 and 35 woodcuts; but often, as in Camille's *Pèlerinage* example, the printers *repeated* several woodcuts. Accounting for the duplication reveals that print editions of *Destruction de Troie* used between 0 and 28 different woodcuts to tell the story. The cluster of editions from Paris in the early sixteenth century (i, j, k, l) have virtually no images. The only two images in editions j, k, and l are generic ones of a man on horseback approached by a man on foot, and two men meeting on a battlefield, one carrying a pole (lance? banner?). For whatever reason, the printers of the Trepperel family did not expend resources on illustrating their editions of *Destruction de Troie*. One reason might have been that their editions were also quarto-sized, leaving much less room on the page for woodcuts. Given the length of the play itself (usually 200 to 500 folio-sized pages), the smaller format may have prohibited the addition of images. Another possibility is that the Trepperel clan did not want to pay an artist to create woodcuts, as such an expense would cut into their profit margin. Since the Trepperels repeatedly printed the play, the profit motive might have been uppermost in their minds, as they sought to take advantage of unmet demand for the book.

Obviously, other printers felt differently about including images in their editions of *Destruction de Troie*. For example, the woodcuts used in edition a are not the same as those Mathieu Husz used in his editions (c, d, f, h). Antoine Vérard, unsurprisingly, had a new run of woodcuts created for his editions (g1, g2) as well. In Bonhomme's, Husz's, and Vérard's

woodcuts, the characteristics defined by Camille are operative. Primarily different in craft, where Vérard's show the most care in composition and clarity and Bonhomme's the least, the printers tended to select similar scenes for depiction. For example, all three sets of woodcuts show scenes of the Trojans in council with Priam, and the Greeks in council with Agamemnon (Stengel 6, 25, 96, 100; editions c, d, f, g1, g2, h). These "court" scenes are also the ones most often repeated. Shared depictions across all three sets of woodcuts also included (this is not a comprehensive list): Paris's dream where he selects the most beautiful goddess; Paris meeting Helen in the Temple; Paris introducing Helen to Priam; the lamb sacrifice by Achilles and Patroclus; Paris and Hector's visit to Achilles' tent; the ambush of Achilles; the death of Hector; the women mourning Hector; the emptying of the Trojan horse into the city; and the beheading of Polyxena on the tomb of Achilles. This list contains some of the most dramatic and visually arresting moments from the play. Some of these illustrations have obvious counterparts in the P4 and O cycles of colored drawings, where the woodcut seems inspired by a particular illustration. The lamb sacrifice, the ambush of Achilles, and the mourning of Hector are all examples of images in P4 that correspond closely to the setting and positioning revealed in the three sets of woodcuts. The woodcuts appear to act as a visual compression, condensing the story to its visual essentials. To risk a contemporary analogy: the density and detail of the drawings in P4 are to film, as the selectivity and economy of the woodcuts are to *filmstrips*.

The condensation or elimination of visual material in the new print medium was not the only manifestation of new expectations and practices to appear in the copies of *Destruction de Troie*. A title page first appeared in edition d, simply listing the title of the play on an otherwise blank folio. Elaborate decorations and arabesques emphasized the initial definite article. The same title page appeared in Husz's later edition f, but with his last edition h, Husz added a large

framed image of a knight in full regalia, holding a shield with the French fleurs-de-lys. Edition h is also the first to include a "registre," or an index to first lines of pages listed by page signature, appearing at the back of the book in narrow columns. Lest we conclude that this development of features progressed solely chronologically, both versions of the play by Vérard, earlier than Husz's edition h, had neither a title page nor a "registre." Vérard's intentions--to imitate the visual appearance of a manuscript book--made such additions superfluous. Thus the chosen audience or market for the book affected how and whether a particular printer or bookseller adopted one of the emerging conventions.

The last three Paris/Trepperel clan editions (j, k, l) all included title pages with material designed to further describe and market the book. The earlier edition i included a title page with only the title and an image of a city burning and huge fleet of ships at anchor. The title page image was the only image in edition i. For j, k, and l, the title page includes a short summary of the contents followed by a smaller image:

Sensuyt la Destruction de Troye la grant par personnaiges faicte par les Grecz avec les merueilleux faictz du preux hector de Troye filz du grant Roy Priam Imprime nouvellement a Paris (j, k, l)

[Here follows the Destruction of Troy the Great (in characters) done by the Greeks, with the marvelous feats of the worthy Hector of Troy, son of the great King Priam. Newly printed at Paris]

This text combines a concise summary of the play with a reason to buy the particular edition--it is "newly printed" and therefore presumably in demand: hot off the press, in other words.

Edition m, printed in Lyon 18 years after the last Parisian impression, shows the shifts in appearance, conceptual organization, and commercial and legal structures surrounding the book

trade that had taken place by the middle of the sixteenth century. Though a basic title page first appeared with edition f in 1491, edition m's title page contains the title, printer's name, location, date of publication, a summary of the play, decorative borders, and the appellation "Auec Priuilege [With Privilege]," denoting the granting of printer's permission from the king to publish this particular work. The play is also the first to appear with roman characters rather than gothic, increasing the similarity of the page's appearance to more contemporary examples. The 1544 edition looks much more like a twenty-first century reader would expect a (printed) book--an old book, to be sure--to look like. Compared with the layout of the first page of Stengel's facsimile of edition a, which shows a woodcut above two columns of gothic text, the title page of edition m records, in much more detail, the kinds of information printers, publishers, booksellers, authors, and readers were becoming accustomed to seeing on the first page of their books. In addition, the printer's advertisement of "privilege" signals the growing "concerns about literary ownership [that] surfaced in the sixteenth century" (Brown 1991, 138). In the case of Denys Harsy, the printer of edition m, he did not have to contend with a living author, like other printers of his time.<sup>26</sup> Thus his reservation of the "privilege" to print *Destruction de Troie* had the effect of protecting his *own* pseudo-ownership of the play. But Milet, or in this case "Jehan de Meung," retained a presence in the edition, as the illustration of a man digging at the roots of the Tree of

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<sup>26</sup> See Cynthia J. Brown's *Poets, Patrons, and Printers* for an extended discussion of the contested relations between authors, printers, and publishers in the sixteenth century and the gradual establishment of domains of authorial and printerly rights. In particular, see her Chapter One (pp. 17-59) for a thorough discussion of late medieval writers, including information on some of the printers of *Destruction de Troie*.

France on the first page of the play's Prologue is labeled "Lacteur" (m, f. 2r). The indeterminacy of this term is legendary. It could mean "actor," and it could mean "author," sharing a general sense of "creator" or "originator." In this context, *both* meanings apply. The printer, Denis Harsy, does not seem to be taking credit for someone else's work, necessarily; he is presenting the work of an "acteur" who delivers a Prologue that introduces a play. On the title page, Harsy *promotes* who he believes the author to be, and that author's claim to fame:

...composée en Rithme Françoise par Miastre

Iehan de Mehun premier Inuenteur de Rethorique

Françoise:...(m, f. 1r)

[...composed in French Verse by Master

Jean de Meun, first Inventor of French Rhetoric...]

Here the reputation of the author is made to serve the purposes of the printer/bookseller who wants to sell the book. The layers of creation and ownership and the varied levels of responsibilities we have come to associate with publication are here represented, perhaps not as distinctly as today's title pages would show. That is, the title page shows us that this book has an author, a printer, a bookseller, a place and time of publication, and a location from which it can be obtained. Hence the medieval schematic of colophons, *incipits*, *explicitis*, and indeterminate places and times of transcription, not to mention the frequent anonymity of the author, has been supplanted by markedly different signals of authority and possession, as well as an express intent to sell the book as a commodity to consumers.

Edition m, on the other hand, also reverses several trends in the print editions of *Destruction de Troie*. The Paris/Trepperel editions set the play in a smaller format (quarto), but Harsy chooses the folio size for his edition. He also includes, in the manner of Vérard though

without the trappings of the manuscript book, a dedication and encomium to the Dauphin of France. This epistle is more similar to Milet's mid-fifteenth century *Épître épilogative* than any of his fellow printers' attempts to sell copies at the bookshop. Harsy expressly dedicates the book to the Dauphin ("de vous dedier & presenter ce liure [to dedicate and present to you this book]") so that, when king, the Dauphin will remember the virtue of the great Hector:

...pource que la matiere y contenue est graue, plaisante & digne de Prince pour en tirer plaisir & recreation: & à celle fin principalement que soubz vostre heureux regne les mirables & excellents faicts du Preux Hector(auquel estes conioinct par vertu & proximité de lignée Royale) fussent rememorés, & remis en lumiere. (m, f. 1v)

[...because the subject herein contained is serious, diverting, and worthy of a Prince to get from it some pleasure and recreation: and to this end, principally to support your happy reign, that the admirable and excellent feats of the Worthy Hector(to whom is conjoined by virtue and proximity the Royal Family)were memorialized, and brought to light.]

In so many words, Harsy restates the purposes that Milet himself lays out in his *Épître*, to educate the Prince of his time (see Chapter Four for details on the "mirror of princes"). Even the heraldic blazons on the shields of the Tree of France in Harsy's first image have been altered to reflect the new addressee: the arms of the Dauphin of France now join the Royal Escutcheon and the arms of the Duke of Orléans. Therefore Harsy's edition both crystallizes many of the emergent practices of modern printing while simultaneously investing nostalgically in the past. One aspect of this nostalgia was the choice of material itself: *Destruction de Troie* was nearly a century old by 1544, but its national mythmaking was obviously still resonant.

Harsy's edition has a similarly divided relationship with the two kinds of manifestations in the manuscripts which cleaved most closely to the performance aspects of the play. On the



one hand, as we shall see in Chapter Three, the colored drawings in manuscripts P4 and O portray the action of the story taking place in a performance context rather than a fictional or imagined context. That is, where there is available iconography in other, narrative versions of the Troy story, the illustrators of P4 and O opted to depict simpler images more evocative of performance conventions. Thus a great divide existed between the kinds of images in P4 and O, and the kinds of images in illustrated narrative versions of the Troy story such as the *Roman de Troie* and the *Historia Destructionis Troiae*. But Harsy, in commissioning woodcuts for his version of *Destruction de Troie*, elected to do double-duty--probably saving time and money. Harsy also created a new print edition of Raoul Lefèvre's *Recueil de Troie* in 1544. For the illustrations in both the *Recueil* and *Destruction de Troie*, he used *the same set of 28 woodcuts*. The single set of images thus became the visual manifestation of two different versions of the Troy story. The visual divergence of the earlier century was bridged, and in this convergence, part of the distinctiveness of *Destruction de Troie* as a play was undoubtedly lost. Yet Harsy preserved, in just as extensive a fashion, the 600 or so stage directions that accompanied every other previous edition, manuscript or otherwise, of the play. While the *images* no longer testify to the dramatic and performative nature of the work as likely conceived by Milet, the plentiful *stage directions* are a forceful reminder of that aspect.

The extant print editions of the *Destruction de Troie* demonstrate the great degree of popularity that the play continued to have nearly a century after its composition, not only among the aristocratic audience who formed its first important constituency, but also among the growing numbers of people able and eager to purchase the new, cheaper printed books. The durability of its subject and corollary national mythopoesis emerges in the strategies that printers and booksellers used to present the books to purchasers and patrons alike. Though some of the

emergent customs and practices generated by the new technology acted to flatten some of the performance aspects of its manuscript presentation, print also made it possible for other aspects to survive. The rarity of medieval stage directions is a commonplace; yet the 26 editions contain a virtually unbroken record of them from the late fifteenth century. This act of preservation may be an accident; but it also may be an indication of the significance that contemporaries accorded *Destruction de Troie* both in terms of its subject, and in terms of *how* the story was told.

### 3.0 CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

#### SURROUNDING *DESTRUCTION DE TROIE*

#### 3.1 MILET: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Jacques Milet was born in Paris between 1425 and 1429 to a family with a long history of royal service (Julleville I, 315; Schaefer 173; Thomas 265). His grandfather, Jean Milet (d. 1396), was notary and secretary to Charles V and Charles VI of France. Jacques' father, also named Jean, worked as a secretary both to Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, and to Charles VII, King of France. During the closing decades of the Hundred Years' War, Jean Milet was given the power to "wage peace or war, to raise money and soldiers" (Tivier 189). He also was sent to England as an ambassador to Henry VI. He died August 17, 1462, and was buried with his wife, Marguerite d'Arsonval, in the church of Blancs-Manteaux in Paris (Tivier 189). Their son Jacques, who at the end of his life lived at the monastery adjoining the church where his parents were buried, thus spent the formative years of his life ensconced in the milieu of the royal court.

He took a bachelor's degree from the University of Paris in 1447, and then a masters and "licentiate" in 1448 (Jung 1978, 242). He then left the capital to enroll in the prestigious Faculty of Law at the University of Orléans. There he earned a Master of Arts, remaining at least until 1452, when he completed *L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troie le Grant*. As a student at Paris and

Orléans, and an eventual clerk to Charles VII, it is extremely likely that Milet encountered--either as audience member or participant--the theatrical trials and proceedings of the Basoche. The Basoche was an organization of the law clerks of the *Parlement* of Paris, and likely spawned similar groups in centers of legal education such as Poitiers and Orléans. The goal of this society, which featured formal and professional aspects, rules, hierarchies, regulations, and royal endorsement, was "to impose a professional discipline on the young men, and to regulate the conditions of their apprenticeship so as to make able practitioners of them" (Harvey 18). Constituted as a miniature, parodic "kingdom, with all the administrative and judicial machinery that a kingdom required," the Basoche possessed a real and limited jurisdiction over the small claims often made against the clerks in their dealings with other clerics and the community at large (ibid.). The dramatic and theatrical aspects of the real and fictional cases tried before this tribunal, and their close relationship both to other forms of performance and as a foundational substrate for many of the later French farces and *sotties*, has been thoroughly discussed by other scholars.<sup>27</sup> As a law student in the heyday of the Basoche (1450-1550), it would have been virtually impossible for Milet to have failed to encounter the phenomenon at all (Harvey 6). Perhaps it was partly the antics of the *Basochiens*, deploying spectacle and satire in the service of learning, that helped inspire Milet's undertaking to dramatize an ancient story for contemporary purposes.

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<sup>27</sup> See, especially, Harvey, *The Theatre of the Basoche*, and Enders, Chapter Three, "The Theater of the Basoche and the Medieval Dramatic Continuum," in *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama*, pp. 129-161.

In the tradition of the Basoche, Milet depended on his fellow law students as collaborators in the creation of *Destruction de Troie*. In the *Épître épilogative* that accompanies three of the play manuscripts, Milet credits three collaborators who helped him write the play "depuis le commencement jusques à la fin [from the beginning to the end]": Pierre Rosier; Jehan de Sauzay; and Guillaume Charruau (Jung 1978, 258). All three were also students studying law at Orléans, and went on to careers in the church, law, and the royal court (ibid.). Milet himself then entered the service of Charles VII from 1452 to 1455, though he also received additional payments for at least two special trips to Berry in 1454 and 1455, as well as a payment in partial recompense for the composition of *Destruction de Troie* in 1452 (Jung 1978, 242-3). The distinctly non-legal drama, therefore, had roots in individuals and contexts touched by legal education and practice in the mid-fifteenth century.

In addition to *Destruction de Troie*, Milet composed two other works that we know of: the Latin verse epitaph of Charles VII's mistress Agnès Sorel and a poem *Foret de tristesse* published in 1500 as part of a collection entitled *Jardin de plaisance*. In addition, a brief, likely incomplete, Latin verse correspondence between Milet and two Italians survives, consisting of two exchanges with both men. The letters, translated into French by Antoine Thomas in 1904, attest to a certain degree of fame that Milet enjoyed with his Italian contemporaries:

Bravo for the French poet who showed us what the French muse can do: she sings very well, but the Tuscan muse also sings well...They say marvellous things about you: your pen makes you famous...(Thomas 268 [translation mine])

Milet, either in the spirit of the playful exchange, or perhaps with a note of seriousness, is less sanguine about his talent and about his homeland's native literature:

No, the French do not admire my verses, and my muse does not lead me to fame among my own people...Our flute is nothing but a collection of fragile stems, though it knows how to make sweet sounds...But in this Latium where the Virgilian trumpet sounded, we are ashamed to play our rustic panpipes. Here, however, in two phrases (later we will write longer), a response to your verse: Fortune drives Man to disasters; Virtue offers a sure reward. (Thomas 268 [translation mine])

Aside from establishing Milet's correspondence with well-educated writers in Italy, this exchange also outlines an orientation towards Virgil--and, by implication, other writers from antiquity--that was both worshipful and imitative. Milet's assertion that his own countrymen did not admire his work may be the protest of false modesty, as his death in 1466 prompted many of his contemporaries to mourn his early passing, including fellow dramatist Simon Gréban<sup>28</sup> (in *La Complainte de la mort de maistre Jaques Millet*) and the poet Octavien Saint-Gelais (in the *Séjour d'honneur*). Gréban's poem (falsely attributed by some copyists to Alain Chartier), in particular, pays homage not only to Milet's specific works, but also his compositional style and his literary contemporaries, integrating these perspectives into a literary paean to Milet's artistic contributions and reputation, as well as the loss inflicted by his passing away at too young an age (Piaget 233-235, 243).

The *Complainte* also gives us an inventory of Milet's works and artistic contemporaries, many of whom were active in various royal courts throughout France and adjoining

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<sup>28</sup> Gréban is credited with being the primary author of *Le Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*. His brother, Arnoul, wrote a *Mystère de la Passion* (Mazouer 183, 196-202). See LeBègue's critical edition of the *Actes* and Omer Jodogne's critical edition of the *Passion*.

principalities, especially the Duchy of Burgundy. In the poem, several authors attend Milet's funeral, presided over by Dame Rhétorique:

Qui pour l'obsequie dire appelle:  
Ce fut feu maistre Jehan de Meung.  
Pour ce corps bel office y a,  
Et fut moult bien recommandé.  
De Lorriz y officia,  
Yvry, Munier et Mercadé,  
Okeghem, Du Fay, Fedé,  
Et Binchois y transmit musique,  
Desquelz le chant a trescendé  
Toute melodie angelique. (Piaget 232-3)  
[And who, for the eulogy, was called to speak:  
It was the late master Jean de Meun.  
For this body, a beautiful Mass there was,  
And all was greatly praised.  
De Lorris led the service,  
Yvry, Munier, and Mercadé,  
Okeghem, Du Fay, Fedé,  
And Binchois led the music,  
Of which the singing transcended  
All angelic melodies.]

Numbered among the mourners and officiants at Milet's funeral, then, are luminaries such as: Guillaume de Lorris, author of the first half of the *Roman de la Rose*; Jean de Meun, the author of the second half of the *Roman de la Rose* and other works, literary and historical; Eustache Mercadé, author of two religious mystery plays, the *Mystère de la Passion d'Arras* and the *Mystère de la Vengeance de Notre Seigneur*; Jean de Ockeghem, court composer to kings Charles VII, Louis XI, and Charles VIII; and Gilles Binchois, chaplain of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, and composer of many polyphonic *chansons*.<sup>29</sup> Finally, Alain Chartier arrives to inscribe Milet's epitaph "en lectre d'or [in gold letters]":

Cy gist maistre Jaques Millet,  
Notable homme et scientifique,  
Lequel fame entre mil est,  
Filz a ornee Rethorique,  
Qui par le regard basilique  
De la mort fut rendu transiz,  
A Paris, la ville autentique,  
Mil quatre cens soixante et six. (Piaget 234)  
[Here lies Master Jacques Milet,  
Well known and learned man,  
Famed among a thousand men,

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<sup>29</sup> This information comes from ARLIMA, the Internet database Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge ([www.arlima.net](http://www.arlima.net)), published by the University of Stockholm, as well as from Vaughan, p. 160.



Son to ornamented Rhetoric,  
Who, under the gaze of the cathedral,  
Into death was transported,  
At Paris, the authentic city,  
One thousand four hundred sixty six.]

Chartier, a clerk and royal notary to Charles VI and VII, who died in 1430, thus inducts Milet into a pantheon of departed French writers and artists, most of whom occupied places at royal and ducal courts in the mid- to late-fifteenth century, and several of whom were responsible for initiating work that hindsight has judged consequential: the debate of the *Roman de la Rose*<sup>30</sup>; Chartier's many works on politics, nobility, and history<sup>31</sup>; Mercadé's massive mystery plays, of which the *Vengeance* was definitely performed at Metz and Reims<sup>32</sup>; and Binchois' polyphonic choral pieces.

Another encomium, crafted by Octavien de Saint-Gelais, a member of the group known as the *Grands Rhétoriciens* (see Chapter 4), classed Milet among the most well-known of the early Italian Renaissance poets, such as Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante. Saint-Gelais' *Séjour d'honneur* also pays tribute to Milet's *magnum opus*:

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<sup>30</sup> The critical bibliography on this subject is immense. For a list of ancient and modern editions of the *Roman* as well as an extensive list of secondary sources, please see the entry on "Jean de Meun" at the Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge, [www.arlima.net](http://www.arlima.net).

<sup>31</sup> See also "Alain Chartier" at the Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge, [www.arlima.net](http://www.arlima.net), for an extensive bibliography on primary and secondary sources.

<sup>32</sup> See Nagler, *The Medieval Religious Stage*, pp. 78-82.

Pres de luy vy maistre Jacques Milet,  
Qui mist en vers l'hystoire dardanide.  
Cil à Paris or ensevely est :  
A mort n'y a ressource ne remyde,  
Savoir n'y peult, armes n'y font ayde ;  
A tous vivans convient passer le pas.  
Helas! mon Dieu, je ne pensasse pas  
Que gens si clers, au moins en si jeune aage,  
Feussent vaincuz par mort...(Séjour d'honneur, quoted in Jung 1978, 241)

[Near him lies master Jacques Milet,  
Who set in verse the Dardanide history.  
Now he in Paris lies entombed :  
Concerning death there is no resource nor remedy,  
Knowledge can do nothing, weapons cannot give aid  
To all the living who must traverse the passage.  
Alas! My God, I would not have thought  
That people so bright--let alone so young--  
Could be vanquished by death...]

At least two of Milet's contemporaries, therefore, Gréban and Saint-Gelais, viewed him as co-equal with important figures of the fifteenth century cultural milieu, and his death as a cruel truncation of an illustrious life of letters.

### 3.2 ZOOMING IN: THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Well-educated, well-read, and well-known among his contemporaries and peers both in France and outside it, Milet's short life stretched over a period of transformation in French history. Indeed, many have argued that the end of the fifteenth century witnessed the birth of centralized French polity, the dawning of the Renaissance in France, and laid the foundations for the absolutist state that would come to dominate Europe.<sup>33</sup> But this formulation--accurate though it may be in essentials--does not explicate the political, cultural, and social conditions that surrounded Milet and the composition of *Destruction de Troie*. Further complicating this picture is an overlapping theatre historiography, which reinforces a binary version of history: popular religious cycle plays dominated the end of the Middle Ages in France, and once banned by resurgent political and ecclesiastical authority, gave way to the Renaissance dramas (written after Italian models) of Jodelle and others. That which is popular and religious is associated with the Middle Ages, and that which is progressive and humanist belongs to the Renaissance, which sweeps away the old ways in a tide. In the same way that Shakespeare is the natural end of many histories of medieval theatre in England, so most roads in French theatre history lead to *Cléopâtre captive* and onward to Racine, Moliere, and Corneille. Similarly, the historiography of the fifteenth century describes it mostly as a transition between "le prestigieux siècle de Saint Louis et la Renaissance [the prestigious centuries of St. Louis and the Renaissance]" (Demurger 7).

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example, David Potter, *A History of France, 1460-1560: The Emergence of a Nation State*; Potter, ed., *France in the Later Middle Ages*; Georges Duby, *France in the Middle Ages 987-1460*; and Janine Garrisson, *A History of Sixteenth-Century France, 1483-1598*.

Yet this version of theatre history is enormously selective and Hegelian in its philosophical underpinnings, painting as nearly inevitable--and unrelentingly positive--the triumph of imported forms, codified aesthetics, and humanist orthodoxy by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But the six or seven decades between the end of the Hundred Years' War and the beginning of the reign of Francis I, viewed closely, look much more turbulent, much more vibrant, and not at all like a hallway, devoid of decoration, that leads away from religious hegemony towards humanist freedom. Indeed, what I suggest is that the milieu that nurtured both Milet and his dramatization deserves assessment as a distinct period between what we understand as the "Middle Ages" and the "Renaissance," consisting of more than connective tissue or transitional movement.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the fifteenth century can be seen, in Alain Demurger's phrase, as a century of "fécondation [fertilization]" (ibid.). The qualities and characteristics of this milieu undermine the traditional binary, oppositional conceptual model of understanding theatre history, and require a new framework for understanding theatre and performance--both emergent and continuing forms--as a manifestation of larger cultural forces at work between the end of the Hundred Years' War and the beginning of the reign of Francis I. Numerous factors signal the strength of an indigenous tradition deserving of analysis on its own terms, not in relation to preconceived historical categories, and free from preordained, pejorative comparisons. Among them were the emergence, popularity, and persistence of the long-form religious cycle plays, the formal and practical brethren of Milet's *Destruction de Troie*; the strength, continuity,

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<sup>34</sup> For a particularly succinct account of the modern historiography of the period, see David Potter's Preface to *A History of France, 1460-1560*.

and ingenuity of civic and courtly spectacles; and the play's long life as a book, and probable history of performance (see Chapter Three).

### 3.2.1 Political and Military Events

Jacques Milet's birth occurred during a decade when France had reached a nadir in political and military fortune.<sup>35</sup> The Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good--despite his distaste for it--continued in alliance with the English Lancastrians, providing crucial support enabling English territorial expansion in France, and threatening to solidify a long-lasting division of France into two separate kingdoms. The Treaty of Troyes (1420), forced on Charles VI by a triumphant Henry V (victorious at Agincourt in 1415 and marching on Paris) and endorsed by Philip, disinherited the Dauphin (the future Charles VII) and made the future English monarch king of both England *and* France. Widespread resistance to the idea of an English king of France in areas outside of Anglo-Burgundian control lent support to Charles VII's (who acceded to the throne in 1422) alternate administration south of the Loire, though Charles was not able to consolidate control over the factions in his own court. This division prevented him from mounting an effective resistance to the Anglo-Burgundians, who pressed their advantage with an assault on Orléans, a strategic gateway for a decisive invasion of the south of France and Charles' nominal capital at Bourges.

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<sup>35</sup> General historical information on the political and military situation in the next two paragraphs is taken from two sources: David Potter's *France in the Later Middle Ages* and George Duby's *France in the Middle Ages 987-1460*.

In 1429, galvanized and inspired by Joan of Arc, the French troops succeeded in breaking the siege of Orléans--an astonishing feat widely regarded as miraculous by most contemporaries. The subsequent crowning and anointing of Charles VII in the cathedral at Rheims effectively annulled the Treaty of Troyes, providing France with a French king and prompting the Duke of Burgundy to open negotiations with the newly legitimized monarch. But the Maid's victory at Orléans did not end the war. Philip of Burgundy proved reluctant to break conclusively with the English until his friend and co-conspirator the Duke of Bedford died in 1435, and Charles VII's problems managing the faction-ridden royal court sapped his resolve to attack Paris until 1436. By the 1430s, however, local rebellion in northern lands held by the English, especially Normandy, helped to whittle away English will to resist Charles' momentum. Once Charles took Paris in 1436, his eventual victory was assured. By 1442, having suppressed an armed rebellion of his nobles, consolidated his control over the armed forces, and initiated an assault on the few remaining English strongholds in the southern Guyenne region, Charles was strongly positioned for the final expulsion of English forces. And so in 1453, Charles VII inflicted a final defeat on the English at Castillon, leaving only the port of Calais in the extreme north still within English hands.

But Charles VII's success in resolving the English challenge to the French royal title did not mean that political and military conflict ended in 1453. Indeed, conflict with the nobles, this time centered on the efforts of two Dukes of Burgundy, Philip and then his son Charles, to revive the ancient kingdom of Burgundy in opposition to the French King Louis XI, broke out in the War of the Public Weal (1465) and endured through at least 1493 and the early years of Charles VIII's minority (Small 136-7; Potter 1995, 1). These contestations of royal power, prerogative, and authority, while disruptive over narrow stretches of time and territory, actually testified to

the growing scope, strength and effectiveness of royal administration, and the developing symbiotic relationship between royal deputies in the provinces and the princes in their discrete domains. In addition, the failure of the most powerful ducal families to sire strong male heirs through the end of the fifteenth century decimated the land, holdings, and separate power base of those houses, blunting their potential as sources of rebellion (Small 140-142).

However, the danger in this narrative is that of oversimplifying the complex negotiations and adjustments made between king, administrative officers, royal cities, princes, *parlements*, fiscal agents, courts of justice, and other organs of governance from the end of the fifteenth century and throughout the sixteenth. My point is that the stability of French unity and the centrality of royal control is clear in retrospect, but that from 1453 to the mid-sixteenth century, the deployment and contestation of political power--and by extension violent force--remained a dangerous game where the risks and potential rewards were enormous (Potter 1995, 110-135). Thus political authority in France at this time paradoxically engendered greater stability while inspiring last-ditch efforts to resist the finality of royal consolidation by historically prominent yet substantially weakened noble houses. Milet's own family straddled one of the most problematic of those high-level relationships: the link between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy. Jean Milet, Jacques' father, likely served the Duke of Burgundy before his break with the English alliance in 1435, and subsequently--perhaps as part of the deal with the king--aided Charles VII as his secretary. Jacques Milet's *Destruction de Troie*, dedicated expressly to Charles VII, nevertheless found its way into the private library of the Duke of Burgundy, according to a 1467 inventory. This appearance of a work aimed at the creation of a national genealogy ("la lignee de la France") in two rival political camps testifies to the currency such fictionalizations possessed in helping rulers build futures and imagine an appropriately noble and

distinctive past. In addition, the distribution of Milet's literary work across the crucial boundary in the French polity mirrored his own father's transit from the duchy into royal service.

On the other hand, the apparent ease with which both people and fiction passed between the ducal house and the crown suggests, instead of a boundary hardened by animosity, a deep interrelatedness born of a shared culture and history. In fact, historian Richard Vaughan takes exception to the importance of the "Anglo-Burgundian" alliance, instead rooting the causes for the conflict in the mid-fifteenth century as personal in nature rather than geopolitical:

It is fallacious to discover in the Treaty of Troyes the basis of an alignment of great powers, and fallacious too, to think of the western European scene in the years 1420-35 in terms of an Anglo-Burgundian alliance against France. For these were attitudes rather than real alliances, and personal not national, in their scope. (Vaughan 6)

In this formulation, Duke Philip's sponsorship of the Treaty of Troyes becomes a way to strike back against his enemy the Dauphin, while solidifying his own connection to a proposed dual monarchy of England and France and preventing further internal warfare. After all, at the time of the Treaty Philip was married to Michelle of France, the daughter of Charles VI and sister-in-law of Henry V. Moreover, Henry V's martial skills and territorial advantage seemed to make the question of who should succeed Charles VI moot, especially if, as Philip did, one hated the Dauphin of France. Thus the Treaty aimed not to destroy France, but to safeguard it from the Dauphin's rule, preserve a set of family connections integral to Burgundy's peaceful continued existence, and support the likeliest victor in the coming conflict, King Henry V (Vaughan 6-11). Seen in this light, the Duke of Burgundy's actions take on the color of national *preservation* rather than destruction. Charles VII's subsequent victory, however, cast the Duke's efforts



forever in the shadow of treason and fueled the historical idea of the "Anglo-Burgundian" alliance that dominates most modern accounts of the period.

For my aims here, these contradictory versions serve an important purpose. First, they demonstrate the confusing nature of the dénouement of the chronic conflict labeled the Hundred Years' War, especially in reference to France's internal strife. On the one hand, Henry V and Duke Philip arrayed themselves against the Dauphin, threatening the royal title and, by extension, the idea of France itself. On the other hand, conflicts remained sporadic as Charles VII could not gain the advantage, and the regency government in England after 1422 lost much of Henry V's momentum--until the turning point in 1429 at Orléans. Philip himself largely stayed out of direct assaults on the Dauphin's forces, preferring instead to defend his own frontiers and nurture his own demesnes (*ibid.*). Second, the resulting uncertainty about the location, borders, strength, continuity, and content of the French nation served as a kind of fuel for ideological and fictional mythopoesis (Beaune 7-10). Third, the family relationships and shared cultural heritage defined a contest for supremacy over the coalescing national identity, rather than an attempt to thwart or supplant France as an entity. Fourth, the undeniable improvement in conditions occasioned by Charles VII's string of military victories inspired large numbers of people to participate in commemorative festivals and celebrations over the course of the end of the fifteenth century (Beaune 150-1). As Colette Beaune puts it:

But the idea of nationhood, evolving since the beginning of the twelfth century, surged into the vacuum and eventually brought whatever was left of the old values under its own sway. It was these new values that allowed a profoundly shaken society to set itself aright, to create a different set of allegiances better adapted to the problems of the day.

(7)

Thus the knitting and re-opening of political and military wounds, coupled with their slow healing, spurred the expression in a number of media---the two most relevant to my discussion here are the literary and performative--of sentiments about the meaning, parameters, and character of nationhood. Moreover, these expressions had currency for people on various sides of the conflict, and for all classes of individuals including kings, dukes and the common people.

### **3.2.2 Diversity, Demographic Recovery, and Economic Activity**

The successes of Charles VII in driving out the English and Louis XI in consolidating royal authority represent significant military and political victories that risk overshadowing the practical reality of a country as diverse as France at the end of the fifteenth century. This "France"--in language, written or customary law, standards of weights and measures, and tax collection, in varied forms and privileges of local authority and strongly rooted (and occasionally competitive) local customs and traditions--was a diverse and disparate place. French, the dialect of the Ile-de-France and hence of the monarch, competed with Latin for use in official documents. Outside the Paris region, only society's top levels--a small minority of the total population--spoke these two tongues. Most common people spoke their local dialect, such as Occitan, Breton, Picard, Gascon, or Provençale (Garrisson 5-6; Muchembled 42). French was, of course, increasingly identified with a national identity of "France"--primarily because of its use in royal courts and offices since the fourteenth century--but the process proceeded chaotically until Francis I (Potter 1995, 6). An essential tool in the binding together of this diverse country, then, became the manifestation of the king's majesty, both literally and symbolically, throughout the realm. Literally, the king's progress in a nomadic court provided

myriad opportunities for royal entries and symbolic rituals. Symbolically, the construction of castles, the conduct of processions and festivals, and artistic and literary contests in the name of the king all delivered the message of "unique and indivisible sovereignty" (Garrisson 7). Thus performance of royal power played an irreplaceable role in knitting together the polity and in reminding people of their place in it.

In addition, society itself had never been more diverse. The neat classification of social classes according to a tripartite division--those who fight (the knights and nobility), those who pray (clerks and the church) and those who work (everyone else)--had been inherited from earlier elites. Yet this triple structure--which not always clearly reflected reality--was challenged by enormous demographic and economic changes. Consequently, the "three classes" increasingly referred to ideas rather than reality (Muchembled 14). The conceptions of the first two levels, the aristocracy and the ecclesiastics, conformed relatively well to the characteristics and duties of the real members of those categories. But the membership, duties, wealth, and qualities of the third estate were increasingly flexible and, more than ever, up for debate. Some writers edited the inherited views of a three-level society, creating orders of dignity within each level and expanding the classifications to twelve (Charbonnier 56).<sup>36</sup> But the imagined revisions to the social order always lagged in comparison to the evolving complexity of society at its most populous and diverse level.

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<sup>36</sup> Charbonnier refers to works by Philippe de Mézières (*Songe du vieil pelerin* [*Dream of the Old Pilgrim*]), Eustache Deschamps (*Lay des douze estats du monde* [*Lay of the Twelve Estates of the World*]), and G. Du Bus (*Roman de Fauvel* [*Book of Fauvel*]) to substantiate this claim.

Ongoing internal struggles notwithstanding, the resolution of principal hostilities between the forces of Charles VII and the occupying English by 1453 meant that by the next decade, demographic recovery was well under way. The catastrophes that decimated the population in the preceding centuries--plague, war, and famine--gave way to more benevolent climatic and social conditions. The previous drop in population meant that more land was available for fewer people, enabling small farms to grow in size and productivity. These small farms soon became able to diversify their products, adding commercial crops such as woad (a plant producing fabric dye), grapes, and olives to grains and food staples. The economic success of these farms, which generated plenty of food as well as a certain amount of wealth--in turn led to an increase in marriages and births (especially early ones), stimulating a population boom that was to last until roughly 1560 (Potter 1995, 7; Charbonnier 123-9; Garrisson 9; Le Roy Ladurie 36). Internal migration, driven by oversupply and demand for labor in various regions, helped redistribute population and connect workers with employment, driving the growth of towns and villages. Greater agricultural productivity made it easier to support larger urban centers, and some towns doubled or tripled their population in the hundred or so years after 1450. But even this dramatic growth only accounted for about 10% of the total population--most of the people still lived in the countryside. Despite the relatively small proportion of town dwellers, the urban population created new demand, concentrated labor for burgeoning craft industries and guilds, and benefited from international trade and the influx of natural resources and gold from the voyages of discovery. The result of all this was a sustained period of economic comfort and prosperity lasting from 1450 until at least 1520, and in some places, as late as 1550 (Garrisson 12-18, 32-37; Muchembled 43; Potter 1995, 2; Le Roy Ladurie 37-39).

In the countryside, peasants fell into two categories: freemen and serfs. The distinction was made based on taxes owed, and determined solely by the lord. However, serfs were disappearing by the late fifteenth century, as many lords sold freedom to the serfs and serfdom itself began to seem outmoded and unnatural. Lords also, increasingly often, simply failed to renew taxes on serfs, and took no action to effectively manage lands according to a feudal model, often ceding lands to the peasants in fact (Potter 1995, 12-13). Scarcity of labor and internal migration also contributed to the demise of serfdom as a dominant way of organizing the agricultural workforce. In the towns, urban charters generally granted the inhabitants free status and other privileges, though the population in towns generally stratified according to income and ability to participate in the town's government. Unskilled laborers formed the bottom rung of society, with craftsmen above them (including masters, apprentices, and valets--former apprentices who failed to become masters), and finally, the merchants. Merchants included those who lived off rents, lending, or property. They also served as a de-facto urban council of magistrates, who selected their own successors and set their own taxes. Membership in the highest class of town society conveyed substantial and ongoing benefits that the class worked to maximize for itself by manipulating the machinery of government and the levying of taxes. Men with legal education could often infiltrate this upper level, by deploying their exclusive power to write and execute legally binding documents (Charbonnier 57-8). Thus the economic milieu of the third estate held more opportunity to own and amass wealth, and thus advance into higher levels of society, than ever before.

Other signs of an overall increase in prosperity across a wide swath of the country included increasing attention paid to threats to that prosperity, including beggars, thieves, prostitutes, and those on the margins, such as Jews and lepers (Potter 1995, 15). Near the end of

the fifteenth century, the royal and local authorities who had been content to regulate and channel crime into approved channels--such as granting permission for brothels--instead began to classify such activities as wholly criminal, placing them under the jurisdiction of the Parisian police force and the royal bailliffs (Demurger 200-1). Thus concern over public safety, as it were, signaled both a change in attitude towards certain kinds of activities and certain categories of people, and another dimension for the expansion and consolidation of royal control.

This prosperity and greater opportunity also fueled the development of schools and universities, and increases in enrollment at the most prestigious institutions: the University of Paris, first, and preeminent faculties of law at Orléans, Bourges, Toulouse, and Poitiers. While it is difficult to cite specific statistics, new parish schools sprang up, both in towns and across the countryside. New universities sprang up as well, though the shape of higher education remained focused on the seven liberal arts, established as the scholastic foundation in the thirteenth century. Based on this model, students studied the liberal arts for six or seven years, and then proceeded to take a higher degree in civil or canon law, medicine, or theology, sometimes spending twelve to fourteen years in pursuit of the latter. Many of the new universities, dispersed throughout France in regionally important cities like Toulouse (theology), Montpellier (theology and medicine) Aix-en-Provence, Nantes, or in cities especially loyal to the crown like Bourges, drove a new geography of recruitment. Universities increasingly depended on local areas, such as the burgeoning ranks of the parish schools, for students.

Concomitant with regional diversity, however, came an increase in royal interference. After the middle of the fifteenth century, royal officials had intervened to change the governing statutes of the major universities: Paris (1452), Orléans (1447), and Toulouse (1470). Accompanying changes in the student body and the structure of authority, however, were

foundational alterations in how scholars saw the world, and therefore, what subjects should be taught. The so-called "crisis" in scholastic thought--on how best to reconcile the Church's views with Greek philosophy--resulted, more or less, in a split between faith and reason. However, like most academic disputes, the victory of one side hardly eliminated the other. Instead, the study of theology increasingly became isolated in the university body, while law and subjects needed by the civil service attracted more students and received more encouragement from the expanding state. Therefore, during the late fifteenth century, universities began to shift away from an exclusively ecclesiastical orientation, increasingly training professionals and civil servants to fill growing demand in towns and the burgeoning central government (Demurger 256-260). As universities attracted students from across the country, they began to serve a new role as "centres [*sic*] of social cross-fertilisation [*sic*], conferring on those who attended not merely degrees, but a broader mental horizon" (Garrison 42).

The recovery of France in terms of population and economic activity should not obscure the fact that this society was materially fragile and sensitive to the vicissitudes of climate and the extreme technological limitations of agriculture. The system relied heavily on manual or animal labor, and grain yields remained low. Thus enormous effort was still required to produce what the farms were able to produce, and disease, malnutrition, and cold were perennial threats to health and prosperity. I make this point here to underscore that the improvements above are essentially *relative*. Given the hardships suffered in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the demographic and economic improvements seemed positive and dramatic not only to us, but also to contemporaries (Potter 1995, 2).

Thus Jacques Milet, as he entered adulthood in the 1440s, found himself in the midst of a country recovering from war, emerging from the economic doldrums, and burgeoning with

opportunities. Greater prosperity led to concerns over unsavory elements in society, and pushed people and legal authorities to further define what it meant to belong to a particular community--at a local and national level. Unsurprisingly, Milet's early years echo these larger changes, as he took a degree at Paris and then traveled to Orléans for a law degree, encountering other students who likely shared his interest both in theatre and in remaking the history of antiquity into the history of France itself. With his family's history in royal service and the improvement in economic and social status of many people in towns and across the countryside, the advantages of education and travel must have been very clear to Jacques Milet. Moreover, the hopeful tone in contemporary accounts no doubt inflected the project Milet undertook with his three collaborators--for a country that had a bright future no doubt needed a history appropriate to that future.

### 3.3 CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC MILIEUX

In the same way that the ideal of a three-part society oversimplifies the complexity of the social world in the fifteenth century, so the idea of a single "culture" obfuscates the variety and diversity of cultures in and around France at the same time. But the multidimensional aspects of these cultural and artistic milieux are essential to understanding the context of Milet and his play *Destruction de Troie*. The current understanding of the play, as a marginal exemplar of an uncommon genre, depends upon severing the play from the milieux of its creation, and obscuring the reflections in the play of vital and vibrant literary, artistic, and cultural agendas. In addition, conventional binary theatre historiography inhibits placing *Destruction de Troie* in a context unframed by concerns of "medieval" and "Renaissance" playmaking and production practices.



A wider cultural perspective, taking into account broad trends as well as specific practices in centers of artistic vibrancy like the courts of Burgundy, Savoy, and Anjou-Provence, and in Orléans, the city where the play was composed, reveals that *Destruction de Troie* is more typical of its cultural milieu than previous studies have led us to believe. The cultural resources available for appropriation at this time included tastes in literature and art in a wide variety of media, recognition of the role arts play in organizing and binding society together, developments in performance practices conducive to the deployment of socially and politically valuable ideologies, intellectual and creative commerce with other polities and creative centers across Europe, and innovation in expression fueled by the rise and refinement of the vernacular as a creative medium. What emerges is a sense that *Destruction de Troie* was *at least* as typical of the fifteenth-century landscape of performance as the large-scale religious cycles plays that we know enjoyed numerous spectacular productions from the late fifteenth century through the middle of the sixteenth. Where we see a different genre, or material very different from other kinds of theatre, Jacques Milet's contemporaries saw no such distinction. As Lerud reminds us, our aesthetic categories simply did not have the same force or currency then; rather, the degree of influence and effectiveness of images and words on the memory and thus the soul were the more important issues (Lerud 219-235). In Milet's case, the only distinction that we know they perceived was the facility with language and imagination that elevated him to the ranks of the best known literary figures of the century. Given these conditions, it would be extremely surprising if no production of *Destruction de Troie* took place in the fifteenth century, though positive evidence for one has not yet surfaced. Perhaps, like three-quarters of the administrative

records from the reign of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy<sup>37</sup>, the financial and organizational traces of such a production have simply been lost.

### 3.3.1 Burgundy: Rehearsing the Theatre-State

The orientation and expansion of the duchy of Burgundy during the last half of the fifteenth century increasingly focused on lands to the north--the densely populated and increasingly wealthy counties comprising the Low Countries, what is now the southern Netherlands, Belgium, and northern France. These areas were dominated by cities like Ghent, Bruges, Lille, Brussels, Arras, and Valenciennes. The presence of so many towns meant that between 31 and 45 percent of the population in the area lived in a town--the highest percentage in Europe outside northern and central Italy (Brown & Small, 3-4). Not coincidentally, much of the surviving material testifying to spectacular dramatic productions of cycle plays--and indeed, a significant percentage of *all* extant material concerning French-language theatre and drama from the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries hails from this region. For example, the canon of early French drama derives entirely from documents created in or near the city of Arras (Symes 2007, 1). The manuscripts containing the text, illustrations, list of actors, and a schematic of mansions used in a production of a 25-day *Mystery of the Passion* at Valenciennes in 1547 provide one of the most complete documentary records concerning a particular production before the seventeenth century (see Konigson). The earliest surviving document in

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<sup>37</sup> Vaughan cites numerous sources that only 4,000 out of an estimated 18,000 pages of daily accounts survived. Most were apparently "used and destroyed by the French artillery in the nineteenth century," p. 139.

French attesting to the additions and notes of a director, as well as a complete list of expenses for the production, hails from Mons (1501), another town not far from Valenciennes (Vince 100; see Cohen for the Mons material).

Recent scholarship has cast the sophistication and cultural vitality of the Burgundian court as intimately connected with, and to some degree generative of, the cultural tastes of the urban and regional context surrounding the court. The court's mobility, and its affinity for long stays in cities outside of the ducal capital of Dijon--especially Brussels, Bruges, and Lille--increased the extent to which the duke and his subjects, especially townspeople, shared cultural values and tastes (Vaughan 136; Brown & Small, 1-2). As Brown and Small argued in 2007: "Art production did not--could not--thrive on commissions from the court alone" (ibid. 2). Thus the urban rich played a role in extending the reach and appeal of the varieties of artistic production burgeoning during the fifteenth century.

Throughout the apogee of Burgundy under Philip the Good (1419-1467), and for a decade or more afterwards, the court served as the mobile center of cultural production that modeled, throughout the region, sophisticated artistic tastes, and--especially relevant to our discussion--valued performance on a spectacular scale that permeated state, civic, and popular celebrations. Philip himself had a reputation as being "far more munificent and enlightened than any other ruler of his day north of the Alps" (Vaughan 150).<sup>38</sup> He surrounded himself with master artists, bestowing upon them lifetime appointments at his court: the Flemish painter Jan

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<sup>38</sup> Andrew Brown and Graeme Small provide English translations of eyewitness descriptions of the majesty of the courts of Philip the Good (1419-1467) and Charles the Bold (1467-1477), in *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c. 1420 - 1530*.

van Eyck served as his *valet de chambre*, the composer Gille Binchois served as his chaplain; and the poet Michault Taillevent served as his *joueur de farces*. Moreover, his private library contained one of the largest collections of illustrated books anywhere in Europe (Vaughan 150). Documents from the period testify to the breadth and sumptuousness of the ducal collection of jewelery, plate, and decorative objects created in gold and silver and studded with precious gems.

The ducal house also possessed a large number of ornate tapestries, with subjects including "the Twelve Peers of France, the Nine Worthies (male and female), the Seven Sages, the Apocalypse, the battle of Othée against Liège in 1408, Jason, William the Conqueror and the conquest of England, stag-hunting, shepherds and shepherdesses, Renaud de Montauban, Bertrand du Guesclin, Charlemagne, and Godefroi de Bouillon" (Vaughan 152). And this is only a subset--the ducal chapel also possessed a full series of tapestries depicting religious scenes (either the history of the world or Christ's Passion), as well as tapestries depicting past Dukes and their wives. Indeed, before the end of the fifteenth century (c. 1471), the Dukes of Burgundy had acquired a ten-piece tapestry sequence of the *History of Troy* (McKendrick 50). Note the diversity of the source material for these works of art: contemporary history (dukes and their wives, the battle of Othée), French history and military successes (Twelve Peers, William the Conqueror, Bertrand du Guesclin [military aide to Charles V], Godefroi de Bouillon [conqueror of Jerusalem in the First Crusade]), characters from vernacular literature (Renaud de Montauban, Charlemagne), religious topics (Apocalypse, Christ's Passion) and subjects taken from the lore of antiquity (Jason, the Nine Worthies, the Seven Sages, and *History of Troy*).

The Duke's and others' taste in, and patronage of, illustrated books helped to drive the creation of a series of book-production workshops in his territories, and new translations into

French of Latin histories. Duke Philip inherited over 250 manuscripts from his father in 1419, though very few acquisitions added to that number prior to 1445. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, however, numerous commissions from the Duke helped to generate scribal workshops and ateliers of illuminators at Mons, Valenciennes, Hesdin, Lille, Oudenaarde, Bruges, Brussels, and Ghent. Some of these illuminators, like Le Tavernier and the Master of Wavrin, are today hailed as founders of distinct styles of artistic expression, and creators of masterpieces of illustration and ornamental design in manuscript books. Books of hours, prayer books, translations of histories of France, Hainault, Rome, Holland, and modernized versions of old poems (like *Renaud de Montauban* and *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*) received luxurious new settings in decorated codices.

The Dukes' literary interests not only included the translation of previously written works, but also the writing of new works--particularly histories. Duke Philip made the court historian an official position, appointing George Chastellain as court chronicler, perhaps for the first time in Europe (Vaughan 157). But Chastellain was only a single representative of a large cadre of writers whom Philip paid a retainer. Nearly a dozen others were paid to write down and interpret events for posterity, including Olivier de la Marche, a prodigious recorder of court events for nearly fifty years (Emerson 11). Thus the Dukes of Burgundy generated, by their own commissions and examples, a considerable industry of people involved in creating not only lasting physical artifacts, but also imaginatively forceful artifacts that still motivate study and interpretation today.<sup>39</sup> At least one, if not more, of the manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie*

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<sup>39</sup> The scholarly literature about the art and legacy of the court of Burgundy is vast. The 2007 *Court and Civic Society* book by Andrew Brown and Graeme Small includes concise

demonstrate their links to the fecund book culture in northern France. Certainly P4--and probably O--were created in workshops receiving support directly from the Dukes of Burgundy. It is unlikely, however, that P4 or O were created in response to a *commission* from the Dukes, as the play and its accompanying material are explicitly aimed at Charles VII and his close allies. Yet the Dukes owned P4, and another copy of the play as well. That the Dukes possessed two large and expensive volumes, explicitly dedicated to Charles VII, the presumed *enemy* of Burgundy, argues for the prestige and importance of the text itself in the broader culture. That is, the idea of a Trojan French origin trumped the political concerns of the day. Moreover, as a branch of the ruling Valois family, perhaps the Dukes of Burgundy viewed *themselves* as the rightful heirs to the noble Trojan lineage. In any event, it appears that the Dukes could not imagine *not* owning such a text--in addition to its cultural importance, perhaps they also felt

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historical analysis, translations of key texts into English, and an introductory bibliography. Christopher Cope's *Phoenix Frustrated* treats Burgundy as a regional and partly imaginary phenomenon recruited by many rulers of various royal houses to support agendas of political expansionism, artistic patronage, or imperial domination. *Splendeurs de la Cour de Bourgogne* (Régnier-Bohler, ed.) includes critical introductions to unedited primary source texts in modern French, including excerpts from the ducal library, and fictional and historical texts commissioned by the court. For details on the ducal library, see *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne* by Georges Doutrepoint. Finally, *L'art de la Miniature flamande* [*Art of the Flemish Miniature*], by Maurits Smeyers (Monique Verboomen, tr.), accompanies details on the Dukes' participation in the book trade with full-color reproductions of many of the treasures they owned or commissioned.

pride in a homegrown artifact. In any event, the choice of material places it squarely within the continuum of interests manifested by other purchases and commissions at the court: the matter of Troy. The overlapping connections between the court, urban society, and a sophisticated industry of artists and writers demonstrate the widespread appeal that Milet's play might have had among his contemporaries, noble and bourgeois.

The existence of considerable material documenting the playing of religious cycles, on fixed or processional stages, in towns all over northern France and the Low Countries, is only one aspect of the culture of performance that permeated this region during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries<sup>40</sup>. Since 1986 scholars have compared the variety and purposes of Burgundian spectacle to Clifford Geertz' concept of the "theatre-state," a term first created for, and applied to, a nineteenth-century Balinese monarchy that was the subject of Geertz' book (Brown & Small 30). But Geertz's circumscription of the analogy--which, in Bali, casts performance as the purpose of the monarchy's rituals--does not apply here, where:

In almost all versions of the Burgundian theatre-state, the relationship between rituals and politics is rather more direct. Pomp does, in the end, serve power: ceremony served the state-building efforts of the dukes. (Brown & Small 30)

Here I am not concerned either with precisely why the dukes saw performance as a particularly effective tool for statecraft, or indeed whether or not they were particularly successful at achieving their goals through performance. What is most important here is the

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<sup>40</sup> For an overview, see Vince, pp. 99-105 and Nagler (1976). See also the recent critical editions of the Lille processional plays by Alan Knight (2001).

degree to which performance was called upon to both enact and connect religious and historical storytelling with the contemporary world as experienced by the dukes and their subjects.

One intersection of state power, narrative, and spectacle was the creation of a new chivalric order, the Golden Fleece (*Toison d'Or*) in 1430 at the conclusion of the tournament celebrating Duke Philip's marriage to Isabella of Portugal. In fact, both the marriage celebration and the festivities surrounding the order's founding, "by using the glittering ceremonial of the court, served to proclaim the newfound greatness of Burgundy throughout Europe" (Vaughan 54). The week-long marriage celebration at Bruges occasioned the transport of a truly mind-boggling amount of food, beverage, and household goods: 65 carts of tapestries, jewelery, and furnishings; 100 carts of wine; and 15 carts of specially made arms and armor for the jousts. The scope and scale of the wedding celebrations was attested in detail by the ducal herald, Jehan Lefèvre, in his *Chroniques*. Three temporary kitchens, constructed in the courtyard of the ducal palace in Bruges ringed a 150-foot long banqueting hall. Wooden statues of a lion, stag, and unicorn dispensed beverages from their outstretched paws. Within the hall, a special gallery held 60 musicians of various kinds. During the banquet service, each course was accompanied by a *tableau vivant*, and the final course--the most spectacular--featured a huge pie "où il y avoit ung mouton tout vif taint en bleu, et les cornes dorées de fin or [wherein there was a live sheep, dyed blue, and horns gilded with fine gold]" (Vaughan 57; Le Févre II:168). No expense, it seems, was spared to impress upon the witnesses--both aristocratic and bourgeois--the splendor of the court.

But this performance ushered in a new mechanism, partaking of both performance and patronage, for the Duke to reward and monitor loyalty and chivalric service. The extensive statutes of the order--related in detail by Olivier de la Marche--allowed the investigation of



members' ethical and chivalric conduct to ensure they upheld their commitments and responsibilities--as chivalric models--to the public good and to the Church (Brown & Small 131). These expectations extended to the Duke himself--in chapter, it was expected that the Duke also would meet with criticism should he fail to uphold the highest chivalric model. Of course, criticism of the Order's founder and patron was rare and likely diplomatically crafted, even though Charles the Bold came in for scathing treatment in the late fifteenth century (ibid.). The principle of allowing the critique was important, as it demonstrated the confraternal atmosphere envisaged in the statutes. The Order's regulations were taken seriously enough for new members to have their own copies, and often translations, made (ibid., 130). Though the Order met relatively infrequently, with only sixteen chapters between 1430 and 1516, the influence and power of the society emerged in ways other than face-to-face meetings (ibid.). In addition, while the Order allowed Philip to integrate his domain by creating a brotherhood of his vassal princes, he also invited foreign dignitaries and ambassadors to join, extending his circle of influence to an international level. By the 1460s, the Golden Fleece included at least two foreign heads of state (Vaughan 162). The explicit and implicit creation of standards for behavior, bonds of chivalric brotherhood, and linkages among diverse political, military, and economic powers created the opportunity to "promote loyalty, resolve conflict, and regulate conduct" (Brown & Small 131).

But the Order of the Golden Fleece sowed more than the seeds of regulated chivalry. Chapters of the Order were occasions for lengthy urban festivals, celebrating the arrivals of the members and their progress through the city, for the jousts and tournaments, and solemn masses. They occasioned a host of events only tangentially related to the purpose of the gathering, but that nonetheless showcased the strengths and attributes of the host city (ibid. 133). The chapters occurred most often in the largest and most important cities. Of the sixteen chapters, three each

took place in Bruges and Brussels. Lille and St.-Omer each hosted two. The other chapters, scattered throughout various parts of the ducal domain, embodied "an exceptional event in the life of individual towns, but...these events were nonetheless essentially urban in nature"--and fundamentally, also performances (ibid.). To a 1461 eyewitness from Milan, the urban *fêtes* accompanying the meetings of the chapter showed how "the Duke of Burgundy exemplified three things: worship, lofty solemnity, ritual" (quoted in Brown & Small 135). In addition to inspiring urban festivity at chapter meetings, the Order also inspired a new strain of artistic patronage at the ducal court. Initially, the figure of Jason, leader of the Argonauts, filled the role of patron of the Order. Yet his less-than-ideal betrayal of Medea created incentive to find a replacement for him, in the Biblical figure of Gideon (a warrior and judge who discovered God's will through a woolen fleece). In 1448, Philip commissioned a tapestry of "History of Gideon and the Golden Fleece." The court also commissioned gold collars for every member of the Order, bearing the Order's device upon it (Vaughan 162; Brown & Small 131). These examples, in addition to the extensive manuscripts created by the Order's historian and registrar, demonstrate just a few of the ways in which the Order contributed to an expanding cultural milieu inspired by antiquity, nurtured by an ambitious court, and reflected in and by an active, urban citizenry.

The Order of the Golden Fleece was not the only mechanism for spectacular performance in the late fifteenth century in Burgundy. State banquets, including wedding feasts, and ducal entries all represented important occasions where considerable financial resources, in conjunction with local ingenuity, created memorable performances. We have already noted the scale and grandeur of Philip's wedding feast; other examples include the 1454 Feast of the Pheasant (*Voeux du faisant*), and Charles the Bold's 1468 wedding to Margaret of York. The fall

of Constantinople to the Turks May 29, 1453 spurred Pope Nicolas V to issue a papal bull calling for a new crusade. As a response, Duke Philip ordained a fortnight of tournaments and celebrations, culminating in a banquet where 107 of his vassals swore an oath (*voeu*) to accompany him on crusade to drive out the infidel from Eastern Christendom. Scholarly debate still rages about Philip's intentions, about whether he truly intended to leave Burgundy and attempt to take back Constantinople, and whether these 107 oaths meant anything more than an affirmation that Philip's vassals generally did as he asked. Moreover, Philip used the banquet for a wide range of political purposes, not all connected with the Pope's wish for a Christian East, most of which concerned the bolstering of his expansionist aims in the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of France (Brown & Small 37). For my purposes, however, Philip's intentions and sincerity are beside the point. What the Feast of the Pheasant represents is a dramatization--and the integration--of a nexus of forces in the Burgundian court: religious faith, chivalric duty, political gamesmanship, symbology of antiquity, and spectacular performance.

The Feast of the Pheasant generated at least two official versions of the event, written by Olivier de la Marche and Mathieu d'Escouchy. Richard Vaughan published for the first time in 1970 an eyewitness account from a minor noble, J. De Pleine, who described additional details of the Feast (Vaughan 144-5). Unlike the marriage feasts, the chapters of the Golden Fleece, or the ducal entries, the Feast of the Pheasant was confined to the members of the court and the duke's vassals who were there to swear their fealty to the crusade and to Duke Philip, specifically. Consequently, the Feast occurred within the confines of the *Palais de la Salle*, the ducal seat in Lille, though extensive galleries testified to a wider audience expected to attend. In addition, official accounts of the Feast and associated events were duplicated and disseminated throughout the duchy. Thus the actual event, though circumscribed within the courtly space, echoed

throughout the land via the written word and word-of-mouth: "General processions were ordered in towns to announce the crusading intentions of the Duke. The urban world was to be kept informed of high ducal ambition" (Brown & Small 38).

The complexity and sophistication of the *entremets* (entertainment occurring "between courses") at the Feast of the Pheasant takes pages and pages for Olivier de la Marche to describe.<sup>41</sup> Highlights include the statue of the naked girl, draped modestly in a veil, whose right breast spouted a mulled wine, guarded by a live lion chained to a pillar; a platform, with a curtain that could be opened and closed, where scenes from the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece were played by "actors who did not speak"<sup>42</sup>; and an elephant carrying a castle called Faith which sheltered an unhappy Holy Church who begged the assembled nobles for rescue. Excerpting the highlights, while useful for my purposes, does not convey the immense degree of order and organization deployed to achieve the celebration. Several iterations of performance occurred one after another, from still presentations of cleverly created still figures, alternating with musicians who entered the room in procession, or exploded out of pastry. The series of dumb shows concerning the story of Jason included a fight with a fire-breathing serpent done "sy bon devoir que ce ne sambloit pas mistere ancois sambloit trop mieux une tres aigre et mortelle

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<sup>41</sup> For an English translation of key excerpts of La Marche's *Mémoires*, see Brown & Small, pp. 39-53. A critical edition of MS fr. 11594 at the BnF, which contains the narrative in the original French: *Les voeux du faisan, noblesse en fête, esprit de croisade* by Marie-Thérèse Caron.

<sup>42</sup> From J. de Pleine's letter, Vaughan, p. 144.

bataille [so realistically, that it did not resemble a play but an all too bitter and mortal battle]"<sup>43</sup>. The use here of the term "mistere" in reference to a general sense of performance (as opposed to reality) is just another example of the way medieval usage does not match the way modern scholars use the same words to indicate generic categories (see Chapter One). An initial showing of still *entremets* was attended to by the entire court, "for quite some time," followed by the seating of the Duke and his guests, which was done in a strictly specified order and supervised by the chief stewards (Brown & Small 44).

As the Feast progressed, presumably each course, which consisted of "forty-eight types of food," would be served by the stewards in between the *entremets* (ibid.). After the seating, a bell announced the next round of *entremets*, these being a series of processions, usually with music, which alternated with the Jason dumb shows. Following the last Jason scene--where he kills the magical army sprung from the dead dragon's teeth--the elephant with Mother Church entered to deliver her lamentation. Her distress call summoned the King-at-Arms of the Golden Fleece, who read Duke Philip's vow aloud, and who also carried in the eponymous pheasant. The King-at-Arms then requested additional vows from the assembled guests. Duke Philip cut short the reading of all the vows, and the tables and food were cleared away. Finally, a procession of musicians and dancers "invest[ed] the Feast with more joy" (Brown & Small 51). The whole event lasted until at least 4 am, when our witness M. de Pleine finally left, writing to his correspondent that "nothing so sublime and splendid has ever been done before" (Vaughan 145). Behind the scenes, "no less than thirty-five artists were employed on the decor, representations and other paraphernalia for this feast, as well as a plumber, six joiners, a sculptor

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<sup>43</sup> The French is from Caron, p. 119. The translation here is from Brown & Small, p. 47.

and a locksmith" (Vaughan 144). What the Feast of the Pheasant represents, then, is a yoking of public purposes with the mechanical ingenuity and craftsman's skills of a small army of artists, a collective sense of what constitutes spectacular presentation, and a clear idea of how to sequence complicated events for maximum effect. Moreover, the distribution of written accounts--several of which have survived today, as we have seen--ensured that the tidings of this spectacle would reach the ears of Philip's rivals and allies, as well as people of varied classes and occupations throughout the west of Europe.

While the Feast of the Pheasant--and the wedding feasts--represented kinds of exceptional events, the ducal entry represented a kind of event that grew in frequency and complexity. Perhaps as many as 200 ducal entries total took place during the fifteenth century alone (Brown & Small 165). An Entry was divided into several parts, facilitating an orderly and predictable sequence of events. Entries also commonly occurred for a limited number of purposes, and always outside the normal routine of the duke's regular itinerary. That is, the duke regularly moved between his palaces in various cities, and such movements were not subject to the ceremonies and expense of a ducal Entry. An Entry occurred to commemorate an inauguration, a dynastic marriage (to introduce the new bride or groom), a military victory, a young heir's attainment of majority, an impending crusade, or a reconciliation between rebellious municipality and the prince (Brown & Small 165). Entries were also normally paid for by the host city. To begin an Entry ceremony, the duke and his retinue would be met at some distance outside the city gates by a group of town officials and important citizens. Then, a welcome address would be given, followed by a procession into the city that included key municipal and ecclesiastical buildings, perhaps with a presentation of gifts or tokens in the central square or marketplace. The Entry typically ended with the arrival of the Duke at the city ruler's residence;

but the procession through town would normally last several hours. The route would be lined with spectators, banners, and often torches, as Entries often did not begin until the afternoon, extending into the evening. The Entry ceremony, in Europe in general, has only recently been taken up by theatre scholars, its analysis having been left in large part to political historians. Significantly, for my purposes, an examination of Entries and similar courtly and civic pageantry "provides theatre historians with a more broadly based conception of the expectations of a medieval audience" (Vince 119).

As the fifteenth century progressed, Entries increasingly included the building of platforms on which actors enacted various stories deemed relevant to the occasion (Brown & Small 166). For example, for the 1458 Entry of Duke Philip into the city of Ghent, the town put up twenty platforms along the processional route, displaying a wide variety of dumb shows inspired by Biblical stories, incidents from the history of antiquity, and even treatises on morality and mercy (ibid., 176-186). In addition to the wide-ranging topics performed at this Entry, the account<sup>44</sup> of these *tableaux* demonstrates the many different ways the actors communicated their messages to the transient audience. Some platforms had writing on them, explaining the content of the story being presented--often in the form of a Bible verse or short excerpt--while actors pantomimed a series of gestures. Other performances linked scenes on two different platforms, locales for a sequence of gestures initiated by the Duke's appearance. Other performances included short dialogues, in addition to the words written on the front of the stage. Many of the

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<sup>44</sup> The primary source for this account is in Flemish, *Kroniek van Vlaenderen van 580 tot 1467*, published in a modern edition in 1840 by the Maatschappij der Vlaemsche Bibliophilen, Ghent.

*tableaux* referred to physical locations in the city, as characters pointed towards battlements, important buildings, or towers, to indicate how the local geography related to the story being presented. Often music was included as part of the performance, or indeed constituted the only entertainment associated with a particular platform. Other performances included animals, though these were likely actors wearing costumes, as it hard to imagine the following without human actors to animate the action:

Across the Holstraat there stood a stage which bore a great black lion with its jaws gaping as if roaring...Opposite this lion there was another, a beautiful white female meekly stretched out, and between them lay three white lion cubs which seemed to be half-dead. When the black lion roared, they awoke and were brought back to life. Everything was masterfully crafted and lifelike. On the edge of the stage was written, 'He will roar like a lion and the children will be afraid. Hosea chp. 2'. (Brown & Small 180)

Indeed, artificial lions were not the only animals to make an appearance at this Entry:

In front of the gate of the residence of my redoubted lord there was a stage with a great grey elephant. Above his mouth he had a long trunk from which wine spouted forth as though from a fountain, and he had two long hanging ears, two great shiny eyes, a knobbly nose and two long tusks shaped like a boar's teeth, lifelike in every detail. Two men who had seen such an animal alive were involved in making it. (ibid. 185).

But the building of platforms, casting of actors, and positioning of musicians were only some of the complex undertakings associated with this Entry. Some of the *tableaux* consisted of maneuvers such as the following:

My redoubted lord passed...over the Counts' Bridge....Here there stood a stage bearing a prophet who was pointing into the water,...holding a scroll in his hand with the words



'Look, O Lord, to your servants. Psalms 89'. In the water...there was a figure represented in the following manner: first, a rope was stretched over the water from which there hung a blue sky which opened up; from the opening there emerged an angel who descended to a pavilion which hung above a green island that had been made in the water. The angel lifted up that pavilion with its hand, and below stood our Lord Jesus Christ....Not far from our Lord there was little barge containing St. John the Evangelist and St. Peter, who appeared to be fishing. St. John stood up firmly facing our Lord and held in his hand a scroll bearing the words 'It is the Lord'. (ibid., 183)

The scene continued, as St. Peter attempted to walk on water, failed, and from the water lifted his own scroll saying "Save Me," which of course prompted the Lord to reply, with his answer written on his own scroll, "O ye of little faith, why did you doubt?" (ibid.). Then the angel dropped the pavilion over the Lord to complete the scene. What these examples show is that these *tableaux*--performances, really--required extensive resources and ingenuity to execute. In addition, these performances relied on precise notions of sequence and timing to ensure that the Duke, on his progress through the town, would experience the most advantageous effects of each of the twenty platforms constructed for the occasion. Though the examples I've given above are exclusively from one ducal Entry in the prosperous and sophisticated Burgundian Low Countries, the ambition, diversity, and ingenuity demonstrated here aligns more closely with the norm across France, rather than illustrating an exception to a trend. As Danielle Quérueil demonstrates in her article "Hystoires et Personnages [Stories and Characters]", the city during the fifteenth century increasingly became an "immense scène sur laquelle les hommes se mettent en représentation [immense stage on which men performed]" (Quérueil 38). Royal entries, after

1380, became not only occasions for theatrical performances like the *tableaux* at Burgundian ducal entries, but also for productions of "*jeux* [plays]" and "*histoires* [stories]" (ibid. 37).<sup>45</sup>

But royal and ducal entries were not the only occasion for platforms and performances in the streets. Indeed, 72 recently discovered (and edited) *mystères*, intended for performance during the traditional post-Trinity Sunday procession in the city of Lille, comprise an enormous variety of subjects: the Old Testament (43); the New Testament (21); Roman history (4); and Christian legend (4). The procession had a very long run--initiated in 1270, financial documents attest to the presence of theatrical presentations for the first time in 1351, continuing (with some interruptions due to plague and civil disturbances) until in 1565, at the outbreak of the religious wars, the procession and associated performances had their final iteration (Knight 2001, I:31-67). The *échévins* of the city awarded prizes in a variety of categories, sparking a vital spirit of competition that was certainly partly responsible for the long endurance of the tradition despite the difficulties of the early sixteenth century in northern France and Flanders. Moreover, despite the sacred motivation for the procession--Trinity Sunday--topics for plays varied widely, and the teams which produced the individual plays were made up of the city citizens. Thus, Lille models the overlap of sacred, civic, and spectacular activities that we've seen in a variety of other

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<sup>45</sup> For more information on urban theatre and performance in France, see *Les arts du spectacle dans la ville (1404-1721)*, Marie-France Wagner and Claire Le Brun-Gouanvic, eds; *Enter the King*, Kipling; and *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe*, Alan Knight, ed.; and the critical edition of *Les Mystères de la procession de Lille*, vols. 1-5, Alan Knight, ed.

settings, with the added dimension of exceptional endurance. Only the devastating wars of religion forced the *mystères* of the procession of Lille to take their final bows.

Like the cities over which they were sovereign, the Dukes of Burgundy did not confine their interest in performance solely to solemn, religious, or politically leveraged events. Two examples illustrate a less reverential sensibility--though the puckish motivations behind these examples did not seem to limit the considerable expense lavished. In other words, the Duke seems to have spent as extravagantly on jokes and recreation as he did on official events like the chapters of the Golden Fleece or in swearing an oath to go on crusade. In 1433, for example, one thousand pounds were spent on repairing and rehabilitating the "mechanical contrivances" at the Duke's rural castle, Hesdin. Some of these devices appear quite sophisticated, though the description of the goals of the contrivances do not indicate how their effects were achieved:

For making or refurbishing the three figures which can be made to squirt water at people and wet them, a contrivance at the entrance of the said gallery for wetting the ladies as they walk over it, and a distorting mirror; and for constructing a device over the entrance of the gallery which, when a ring is pulled, showers soot or flour in the face of anyone below...and another contrivance, at the exit from the gallery, which buffets anyone who passes through well and truly on the head and shoulders...A book of ballads lies on a desk but, when you try to read it, you are squirted with soot, and, if you look inside it, you can be sprayed with water...and above...is a figure which makes faces at people and replies to their questions, and one can both hear and see the voice in this box...And after all this was completed, my lord [the duke] ordered him [Colard le Voleur, *valet de chambre*] to make conduits and suitable contrivances low down and all along the wall of the gallery,

to squirt water in so many places that nobody in the gallery could possibly save themselves from getting wet...(Vaughan 138-9)

I quote Vaughan's translation of the clerk's detailed notations here because of the sheer silliness and inanity of these devices. Nowhere in evidence is a ducal interest in state building, sponsorship of serious art, or the building of a reputation of imperial majesty. Instead, we have a Duke who likes to ensure that the ladies of his court are sprayed regularly with water, and who uses books to trick people into compromising positions and cover them with flour and soot. Is he the monarch of a rich and sophisticated European duchy, or the social director of a college fraternity house? What I think is important about this seeming duality is that *it is not a duality at all*. Only intellectually does such behavior seem out of alignment with the larger trends of political, military, and cultural history outlined here. I argue that we should adopt a perspective markedly different from Johan Huizinga, who viewed the banquet of the Pheasant as one of the last spasms of a desperate and dying culture (Huizinga 1921, 101-3). Instead, what is crucial for understanding the truly over-the-top spectacle necessary for imagining and producing the *Passion* plays and *Destruction de Troie* is the interest, will, and financial wherewithal to imagine and then build a space dedicated solely to *fictional enjoyment and pleasure*. This is at least as important a motivation as teaching about God, or reminding citizens of ducal power. It is clear that, sometimes, that something was *fun* and *rewarding* helped motivate people to do it.

In addition to the significant sum spent on the practical jokes at Hesdin, the Duke also expended resources for a different kind of joke--a parody of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, entitled *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* [*A Hundred New Stories*]. Created circa 1459, *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* records stories--many of them true--swapped among Duke Philip and his courtiers, with an emphasis on the lewd, the shocking, or the unbelievable. The stories illustrate the

remarkable diversity of travel and experience present at Duke Philip's court and fill out a picture of "the world outside the court, of hotels and travellers, of merchants, of clerks and monks, and of the countryside" (Vaughan 159). Moreover, the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* shows a Duke not content to merely imitate artistic models, but to re-interpret those models. In other words, the Duke is not interested in out-Boccaccio-ing Boccaccio. Rather, he takes Boccaccio's form and fills it with content to suit his own purposes. And in this case, like the contrivances in Hesdin, the purpose seems clear: pleasure and the sharing of it.

The context of the Burgundian court, embedded in a network of prosperous and sophisticated cities both dependent on and generative of networks of artistic patronage and production, thus provides one dimension of Jacques Milet's world, where performance served important aims: political, economic, social, and aesthetic. And we have seen that Jacques Milet was viewed by numerous artistic peers (Gréban, Saint-Gelais) as an important writer and contributor to those networks. In addition, the natural interweaving of material from multiple sources--and the re-framing and re-articulation of this material for diverse purposes--provides a cultural framework for understanding Milet's project in *Destruction de Troie*. In the same way that ducal entries collected material from many traditions and overlaid it on the geography and needs of the particular moment, Milet transformed the "matter of Troy" into a dramatization partaking not only of urban performance practices (like scaffolds and elaborate special effects) but also long-form religious cycle plays. Thus the ambition of fifteenth-century literary lions was yoked to the ingenuity of urban *tableaux* technicians. None of this is to assert that Milet experienced a ducal entry and therefore conceived his play to take advantage of those skills, or that he attended a particular performance of a Passion play and was inspired to create *Destruction de Troie*. Rather, I am sketching out a constellation of cultural practices and

preferences that undoubtedly played a role in the choices that Milet made in crafting his dramatization. In this context, *Destruction de Troie* moves in towards the center from the margins. Instead of representing an exceptional case in French theatre history, it appears, on the other hand, to be fraternally related to the kinds of literary, artistic, and theatrical modes most common at its points of origin.

### **3.3.2 Other Cultural Milieux: Anjou-Provence and Savoy**

The Duchy of Burgundy provided the material and cultural support necessary to imagine, scribe, illuminate, copy, and preserve Milet's *Destruction de Troie*, but other cultural milieux also had contributions to make in modeling artistic forms, supporting theatrical artists, and endorsing the creation of new dramatizations. In addition to the itinerant ducal court, several other princely and royal courts served as centers of artistic patronage. Indeed, the time period from 1300 to 1500 saw "la cour princière, fait politique et social, s'impose partout en Europe [the princely court, a political and social fact, become essential throughout Europe]" (Robin 7). Of course, royal and ducal courts had existed for centuries--in fact, were a central aspect of political, military, and social organization for the period following the fall of Rome. However, after 1200, and accelerating during the fourteenth century, the households, services, servants, accoutrements, and ambition of Europe's courts underwent an astonishing expansion. This expansion, in its turn, provided models to lower levels of nobility, who subsequently strove to imitate the highest level, gaining in turn new prestige and clout. Thus vassals down the line strove to mimic their overlords, and provincial and local courts surged in numbers as well (Robin 8).

A key element of the newer, robust court culture was the presence of permanent and visiting artists, whose role was to bolster the prestige of their patrons through their artwork,

skills, and reputation. By the fifteenth century, "La cour devient...un lieu de délices où, sous l'autorité du mécène, l'art déploie sa magnificence aux yeux des courtisans éblouis [the court became...a place of delights where, under the rule of the patron, Art displayed its magnificence before the eyes of dazzled courtiers]" (ibid.). Some of these patrons either created or lent their names to works of art that have since become famous: the *Tres Riches Heures du duc de Berry*; *Les Heures d'Etienne Chevalier* (counselor to Charles VII); *Les Heures de Charles d'Angoulême*; the poems of Charles, Duke of Orléans; and many others (*Littérature* pl. x, xi). Even the Regent for the English King Henry VI, the Duke of Bedford, ensured the flourishing of the Parisian artistic community during his brief suzerainty there (Reynolds 37-38). The demands of courtly life did not abate, even in the face of an ongoing dynastic struggle: for the Duke of Bedford, a struggle taking place on foreign, and potentially hostile, soil. In fact, the Duke likely saw the extravagant scale of his artistic patronage in Paris as both crucial for his short-term control, and necessary for England's long-term success.

The flourishing of artistic milieux with a court at the center was a phenomenon prevalent throughout France, especially as open hostilities wound down throughout the fifteenth century. For example, at the court of Anjou-Provence, in the south, the Duke René--a poetic correspondent of Charles d'Orléans--not only sponsored a considerable artistic community, but also wrote his own works, some literary (allegories of chivalric love and religious meditations on it) and some technical (a manual for jousting and tournaments) (Robin 37). Writers and illuminators alike found plenty of work at the court of Anjou-Provence, copying devotional and hagiographic texts, histories, accounts of exotic lands, works from antiquity, as well as contemporary literature in French and Italian (ibid. 40-45). René, like the Dukes of Burgundy,

rarely missed an opportunity to embellish tournaments he hosted with myriad additional performance events: plays, banquets, dances, pantomimes, chorales, or *tableaux*.

Indeed, faced with his own brother's assertions that no one could best the Burgundians in terms of luxury and imagination, René held a great tournament at Nancy, which the Burgundian chronicler Georges Chastelain declared rivaled those of his home country (Robin 46). The Duke also copied his Burgundian rival by founding his own order of chivalry, the Order of the Crescent, in 1448. The most intense period for grand courtly ceremonies at Anjou was 1445 to 1450, just after the Duke returned from taking full possessions of his Italian dominion as King of Sicily (Robin 47). At the center of most of the spectacles at Anjou were tournaments created especially to showcase the Duke and his love of chivalric values. The tournament also provided an especially apt opportunity to compete both physically and presentationally with other important rulers, including the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy. In other words, Duke René took very seriously the opportunity to portray an ideal knight in the lists, and to model lordship and vassallage all in one. While technically owing his allegiance to Charles VII, René also ruled as a king in his own right. Thus he saw himself as a loyal member of the court and the lord of his own domain (Robin 48-51). But this focus on chivalry did not completely dominate the schedule of entertainments at the court of Anjou. Often, the entire court participated in musical dance presentations, called "mauresques," that involved painting signs and backdrops, dressing in furs or fine cloth, and pretending to be characters from legend, like Sirens or "King Adrastus" (Ibid.). The Duke's brother, the count of Maine, wore 2 wolfskins during one of these "mauresques" (Robin 50).

In addition to book art, tournaments, and dances, Duke René provided a living to approximately 100 artists, including painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, weavers, and architects.



Many of these came from the local cities and towns; but many also hailed from a diverse roster of foreign principalities such as Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries. The geographic position of Anjou, situated on the routes from Italy to France, Burgundy, and the Low Countries, enabled the cross-pollination of working methods and techniques from a variety of burgeoning artistic centers in the fifteenth century (Robin 82).

Positioned similarly to Anjou-Provence, the Duchy of Savoy--immediately to its northeast--also possessed charismatic and ambitious dukes, as well as a strategic location that inserted them into most fifteenth-century political machinations (Rosie 62). One of the most well-known dukes, Amadeus VIII, also happened to be the final antipope, Felix V, elected in 1439 (five years after abdicating the duchy) and resigned in 1449 (Cope 156). The specifics of this court echo what we've seen in the two other examples: ambitious leaders invest both in self-aggrandizement and artistic patronage, taking advantage of new economic energy and relative peace and prosperity. Amadeus VIII, by the time of his abdication, managed to consolidate the duchy into "a compact state which stretched from the Saône north of Lyons to the Mediterranean coast east of Nice" (Cope 154). Called the "Peacemaker," Amadeus's skill in political maneuvering and lawmaking earned him praise from the Burgundian chronicler Olivier de la Marche, and indeed, he managed to steer Savoy away from the military convulsions of the early fifteenth century. As a musician himself (like René the writer), a grandson of Jean, Duke of Berry, and husband to Mary of Burgundy, Amadeus possessed the innate abilities, family inheritance, and travel experiences that motivated him to fulfill the role of artistic patron. His court became a nexus of French, German, and Italian influence, where pictorial art flourished,

especially book illumination, painting, and frescoes.<sup>46</sup> The famous *Livre d'Heures du Duc Louis de Savoie*, created for Amadeus's son and successor, is just one example of the extensive output of the artists working for the Duke of Savoy (Daniel-Rops 7-8; Deschamps 9-10). Related in various ways to the Dukes of Burgundy, the court of Amadeus VIII, who ruled 1391-1434, anticipated in many ways the milieu created by his nephew, Philip the Good (Daniel-Rops 8; Cope 276).

Amadeus's abdication marked a period of decline for the duchy, as revenues went in large part to fight a Cypriot war against the Turks, the new duke's wife being the daughter of the King of Cyprus (Cope 157). Yet the legend of the court of Savoy as a center for the arts withstood these troubles, allowing the regency of Yolande to stage a resurgence of that reputation--this time, for music and dance (Rosie 57). In particular, Yolande's court showed a penchant for "morisques" and "momeries," varieties of dance we've already encountered in accounts of the court of Anjou, where they took on a decidedly exotic flavor. Of course, these kinds of entertainment were not limited to Anjou and Savoy, but at Yolande's court, "they far surpassed in popularity all other theatrical or ceremonial display" (Rosie 58). From 1465 to 1478, at least 30 "morisques" or "mommeries" occurred, eclipsing the half a dozen mystery plays and almost no tournaments held during the same time period.

These two terms, sometimes used interchangeably in accounts of the time, do denote two separate kinds of performance. The "morisque" is an energetic, almost frenetic dance accompanied by woodwinds, percussion, and foot-stomping. With origins in Spain, where

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<sup>46</sup> For a detailed analysis of many of these works, as well as high-quality reproductions, see Clément Gardet's *De la peinture du Moyen Âge en Savoie*, vol. 1.

"morisco" meant a Moor who had converted to Christianity, the dance often involved blackface, masks, and woollen wigs (Rosie 59). A "mommerie," however, was a pantomime wherein performers disguised themselves as characters from "myth, chivalric romance literature, or the bible," sometimes organized around a central theme or idea, and probably mostly silent. Taken together, these two forms comprised the chief entertainment on the bill at feast days, holidays, weddings, banquet, and virtually any festive occasion at the court of Savoy in the late fifteenth century (Rosie 60). This performance form, therefore, also partook of a wide variety of subjects including classical mythology as well as Christian legend.

With no literary accounts of the two performance forms, only household accounts and the rare eyewitness account testifies to the specifics involved. For example, a "morisque" or "mommerie" could vary in complexity depending on the importance of the occasion. "Morisques" could be danced by a single court servant, and "mommeries" could be performed with a few pieces of fabric, and Yolande's two young daughters. But on the occasion of the 1434 wedding of the soon-to-be-Duke Louis, we see both the fantastic possibilities as well as the court's interest in impressing its peers:

The lavish festivities, spread over five days, were obviously intended to impress the assembled guests (including René d'Anjou...) with the magnificence of the court of Savoy. On each successive evening the audience was entertained to the spectacle of a different fantastic world, wildmen...bore a huge rose-filled garden of wax into the hall, in the midst of which a live, and uncomfortable, billy goat was tied; a man disguised as an eagle burst out of a pastry case and a host of white doves flew out from under his wings; forty masked dancers, clad...in black and gold, whirled up and down the length of the hall. (Rosie 60-61; Le Févre, II: 295-6)

In addition to weddings, the arrival of foreign emissaries (an extremely common occurrence given the geography and the family connections to ruling families in France, Burgundy, and Milan) signaled the need for extravagant and complicated "mommeries" and "morisques" (Rosie 62). But the court of Savoy was not as rich as its peers, particularly during the regency of Yolande, after the Cypriot wars had drained the treasury. Honor required the entertainments to go forth; how unseemly it would be to fail to amaze the visiting Duke of Burgundy. But financial limitations meant that members of the court, including the Duchess herself, were often among the performers. To be sure, however, the Duchess never performed in entertainments for her own peers--only for her court favorites. In Burgundy, such entertainments would always be staffed by professionals (Rosie 63-64).

Despite these limitations, however, the court of Savoy still managed to create events seemingly just as ambitious and complicated as the cities and court of the Burgundian Low Countries. The 1475 visit of the Prince of Tarento is a case in point. This "mommerie" involved a mobile Castle of Love, with four towers, each containing a maiden, who threw gold coins at the spectators; a mechanical dragon, attacked by performers dressed as wildmen; seven trees created from laurel branches to form a Garden of Love; and one man, dressed in drag, dancing with five women (Rosie 72). The household accounts offer extremely specific details--down to the kinds of fabrics and the use of gold thread--regarding the costumes prepared for this particular performance.

Unlike in Burgundy, where wealth and opportunity created homegrown expertise and innovation, Anjou-Provence and Savoy combined native strengths with the opportunities of frequent and free exchange. The results, in some senses, were the same: a thriving court, in the context of an increasingly urban economy, provided both an attractive living and a plethora of

commissions for a community of artists likely as ambitious as their own patron. In courts like Burgundy, Anjou-Provence, and Savoy, the leader's constant, restless pursuit of greatness--whether defined as territorial expansion, continental prestige, or chivalric reputation--doubtless infected many at the court with similar desires, framed according to their skills and abilities.

### 3.3.3 A Sketch of the Orléanais Performance Context

Milet's composition of the *Destruction de Troie* at the city of Orléans over the course of two years invites the question of what was the nature of the performance milieu at that specific time and place? And, what possible cultural appropriations were available to Milet as he worked? Preserved in a thirteenth century manuscript<sup>47</sup> are ten short plays, in Latin, testifying to the regular performances at the nearby monastery at Fleury. Linked to the liturgical calendar, and occurring in March, July, and December, these ten plays included stories about the raising of Lazarus, the Nativity, the Resurrection, and the Conversion of Saint Paul, among others (Cuissard 9-10, 20). Also included in the manuscript are four plays, dedicated to Saint Nicolas, and created, it seems, to be performed by the students at the monastery's school. The first is the story of a father, depressed at being unable to marry off his three daughters, because he has no money for a dowry. They are beautiful, well-born, morally pure, young--and poor. All turns out well, however, when Saint Nicolas miraculously arrives, bringing the father riches. The second

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<sup>47</sup> This is attested in an 1879 article by Charles Cuissard, where he refers to this manuscript only as "ms. 178", I cannot be sure of the current location or existence of this document. This is potentially a loss, as I believe that the four plays for students that I describe below have evaded all scholarly scrutiny since Cuissard's mention of them.

play recounts the story of three students on a voyage who fall ill and die, and are subsequently raised from the dead by Saint Nicolas, who arrived in the disguise of a pious pilgrim. The third play tells the story of a Jew, robbed of all his gold while he was away all day in the field, converted to Christianity after Saint Nicolas appeared miraculously to the thieves and convinced them to return the gold. The fourth play, inspired possibly by the Crusades, tells the story of the deliverance of a Christian knight, held prisoner by a Saracen King, who is emancipated miraculously by the intervention of Saint Nicolas (Cuissard 13-16). Though the audience for these plays was limited to the inhabitants and students of the monastery of Fleury, most of the students who studied there were not in training for the priesthood (Cuissard 12-13). Instead, these students took their experiences with them out into the world at large, making these short Latin plays part of a community experience of drama in the area around Orléans. Indeed, evidence from the late fourteenth century (1391) attests to performance as an integral part of civic celebrations:

a Jacques Resjoy, menesterel et IIII autres menesterels de sa sorte et estant avec lui Raoulet le guiterneur...lesquels corneront et joueront de haut instrumens par II jours et grant partie de la nuit, parmi la ville d'Orliens, pour resjoic les bourgeois...et autres...habitants de ladicte Ville, pour cause de bonnes nouvelles...de la nouvelle naissance de monseigneur le Dauphin, fils du Roi...firect grans feux es carrefours de la dicte Ville et grans esbattements de gens...[monetary amount] (*Archives communales d'Orléans*, CC 537).

[To Jacques Resjoy, minstrel and 4 other minstrels of his kind and being with him Raoulet the guitar player...who trumpeted and played their treble instruments for 2 days and a large part of the night, within the city of Orléans, to give joy to the

townspeople...and other...inhabitants of the said City, because of the good news...of the birth of our Lord the Dauphin, son of the King...and for the lighting of large fires in the intersections of the said City for the great entertainment of the people...{monetary amount}]

Of course, these examples predate Jacques Milet's arrival in the city by several hundred years. But they nonetheless demonstrate a diversity of performance traditions involving civic and ecclesiastical authorities as well as the general public, as students and as bourgeoisie.

By the fifteenth century, the *comptes* [accounts] of the city reveal that the lifting of the siege of Orléans in 1429 on May 8 by Joan of Arc provided a fresh impetus for civic spectacle, including performances of various kinds. The city instituted an annual festival to celebrate the victory of May 8, consisting of a parade and the construction of "*eschaffaulx*" [scaffolds] along the streets of the city on which choirs sang motets and hymns to thank God for the deliverance (Cuissard 23; *ACO* CC 654). By 1435, the annual celebration included the production of a large scale *mistere*, which we know today by the name *Mistere du siège d'Orléans*, a 20,529-line dramatization portraying Joan of Arc and her allies and enemies in the lifting of the siege and her subsequent trial for heresy (Cuissard 24; *ACO* CC 654; Mazouer 221).<sup>48</sup> The play includes numerous musical interludes, dozens of characters, and requires several days to complete a single performance (Cuissard 24). By 1450, this tradition of civic spectacle fused with the production of a mystery play was at least 15 years old; its annual occurrence could hardly have escaped the notice of a young law student from Paris.

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<sup>48</sup> For more information, please see Vicki L. Hamblin's critical edition, *Le Mistere du siege d'Orleans*, Geneva: Droz, 2002.

Performances also played on the *eschaffaulx* constructed for the Duke of Orléans' triumphal re-entry to the city in 1440, fresh from his English captivity and accompanied by his young bride, Marie of Cleves (Cuissard 26). On this occasion, mystery plays called the *Labourers*, the *Virtues morales*, and *David et Goliath* joined with unnamed performances and a specially made fountain that spouted wine to welcome the Duke into his eponymous city (ACO CC 655). Other entries, such as the Entry of the Dauphin in 1470, spawned similar-scale events, some including giant "*feux de joie* [bonfires]" in the city intersections, processions, and "*plusieurs ystoires et esbattemens...en bonne devocion et joyeuseté* [many stories and entertainments...given in true devotion and joyousness]" (ACO CC 561). Some of these civic spectacles even borrowed the practices of the religious festivals, as during the 1470 Dauphin's Entry, where the *comptes* record this notation:

deux nouvelles processions eurent lieu les lundi et mardi et l'on y porta le luminaire comme a Fete-Dieu...(ACO CC 561).

[Two new parades took place on Monday and Tuesday, and people carried in them the large candle, like at Corpus Christi...]

Here is further evidence, if it were needed, of the overlap between religious practice in the cities and the civic performance traditions. Clearly the fifteenth-century public did not have any hesitation in mixing what, to them, was all part of the same activity: acting out their community values.

To the city's credit, one aspect of their community's values--their Christian charity--was put to the test when the city fathers were forced to contend with a cadre of interlopers, who by definition, could never have been a part of the Orléans community. Between 1446 and 1450 (the date of the city *comptes* is not certain), a caravan of six wagons, carrying Saracen men, women



and children, passed through the city on a pan-European journey of penance assigned to them by the Pope. They stayed within the city walls, though the number of days of their visit is not recorded, and the city gave the group alms "a passer pais [to pass through peacefully]" (*AOC CC* 660). Could such a rare opportunity of peaceful interaction between Saracens and Frenchmen on French soil have played a role in how Jacques Milet saw the world? Other than the communal acts of hosting and almsgiving, what other performances might have taken place during the interval? Did our author have the opportunity to see or speak with this group? Is there a connection between the stereotypical portrayal of the Greeks as Saracens in *Destruction de Troie* and this incident at Orléans? Answers to these questions are, of course, unknowable. But the fact of the Saracens' visit shows how easy it is to assume that we know what kind of world fifteenth-century French speakers lived in, and how wrong our assumptions might be.

What we do know, however, is that in the middle of the fifteenth century, a renewed hope for the future had taken root in the fertile ground of political stability and economic and demographic recovery. The optimistic tone inflected a broad swath of cultural and social practices that no doubt colored Milet's decision to embark upon *Destruction de Troie*. For, no doubt, a nation with a bright future needed a history to match. The evidence from many sources in many parts of French-speaking western Europe shows how groups and individuals naturally appropriated and integrated materials from multiple sources, re-framing and re-articulating them to serve new and diverse purposes. Thus, Milet was hardly alone among his countrymen in fashioning his play out of the circulating ideas, stories and practices in the mid- to late-fifteenth century. Rather than viewing the play through the lens of genre, which reduces it to a tiny sliver in a sea of religious and sacred plays, our new perspective of Milet's embeddedness in a constellation of cultural practices shows how *Destruction de Troie* is fraternally related not just

to theatre and drama, but to the kinds of literary, artistic, and performance modes most common at its point of origin and in places that created and influenced cultural trends from the Low Countries to the Mediterranean Sea. How easy it is to imagine these cultural *milieux* as fertile grounds for inspiration and experimentation, and the intermingling of language, culture, forms and expression. Performance, no less than other art forms--and perhaps more than some--played an important role in the presentation and manifestation of courtly and urban society. Performance also created opportunities for people to show their allegiances and their talents, work together in groups, commemorate the past, and dream about the future. The religious, secular, generic, or even disciplinary divisions that erupt in (define?) contemporary scholarship simply do not apply. Unconcerned by the categories that preoccupy us, the performances staged in these cultural *milieux* provided the substrate out of which Jacques Milet's dramatization of epic battles, political intrigue, and spectacular special effects germinated.

## 4.0 CHAPTER THREE: TRACES OF PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 DEBATING DIRECT EVIDENCE

Direct evidence for a performance of Jacques Milet's *L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troie* is extremely scanty and carelessly documented. Gustave Lanson, in a 1903 article, cites two occurrences: one in 1611 at the Bordeaux Hôtel de Ville, before the Prince and Princess of Condé; and the second in 1613 at Draguignan, a Provençal town. This straightforward attribution, however, conceals a lack of precision in the origin of this information, and its actual relationship to Milet's fifteenth century drama. Both examples explicitly name the play performed as *Destruction de Troye*, though the Bordeaux record calls it a "tragédie" and the Draguignan testimony labels it an "istoyre en deux journées[story in two days]" (Lanson 224-5). Thus the Draguignan event possibly represents a performance of only half the fifteenth-century text. Moreover, Lanson's citations only account for the origin of the Bordeaux record, from an 1883 work by Minier and Delpit, *Le théâtre à Bordeaux*. The quote from Draguignan's archives is not cited. Likewise, Minier and Delpit do not cite a primary source. As a result, Lanson's evidence, seemingly convincing in and of itself, yields some credibility under this examination; though to claim that the data are utterly specious would be a considerable leap, due to the common nineteenth century practice of leaving out specific citations.

A similarly opaque reference to a fifteenth-century performance adds another layer of uncertainty to the performance history of *Destruction de Troie*. In Frédéric Faber's 1878 five-volume survey of the *Histoire du théâtre français en Belgique* [*History of French Theatre in Belgium*], he includes the following notice in a section on temporary groups formed to present plays in Tournai:

En décembre 1472, plusieurs compagnons formant la *Société des Coeurs joyeux*, requièrent des consaux la permission "de jouer en chambre" pendant les fêtes de Noël, l'histoire du siège de Troie. (Faber I, 13)

[In December 1472, several companions, making up the *Society of the Happy Hearts*, petitioned the city council for permission "to perform indoors" the story of the siege of Troy during the Christmas holidays.]

Tournai is a city in the modern-day Walloon (French-speaking) region of Belgium that in the fifteenth century was the capital of the province of Hainault, in the dominion of the Duke of Burgundy. Faber sources his quote about performance from the above excerpt as being from A. Bozière's 1864 *Tournai ancien et moderne*, which cites the primary documents as belonging to the "*Reg. des Consaux*" (Faber I, 13; Bozière 366). This title, unfortunately, *also* belongs to a secondary source, the *Règlement des consaux de la ville et cité de Tournay* [*The Rulings of the Council of the Town and City of Tournai*], printed in Tournai in 1756. The only copy of this document that I can find in the world rests in the basement of the Tournai municipal library.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The website of the Bibliothèque et Médiathèque de la Ville de Tournai can be found here: <http://www.tournai.be/fr/officiel/index.php?page=406>, accessed on March 20, 2009. The page has a link to the online catalog.

At this point, it is impossible to determine what information is contained in the primary source, and what information has been added or changed in the long chain from a fifteenth-century council ruling to Faber's 1878 reference (which I first discovered in Frank's *Medieval French Drama*). In addition, as Faber's text implies, the only information recorded is that permission was given for a group to put on a play--it is at least possible that the group never followed through or performed a different play. So, fully cognizant of the uncertainty surrounding many of these references, it is nevertheless safe to conclude that some performance of some kind of dramatization of the Troy story took place between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Indeed, the Draguignan event bookends a long history of performance of the Trojan story dating back at least to 1389, when, on the occasion of the entry of Isabeau de Bavière, Queen of France, into Paris, a great banquet featured an *entremets*--a performance of the siege of Troy, complete with castle, ship, and pavilion, all on wheels. Medieval chronicler Jean Froissart narrates the event in Book Four of his *Grandes Chroniques*. Of course, the 1389 *entremets* could not have been a performance of Milet's text. But what the *entremets* and Draguignan illustrate is two points on a continuum, wherein Troy material found itself out of a book and on its feet in front of audiences, both noble and clerical.

Despite this background, and in addition to Lanson's unfortunate documentation practices, the time lag between the last print edition--1544--and the first recorded instance of performance--1611--has encouraged skepticism amongst scholars. In particular, Graham Runnalls--who may be unaware of Lanson's article, or perhaps chose to ignore it given the problems in tracing primary sources--took the following position in 1999:

Nul de ces manuscrits n'est un "livre original", c'est-à-dire destiné à une représentation. Egaleme nt significatif est le fait qu'aucun document n'atteste une représentation de ce mystère. Ces facteurs nous amènent à la conclusion que la *Destruction de Troye* n'est pas un vrai mystère; c'est-à-dire qu'il ne fut jamais joué et que, peut-être, Millet [*sic*] lui-même n'avait jamais envisagé une représentation. Il s'agit donc d'un beau livre à lire, les nombreuses didascalies ayant pour fonction d'orienter l'imagination d'un lecteur et non un metteur en scène. (85)

[None of these manuscripts is an "original", that is, destined to be used for a performance. Equally significant is the fact that no document attests to a performance of this mystery play. These factors lead us to the conclusion that *Destruction of Troy* was not a true mystery play; that is, it was never performed and, perhaps, Millet himself never intended it to be performed. It is thus a beautiful book for reading, the numerous stage directions serving the purpose of orienting the imagination of a reader, not a director.]

In addition, in a footnote to the above passage, Runnalls claims that Marc-René Jung, an expert on the medieval manifestations of the Troy story and *Destruction de Troye's* chief bibliographer and modern critic, agreed with the conclusion reached. Such agreement oddly contradicts Jung's 1983 article on the play's *mise-en-scène*, where Jung takes it for granted that the play was meant for performance. His tracing of three miniatures from the P4 manuscript appearing in that article is the only published reference to images appearing alongside the play's text. These three images, removed from their context, are unhelpfully linked to the following assertion:

Le miniaturiste de ce manuscrit n'est pas un grand artiste, loin de là, mais c'est justement ce manque de talent et de fantaisie qui permet de croire que ce qu'il représente est ce qu'il semble avoir vu, et non point ce qu'il a imaginé. (567)

[The miniaturist of this manuscript is not a great artist, far from it, but it is exactly that lack of talent and imagination that permits the belief that what he paints is what he appeared to have seen, and not what he imagined.]

Linking the artist's alleged lack of talent with the likelihood that what he painted was "what he appeared to have seen" only serves to undermine Jung's argument. Yet Jung's 1983 presumption echoes that of the nineteenth-century scholar Henri Tivier, who studied both *Destruction de Troie* and the *Mistere du siege d'Orleans*--the latter possessing a long production history--and concluded that it was obvious *Destruction* was intended for performance (Tivier 222).

But Runnalls' and Jung's contemporary point of view is not the only one. Lynette Muir in 2007 used Lanson's article, as well as an (incorrectly cited) excerpt from the play itself, to contest the idea that the play was never performed.<sup>50</sup> Muir further notes that there is no other known Troy play in French, making it all the likelier, she argues, that the "istoyre en deux journées" performed at Draguignan in 1613 was a cut version of Milet's play (131-2). Moreover, Muir agrees that performances dramatizing the siege of Troy are part of a longstanding tradition. She quotes from a 1400 Italian merchant's journal concerning a "play of the siege of Troy" acted by Avignon craftsmen and attended by the Duke of Anjou (Muir 131)!

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<sup>50</sup> Muir misinterprets a Julleville citation in *Les Mystères* (1880) of the end of the play as being from the end of the Prologue. The quote, "Si vous pryons treshumblement / Que recevez dentente saine / Noz ditz car sans chose villaine / Avons joue lesbatement [We beg you humbly / to receive with sound understanding / our words, for without anything offensive / we have performed this entertainment]" is actually Diomedes' line, the next-to-last utterance in the whole play (translation above is Muir's, p. 131) (Stengel 434, ll. 27977-80).

Muir also alludes to the far better known 1389 *entremet* at the French royal court, mentioned above. But, given the existence of this tradition, it is hardly conclusive that any performance with the label "Destruction de Troye" would represent Milet's drama in particular.

On the other hand, in at least one case, the spine of the book containing Harsy's 1544 edition of *Destruction de Troie* is labeled "SIEGE DE TROYE COMEDIE" (BnF Réserve Yf 35). So Milet's play was occasionally labeled with a descriptor slightly different from its actual title, and in line with the tenuous references to performance, cited above. Though this labeling probably occurred during an eighteenth century rebinding, the fact is that people at the time may have *meant* this particular play though they did not ascribe to it the same title that today's scholars and bibliographers do. The story's demonstrable popularity, and the persistence of records (or rumors of records) of performance on several occasions after 1450, makes it far more likely that Milet's *Destruction de Troie* specifically also found a path to performance, although our confidence in the known pieces of direct evidence remains uncertain at best. What this scholarship illustrates, rather than any kind of comprehensible consensus, is instead a constellation of competing and conflicting information. In view of the paucity of external evidence, traces of actual or intended performance practices within Milet's drama must be analyzed.



## 4.2 COMMENTS ON METHODS

Frequently, theatre scholars are in the position of extrapolating from the visual arts, theorizing gesture, images, and production practices from this indirect source. George Kernodle's *From Art to Theatre* is perhaps the grandfather of all such studies, placing the visual arts at the center of understanding how medieval theatre became the Renaissance theatre:

There in the paintings, sculpture, stained glass, tapestries, and *tableaux vivants* were the stage wings, proscenium arches, inner stages, curtains, side doors, upper galleries, heavens, and canopies they [previous theatre historians such as E.K. Chambers] were looking for (Kernodle 1).

Aside from this passage's unproblematic relationship to the evolutionary argument dogging medieval theatre historiography, Kernodle leaves out the possibility that the visual arts of a particular period might explain more about practice *in that period* rather than practices in future periods.<sup>51</sup> But the relationship between figurative art (depictions of people, real or imagined)

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<sup>51</sup> This is the perspective of Clifford Davidson in *Drama and Art: An Introduction to the Use of Evidence from the Visual Arts for the Study of Early Drama*. This work also cautions against the "evolution" towards "secularization" while maintaining the importance of contemporaneous visual art to preserving traces of performance practices.

and theatrical practice is a complicated and conjectural one, spawning many different kinds of methods of inquiry.

A "mirror-like evaluation," that views the relationship between figurative art and theatre as an uncomplicated, two-way passage, has resulted in "an often superficial application of figurative sources--and inspired an extensive and haphazard introduction of irrelevant images," (Ventrone 5). Crucial for making the distinction between relevant and irrelevant images is research revealing the specific forms and practices associated with the target spectacles in a specific locality, "revealing the motives and the cultural characteristics that lie behind" (ibid. 6). This prescription would seem destined for some success, as it does avoid transnational and ahistorical generalizations, yet the lack of "direct figurative evidence recording various moments of the performance" clears the way for the creation of what Ventrone calls a "'hegemonic model'" (ibid. 7-8). This model, the famous image of the mansions lined up side-by-side in the manuscripts recording the 25-day performance of *Le Mystère de la Passion* at Valenciennes in 1547, represents "one of the rare direct illustrations of a medieval dramatic text" (ibid. 7). The image of the mansions, called the *Hourdement*, is accompanied on every page of dramatic text with extensive illustrations. These illustrations include the mansions of the *Hourdement* in representations approximating the scenes as outlined in dialogue underneath the pictures. Many aspects of these scenes, however, do not represent what Ventrone calls "'photographic' reproduction" (ibid.). For example, angels fly unsupported in the sky above the mansions; clouds surround scenes along the top border of the illustrations, wherein divine personages interact with each other; and the pastoral background is constantly shifting, variously including towns, castles, sheep, ships, crowds of people or devils, forest, plains, or hills (Konigson, plates 1-9).

As "direct evidence," these illustrations do not show *precisely* what spectators saw in 1547, unless there were a moving panorama surrounding the entire playing space and the dozen or so mansions and enough machinery to fly several groups of angels simultaneously. Of course, it is impossible to know--with any degree of precision--exactly what spectators may have seen at Valenciennes. Yet the images offer an extremely rare visual perspective. The intrinsic significance of images accompanying this manuscript text is bolstered by the existence of the *Hourdement*, which shows the empty pavilions. In contemporary terms, this is somewhat like finding production photos accompanied by set elevations and photographs of the auditorium with the set in place. These kind of visual images from the Middle Ages are simultaneously rare and rarely studied *in context with other similar images from similar contexts*.<sup>52</sup> Instead, following Kernodle, researchers analyze images from dramatic texts alongside images from the visual arts. This has numerous effects. First, it groups evidence according to topic rather than the context of the evidence's creation. This creates the impression that theatrical practice depends upon iconographic representations. Certainly there is a link between common iconography and particular performance manifestations. Shared ways of visualizing culturally significant episodes no doubt spawn similar configurations in different media. Yet such a link does not account for--and cannot illustrate--the movement of bodies, costumes, and scenery that occurs

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<sup>52</sup> This kind of analysis, comparing types of illustrations across all kinds of manuscripts, has been attempted for late medieval English illuminated manuscripts: see K. L. Scott, "*Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts*," *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*. However, Scott does not address play manuscripts specifically.

leading to and away from the hypothesized performance moments. Any given iconographic image can only account for a second or two--more or less--of performance time.

Second, the link also privileges certain kinds of plays and certain kinds of moments within those plays--namely those which have a tradition of widespread iconographic representation, such as plays on the Passion or the Resurrection. Meg Twycross's essay "Beyond the picture theory: image and activity in medieval drama" uses a Dürer woodcut of the Resurrection, fourteenth and fifteenth century illuminations of the tools of Christ's Passion (spear, nails, scourge, etc.), and photos of contemporary productions of medieval plays to support her argument about the importance of props and stage directions embedded in dialogue. Yet these images serve less as evidence of medieval practice, and more as incidental illustration of her argument, which revolves around *textual* analysis--"literary' images,...and how they are integrated into the action of the plays" (Twycross 1988, 592). But such an analysis can thus only illuminate a few aspects of any given set of performance practices and conventions.

Finally, looking for links between visual arts and performance practices encourages criteria embedded in art historical modes of analysis--such as quality and style--to be deployed, often confusing matters rather than clarifying them. For example, the figures in the Valenciennes illustrations have a great deal in common with the fifteenth-century frescoes and the narrative conventions appearing within them (Ventrone 10). Konigson goes to great lengths in his critical edition of the Valenciennes manuscripts to argue that Hubert Cailleau, the miniaturist, did not use models from the visual arts, rather consulting his own memory to produce the illustrations. Though thirty years separated the performance from the record of the performance, he shows that only seven illustrations in the mystery play manuscript represented Cailleau's re-use of previously conceived material. Moreover, he claims that "the only

experience that Cailleau could have had of such an extended representation--that is to say, picturing the time of the action in such a long space, was due to the mystery play performed in 1547."<sup>53</sup> Thus Konigson links the *format* of the illustrations--in a register extending across the top third of the pages--to the likelihood Cailleau was remembering and thus representing the actual performance. Is it really true that Cailleau had no other way to imagine the illustrations he drew other than the performance of the play? This seems doubtful. What, then, has Konigson proved? That particularly unimaginative artists are the ones who participate in, and then illustrate, medieval plays? Konigson's desire to prove that the illustrations in the Valenciennes manuscript cleave closest to our idea of photographic reproduction--bolstered by copious detailed ground plans and elevations meant to conform precisely to the pictures--compromises the logic used to attempt the proof.

Similarly, in the only article published about the illustrations in *Destruction de Troie*, art historical concerns intrude to obfuscate the argument. Declaring that the miniaturist of P4 "was not a great artist, far from it" Jung uses this stylistic judgment to support the idea that "he painted that which he appeared to have seen, and not what he had imagined" (Jung 1983, 567). If a stylistic judgment about the artist is important, then why not contextualize the objects of analysis fully within an art historical context? What is the relationship between talent and accurate representation? It is perfectly possible to argue that an artist's lack of talent leads to errors in the final artwork, rather than, as Jung argues, that a lack of talent results in an accurate depiction of

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<sup>53</sup> "Et la seule experience que Cailleau pouvait avoir d'une représentation en étendue, c'est-à-dire figurant le temps de l'action dans un espace en longueur, était due au mystère joué en 1547," p. 31.

what was seen. The shaky foundations of this analysis perhaps led to Jung's evident surrender to Runnalls' interpretation of the evidence, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. In his section on *Destruction de Troie*, Runnalls interprets images ("beautiful illuminated manuscripts") while adducing Jung's agreement "in a private communication" to arrive at the conclusion that "it was never performed...the many stage directions have the function to orient a reader and not a director/producer" (Runnalls 1999, 126). Thus, visual images accompanying the play text--used in Konigson's case to argue for the close, indeed, nearly photographic, relationship between picture and performance--here barely register as evidence for a possible production.

In the case of the Valenciennes *Passion* and Milet's *Destruction de Troie*, then, similar kinds of evidence precipitate very different conclusions. What, then, to make of images accompanying manuscript play texts? Theodore Lerud has observed that people in the medieval period tended to distinguish between two types of images: "quick," or moving, and "deed," or still (Lerud 213). Rather than making distinctions based on aesthetic categories like sculpture, painting, or drama,

all were viewed as the images or *phantasmata* which, in Aquinas' model, served as the link between body and soul, sense and understanding (ibid.).

Moreover, the "quick" image that results when a "man is sett in a pley" appears to have been viewed as "better," and thus "uniquely able to jog the mind" (Lerud 224). Thus the *moving* image, or the performance, provides a stronger signal for encoding the visual than the *still* representation of painting or sculpture. Consequently, illustrations in play manuscripts portray "quick" images in a "deed" format. Thus, such illustrations might be prone to demonstrate some preoccupation with what distinguishes "quick" from "deed": motion and performance.

But illustrations in play manuscripts are not snapshots or still photography. It behooves us to remember Thomas Heck's warning in *Picturing Performance*: "art usually imitates *art* more than it imitates life" [emphasis in original] (5). Thus the axiom that "medieval drama cannot be dissociated from the visual arts," articulated by Clifford Davidson in 1977, remains a chief component of any investigation of illustrations in manuscript play texts. Ignoring evidence from the visual arts both circumvents most recent scholarship and closes a potentially fruitful line of inquiry. In addition, it is worth remembering that performance *is* a kind of art, and thus illustrations in a play text may indeed imitate art: the art of performance. But Davidson also cautioned researchers that "controversy remains with regard to the precise nature of the relationship between the static representations of the artists and the temporal displays of the early theater" (Davidson 1977, 1). We've certainly seen the consequences of imprecision in the examples offered above. But Davidson proposes one way of resolving the controversy in *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting in England to 1580*.

In this book, Davidson examines two manuscripts containing miniatures: a twelfth century copy of the plays of Terence, and a fifteenth century copy of the academic drama *Liber Apologeticus*. In the first case, Davidson demonstrates that the images--created by several artists--likely derive from classical-era traditions, filtered through Carolingian practice, of a conventional method of illustrating the plays of Terence (Davidson 1991, 50-55). This edition of Terence features 139 images scattered throughout the text, where characters appear singly, in groups, touching and gesturing towards each other, and occasionally framed by vestigial building elements, such as gates, towers, arches, and the like. The artists copied drawings in other books of Terence, incorporated an elaborate system of gestural expression, and showed some concern with reflecting current fashion in garbing the images of characters. In the *Liber Apologeticus*, on

the other hand, the 15 nearly full-page miniatures appear to be designed "with some other purpose than the stage in mind" (ibid., 56). All the images are framed, containing pastoral backgrounds with hills, trees, and sky, or generic interior spaces with tiled floors and wooden beamed ceilings, and occasionally include characters or incidents that do not appear in the dialogue. Davidson labels these extratextual images as a "gloss" on the text--imagery that comments on the text rather than directly representing something within the text. For example, the first image pictures the descent of the fallen angels into Hell, as well as Adam's emergence from the mud; both incidents, recounted by God in the prologue, occur prior to the action of the play. In neither case considered by Davidson does the visual evidence stand in as a "photographic" representation of a production.

Rather, Davidson offers two slightly different positions on the visuals in these two examples. In the case of the Terence book, the pictures demonstrate that the artists are "far more dependent on the traditions of the visual arts than on the theater," as well as representing a longstanding tradition of conventions in illustrating Terence playbooks that date from a century or so after the classical period itself (ibid., 55). For the *Liber Apologeticus*, Davidson positions the miniatures as "establishing one way in which a drama would have been visualized by a contemporary" (ibid., 56). But the existence of theatrical activity in Oxford, where the *Liber Apologeticus* was created, and the author's specific role there both prompt Davidson to extend his hypothesis concerning the likelihood of a performance of the *Apologeticus*. The play's author, Thomas Chaundler, was sometime Ward of New College and Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the University. Though Chaundler died in 1465, his first term as Chancellor overlapped with the hypothesized dates of the manuscript's creation, circa 1457 to 1461. These two facts--a community familiar with theatrical production and the strong linkage of the play to a specific



academic institution--lead Davidson to conclude that "it would actually be surprising to learn that this drama was not presented in one of the college halls, with New College being the leading candidate" (ibid.). Of course, this is notwithstanding a shred of documentary evidence suggesting such a performance took place.

Yet Davidson's reasoning can be overturned by the application of another set of standards for judgment. For example, the characteristics of the visuals of the two plays relate closely to Lerud's distinction of "quick" and "deed." The representations from the Terence play show qualities of "quick" images: gesture, motion, and character interrelationships are paramount. Yet the pictures from the *Liber apologeticus* have a flat quality more like a painting than anything else. The lack of backgrounds in the Terence illustrations feeds the impression that the characters are unmoored against the blankness of the page, frozen in the midst of expressive motion. Lerud's perspective on these same sets of pictures might be the reverse of Davidson's: that the Terence images showed performance, while the *Liber apologeticus* was an illustrated closet drama. This shows that multiple axes of analysis are required to avoid conclusions which look reasonable from only one angle. The more comparisons that can be drawn among manuscript layouts, evidence of performance practice, types of illustrations, and the like, the closer we may come to perceiving a particular example in ways similar to its original audiences.

In assessing the relationship between visual images and performance practice, then, several strands of evidence require assessment: form and appearance of images in books containing similar material; contextually appropriate art historical analysis; relevant conventions in visual arts; contemporary records of performance practices; authorial biography or ownership information placing the book's origins in a location likely to host performances; and the apparent content connection between picture and text. This number of variables makes it impossible to

generalize about illustrated books in relationship to performance. That is, the presence of images *in and of themselves* does not mean that a given text enjoyed a performance. Nonetheless, images in play texts can illustrate--partially, symbolically, or literally--possible contemporary visualizations of drama.

But images can also represent more than possible visualizations. Since the image exists, though the performance no longer does, the images themselves embody a kind of materialization of selected scenes in the play. That is, the failure of an image to record an instant of performance does not preclude the transmission of some information about the material conditions of that performance. In Jesse Hurlbut's analysis of the fourteenth century Aix manuscript of *Le jeu de Robin et Marion*, for example, the density of illustrations (one miniature every 5.7 lines, or 132 over the 11 folios) along with their irregular arrangement "hint at some deliberate choices" over what parts of the text required detailed portrayals (Hurlbut 222). The miniatures feature shifting, static backgrounds, characters in different costumes and hairstyles from frame to frame, and expressionless faces revealing nothing of the characters' affects. But what the images lack in terms of showing background, setting, or costume, they make up for in terms of gesture and physical positioning and contact.

For example, the *jeu* includes many sections of music, singing, and dance. The dance sequences are consistently among the most densely illustrated sequences; moreover, they represent occasions of very close match between the dialogue and the pictorial manifestation. In addition to dance, the miniatures most closely matching the play's action show eating, fighting, playing games, and reacting to a fart. All of these examples share particularly strong valences to physicality and embodiedness. Combined with the miniaturist's preoccupation with precision in hand gestures (as demonstrated by the exposed under-drawings), one aspect of the medieval

reception of this play takes shape. Whether having seen it in performance or not, the Aix miniaturist tended to cluster illustrations around incidents contingent on bodies--dancing, playing, moving, ingesting, and excreting. These are "quick" images--the kind expected in, and characteristic of, performance. Of course, many images illustrate conversation, dialogue or singing--the former through including two characters facing each other and gesticulating and the latter through showing a single posed character--but understanding *conversation or song* primarily through text seems to have been deemed easier than understanding *fighting or dancing* through text. The Aix manuscript, then, shows a medieval artist at work distinguishing not only between word and image, but also deciding what types of information are best conveyed in text versus best conveyed in pictures. It is probable that the artist, less concerned with aesthetic categories, was primarily concerned with the problem of distilling the "quick" medium of performance into the "deed" medium of the manuscript illustration.

Just as the medieval distinction of "quick" and "deed" images differs from our contemporary understanding of art forms, so medieval conceptions of text (*parole*) and picture (*painture*) differ from our contemporary notions. And the goals of representing knowledge shared by these two forms make it possible to articulate the relationship among text, picture, and their referents. The assumption that images or text may objectively represent something in the world is a decidedly modern bias. Rather, as Mary Carruthers demonstrates, words and pictures both functioned as "signs [to] make something present to the mind by acting on memory" (Carruthers 1990, 222). Therefore, these signs make pictures in the mind that are necessary for learning the matter presented by the signs. Consequently, *painture* can mean both the images in the text, as well as the images *in the mind* evoked by the text itself. Lerud would wholeheartedly agree--the purpose of images, either moving or still, was to "jog the memory" (Lerud 224).

Carruthers quotes the thirteenth century ecclesiastic Richart de Fournival, in a passage particularly relevant here because of its topicality:

When one sees painted a story, whether of Troy or something else, one sees those noble deeds which were done in the past exactly as though they were still present. And it is the same thing with hearing a text, for when one hears a story read aloud, listening to the events one sees them in the present. (ibid., 223)

Thus words and pictures both carry the essential meaning of the story because they conjure the mental pictures necessary to comprehend them. Carruthers notes the relative stability of this idea, citing sources from the seventh century through the fifteenth. But the question at issue in manuscripts of play texts is *which story is being conjured?* Drama, as a form of literary expression, is distinguished by its particularity. This person speaks now, and says this; another person replies, saying this; the essence of the story-telling emerges in dialogue, in bodies in motion, in relation to an audience. Further, every manifestation of drama in production differs from every other--both in terms of subtle differences in repeated performances of the same production, as well as more substantial differences from production to production. What story is being conjured: The story of the play, or the story of a production of that play? Plumbing the difference here is extremely well-traveled ground, from Aristotle's distinction between *logos* ("story") and *mythos* ("plot"), to Mieke Bal's distinction between *fabula* and "story" (*Poetics* I: 1-10, XXIII: 1-37; Bal 6-7).<sup>54</sup> The words are different, but the concepts are the same: *logos* is to

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<sup>54</sup> In her book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (trans. van Boheemen) Bal attempts to systematize the study of narrative. She adds a third dimension to the *fabula*/story idea, positing a "text" which is the actual substance of the words on the page.

*fabula*, as *mythos* is to "story." Thus it is possible to conduct a comparative analysis of images in different versions of the same *logos/fabula*: the legend of Troy. By examining pictures in manuscripts of prosaic, poetic, and dramatic versions of the Troy legend in Latin and the vernacular, the resulting constellation of similarities and differences points to which visuals most likely record production-related images, and which visuals likely record story-related images. Of course, none of this proves that a particular image "photographically" represents a particular production moment. Rather, this formulation provides a framework to account for, articulate, and measure the significance of differences among images in particular medieval manifestations of the Troy story; and, of greatest interest to me, strengthens the connection between selected images in a play text and conceptions--conjured and crystallized--of that play text in performance.

Taken together, then, Davidson, Lerud, and Carruthers—with assists from Hurlbut, Aristotle, and Bal—suggest a plan of analysis for linking images in manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie* with medieval notions of that play in performance. The terrain consists of visual images--and their accompanying text--in various forms of the medieval Troy story; art historical analysis of those images, including style, origin, media, and common practice; the quality of the correspondence between picture and text; the nature of the visual representations, that is, what is depicted and how ("quick" vs. "deed"); contemporary records of performance practices supporting the production conventions on display in the images; and provenance tying documents to known performance centers.

### 4.3 MILET'S *MOUVANCE*: PICTORIAL EVIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

*Destruction de Troie*'s author, Jacques Milet, took considerable pains to emphasize the performance aspect of his work. The Prologue, clearly intended for inclusion in all copies of the play and confirmed extant (in whole or in part) in nine of 13 manuscripts, declares the author's motivations:

Jay voulu eviter redicte  
Sy ay propose de le faire  
Par pesonnages seulement  
pour monstrier le vray exemplaire  
a leuil tout evidamment  
comme il appert tout clerement  
a ceulx qui la lisent et oyent (P4, f. 2v)  
[I wanted to avoid repeating;  
So have proposed to do it  
In characters only  
{In order} to show the true exemplar  
Most noticeably to the eye  
So that it appears quite clearly  
To those who read and hear it]

In creating a work based on characters in dialogue with each other, Milet aims to produce a clearer model of exemplary behavior than that presumably shown in narrative versions of the story--which he has no wish to replicate. He is placing in the foreground the *mythos* of his undertaking--the crafting of a specific manifestation of the Troy legend for a specific audience.

In addition, this passage is an intriguing manifestation of Paul Zumthor's concept of *mouvance*: in the eight manuscripts that include the final phrase in the above quote, no fewer than three variations unsettle the clarity of meaning (Zumthor 43-46, 507). Like P4, the manuscripts P3, Pe, and R all show "lisent et oyent [read and hear]." The manuscript P5, however, reads "lisent et voyent [read and *see*]" while the three others (O, P1, and Y) all read "lisent ou voient [read *or* see]". The slipperiness here, centered on the linked concepts of "reading," "hearing," and "seeing" illustrates a constellation of meaning of particular importance because what is at stake here is a question of *performance*. First, the phrase "read and hear" could refer to aural recitation--one person reading out loud to one or more auditors, or to theatrical presentation. Second, "read and see" could refer to aural recitation, as "see" could mean what Carruthers argues it to mean, that auditors "see" images in their minds' eyes as a result of the reading. But "read and see" could also--I think this is a secondary meaning--refer to two alternatives: *reading* the play, or *seeing* the play performed. By using "and," this phrase keeps alive both possibilities. Finally, the phrase "read or see" points much more strongly to the two-alternatives interpretation, that the play may be transmitted through reading (either singly or to groups) *or* through seeing it acted out. Carruthers' perspective on "see," as primarily a reference to mental images, appears less plausible because of the word "or." *Painture* and *parole*, as we have seen, work together to create meaning in the minds of readers; they are not alternatives to each other.

Contained in these eight manuscripts, the Prologue's indeterminacy regarding the mode of transmission of the play is, on the one hand, hardly a surprise. Scholarly investigation has

plumbed the complex relationship between reading and performance in the Middle Ages.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, that such a distinction appears contested in a particular example would be expected. But on the other hand, to declare that the *mouvance* at work in the Prologue exclusively derives from an abstract overlap between reading and performance in medieval culture misses what might be a more mundane explanation. It is hard to imagine scribal error accounting for the variety of differences in the phrase--"ou" instead of "et", adding a "v" to the verb "oyent". Deliberate changes, then, more likely reflect a contemporary sense that *Destruction de Troie* did in fact enjoy a life outside of its pages. Moreover, all three variations of the phrase emerged early on in the play's manuscript life. Of the six manuscripts for which reasonably precise origination dates exist<sup>56</sup>, the three phrase variants occur in the first three manuscripts to appear. One of those manuscripts contains almost 100 images, and the earliest manuscript contains a list of 102 characters. Within a decade of the play's completion in 1452, then, scribes were illustrating it, recording the *dramatis personae*, and altering phrases in the Prologue to reflect the idea that this play was read *and seen*.

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance*; Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France*; and Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book*.

<sup>56</sup> P5, in 1459; Pe, circa 1460; O, in 1461. MS P5 contains a complete *dramatis personae*. MS O contains 97 colored miniatures. For a discussion of the images in O, see the upcoming section "The Case of O."



### 4.3.1 Physical Features and Art Historical Context for the Illustrated Manuscripts

Two of the surviving manuscripts of Jacques Milet's *Destruction de Troie* include colored images accompanying the text. One, P4, includes nearly 400 such images. The column-width illustrations vary in size and complexity, and occur at irregular densities throughout all 254 folios. The other, O, includes 96 illustrations on the first 63 consecutive folios, and one on folio 167r. Spaces occurring throughout the rest of the text's 351 folios were presumably meant to contain illustrations. Various other manuscripts feature space for images, though no other manuscript copy includes them. In addition to containing 400 images, P4 also includes a complete copy of the play's Prologue as well as one-third of Milet's *Épître épilogative*. P4 is also the most completely and carefully copied and decorated example among the 13 extant manuscripts. Using vellum for substrate, the thick codex also does not include works by any other author. The entire volume is in extremely good shape, with the ink, paint, and illumination appearing virtually unfaded and free of decay. The pages are laid out in two columns, 32 by 23 centimeters. Pictures generally span only one column, though images at the beginning of each of the four performance days generally extend from the left to right margins, as well as down one-half to two-thirds of the page. Most images are framed in gold paint.

This manuscript also contains two different kinds of text. The play's dialogue, counted in Edmund Stengel's 1868 critical edition of the 1484 first printing as containing 27,984 lines, accounts for 90% of the text in the manuscript. The remainder occurs in the form of stage directions, descriptions and instructions of a logistical, emotional, or scenographic nature. The dialogue unfolds in columns, the left margin justified and the right margin left ragged, with character names centered in the column above their speech and underlined in crimson ink. The stage directions are also underlined in red, beginning either at the left margin or at a point

midway between the left margin and the start of the character name. This layout and pattern of emphasis makes it very easy to find the stage directions on a page of text. Moreover, the images in the manuscript nearly always directly precede or follow stage directions. In many cases, the words of the stage directions impinge within the frame of the miniature; this acts to strengthen a visual connection between the words and the image. Thus the stage direction becomes a kind of caption for the picture. As a result, the stage directions, with the accompanying pictures, provide a rough overview of the entire story of the play, accessible by simply turning the pages at a measured pace. Some have argued that such captions--or rubrics--represent instructions to the illustrator rather than information about performance (Stones 96-7). It is certainly possible that the captions did assist the illustrator in creating the drawing; however, the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, how neat and economical it would be to serve dual purposes with these snippets of text. As we see in the upcoming analysis of rubrics and illustrations, the two modes of delivering information often complement--rather than duplicate--each other. Indeed, in some cases, images occur without any accompanying text that could be viewed as an instruction. This is particularly the case where the image focuses on gestural or physical reactions to events in the dramatization.

From an art historical perspective, the images in P4 reflect a relatively uncommon practice in fifteenth-century French book illustration. The style, called *dessin colorié* (colored drawing) and attributed primarily to workshops in Lille and surrounding cities in Northern France and Burgundy dating to the last half of the fifteenth century, was relatively common in German-speaking areas, especially German-speaking Switzerland (Avril 98). Used primarily in vernacular works on paper, its appearance and subsequent frequent use might initially be attributed to the need to illustrate long works with many small drawings, relatively quickly, and

at a reduced cost. But the economic constraint that may have motivated a shift to swiftly rendered ink sketches enhanced with watercolors, quickly turned into an aesthetic preference amongst certain northern French, Flemish, and Burgundian artists. Indeed, this style became so strongly associated with the region that few other illuminators in French-speaking areas copied their work—the *dessin colorié* became nearly exclusive to this cadre (Avril 98). The best-known practitioner of the style, called the Master of Wavrin because of his employment under Jean de Wavrin, chamberlain to Philippe le Hardi the Duke of Burgundy, created images of striking simplicity, with dark ink outlines to figures, economical picturization, and light color washes for emphasis. The active, vibrant images have reminded more than one art historian of modern cartoons (Avril 99). The Master of Wavrin's distinctiveness, however, does not limit the variety possible within this style. For example, Martin Le Franc, a contemporary of the Master of Wavrin, created different effects though he used similar tools. Le Franc's *Le Champion des Dames*, considerably smaller in size than the Master's folio editions, allowed the colored drawings to take up relatively more of the page, with concomitant greater detail in the image. Still economical in what he included within the frame, Le Franc nonetheless provided much more shading and detail—particularly in the background—than the Master of Wavrin. As a result, Le Franc's drawings lack the striking resemblance to cartoons, instead seeming more like detailed copper engravings enhanced with watercolor washes.

With this context in mind, the images in P4 do belong to the *dessin colorié* style, though like the examples above, the illustrations show the wide range of variation possible in the style. For example, nearly full-page illuminations start the play and each of succeeding *journées*, Hector's tomb near the end of the second day, and the failed Trojan sacrifice on day four. Ink and watercolors are the materials used, irrespective of the size of the images. The one exception

appears to be Hector's tomb, where layers of richly pigmented and gold paint comprise the background and the tomb itself. Given these variations, however, all pictures appear to be the work of the same artist—shapes, colors, and style all seem consistent from the first image on folio 3r to the last image on folio 247r. The origins of the style in northern France and Burgundy are also consistent with what is known about the provenance of this manuscript: it appears in the inventory of the Duke of Burgundy's personal library in 1467 (Doutrepoint 171).

The O manuscript, written on paper, is scribed in two columns, with a justified left margin and the right-hand margin left ragged. Miniatures (and the spaces left for them) span the width of a single column. The lines to guide scribal writing, and the lightly traced borders of miniatures show a particular attention to creating straight lines and right angles, a preoccupation not in evidence in the P4 manuscript. Character names are centered above their speeches, and the initial letter of the name is usually written in crimson ink. Stage directions are usually indented, set off from the dialogue by a line or two of blank space, underlined in crimson, and emphasized with a small trefoil symbol to the left and right of the text. Shorter stage directions, like "pause," are often written in the margins in a slightly smaller hand. Like P4 and other secular French manuscripts, the first image (f. 4r) stretches across both columns and down two-thirds of the page. The codex is also in extremely good shape, with the exception of the occasional wormhole, and the deliberate excising of two images on folios 32 and 44--apparently cut out with a razor.

Unlike in P4, the scribe of O divided long dialogue sections and the Prologue into stanzas. The Prologue, like the cycle of illustrations, is incomplete, missing the first 56 lines and the last 8 (about 20% of the poem). This manuscript also includes *L'Abregié de Troie*, following

the *Explicit* at the end of the play text. This *Explicit* contains very specific information about when and who actually copied the play:

Cy fine listoire de la destruction de troye faicte et mise par personnaiges par maistre  
jacques millet lan mil CCCC cinquante deux et escripte par la main de Jehan Fleury et  
achevee le cinquieme de decembre vigille saint nicolas mil cccc soixante et ung (O, f.  
352r)

[Here ends the Story of the Destruction of Troy, created and told in characters by Master  
Jacques Milet, the year one thousand four hundred fifty-two and written by the hand of  
Jehan Fleury, completed the fifth of December, the vigil of Saint Nicholas, one thousand  
four hundred sixty-one]

Jean Fleury was a Master at the University of Paris in 1461, placing the origin of this book in the northern French milieu where P4 also originated (Jung 1996, 604). Thus it is not surprising that the drawings in the O manuscript cleave closely to the criteria of the *dessin colorié* style. The images are striking in their balance between simple ink outlines and enhancement like colors and details. The economical picturization and light color washes recall the characteristics of the Master of Wavrin, while the use of what must have been a straightedge gives a sharp, almost printed quality to the illustrations. Thus the O images illustrate qualities of both the well-known practitioners of *dessin colorié* while articulating a unique style. The most important aspects of this style seem to be attention to detail especially on interior surfaces and character costumes; obvious use of a straightedge in outlining frames and interior surfaces (including lines in tile floors), subdued colors, and figures lacking any facial features. In fact, the pale colors and the lack of facial features, coupled with the number of blank spaces in the manuscript, delivers the strong impression that the drawings of O were never finished.

### 4.3.2 The Example of P4

The first image, on folio 3r, belongs to the class of images larger and more elaborate than the majority of the other colored drawings. In secular books from the fifteenth century, it was common for an initial image to be treated differently from the other images in the book (Stones 93). Often, these initial images would be different both in scale and in type. In the case of P4, the first image involves deviations in both dimensions. Dominating the upper half of the page, the image consists of a frame within a frame. The outside frame, limned in gold paint, outlines an arched opening containing towers, battlements, and archways—the elements of a fortress or city. In the center, an additional frame encloses a curious hybrid space. What appears to be a wooden ceiling and pillars encloses a view of a blue sky, a green lawn, and a king seated upon a wooden throne attended by five men, four standing and one kneeling, hat in hand. Two columns of text run underneath this picture. The left-hand column is a continuation of the play's Prologue, finishing with a crimson-underlined *Explicit*. At the top of the right-hand column, a colophon in red names the author and work to follow:

Cy sensuit listoire de la destruction de troye la grant translatee de latin en francoys et par  
personnages faicte par maistre jacques millet estudiant en luniversite dorleans

commence lan mil cccc cinquante le deuxiesme jour du mois de septembre (P4, f. 3r)

[Here follows the Story of the Destruction of Troy the Great, translated from Latin to French and dramatized by Master Jacques Milet, student at the University of Orleans, begun in the year one thousand four hundred fifty, the second day of the month of September]

Immediately beneath the colophon, the illuminated initial "O" begins the first line of the play's dialogue, "O deesses et dieux, parfaits et glorieux." Within the "O," an image of a scribe,

seated on a wooden bench at a wooden desk, holds a stylus over an open book with markings upon the pages. In the background, a green lawn meets a blue sky. The presence of green grass and blue sky--in images showing activities usually occurring indoors, such as a king addressing his vassals or a scribe completing a book--inaugurate a convention that the artist sustains throughout virtually all the images in the manuscript, for both interior and exterior scenes. Moreover, this way of depicting scenes probably shows the common practice of outdoor performance. This convention of green grass and blue sky is not a characteristic of *dessin colorié*, because of the eight different images by three different artists cited by Avril in *Les manuscrits à peintures en France 1440-1520*, all depict specific interior and exterior scenes, rather than characters against a chosen conventional backdrop (98-103). If the practice of grass and sky does not originate in the visual art tradition that generated these images, that strengthens the possibility that these images reflect outdoor performance practices.

Depictions of incidents in the legend of Troy that appear in manuscripts from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries occur in a wide variety of formats, styles, and visual vocabularies. For example, one example of the *Roman de Troie* from the late thirteenth century does use alternating blue, red, or gold geometric backgrounds as a convention behind illustrations of battle scenes or other gatherings of figures.<sup>57</sup> However, illustrations of incidents from the Troy story occurring in *later* manuscripts, from the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, eschew conventional backgrounds, instead opting for highly detailed landscapes, Gothic

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<sup>57</sup> MS fr. 1610 at the BnF, folios 18r, 144v, 154v, 155r.

interiors, or distorted, bird's-eye views of epic battles or apocalyptic destruction.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, illustrations from the Troy legend in other kinds of art--such as textile, sculpture, or painting--adopt the particularity of the time and context where they originated.<sup>59</sup> That is, fifteenth century tapestries and illustrations pictured the antique Trojan milieu as analogous to, and invested with detail from, the medieval one. This is not to claim that artists strictly adhered to reflecting contemporary dress and appearance; rather, artists used details from their own society, together with iconic additions from the East--differently shaped helmets, beards, curved swords, or turbans (McKendrick 64). The images in P4 themselves argue that the artist did occasionally draw on familiar visualizations to portray parts of *Destruction de Troie*--the tomb of Hector and the Eastern costume details on the Greeks in particular--but that the majority of illustrations show something other than variations on a thematic tradition.

The play begins with Priam's speech decrying the first destruction of the city of Troy, which took place under his father, King Laomedon, and the subsequent abduction of his sister, Hesione, by the Greeks. Thus the first image of the play--that of Priam, seated on his throne--stands in for a label on this first speech. Other manuscripts, as well as every extant print edition,

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<sup>58</sup> For more specifics, please see the discussion later in this chapter concerning particular moments of the Troy legend. For more information on the manuscripts I cite in this section, please see Appendix A, which lists manuscripts by number, with title and approximate date. For an overview on, and a history of, common iconography in narrative Troy illustrations, see Hugo Buchthal, *Historia Troiana: Studies in the History of Medieval Secular Illustration*.

<sup>59</sup> For an extensive list of works of art in many media on the "matter of Troy," see Margaret Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature*.



add the word "Priam" or the phrase "et commence le roy Priam" before the first line "O deesses et dieux." In this case, the image replaces the word. The next set of illustrations sets the parameters for the great majority of miniatures in this manuscript. The illustrations tend to be just large enough to contain several figures and a few other elements. For example, the first image after Priam's initial speech, where he commands his messenger Mathabrun to visit his vassals and order them to attend his court, shows the messenger, standing on a green lawn, outside a castle whose towers are the same height as the figure. Mathabrun's line immediately follows the image:

Sire vostre voulente soit

Je iray tout presentement (P4, f. 4r)

[Sire, your will be done,

I will go immediately.]

Thus the image shows what occurs *after* Mathabrun has uttered this line--he leaves Priam's presence, and presumably, the location Priam is in, arriving outside of some kind of structure, ready to journey to Priam's sons and vassals. The next image shows Machabrun meeting the first person on his list--Anchises. Machabrun's line ends just before the frame of the illustration, and Anchises' name appears at the bottom of the frame, just within it, underlined in red, so that it serves as a label for the image of his character as well as a signpost for the beginning of his line. Within the image, Machabrun is kneeling on the grass, holding an envelope or folded letter out for Anchises. Anchises' hand is outstretched, about to take the envelope, and he is standing on a low set of steps that leads to some kind of turreted and castellated structure behind him. The content of these images align strikingly with Lerud's conception of "quick" images. What the artist seems at pain to capture is a frozen moment of

physical expression where characters are caught in the process of making gestures and passing physical objects. In addition, the structure within the second picture bears striking similarities to the one Machabrun *has just left*. Thus convention seems to dictate not just the backdrop, but also the structures within this world. The similarity of Priam's castle to Anchises' fortress, and the "quickness" of the interaction between characters illustrates an important priority of the world being conjured by the images in this manuscript: to establish and reinforce a standard visual and vocabulary--in other words, performance style and conventions.

This priority reinforces the connection between image and performance, as performance in the Middle Ages, where subjects often included the supernatural and the epic, required conventions. How do you show God? What about Satan? Where is Hell? How do you know you're in Limbo? By establishing a convention (for example) that "God" wore white robes and sported a long white beard, playmakers could guarantee that their audiences would follow their storytelling. Conventions, of course, can be simple or complex--though the more complex the convention, the more expensive--and subject to mistaken interpretation--it became. Conventions in performance are similar to iconographic traditions in the visual arts, with the important caveat that performance conventions are always constrained by material conditions, in ways that visual portrayals are primarily constrained by the medium, the imagination, and the artist's skill. Certainly, from a visual art perspective, it is easier to show details on a gigantic canvas, perhaps, than in a 10-centimeter block of marble--however, nothing can reduce the scope of performance itself. You need actors and an audience, which means the entire endeavor of performance occurs at human scale. A tapestry, a painting, or a sculpture may be in an entirely different scale, thus enabling the compression or expansion of information as the artistic vision warrants. Likewise, in performance, conventions enable a similar expansion and compression, as

playmakers choose how to communicate big ideas through iconic images, costumes, settings, words, gestures, and behaviors. Moreover, performance conventions can reduce production expenses, as simple set or costume pieces can be used differently, or be easily altered, to accommodate major or fast-moving shifts in time, place, or character.

With a conventional background established within the first few images, the artist of P4 also depicts scenic, property, and costume conventions throughout the play. Scenically, the artist repeats a motif of white columns, sometimes showing a wooden vaulted ceiling, a wooden wall with three glazed windows, or a red curtain either drawn across the back of the picture, or left hanging at the edge of the frame. For scenes occurring only on the green lawn, the artist often adds a wooden bench and small wooden tables--these props, rather than indicating a particular kind of setting, appear in a wide range of scenes, from battlefields, to temples, to palace chambers. Pictorial conventions featuring generic spaces are hardly unique among medieval illuminated manuscripts--I have already cited some examples. But the distinction I am drawing here is the difference between other, contemporaneous depictions of the Troy story, which tend towards the representational and the fantastic, and the repetitive conventions appearing in P4. In fact, what the white-columned space most closely resembles is the mansions of the Valenciennes *Hourdement*--though with considerably less detail and in a much less painterly style.

The white-columned space--or mansion--stands in for an astounding variety of locations. For example, Priam appears in council with his sons on folio 73v, yet precisely the same space also serves as the Temple of Venus where Achilles prays on folio 130v. The Temple of Athena, where the Trojan family assembles for the final failed sacrifice, except for its apparent size, looks exactly like the Temple of Venus. And on folio 234r, the same space--complete with a red curtain behind--hosts the Greek army as they see the wooden horse for the first time and prepare

to enter it. Various combinations of the white columns, wooden ceiling, wooden wall, and red curtain occur and recur throughout the text. On Cytharea, where Helen and Florimonde pay their respects at the temple of Venus, a wooden wall with windows allows the viewer to see them within the Temple, while a bench nearby serves as a convenient seat for Paris and his lords (P4, f. 24r). The simplicity of this image stands in stark contrast to the detail and style of an illustration of the exact same moment in a fifteenth century edition (c. 1495) of Raoul Lefèvre's *Recueil de Troie* (BnF fr. 22552). Taking up two-thirds of the page and stretching across both columns, this illustration shows the interior of the Temple of Venus, with the altar to the right, Paris' men-at-arms on the left, Helen (kneeling on a cushion) and Paris (bending over her) at the center, and a doorway to the outdoors, through which the viewer can see the seaside and the Trojan fleet at anchor. Interestingly, the altar is framed in white columns, and a red curtain to one side is being drawn back by a lady-in-waiting.

The superficial similarity of these structural units, however, pales in comparison to the divergent impact of these two images. The colored drawing in P4, absent the explanatory dialogue and stage directions, would be nearly impossible to decipher. Two women behind a wooden wall? Three men seated on a bench? No background texture, interior decoration, or costume details indicate that the figures in the drawing represent some of the most well-known fictional characters in the fifteenth-century French cultural milieu. In Lefèvre's narrative version, however, the picture stands on its own. With the richly dressed main characters, sumptuously painted setting, and the helpful gold-painted label of "Temple de venus" on the wall next to the door, virtually anyone familiar with the Troy story could hypothesize what scene was playing out in the image. Carruthers' formulation--after Fournival--that *peinture* and *parole* can "make something present to the mind" and thus aid the reader to see "those noble deeds which were

done in the past exactly as though they were still present" appears strongly at work in this copy of the *Recueil*. That is, the image of Helen's abduction stimulates a picture in the mind of the "historical" deed as it took place in the past. In P4, however, the illustration conjures details more closely associated to *performance* rather than imaginative reconstruction.

Likewise, on folio 168, as two Trojans lie in wait to ambush Achilles and Archilocus in the Temple of Apollo, the red curtain is shown drawn back, with an armored knight just visible hiding behind it, watching the two Greeks as they enter between white columns. This image, in particular, suggests a keen awareness of how the scene could be staged. Rather than showing the actual attack, as contemporaneous narrative versions like the *Recueil* and as later print editions of the play often did,<sup>60</sup> this image shows the set-up required for performance. The scene is configured to allow the attackers to hide themselves from view of the entering characters while still being apparent to the audience, and incorporates elements of the mansion in that configuration: the columns serve to bracket Achilles' entrance; the altar indicates the sacred locale; and the curtain provides a handy hiding place. The durability of the mansion as a stand-in for a scenic element rather than an imaginative or historical location is demonstrated by its reappearance, *after the complete destruction of the city of Troy*, in a scene supposedly occurring in the Greek camp. Witnessed by Pirrus, the Greek warrior Ajax dies in a blue bed set within the confines of the same white columns, wooden ceiling, and red curtain that served as primary location for the palace and citadel of Ilion, the variety of temples in Troy and elsewhere, and even the staging area for the final deceptive assault on Troy with the wooden horse. As an

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<sup>60</sup> See folio 209, Ars MS-3692, *Recueil de Troie* (15th century). The ambush is depicted in woodcuts in print editions a, c, f, g1, g2, h, and m.

imaginative exercise, this practice of illustration utterly fails to make any distinction among place or time, or even which characters are associated with which places. Instead, the images argue strongly for P4 as a record of the economy of resources required for performance.

In addition to a generic mansion (which probably represents one of the several to a dozen that would be needed to accommodate a performance of *Destruction de Troie*), props like a wooden bench and two small wooden tables play diverse roles in a variety of settings. For example, in the scene where Hecuba bids farewell to Paris, two small wooden tables provide a resting place for Paris' helmet, and a support for Hecuba as she swoons (P4, f. 19r). The first illustration shows an embrace, and the second shows Hecuba, bent over, with her hand on the second table. A long wooden bench--upon which Priam's sons sit during a council meeting on folio 12v, and Paris waits for Helen to finish her prayers at Cytharea (f. 24r)--reappears as an altar, covered in a white cloth, in many different temples, including Venus (f. 21r), Apollo (f. 168r) and Pallas Athena (f. 231r,v), as well as the impromptu altar holding three idols for the Greek oath (f. 237r). The bench also appears as a seat for Agamemnon, as he rallies his troops on the field of battle (f. 81v). A wooden coffin--of apparently similar dimensions that could be a bench with its seat removed--appears during the scene where Achilles wraps the dead body of Patroclus in a sheet (f. 96v). These examples demonstrate how basic wooden pieces--utilitarian furniture common to the period--take on a protean role in these illustrations, insofar as they represent *indications* of setting rather than detailed *representations* of settings. What the pictures show, consequently, is a variety of objects whose reappearance and usage becomes *most* comprehensible in the context of performance.

Similarly, the many stage directions often explicitly point to structures and events inherent in performance, yet utterly unnecessary outside of a performance context. For example,

on folio 6v, an illustration shows a man kneeling to Priam, who is now seated on the wooden throne placed on the green lawn. The man is holding his hat in his hand. No other structure is visible. The stage direction underneath this picture describes a sequence of events:

Et y aura grant pause de hault menestrelz tandis les filz de priam et les enlever se seront  
autour de priam et apres la pause liconius et sa compaignie rencontra et saluera priam en  
telle maniere (P4, f. 6v)

[And there will be a long pause for the minstrels, while Priam's sons get up and place  
themselves all around Priam, and after the pause, Liconius and his companions will meet  
and greet Priam in this manner]

This text connects written dialogue and the illustration with events that can only occur in performance: the playing of instruments, the movement of actors, and the greeting of a king. In addition, the text also provides guidance for a sequence designed to *direct the audience's attention*. First, there's a pause in the dialogue. During this pause, the musicians play, while actors move into place. Then, the signal for the end of the pause is Priam's sons, in place about him, with Liconius and companions approaching. The nature of this coordination has maximum meaning--that is, it is most comprehensible--in relationship to actual musicians, real people, and the distance between points in a space set aside for performance (a greensward, for example, as shown in the illustration). As an exercise in imagination, it is preoccupied with the mundane rather than the fantastic. Likewise the illustration, which freezes the moment at the end of the sequence of events, where Liconius salutes his king, "en telle maniere." Outside of a performance context, then, the information delivered by the picture, and its ersatz caption, provide exactly the wrong kind of cue for an imaginative reconstruction of a vassal's fealty to the great Trojan king. Instead, the clues here motivate an obvious, yet imprecise, interest in

performance. The imprecision comes because of our own expectations for what kinds of documents need to be available to re-create a performance--blueprints, annotated scripts, photographs, and videotapes, if possible. But this kind of information is simply neither recorded nor available. Instead, what the manuscript provides, in *peinture* and *parole*, are pathways to imagining a *performance* of a vassal's fealty to the great Trojan king, which necessarily partakes of mundane, material details focused on what was most relevant to staging--musicians, timing, basic scenic elements, actor movements, and gestures.

A stage direction on folio 7v gives yet additional information about the structures expected to be a part of a performance--and previously illustrated on earlier folios--though no illustration accompanies this text at this time:

Cy endroit se departront de lostel priam et retourneront en leurs places et fera on ung silete<sup>61</sup> dorgues et quant anthenor fera en son hostel il appellera athimas son varlet (P4, f. 7v)

[At this point, {they} will leave Priam's shelter and will return to their places, and there will be a musical interlude, and when Athenor will be in his shelter, he will call his

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<sup>61</sup> This word, which does not appear in Hindley et al's 2000 *Old French-English Dictionary*, is defined by Godefroy's 1880 *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* with two diametrically opposed meanings: "silence," or "intermède musical." All the usage examples given, save one, come from dramatic texts (such as *Destruction de Troie*, *Mystère de la Passion*, and *Mistere du siege d'Orléans*) where the word appears in both dialogue and stage directions (Vol. 7, p. 425). Furthermore, Konigson notes the use of the term "silete" to mean "musical interlude" in his edition of the *Passion à Valenciennes* (pp. 61-142).



servant Athimas.]

This instruction, serving a similar temporal function as the caption above by sequencing a series of physical movements, includes the term "ostel," which, in its modern form "hôtel," encompasses a concept with broad connotations and an imperfect correlation to any single English word. For example, a City Hall in France is called a Hôtel de Ville; a hospital Hôtel de Dieu; and of course, a hôtel may also mean a place for temporary lodging. In the fifteenth century, "hôtel," which could be spelled in a variety of ways, including the above "ostel," also could mean house, home, dwelling, residence, lodging place, lodgings, shelter, hostel, inn, or household (Hindley et al, 460). It was also part of the expression "estre de l'hostel," which meant "to be at the court" (Godefroy IV, 503).

In the specific case of what the P4 manuscript refers to, "ostel" indicates numerous locations, throughout a playing space, similar in function to the mansions--referred to as "autels" in the Valenciennes *Hourdement*. These "ostels," according to the above stage direction, clearly represent separate structures, potentially of significant size, able to host scenes including, for example, Priam, his five sons, and several other supplicants. The first several miniatures picture part of these "ostels," showing them at the edges of the frame when Mathabrun exits his audience with Priam and encounters Anchises. What little can be seen of the "ostels" in *Destruction de Troie* correlate to the images of mansions in the *Hourdement*--pillars and turrets frame a central space of indeterminate size that relates closely to an adjacent playing space--a greensward, in both cases. Also, like in the illustrations of the *25 journées* at Valenciennes, scenes in *Destruction de Troie* take place in and around the mansions. Both documents indicate that movement between the open playing space and the interior of the mansions is unrestricted and smoothly integrated into the action. Though these documents are separated in time by almost a

century, some of the foundational assumptions guiding portrayal of scenographic elements--and by extension, production practices--are very similar.

It is not clear how many of these structures--mansions, for lack of a more precise term--might be needed for a production of *Destruction de Troie*. References within the text itself are not consistent, and do not enumerate the required structures in any systematic way. However, the stage directions do repeatedly refer to a location where Priam holds his court, sometimes calling it a "chateau [castle]" or "chateau Ylion [Ilion Castle]" and other times labeling it a "lieu", "eschaffault", "ostel", or "place". Anthenor's embassy, which takes up half the first performance day, visits nearly a dozen separate locations where he is received rudely by various Greek nobles and kings. Do all of these destinations represent separate mansions? Perhaps this is the mechanism used to determine the numbers of mansions needed, which could then be repurposed over the course of the succeeding three performance days into other locations. A more thorough examination of the stage directions would be required to conjecture with any confidence about the minimum or maximum numbers of mansions that might have been used. Certainly, it was several more than one--but a wide range would be possible given the flexibility of the mansion itself as a playing space, and the repetitive use that Milet seems to call for both in images and stage directions.

Given the similarity between depictions in *parole* and *peinture* of these mansions--"ostels" and "autels"--in *Destruction de Troie* and *Valenciennes* manuscripts, what about similarities between the drawings in P4 and images of buildings and structures in non-dramatic versions of the Troy story? Illustrations in copies of *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, a Latin version by Guido delle Colonne, supply the most proximal path of possible inspiration for Milet, because he used Colonne's Latin version as the exclusive source for *Destruction de Troie*. While

it's impossible to say which copy he may have consulted, the Bibliothèque nationale de France conserves three different manuscript copies of Colonne, which supply a range of images for comparison to the images in P4. Two of these copies date from the late fifteenth century, and were issued from the workshop of well-known manuscript illuminator Jean Colombe (d. 1493). Colombe lived in Bourges, in central France, and worked for Charlotte of Savoy, Louis XI's queen, and Charles I, Duke of Savoy, her nephew. Colombe's style differs markedly from the *dessin colorié* tradition. Instead of small, single-column-wide drawings meant for swift execution, Colombe's large, often full-page paintings demonstrate a careful pictorial composition, preoccupation with storytelling, a love of expressive effects, a welter of detail on figures and backgrounds, and little interest in correct perspective or logical construction of space (Avril 326-7).

An image of the city of Troy, appearing on f. 41v of BnF fr. 24920, demonstrates these characteristics. The double-columned layout is dominated by an image of the walls, city, and citadel of Troy that bleeds nearly to the edge of the page itself, far outside the confines of the text's margins. No frame encloses this large-scale picture that encompasses an enormous amount of fictional geography. Close to the observer, the walls of the city rise high, forbidding in their lack of detail like chinks in the stone or mortar lines. Just visible above the walls is a densely packed arrangement of city buildings, like stalagmites reaching towards the indigo blue sky. In the walls, a great, double-doored gate gapes, showing a path past tall houses that disappears into the distance, which is dominated by a greenery-covered outcropping at the apparent center of the city. On the crown of this hill, a gray wall encircles a many-turreted fortress. In scale and in detail, this picture of the city of Troy has a great deal in common with Priam's *textual* description

in Milet's *Destruction de Troie*,<sup>62</sup> but almost nothing in common with the "ostel" where Priam holds court in the P4 illustrations. In this example, the *dialogue* of the play appears linked to depictions in other works, but the illustrations in P4, rather, correlate closely with the *stage directions*.

Likewise, images in another version of the *Historia* also illuminated by Colombe's atelier demonstrate a concern with narratively-inflected pictures that stand on their own rather than in relation to a cycle of conventionally-similar colored drawings. For example, Paris's departure from Troy includes a shoreline populated by a vibrantly dressed aristocracy, a vast sea that stretches to a horizon line near the top edge of the page, and a fleet of ships, scattered in a harbor --some large (and close-up) and others small (therefore farther away).<sup>63</sup> Though this picture is closer in size to the P4 drawings, its color, detail, and wide perspective reflect the priorities of a very different artist and purpose. In a particularly detailed painting, the portrayal of Helen's abduction manages to include, in one image: a foreground where a deadly battle rages; a middle ground showing steps to the temple of Aphrodite and a road to the port, framed with a portcullis and showing the harbor and ships in the distance; and a background filled with city buildings surrounding the temple. None of the images in P4 have the depth or the background detail shown in these illuminations by Colombe and his atelier. The illustrations punctuating the scene of Helen's abduction in P4 show, by contrast, Helen and her maid Florimonde behind a wooden screen with three windows, next to a bench where Paris and his men sit and wait. The blue sky

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<sup>62</sup> Priam welcomes the abducted Queen Helen with a 71-line encomium to the city's vastness, richness, and invincibility (Stengel 53-4, ll. 2926-2997).

<sup>63</sup> N.A.F. 24920, f. 10r.

and the green lawn are the only background details. The stage direction associated with this miniature

...et tous les troyans seslongnent du temple et sen vont sur ung banc pres du temple Et  
helene dit (P4, f. 24r)

[...and all the Trojans leave the temple, and go {sit} on a bench near the temple, and  
Helen says]

leaves little doubt as to the relevant scale--human rather than epic, narrow rather than wide--and the priority of the illustrator to show information about the *enactment* of the scene: Where do the characters go when they leave the temple? Which group--inside or outside the temple--do we pay attention to after Paris and company leave? Colombe's concern, rather, was to evoke an imaginative reconstruction of the scene on Cytharea for the readers of Colonne's *Historia*.

But Colombe's preoccupations and priorities may not have been the norm--indeed, stylistic innovators often buck the trends before others adopt their practices. In the third example of the *Historia*, illustrated by an unknown artist, the drawings almost match in size some of the larger miniatures in P4. However, the content still demonstrates a desire to show more detail rather than less. One picture shows the city of Troy in the background, a middle ground consisting of three standing figures, and a foreground of Greek tents enhanced by a forest of spear points.<sup>64</sup> And all of this in about forty square centimeters of space! The precise location of the figures, and the spatial relationship between the city and the encamped army, are elided against a shaded ground dotted with trees and bushes, seemingly randomly. This image cues an altogether different sort of imaginative reconstruction--it requires imagination to untangle the

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<sup>64</sup> fr. 22553, f. 108r.

confusing relationships among items within it. Apparently, in these examples, Milet and his illustrator's debt to Colonne's *Historia* did not extend to pictorial representation.

However, at least one image appears to deliberately invoke the iconography of a particularly well-known character from the Troy story, Hector. Folio 126v, which contains the nearly full-page illustration of Hector's tomb, occurs exactly at the mid-point of the codex. The illumination of Hector's tomb, which includes an elaborate throne and an armored effigy, enshrines the character at the literal center of the play. The extensive use of gold paint--not only on the frame, but also within the image itself--represents a concrete application of time and treasure to the crafting of this particular image. No other image in the book contains nearly as much gold paint within the frame. Unlike the swiftly drawn and colored illustrations that dominate the tome, Hector's tomb and epitaph emphasize color, density, and luxurious detail. In addition, the illustration of Hector's tomb most closely aligns with depictions in other versions of the Troy story, such as in Jean Colombe's illuminations of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia*. In this version, the scene where Achilles fatefully falls in love with the Trojan princess Polyxena, features Hector's tomb in the background, looming nearly as high as the vaulted ceiling above the scene, decorated with much gold paint, and sporting two effigies of the dead knight: one prone and one standing, both in full armor (BnF: NAF 24920, f. 27v). Other manuscripts, such as a *Roman de Troie* (from the late thirteenth century) and two *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* (from the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries) also feature illustrations of Hector's tomb, though in various sizes and with divergent details (BnF: fr. 783, f. 109v; fr. 254, f. 99v; fr. 22554, f. 119r). Yet the crucial placement of the illustration of Hector's tomb in P4, and its reflection of iconographic practices, exalts Hector's place as a central figure in the play--as a model of chivalry, easily recognizable. But the image also incorporates many of the motifs

repeated throughout other illustrations: the wooden wall with windows; the bench-*cum*-altar, covered in its white cloth; the white columns, framing the scene; and a wooden vaulted ceiling. In the same way that the events in the play complicate the example of Hector as the best example for Christian knighthood, so the image complicates--by juxtaposing and integrating--iconographic traditions with visual traces of performance. Moreover, the complexity of this illustration is the exception that proves the rule: its ostentation reveals the functionality of the other images in the manuscript.

Thus Hector's death--or more accurately, the commemoration of his death--occupies pride of place in the play. Furthermore, it is in death that Hector's reputation as a *prudhomme*--a masculine chivalric model--acquires its ability to disseminate a range of effects. The manuscript records the reactions of characters to the event, structuring the illustrations like a funeral march. Beginning with a procession that shows the Greek army tents, the citadel of Ilion, and the intervening green space, Hector's return to his home traces the contours of a place both real (the performance space) and imagined (the context of both Troy and the French-speaking community surrounding the performance). Each of the images of family members mourning Hector occurs within a white-columned enclosure featuring a wooden ceiling, and a red curtain drawn across the back. The ground remains the green lawn, while blue sky shows through small gaps in the curtain. Encounters between Hector's body and his family members emphasize the magnitude of the loss, and inscribe the physical manifestation of that loss on the bodies in performance. The cycle of illustrations shows Hector's body, carried in procession back to Troy; individual depictions of family members' reactions to the body, laid in armor on the greensward; Andromache lifting the body of Hector in her arms; and a large illustration of Hector's tomb with an accompanying eight-line epitaph. The cycle stretches from folios 121 to 126v.

To return to the images in P4: the structures called "ostels" are not the only significant physical pieces required to perform *Destruction de Troie*. Anthenor commands his servant, Athimas:

Athimas entens a mes ditz

Va ten tost au port de la mer

Parler a mes gens et leur ditz

Quilz facent la nef aprester (Stengel 13, ll. 489-492)

[Athimas, listen to my commands.

Go thou quickly to the port of the sea

Speak to my people there, and command them

To make the ship ready]

The separate references to a ship and to the sea also recall the visuals of the Valenciennes *Hourdement*: at one end of the famous image of empty mansions, is a flat pool of water, labeled "La Mer," on which floats a small masted merchant ship, sails furled. The *Destruction* stage direction immediately following the exchange between Anthenor and Athimas reveals:

Silete dorgues tandis quil y va a la nef Et puis arrivera et dira ce qui sensuit (P4, f. 7v)

[Musical interlude while they go there to the ship, and when they will get there {they}

will say that which follows]

Again music serves to cue, time, and cover the movement of actors from one kind of structure to another. Moreover, additional dialogue about the ship--that Anthenor awaits its arrival--continues for ten lines. Finally, Athimas says "descendez quant il vous plaist [go aboard when it pleases you]" and the stage direction supplies:

Adont anthenor descendera de leschaffalt et viendra a la nef et puis dira son oroison aux



dieux ainsy quil sensuit (P4, f. 7v)

[So Anthenor will descend the scaffold and will come to the ship and then {he} will say his prayer to the gods, just as it follows here]

This exchange gives new information concerning the expected structures. First, it seems that a ship may be difficult to time precisely, as many lines fill the time that might be taken by a delay in getting a ship close enough for actors to board it. Whether or not the ship is actually on water is a topic the stage directions do not address. The presence of what looks like a pool of water in the Valenciennes *Hourdement* is only one possibility. Jean Froissart observed in 1389 that a ship, at a royal *entremets* featuring a performance of the siege of Troy, was both large enough to contain a hundred men at arms, and mounted on wheels, which enabled it to move about.<sup>65</sup> Christine de Pizan described a similar ship, used during a performance of Godefroy de Bouillion's siege of Jerusalem during a 1378 banquet in Paris for the visiting Emperor Charles IV.<sup>66</sup> Since these two examples took place as part of banquets in honor of visiting royalty, the material conditions of being indoors and having to accommodate diners meant that sailing the

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<sup>65</sup> From the *Grandes Chroniques*, Book IV, Chapter 1: "Encore y avoit, si comme en leur aide, une nef tres proprement faite, ou bien pouvoient estre cent hommes d'armes; et tout par l'art et de l'engin des roues se mouvoient ces trois choses, le chastel, la nef et le pavillon." [And then there was, as if coming to their aid, a ship, very well done, within which easily 100 men-at-arms could fit; and all, by cleverness and engineering, the wheels moved all three of these about, the castle, the ship, and the pavilion.]

<sup>66</sup> Translated in Lori J. Walters, "Performing the Nation." Original text found in Suzanne Solente, ed., *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, Book XLI, pp. 112-3.

ships on water was either impossible or prohibitively expensive. By contrast, the 1547 Valenciennes *Passion*, performed outdoors, could more easily accommodate the use of water for sailing a ship. This evidence from the late fourteenth century through the mid-fifteenth demonstrates that ships in performances may have made their way on water or on wheels--and that the choice of propulsion depended on the material circumstances and physical constraints of the overall event.

The illustrations of ships in P4, unfortunately, do not show precisely how they might have moved about the playing space, using water or wheels. A miniature at the top of the first column of folio 8, labeled "Anthenor en entrant en la nef [Anthenor while boarding the ship]" features Anthenor standing on a gangplank and a single-masted ship, sail furled, containing two other characters, probably Sorbin, the sailor, and Athimas, Anthenor's valet. While the physical context in the background remains the same--blue sky and green lawn--the ship's hull is surrounded by a swirl of blue. Yet the ship and water are still surrounded by the greensward, suggesting either that the pool of water is limited in size, or that the water is actually a painted effect to cover the wheel mechanisms at the bottom of the hull. Other images provide no additional clarification. On folio 191v, a ship containing Greek warriors approaches the gates of Troy. This example shows a ship more clearly surrounded by the greensward, though its hull still sports the swirls of blue. Later images showing the same gates into Troy sometimes also show the gates without an adjoining body of water (f. 121v) and sometimes with one (ff. 73v, 242r). To add to the confusion, the stage directions appear much less conflicted:

Adont sorbin mettera la voille au vent et la nef partira et fera ung silett de menstrelz et  
quant il viendra quilz approcheront de la ou ils doivent arriver Sorbin dit a anthenor  
(f. 8r)

[Thus Sorbin will furl the sail into the wind and the ship will leave, and {there} will be a musical interlude, and when it will appear that they will approach near to where they must arrive, Sorbin says to Anthenor]

Here a sail and the wind serve as the primary movers of the ship! Or do they? Furling a sail does not necessarily preclude the possibility that several men below decks move the ship using hidden wheels. In fact, it is often playwrights' primary goal to create a convincing *appearance*, while concealing the real mechanisms needed to achieve that appearance. The example of the Valenciennes manuscript shows ships floating on water, though the location and prominence of the water itself shifts in every representation. For example, during the eleventh day, the ship appears in a body of water at the base of a cliff, occupying most of the final panel in the illustration register (Konigson, plate IV). On the twelfth day, however, the boat can be seen floating in the background, at a distance from the scene in the foreground (*ibid.*, plate V). The hegemonic model, therefore, seems to indicate water as the best way to transport the boat-- but the inconsistent landscape reminds us of the dangers of assuming such images represent "photographic reproduction."

Given this, what to make of the numerous and seemingly conflicting options concerning shipboard travel during a performance? On the one hand, the inconsistency in details argues that such details did not really matter, suggesting that no real performance either inspired or derived from the representations made in this document. If P4 really recorded "an instance of performance" (as Runnalls put it), why not be clear about how the ships would move, and whether or not a pool of water was required? One reason may be that communities may have guarded their cleverest stage ingenuity from poaching by others. The complicated special effects employed in mystery plays, religious dramas, and sometimes as part of *tableaux* during festivals

or entries had a special name: *secrets* (Mazouer 159; Nagler 1976, 18; Vitale-Brovarone 453-463). Productions of large-scale performances often had an individual who took charge of ensuring the design, construction, and proper functioning of all the stage technologies required for the show, variously called the *député aux secrets* [deputy of secrets] or the *inventeur* [inventor] or *conducteur de secrets* [conductor of secrets] (ibid.). Writing down exactly how to perform various effects would have enabled other communities to copy a homegrown solution to a problem of spectacular presentation. Indeed, it is hard to suppress the feeling, when reading compilations of the myriad kinds of spectacular special effects created, that communities competed to outdo each other in the scale and wonder of the stage magic.<sup>67</sup>

Since communities and groups of play producers expected to tackle the special effects on their own, it is hardly surprising that the illustrations and stage directions in P4 seem to be *leaving open* the possibility of using water or wheels. What the artist of P4 would share with potential play producers is the knowledge of this common practice, and thus an awareness of the importance of a specific setting and precise physical conditions in making a decision about which method of propulsion to use. In other words, mandating the presence of a pool of water, or of ships with hidden wheels, would provide logistical information that play producers *expected* to come up with on their own. Indeterminate details about the mechanism of travel--while being clear about the *existence* of ships--delivers the crucial information about *what* takes Anthenor from point A to point B, without prescribing *how* Anthenor gets from A to B. Finally, since ships ferry both Trojans and Greeks, and appear in images throughout the manuscript, this undoubtedly expensive and potentially cumbersome mechanism actually forms a significant part

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<sup>67</sup> See especially Meredith & Tailby, *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe*.

of the way groups of people move around the playing space during all four playing days. Thus, an investment in figuring out how to move ships quickly and easily solves more than the problem of sending Anthenor on his embassy--it solves numerous problems throughout the play. In the case of a possible production of *Destruction de Troie*, I am not arguing for water or for wheels; rather, that the indeterminacy of the mechanism, as witnessed in the manuscript, supports the shared awareness among author, illustrator, and playmakers of the production customs that would regulate a performance of *Destruction de Troie*.

A much more straightforward category of physical structures required by the text also appears early in the manuscript. The word for "scaffold," (modern French *l'échafaud*) spelled in the citation from folio 7v as "eschaffalt," meant "place destined to support a platform; structure in a public square for the corporal punishment of criminals."<sup>68</sup> Many of the examples underneath this definition in Godefroy, however, testify to a far more common usage--to describe the kind of structure on which plays and other performances took place.<sup>69</sup> The scaffolds in P4 appear particularly in relationship to embarking and disembarking on ships. In the first significant movements of the play, Anthenor repeatedly lands at, and departs from, "eschaffaulx" which belong to members of the Greek ruling class, entering and exiting from his ship each time (P4, ff. 7-13). Similarly, the arrival of Paris and his men at Cytharea--where the kidnapping of Helen occurs--receives detailed treatment in the stage directions:

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<sup>68</sup> Godefroy, *Complément IX*, p. 508-9.

<sup>69</sup> The use of this common term for "stage platform" is attested in Mazouer, *Le Théâtre français du moyen âge* (pp. 157-8) and Meredith & Tailby, *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe* (p. 297 for listing of occurrences in primary source documents).

Lors il sort de la nef et montent en eschaffault et les haulx menestriers devant et quant il y seront paris rencontre ung grec nomme protheus accompane de deux aultres qui nomme thideus e aussi Egeus Et dit paris a protheus (P4, f. 21r)

[Then he exits the ship and climbs onto the scaffold, the treble<sup>70</sup> musicians in front, and when he is there, Paris meets a Greek named Protheus, accompanied by two others named Thideus and Egeus; and Paris says to Protheus]

Clearly, a scaffold awaits Paris's arrival at Cytharea, where he encounters the three Greeks. What the text does not make clear is where the musicians were before this moment: in the ship? Waiting on the scaffold? Waiting at the base of the scaffold for Paris to arrive in the ship? Certainly the presence of musicians reinforces the convention, outlined explicitly at the ship's first appearance on folios 7 and 8, that a musical interlude covers the movement of the ship about the playing space. One way to accomplish this would be to place the musicians on the ship, so that, as passengers, they would know exactly when the ship departs and arrives. Like the example of the ships, the existence of musicians does not prescribe the methods and locations of those musicians.

More than one scaffold appears in descriptions where movements of, presumably, large numbers of people are involved. For example, when the Greek fleet approaches Thenedon, the port city of Troy, multiple scaffolds are required to accommodate the Greek army:

Lors tous les rois se seront autour de priam en places apparaoillees et trompettes

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<sup>70</sup> I have interpreted the word "haulx" in this context to mean that the instruments being played are of a high timbre--for example, a recorder or other higher-pitched woodwind. See Godefroy V, p. 238, under "**MENESTREL**" for examples of this usage.

sonneront et les bateaux de grecs approcheront en lisle thenedon pres de troye et y aura  
eschaffaux est monteront sur ces eschaffault et puis agamenon dira (P4, f. 73v)

[Then all the kings will be around Priam in the appropriate places, and trumpets will  
sound and the Greeks' ships will approach the island of Thenedon, next to Troy, and there  
will be scaffolds; and they {the Greeks} will climb up on these scaffolds and then  
Agamemnon will say]

This stage direction mixes references to actual (though fictional) places and the quotidian  
locations required by a performance. The Greeks approach "the island of Thenedon," but  
*scaffolds* are needed to enable the army to disembark--not piers, or docks, or quays--*scaffolds*.  
The language of this stage direction demonstrates the hybrid nature of the world being conjured  
by *parole* and *painture* in this manuscript. On the one hand, material, mundane details about the  
structures needed for performance jostle for position against statements about locations and  
characters derived from the imaginative realm where places--though fictional--have their usual  
names (e.g. "island", "Troy").

But the term "eschaffault" might also refer to a scenographic element that is two levels--  
the lower level a roofed interior, and the second level accessible via a stairway or ladder. A  
little-known, badly singed Provençal Passion play text first published in 1984 and conjecturally  
dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, includes many indications that "scaffolds"  
meant the platforms above a "stage". Two such stage directions in the text imply the ability to  
use both locations simultaneously during a performance:

...beneath the scaffold on which we will play or you will play...(Plesch 76)

...one fills basins with water that are emptied in order to make on the stage beneath the

scaffold a little stream of a good *palmo* and a half. (Plesch 78)<sup>71</sup>

Konigson also conjectures two levels for some of the mansions pictured in the Valenciennes *Hourdement*, creating twice the playing space in a given structure, and perhaps accounting, in this case for the two terms used to indicate structures in a playing space: "ostels" and "eschaffaulx." The Provençal Passion text, interestingly, also calls for a revision of common assumptions about medieval theatre and drama. According to Plesch, who wrote an article on the document for Clifford Davidson's anthology *Material Culture & Medieval Drama*, the Provençal Passion does not appear in the most well-known compendium of medieval staging practices (Meredith & Tailby), nor does it fit within Graham Runnalls' Typology of medieval French play manuscripts, discussed here in Chapter One.

Scaffolds also appear in the manuscript as an analogue for a modern stage, where the main action of a scene takes place. In day four, the Greeks swear fealty and vengeance before climbing into the horse and perpetrating the famous ruse. To set up the oath-making, the manuscript offers this stage direction:

Lors nestor apportera trois ydoles et les mettre sur une table bien paroit au milieu de leschaffault Et y aura pause dorgues et ce pendant citheus va vers priam et dira (P4, f. 235v)

[Then Nestor will bring three statues and place them on a table right in the middle of the scaffold; And there will be a pause for music and during this, Citheus goes towards Priam and will say]

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<sup>71</sup> These are Plesch's translations of the Provençal original. Both are provided in her article, "Notes on Staging of a Late Medieval Passion Play," in the Davidson anthology.



Here, a scaffold appears large enough to support a table, three statues, and various members of the Greek ruling class who then venture one by one towards the makeshift altar to swear their oaths. In this case, however, the images in the manuscript show a different interpretation. Directly underneath the stage direction excerpted above, an illustration shows Citheus kneeling on a green lawn before Priam and the assembled Trojan nobles (P4, f. 235v). Citheus's move towards Priam, because it leads directly to the next section of dialogue, is most relevant to the continuing performance, notwithstanding a modern critic's desire to see the precise mechanism by which Nestor obtains and places the props for a subsequent scene. Two pages later, during the actual swearing of the oath, an illustration shows the occurrence: Greeks, kneeling before an altar with three idols placed upon it (f. 237r). However, both the earlier image of Citheus, and the later one of the oath-taking, show a conspicuous lack of any kind of structure other than the altar. Where is this scaffold, then, that figures so prominently in the stage directions? What does its failure to appear in the illustration mean? To rephrase the question: how are we to understand the apparent inconsistency between what is recounted in the text and shown in the picture? One way could be through the indeterminacy of the term "eschaffault." Rather than referring to a specific kind of structure, it could also refer to a conceptual *locus*, a neutral space, an absence of a specific mansion, that could take on the properties of any needed location.

Or perhaps, as *peinture* and *parole*, two different routes--with different specifics--lead towards a similar conception of the key points of this sequence. The text accounts for who moves, talks, and relocates props; situates the action in a specific place ("eschaffault"); indicates when music should play; and ultimately provides the dialogue for the set-up and the taking of the oath. The images, on the other hand, provide the equivalent of snapshots--frozen moments of

time showing the two most relevant events in the overall arc of the storytelling. Citheus is a messenger sent to Priam to announce the arrival of the Greeks to perform their oaths. Then, the oath itself takes place before the three idols. Since *peinture* and *parole* work together, both showing and telling information about scaffolds would seem to duplicate efforts. In other words, the stage directions make clear who's supposed to do what during a performance; the image shows the important part of the story told through that performance. The art-historical observation about the Master of Wavrin emerges as unusually relevant here--in modern comic strips, only the most essential information remains in the frame. The *dessin colorié* style, with its emphasis on economical expression, meshes well with the purposes of images in this sequence--to provide a condensed sequence of illustrated story events that *complement*, instead of *duplicate*, the information delivered in the text.

As in the Aix manuscript, where images hinge on gestural expression, some images in P4 depict the physical manifestation of the stakes in the play. In other words, they are very much "quick" images. As previously described, Hector's death precipitates a wealth of physical reactions. But Hector's death is not the only catalyst for series of illustrations detailing the emotional and gestural reaction of characters in the play. Menelaus, told of Helen's abduction by Citheus--who is pictured alone on the green lawn with his hand to his ear, apparently listening to the end of Helen's royal Trojan welcome--is pictured falling towards the earth in a faint. The stage direction above this image reads "Menelaus se pasme [Menelaus faints]" (P4, f. 32v). Achilles mourns the dead body of Patroclus, undressing him, wrapping him in a cloth, and placing him inside a coffin. This sequence of events uses a combination of stage directions--"subtillement le severlira et cela fait dira [subtly {he} will place him in the tomb, and that done, will say]"--and image, showing Achilles, arms around Patroclus' naked, bleeding body, placing

him on a sheet next to an empty coffin (P4, f. 96v). Helen, confronted with Paris' dead body in two illustrations, reacts to Priam's news first by looking down at the body while Priam holds her, and then she bends toward the ground as if she will lie on the body as Priam holds her shoulders. Both images occur after the stage direction "Lors elle se pasme [Then she faints]" and in the middle of Priam's long speech. Helen's reaction--and its depiction--mirrors that of her husband's when he learns of her abduction earlier. This example of Helen represents an instance when the images in P4 illustrate the *actions* of a character who has no dialogue during another character's speech. Thus *peinture* and *parole* find expression separately yet simultaneously, and the "quick" image supplies information for which there is no text.

The case of Helen's leavetaking from the four Trojan princesses--Hecuba, Andromache, Creusa, and Cassandra--features no accompanying stage directions, relying instead on a combination of dialogue and imagery. One image is dedicated to each embrace. First, Helen and Hecuba embrace and kiss. Second, Helen embraces Creusa; then Andromache, and finally Cassandra. As in the Aix example, where illustrations clustered around physical and embodied actions, this constellation of pictures shows a similar preoccupation. In fact, scenes with considerable affective content--such as the revelation of a dead body, or an ill-omened departure--also inspire images in series, depicting gestures that accompany the dialogue. When Hecuba bids good-bye to Paris, before his departure on the expedition that culminates in Helen's abduction, two images illustrate the physical impact this event has on Hecuba. In the first image, she stands on her own, facing Paris. In the second, she supports herself with one hand on a nearby table, while Paris holds her up--one hand on her hand, the other behind her back (P4, f. 19r). Her anticipation of his departure on the trip that ultimately leads to Troy's destruction and her own trauma at the hands of the Greeks drives a physical deflation that appears in the images.

Paris literally supports her, and this physical contact sharpens the paradox that he is the agent who leads to her destruction. The comfort he provides is empty, because his subsequent actions set in motion the events that destroy Troy and its royal family. Indeed, the illustrator shows us the bookend to this scene, where Hecuba, distraught at her daughter's flagrant beheading at the hands of Pyrrhus, throws stones and clutches at her hair (P4, f. 247r).

Some images of gestures involve single characters during significant speeches. The best example of this is Priam, on folio 220v, when he asks to be alone, sending his allies away. The stage direction above the illustration notes "Lors se iront et priam demoure seul [Then they will go, and Priam remains alone." Within the white columns of the mansion which serves as a picture frame, Priam stands exactly in the middle, his right hand across his chest, and his left hand palm out, facing out. He stands on the greensward with nothing but the sky behind him, his gesture one of supplication, protection, and prayer. The speech carries particular weight within the story because the figure of Fortune, whose appearance in a dream Priam recounts, explicitly connects the dire nature of Priam's imminent defeat with the ultimate victory of Charles VII in the war against the English. Though the hope Fortune offers cannot aid Priam in his fight against the Greeks, Fortune's wheel ensures that Priam's descendant serves as a "paisible roy [peaceable ruler]" (Stengel 390, l. 25052). Fortune also explains that even Charles VII will suffer "du maleur [some misery]" and eventually rule as king only as a result of "tresgrant labour [very great labor]" after a beginning fraught with "tourment [torment]" (Stengel 390, ll. 25070, 25075, 25081). Thus Priam's speech, bracketed by the initial image of his lonely supplication, and more a narrative monologue than a dramatic exchange, emphasizes the specific appeal of the speech to an audience. The moment, at least temporarily, halts the accelerating pace of events to focus on a rhetorical exercise--Fortune's appearance in Priam's dream--that both predicts Troy's fate and

offers a consolation prize: Charles VII's difficult victory. Though Fortune explicitly places "cinq mille ans [five thousand years]" between Priam and Charles, the audience may have had a more immediate sense of how close victory and defeat could be (Stengel 390, l. 25076). It is hard to read the passages about labors and torments, and not hear the echoes of the public debate from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries--France in danger, her people devastated, and her rulers unable to unite against the enemy, or worse, eager to join with them to settle personal scores. The violent and protracted end of the Hundred Years' War and the subsequent internecine squabbles over royal power and prerogative reverberate throughout Priam's speech.

In a way related to gestural expression, some stage directions explicitly require actors to "pretend" or "appear" to do certain actions. Occasionally these actions are pictured, but often they are not. The first instance occurs during Hector's plea to Priam for moderation instead of vengeance regarding the past kidnapping of Priam's sister Hesione. Priam's grief and anger over this incident fuels his decision to approve Paris' abduction of Helen. Hector mightily attempts to persuade his father--and his brothers--that vengeance will only turn back on them. To begin the speech, the stage directions note: "Lors hector se levera faisant samblant de plourer Et puis dira [Then Hector will get up, pretending to cry, and then will say]" (P4, f. 14v). The image at the top of the next column shows Hector standing before Priam in his throne, making his emotional and impassioned plea. After the death of his last ally, Priam "fera samblant denracher sa barbe [will pretend to pull out his beard]" (P4, f. 201v). During the failed sacrifice at the Temple of Apollo, the two priests repeatedly pretend ("fait semblant," "fera semblant") to light a fire that never catches, instead creating clouds of smoke (P4, f. 231r,v). A further caution in the stage directions, that the wood used be juniper so that "la fumee ne fait mal aux yeulx [the smoke does not hurt the eyes]" adds the *comfort* of actors and audience members to the number of

dimensions in this text that require performance to make sense of them (P4, f. 230v). The common locution of "pretending" likely signals that all of these actions belong in the category of stage tricks, or *secrets*. Like the more elaborate effects discussed earlier, such as moving ships over water, *secrets* also comprised these smaller-scale tricks.

During the eighth battle, which the Amazon Queen Penthesilea has joined to support Priam's sapped forces, a stage direction introduces a different kind of pretending:

Lors se renouvellera la bataille et sera delivre polidamas des mains des grecs et durant  
reste bataille panthasilee sera des mirmidonez environnee et lui fera desrompu son  
heamne et cela fait se tiendront tous en fiction et ce pendant venra pirrus tontue elle et  
dira (P4, f. 200v)

[Then they will renew the battle, and Pollidamas will be delivered from the hands of the  
Greeks, and during the rest of the battle, Panthasilea will be surrounded by the  
Myrmidons and they will rip off her helmet, and that done, will freeze in place  
while Pirrus comes over, shaves her head, and will say]

The verb phrase here, *se tenir tous en fiction*, is a compound construction not explained in any dictionary of Old or Middle French.<sup>72</sup> Marc-René Jung interprets the phrase as a precise technical term, deployed during "a tumultuous scene, to immobilize the extra characters in a

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<sup>72</sup> I include here Godefroy's 1880 multi-volume set, the 1895 *Complément* and 1904 *Lexique*, as well as Hindley et al's *Old French-English Dictionary*, and 8 editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*.

*tableau vivant*" (Jung 1983, 577).<sup>73</sup> Jung traces the appearance of the term through 10 of the 13 manuscripts, discovering variations in how much the idea is explained, though the instances of its usage seem confined to large battle scenes where the audience attention needs to be directed to a specific conversation occurring in the midst of considerable action. Some of Jung's examples even use the word "joueurs [players]"--explicitly assigning the job of pretending to actors. The example I cite above, as well as the 22 examples Jung cites in his 1983 article, make no sense in the context of a drama designed for reading. Indeed, it is *only* in performance that the need for a practice like *se tenir en fiction* becomes obvious. On the page, character labels above dialogue serve just as well to redirect a reader's attention to the conversation the playwright wishes to emphasize. But in the performance of large-scale battles, which in *Destruction de Troie* take up just over 7% of the dialogue and last for an average of 205 lines,<sup>74</sup> something physical and impossible to ignore would need to occur in order to guarantee that the audience sees, for example, the humiliation of the Amazon Queen. Thus the image following this stage direction shows the Queen's beheading at Pirrus' hands--her helmet on the ground, and blood spurting from her skull as he raises his sword again. This gruesome scene is the result of

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<sup>73</sup> "En effet, lorsque Milet veut faire parler ses personnages pendant une scène tumultueuse, il fait s'immobiliser les comparses dans un tableau vivant. Il utilise un terme technique très précis: *se tenir en fiction*."

<sup>74</sup> Based on Stengel's edition and lineation, a total line count of 27984, and my estimate of 2049 lines comprising battle sequences. Of course, the precise beginning and ending of these sequences is certainly up for debate, and thus the total lines devoted to battle may vary within a dozen lines or so of my estimate.

coordinating the audience's attention, diverting it from the battle to the Queen's execution. Consequently, the function of *se tenir en fiction* modulates and punctuates the pace and key narrative events during the battle scenes in *Destruction de Troie*.

Moreover, the use of the technical instruction *se tenir en fiction* probably derives from a performance event that Milet witnessed. Only in performance, I think, would the utility of such a technique become clear. And indeed, we have at least one piece of evidence that places the technique at a location where we know Milet spent time. In the *Mistere du siege d'Orléans*, "*se tenir en fiction*" is used at least once in the one extant manuscript<sup>75</sup> to modulate a complicated battle scene:

Et la se tiendront ung peu en fiction l'un devant l'autre.

Adont, les trompettes et clairons sonneront amoderement, et marcheront les ungs contre les autres tout bellement jusques ad ce qu'i se entre rencontreront de lances. Et romperont chacun sa lance contre leur homme. (Hamblin 339)

[And there they froze in place, for a moment, facing one another.

Then, trumpets and bugles sound with middle volume, and they {the soldiers} march against each other in a very orderly fashion just until they meet within range of the lances. And each throws his lance against his man.]

These are just a few lines out of an extended section of stage directions that covers *four pages* in the original manuscript, laying out a specific sequence of events in a battle between the French and English at the siege. Additionally, the character of these instructions is very similar to those

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<sup>75</sup> This manuscript is conserved in the Vatican Library, Reg. lat. 1022. Vicki L. Hamblin published a critical edition in 2002.



examples we've seen in *Destruction de Troie*. It is not hard to imagine the young law student, witnessing the annual playing of Orléans' *Mistere*, and seeing firsthand the effect of the *se tenir en fiction* technique and how it controlled and made comprehensible large battle scenes. It would be a natural appropriation for Milet to apply this same command in the similarly densely choreographed battle scenes in *Destruction de Troie*.

For the most part, the costumes represented in the P4 manuscript approximate northern French and Burgundian dress from no later than 1475, with the padded sleeves and exaggerated shoulders (Sheingorn 173). Occasionally, however, a combination of stage directions and images requires specific costumes according to the scene or characters being portrayed. During the first sequence of events in Greece, Agamemnon assembles his army and arms himself for battle, accompanied by three lieutenants. The stage direction indicates:

Lors se saindront de deux cordes et enveloperont leurs testes de touailles et mettront dessus ung chapeau de losier et dit achilles (P4, f. 63r)

[Then {they} will put on two ropes, and wrap their heads in towels, and place on top a wicker hat, and Achilles says]

The accompanying image shows the four Greeks, holding lengths of rope, with hats of twisted branches sitting on top of their turbans. The time taken here to show exactly how the four Greek chieftains should look--time, as it happens, not taken to detail the appearance of the Trojan princes--underscores the important resonance these costumes have for the story of the play. Indeed, the next sequence, where Achilles and Patroclus sacrifice a baby lamb on an altar, spilling its blood into a bowl, reinforces the connection between the Greek adversary with the image of the pagan Saracen warrior in Western Christian literature. This connection is discussed more in Chapter Four, but the crucial point here is the explicit outlining in word and image of

how to tell the Greeks apart from the Trojans in the performance of this play. It is important to note, however, that images subsequent to this introduction of the "Greek" headwear do not always show the Greeks wearing the distinctive hats. Consistency of portrayal does not appear to have been important--instead, what was drawn in a given illustration hinged on what actions needed to be taken by actors in order to make a particular point clear to the audience. The dialogue includes no clues about the ropes, turbans, or wicker hats--these details emerge only in the illustration and its accompanying stage direction. Where dialogue fails to *tell* an important point, the image and its stage direction *show* it.

Similarly, in preparation for the failed sacrifice scene, the stage directions ensure that the priest and his assistant wear different clothes from those of the assembled Trojan royal family. After everyone has assembled in the Temple, the stage direction indicates:

Lors thoas, sabillera de vestement propice Et tous les troyans se mettront a genoulx...Et  
lors thoas dira a son clerc qui fera ainsy vestu que thoas mais il naura point de chapeau  
en la teste (P4, f. 230v)

[Then Thoas will dress in an appropriate garment. And all the Trojans will kneel...And  
then Thoas will say to his assistant (who will be dressed similarly to Thoas but he will  
not have a hat on his head)]

The next image shows two men, each dressed recognizably in priestly vestments, one with a hat, and one without. On the one hand, this second example appears much less important than the first. The Greek turbans serve to invoke audience sympathies on the side of the Trojans by allowing popular stereotypes of Saracen appearance and behavior to co-opt the reputations and characters of antiquity. But what difference does it make if the priest's assistant wears a hat or not? This argument, I think, has more strength if the important dimension we're discussing is

primarily a narrative one. After all, much literature engaged the concept of Saracen customs, beliefs, and--of course--threat to Western Christendom. The detail of who wears a hat belongs to a much more mundane realm. And as the images in P4 repeatedly show, one of the important criteria for inclusion in an illustration or stage direction, is the degree to which the information is--*or could be*--required for enacting a performance. Not every detail in a picture or stage direction alters the course of the story, or changes the meaning of a scene. But many details, like a shadow on a wall, outline the presence--indirectly attested--of actors and other performers engaged in the many decisions required to enact a dramatization, mediated by an additional artist whose job it was to illustrate this particular manuscript.

Some examples from P4 allude to practices that the illustrations and stage directions do not completely explain. For example, the image on folio 102v records the death of the Centaur ("le sagitaire") by a method impossible in reality: the knight is slicing vertically through the body of the Centaur, in between its front and back legs. No sword is powerful enough to slice the body of a horse vertically. The stage direction makes it doubly clear, however, on what method to use dispatching the Centaur:

Adont frappe le sagitaire dune espee toute nue et le coppe a trances du corps et dit le  
sagitaire en morant (P4, f. 102v)

[Then strike the Centaur with a naked sword and cut the body into slices; and the Centaur says, dying]

While this method in relation to a real horse body makes little sense, slicing vertically through a *costume* might make more sense. For example, if the Centaur contained two people, one playing the head and front legs, and another playing the back legs, both encased in a framework and an animal skin covering, then slicing at the middle would be *the only safe place*

to use a "naked sword." Such an ungainly contraption might seem at first laughable. But in the fifteenth century, important performances such as a royal entry or an *entremes* at a banquet would motivate people to dress up as iconic animals. For example, in February 1454 (n.s.), virtually contemporary with the completion of *Destruction de Troie*, a banquet for Philip, Duke of Burgundy, in Lille, often called the *Voeux du Faisan* (Banquet of the Oath of the Pheasant), featured a number of performances including large-scale figures animated by human performers, as well as interacting with other performers. The narration of the series of performances at the banquet includes details on a demon, a camel, a singing stag, a great fire-breathing serpent, and a flying dragon (Caron 117-120). The stag is the most analogous example to the stage machinery I imagine would be necessary to make sense of the death of the Sagitaire. The stag:

merveilleusement grant et beau, lequel estoit tout blanc et portoit grandes cornes d'or et estoit couvert d'une riche couverture de soy vermeille, selon mon advis. Dessus ce cerf estoit monté un jeune filz de l'eage de douze ans...Ce dit enfant tenoit a deux mains les deux cornes dudit cerf. Quant donc il entra en la sale, lors il commença le dessus d'une chançon moult hault et cler, et ledit cerf chanta la teneur, sans y avoir autre personne, sinon l'enfant et l'artifice dudit cerf... (Caron 118)

[marvellously large and beautiful, which was all white, and wearing large gold antlers and covered by a rich fabric--silk *vermeil*, in my opinion. Astride this stag was seated a young girl of 12 years...This child held on to the stag's two antlers with her two hands. When it came into the room, the child began to sing a song, high and clear, and this stag sang the accompaniment, without there being any other person, except the child and the artifice of this stag...]

Here the stag supports a small child--probably sitting on the shoulders of a man underneath the "rich fabric" who is wearing the antlers on his head. The witness emphasizes the "artifice" of the stag--that its real nature and operation is hidden from the audience. Similar artifice is on display during the entry of Louis XI into Lyon on March 23, 1476: a "lion" presented the King with the keys to the city (*Entrées* 62). The financial accounts for the city's municipal council record that Jehan Prevost was paid "pour avoir fait le lyon [for having made the lion]" and that the butcher Jocerand Bullioud was paid "pour troys peaulx de veau pour fere le lyon [for three veal skins to make the lion]" (*Archives municipales de Lyon*, CC 0481, f. 2, 4). People dressing up as animals of various kinds also occurred in productions of religious drama as well. For example, men were paid to dress up as lions and eagles in the fifteenth-century Valencia, Spain Corpus Christi processions, and to dress up as a donkey in the Chester, England cycle plays (Meredith & Tailby 120-2).

Imaginary animals were not the only ones to participate in a performance of *Destruction de Troie*. According to the illustrations in P4, live horses played a limited role, though contemporary depictions of the battles between the Trojans and the Greeks, particularly in textiles, show literally hundreds of men on horseback engaging each other (McKendrick 10-11, 13, 15-17, 20-23). In P4, on the other hand, there are neither large-scale engagements of many men on foot, nor pitched battles involving men on horseback. The sole example of the use of horses comes during a scene where Paris introduces his new bride to Priam. On folio 28, Paris visits Priam in his "ostel." Paris's horse remains outside the "ostel," saddled and bridled. Over the next two pages, Priam mounts a horse and goes to meet Helen, who is also on horseback. Both the stage directions and the image make this clear. In a pair of illustrations on folio 29r,

Paris is shown leading a horse towards Priam, and then it is revealed that Helen is astride the horse Paris is leading. The stage direction underneath this second image states:

Lors paris remonte et priam se trot pres de helene et elle fera samblant de descendre (P4, f. 29r)

[Then Paris remounts, and Priam trots near Helen, and she acts as if she dismounts]

Immediately, Priam tells her to stay astride, until she can be properly welcomed. Once the formal niceties are exchanged and the entire party dismounts from their horses, the stage directions deliver this instruction:

...y doit avoir des gens pour tenir les chevaux...(Stengel 53, l. 2925sd)

[...must have people there to hold the horses...]

The care taken here to deploy real animals only in the context of a formal meeting--rather than in battle, where the animals would have great difficulty telling the difference between fiction and reality--differentiates the version of the Troy legend in P4 from virtually all other versions of the story. In medieval tapestries and manuscripts, battles on horseback permeated the climactic moments of the Troy legend. But here, where the use of horses would actually introduce an unstable element to an already complicated performance endeavor (recall the technique of *se tenir en fiction*), they make no appearance in illustrations or in rubrics. Except, of course, for the one context in which "people [are] there to hold the horses."

The final examples of animals--one artificial, and one real--mirror the many cases where reality and fiction overlap in the depictions of the Troy story as dramatized in this manuscript. While not necessarily conclusive, the economical visual style--coupled with the complementary explication in the stage direction rubrics--lends itself particularly effectively to the portrayal of objects and figures that reflect a performance milieu. As the examples from the *dessin colorié*

genre show, the choice to include the same backdrop and to re-use structural elements derives not from an aesthetic practice or an artistic tradition, but from the very real likelihood that these images depict varieties of performance practices and the deployment of specific properties, scenic, and costume conventions. The proximity of these representations to an actual production is, of course, impossible to determine. Yet much of the language, imagery, and detail in this document becomes most comprehensible--in some cases, *only* comprehensible--in the context of a real performance, involving purpose-built structures, actors, musicians, costumes, stock scenery, stage machinery, selected props, and real and artificial animals.

### 4.3.3 The Examples of P5 and O

In addition to the P4 example, two other manuscripts show signs of their embeddedness in a performance context, though in very different ways. The O manuscript, for example, contains a repository of images similar in quality, if not in quantity, to the illustrations in P4. The P5 manuscript, on the other hand, has no images, but is the only manuscript to contain a detailed *dramatis personae*. Such character lists are extremely uncommon in medieval play manuscripts, except where a collection of documents attests to a performance. In that case, a list of characters is usually accompanied by a list of the actors who played them. For example, the 1509 Romans performance of *Le Mystère des Trois Doms*, the 1535 Bourges performance of *Le Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*, and the 1547 Valenciennes *Passion* all have left behind manuscripts listing actors and the characters they played (Vince 103-5).

Though the P5 *dramatis personae* contains no actors' names, the multi-page listing is exactly the kind of enumeration that any producer of the piece would have to undertake in order to determine how many actors were needed for the number of roles. In addition, the *dramatis*

*personae* divides the characters in a specific fashion: Trojans, allies of the Trojans, female allies of the Trojans, and the Greeks, which include "Apollo ydole [The Apollo Idol]" and "le sagitaire [The Centaur]" (P5, f. 7v). Since this division is not in the order that the characters appear in the play, that means that the scribe specifically created this particular list for the front of this particular manuscript. As a result, this *dramatis personae* is an easy reference point for characters' relationships to each other and their place on either side of the conflict. Though the existence of such a list does not prove that this manuscript was destined for use in helping create a performance, it would have been impossible to undertake a production of *Destruction de Troie* without such a list.

The P5 manuscript shows others signs of a distinct consciousness of performance. For example, it is the only manuscript to include marginalia. Many of these notations include stage directions, like "Ils sen vont [They go there]", "le baise [kisses him]", and "y le baise [there kisses him]" (P5, ff. 11v, 23r, 46v). They are usually underlined, and some, like the last example, are connected to the dialogue with a line, showing the precise part of the text where the action should take place. All of the interludes for dinner breaks are marked prominently, and the moments of death for each character who dies are noted in the margins as well. Finally, the P5 manuscript is one of two to use the precise word "*joueulx* [players]" in a stage direction (Jung 1983, 576-7). Given that no other manuscript shows the same level of marginal notations, and that these notations almost universally deal with actions, the presence of the term "*joueulx*" in the same codex as a *dramatis personae* becomes even more intriguing. Was P5 created in preparation for a process of production that was interrupted in some way? Did the early planning fail to garner the appropriate level of community support for such an undertaking? The



constellation of deviations in P5 argues, at least, that the person making these notations--the scribe, or someone else--contemplated seriously the idea of producing *Destruction de Troie*.

In the visual register, the field of analysis in the O manuscript is significantly narrower than for P4 because of the much smaller number of images, and because many of these appear incomplete. However, some aspects of the O manuscript do correlate with key features of the P4 manuscript. The most obvious is the use of a conventional background, especially in interior scenes, rather than the depiction of different, specific locations whenever the scene changes. In this case, the conventional backdrop involves a wall with a patterned green tapestry, a series of leaded windows visible above the tapestry and green and white floor tiles. This description matches not only the location where Priam consults his sons and meets his ambassadors, but also the Temple of Venus, from which Paris abducts Helen. Menelaus also inhabits an extremely similar chamber, though the decoration at the top of the frame is different; in Greece, domes take the place of the pointed gables found in Troy.

Unlike P4, however, the artist of O has provided a great deal of landscape detail in the images. That is, images in O tend to place structures like the "ostels" in a countryside. This pastoral context delivers the impression that the white buildings, doorways, and castellated ramparts that populate the images in O represent either a very different performance location from P4, or a fictional milieu drained of the detail usually present in the images in narrative illuminated manuscripts of the Troy story. Many of the O illustrations show an encircling wall, surrounding smaller buildings as well as a playing space inhabited by the characters. Is it possible that the images in O were inspired by a performance occurring in a ruined theatre or arena? The 1536 Bourges performance of *Le Mystère des Actes des Apôtres* took place in just such a location: a ruined Roman arena. At Bourges, the stone exterior walls defined the outer

boundary of the space, and specially built grandstands against the perimeter held the audience, while the players used the capacious interior of the arena to set up the many dozens of locations, theatrical *secrets*, and nearly 500 characters called for in the 60,000-line plus saga (Nagler 1976, 22-25; Vince 104; Runnalls 1999, 117). Whether the images in O record such a specific event, or merely track the imagination of one, is not the important issue. What is important is that these images show a *different way* of imagining the play in performance. P4 was not, then, an aberration. More than one set of scribes and illustrators sought to represent performance dynamics--"quick" images--rather than replicate fictional and fantastical locales--"deed" ones.

To that end, the stage directions and rubrics contained in the O example use language similar to the P4 manuscript--combining references to actual places ("Ylion," "Thenedon") with names of performance structures ("eschaffaults," "chasteau," "maison," "places," "lieux"). References to musicians also extend throughout the text of O, with a diversity similar to the range apparent in P4: "orgues," "menestriers," and "trompettes." The depiction of ships always shows them floating in bodies of water bounded on three sides by banks. In one image, however, the artist depicted Anthenor walking away from a ship moored at a coastline and heading towards two small white houses. In between these houses stands a gigantic wooden platform, braced with angled struts, and as tall as the roofs of the two houses. No ladder or stairway is visible as a means to climb to the top deck of the structure. The stage direction closest to this image declares:

Adont ils vont hors de la navire et montent sur leschaffault (O, f. 13r)

[And then they go out of the ship and mount the scaffold]

The wooden platform appears in no other image in O. What to make of its presence here? Plenty of other extant illustrations show ships--but none depict the scaffold that would

presumably be required to disembark from them. Perhaps, in this case, the artist did not have a personal frame of reference for creating images most helpful for readers interested in performance. Thus, this rubric might be an instruction to the artist that was taken very literally.

However, other rubrics mention scaffolds, yet no other image shows a wooden platform separate from the white houses that populate the landscapes in these illustrations. Most often, the image depicts the action occurring immediately after the character has left the scaffold, as in Paris' leavetaking from Hecuba:

Lors cesse Hecuba de parler et paris dessent de leschaffault et laisse priam et doit rencontrer anthenor en la compaignie de ses gens (O, f. 27v)

[Then Hecuba stops speaking, and Paris descends the scaffold, leaving Priam, and must meet Anthenor in the company of his men]

The image associated with this rubric shows Paris walking across a greensward towards a group of men, two mansions in the middleground, a ship in the background, and a low crenellated wall in the foreground. No scaffold to be seen; indeed, none of the other characters involved in the previous scene--or in the rubric--appear at all in the image, even though the illustration's scale and scope could encompass additional locations.

The relationship between the images in O and the rubrics accompanying them is much more tenuous than the same relationship in P4. That is, how the words and pictures work together is submerged beneath a style of illustration that emphasizes something other than the performance dimension of the story. Put another way, the performance dimension does not appear to be as strongly at work in the O manuscript as in P4. Thus the images cue imaginative reconstruction--or alternatively, a literal manifestation of the rubric--rather than depict a series of important narrative and dramatic elements.

Yet the manuscripts share much of the quantity and precise wording of the rubrics that are intended to accompany the illustrations. During the first appearance of the Greeks, they wrap their heads in towels and wicker. Paris and Helen ride on horseback to meet Priam. Nestor places the three idols on a table in the middle of the scaffold. Achilles wraps the dead body of Patroclus in fabric and places him in a tomb. During the failed sacrifice, the priests dress in appropriate clothing, and use juniper in order to avoid stinging people's eyes. People pretend to do things--cry, wrap a body, light a fire, fall asleep. The battle scenes, though not illustrated in O, show dense concentrations of blank areas intended for images. Thus some of the pictures intended for these spaces likely deliver information about the key moments that might be occurring while the armies "*se tiennent en fiction* [freeze in place]".

In fact, the words of the stage directions remain almost precisely the same in many respects. The differences in images, on the one hand, render the intention behind the text more opaque. But on the other hand, the illustrations in O display more similarity to those in P4 than, say, to more elaborate paintings in manuscripts of the *Historia Destructionis Troiana*, *Recueil de Troie*, *Roman de Troie*, *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* or some of the other narrative, illuminated versions of the Troy legend discussed in detail in the previous section. Perhaps some of the differences between the O and P4 examples could be accounted for by a different performance venue, or at least the *imagining* of the play in a different performance venue. In the end, the similarities outweigh the differences. A shared artistic style, the source text itself, layout of the play in each codex, the density of illustrations--or intended illustrations--coupled with a relatively economical visual vocabulary demonstrates that the creators of these books shared at least a partial understanding: that this text was unusually attendant to performance

concerns. This shared territory still exists, even as the details and expression of these concerns varied considerably both between and within these two manuscripts.

The uncertain provenance of much of the direct evidence of performance for *Destruction de Troie* is, on the one hand, typical of the vast majority of extant theatre and drama from the Middle Ages. Even well-documented examples from the sixteenth century amount to only a handful of performance events. What is not typical, however, is the mountain of indirect evidence that infuses the 13 manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie*, especially the three examples discussed in this chapter, P4, O, and P5. The nearly 500 images, and other traces of fifteenth-century minds both imagining and recording the performative possibilities of this play, argue against rash judgments of the kind that have been levied--repeatedly--in the past, *vis-à-vis* its production history and indeed, its status as a performance text. Moreover, the trove of information contained in these manuscripts suggests that the compartments scholarship has constructed for the varieties and diversity of medieval performance had very little to do with most people's phenomenological experience at the time. I am not the first person to make this argument; but this chapter, in particular, places a good deal more evidence on the side of the scale tipping towards a more holistic and less polarized account of what kinds of performance excited and engaged most people in the fifteenth century.

**5.0 CHAPTER FOUR: INTEGRATING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE:  
IDEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY ASPECTS OF *DESTRUCTION DE TROIE***

As we have seen, the "matter of Troy," first translated into the vernacular in the mid-twelfth century, and then re-translated, reconfigured, and recopied many times over the next several centuries, formed a large part of the corpus of stories and legends available to stoke the imaginations of readers and leaders throughout Europe. In France, we know of between 15 and 20 versions of the Troy story, extant in 350 separate manuscripts, that circulated in virtually every corner of the country for literally hundreds of years (Jung 1996, 10). As demonstrated in Chapter 1, Jacques Milet's *Destruction de Troie* and the codices containing it manifest the multilevel process of translation and reproduction, existing as a French version of a Latin adaptation of a French compilation of Latin accounts. Like the children's game of Telephone, this process of recapitulation did little to conserve the precise contours of an original story; instead, with the assistance of writers, authors, and copyists along the way, it shaped the legend in accordance with myriad purposes suited to the time, contexts, and audiences in each generation. Indeed, writers and authors of works, at least in French-speaking areas from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, seemed to *expect* that "their texts were being rewritten, continued, adapted" (Gaunt 147).

Milet's *Destruction de Troie*, on the one hand a product of this diachronic iterative process, also deploys a synchronic variety of ideological and literary forms, tropes and themes.

These include: ideations of the French nation; the Trojan origin myth; the "mirror of princes"; the *complainte funèbre* (funerary lament); a variety of poetic modes and techniques based in part on epic verse and the values of the *Grands Rhétoriciens*; and representation of religious difference. These two axes of integration--one occurring through time in the realm of the story/*fabula* itself, and the other occurring across the range of available forms and content at the time of its composition--charts a work partaking strongly of long-standing traditions as well as of relatively new ideas. In addition, the vast scope of the play compresses significant aspects of French history, culture, and literature over the preceding two or three centuries into a *mise-en-abyme*, where history and the play become fused in repetitions and representations of each other: Paris' victory, Priam's defeat, Charlemagne's victory, Roland's defeat, and Charles VII's victory.<sup>76</sup> In other words, the play encapsulates and reflects many literary and historical aspects of its time, accomplishing what Lucien Dällenbach notes are the "basic points" of the *abyme*:

1. ...the work turns back on itself, appears to be a kind of *reflexion* [*sic*];
2. its essential property is that it brings out the meaning and form of the work;
3. ...it is a structural device that is not the prerogative either of the literary narrative or indeed of literature itself...(Dällenbach 8).

This doesn't mean that events in the play correspond precisely to events in history. Rather, the play's series of victories and defeats, a focus on chivalric, political, and diplomatic behavior, its literary variegation, and the deliberate linking of Priam's imminent defeat with

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<sup>76</sup> This term, first used by André Gide in 1893, was defined and elaborated in Lucien Dällenbach's *Le récit spéculaire: essai sur la mise en abyme*. I have referenced the English translation, *The Mirror in the Text*, above.

Charles VII's victory thousands of years later, creates the impression that the play's texture is both the remainder of a distorted imprint, left by the literary and historical representations of the preceding several centuries, and a blueprint to guide future behavior in the realm of statecraft and chivalric leadership.

## 5.1 THE MYTH OF TROY AND IDEOLOGICAL PROJECTIONS OF THE STATE

Fueling, at least in part, this emphasis on political and military history, was the pervasive and continuing utility of the Trojan origin myth in "preserving the unity and continuity of the French race" (Beaune 226). Though it can be tempting to see the ideological action of this myth in terms of nation-building or nationalism, Colette Beaune establishes useful distinctions between modern terms like "nationalism," "nation," "patriotism," and "patriot" and how people up to the late fifteenth century spoke of their country.<sup>77</sup> "Nationalism" did not appear in English until the late eighteenth century, or in French until the early nineteenth. "Patriot" appeared first in both languages around the early to middle sixteenth century, while "nation," in use since at least the fourteenth century, did not take on its current meaning of "a people or group of peoples; a political state" until the mid- to late-fifteenth century. During the medieval period, "nation" referred to groups of people, organized along ethnic, academic, ecclesiastical, or mercantile lines. For example, the four nations of the University of Paris were identified as the

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<sup>77</sup> The information in the following paragraph comes from Colette Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology* (tr. Huston), pp. 4-5, as well as entries on the subject words in the online *Oxford English Dictionary*.



Picards, the Normans, the English, and the Germans. The four nations of the Church councils on the other hand, were France, Germany, Aragon, and England.

The French word *patrie* (fatherland)--derived from the Latin *patria*--appeared by the 1530s, though it was used almost exclusively by scholars and clerks. Others used the term *pays* (country), which often referred to a specific region--Brittany or Normandy is one's *pays*, for example. To refer to the country as a whole, "People spoke about 'France' or the 'kingdom' or the 'Crown,' rather than the 'nation.'" (Beaune 5). This difference in terminology reflects differences in concept as well. For us, "nation" and "nationalism" constitute ideas both well-worn, and inflected with nineteenth and twentieth century global politics. But a "nation" as "A large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people," as well as "nationalism," or "Advocacy of or support for the interests of one's own nation, esp[ecially] to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations," are not the ideas a-borning in the late fifteenth century (*OED*). Even the concept of "ideology" is "too abstract, rational and text-based" (Beaune 8).

Instead, what emerged over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were "myths and symbols of nationhood and the discourses people constructed around [them]" that "did more to shore up the unsteady trusses of the state than any institution" (*ibid.*, 8, 11). The myth of the Trojan origin provided both the stability of a shared noble and illustrious lineage, as well as the flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances and evolving emphases. The myth also included seemingly paradoxical internal components. On the one hand, the Trojan story placed the origins of the French in a distant and famous land. On the other hand, the story also connected the Trojan refugees strongly with their newly-adopted territory, allowing the

French people to claim to be indigenous. The articulations of the Trojan myth in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries demonstrated how

the myth of origin of a territorial state became a myth about the ennoblement of a collectivity. As little by little this most Christian kingdom gained an eminent position among other kingdoms, it felt the need to find its superiority in the story of its national origins. (Beaune 227)

Therefore, both God and history itself endorsed France as first among nations, her status bolstered by an enduring connection to the ancient Trojan royal house.

Milet's *Destruction de Troie* in many ways embodies this movement to make manifest the connections between the ancient royal family of Troy, and the nobility and people of France, resurgent and renewed in the mid- and late-fifteenth century. Beaune refers several times to sections of Milet's play to illustrate both its continuing influence in general, and its ongoing adaptations to circumstances. What Milet and others, including the Burgundian chronicler Georges Chastelain, emphasized was the fulfillment of Troy's promise for rebirth as demonstrated by the rejuvenation of the French crown and people. And despite Beaune's contention that "during the second half of the [15th] century, these comparisons disappeared," we know that Milet's play circulated vigorously in both manuscript and print form well into the sixteenth century. Thus, the attraction of imagining France as a uniquely gifted beneficiary both of Troy's ancient chivalric pedigree and the hard lessons learned in Troy's destruction continued to generate interest among patrons of the book trade well into the crises of the early sixteenth century. These ideas, therefore, had a long shelf life. Indeed, perhaps the threats to French nationhood and the very definition of 'Frenchness' (for example, the wars of religion between Catholics and Protestants in the early sixteenth century) increased people's desire to enter a

fantasy world where the destiny of France--victorious and at the height of her powers--lay clearly defined within it.

In the Prologue, Milet deploys a variety of images that show *Destruction de Troie's* connection to this family of ideological projections about the French state. Some of these, like the Tree of France and the Garden of Paradise, Beaune explicitly mentions as symbols of "the territory of France" (Beaune 9). As we have seen in Chapter 1, in at least two cases, the Prologue's *incipit* labels it as containing "l'arbre de la lignee de france [Tree of the Lineage of France]" (P4, f. lr; P3, f. lr). But even where no *incipit* invokes the image of the Tree, Milet's storytelling in the Prologue creates an integrated whole out of several images all related to one aspect or another of the French nation. Moreover, Milet's very creation and inclusion of a Prologue, in addition to its ideological content, distinguishes it from works like Colonne's *Historia*, St.-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, and Lefèvre's *Recueil*, because it makes a previously implied connection between national genealogy and Trojan history quite explicit.

In the Prologue's first phrase, Milet orients the reader around a narrator, his emotional state, and that narrator's progress through a particular environment:

En passant parmi une lande  
Plaine de roses et de fleurs  
De romarin et de lavende  
Daubefins de toutes couleurs  
Pour entreoblir mes douleurs  
Ainsi que cueur qui se soulcie  
Transi en lermes et en pleurs  
Par force de melancolye

Trouvay ung lieu moult delictable (Stengel 1, ll. 1-9)

[In passing through a wooded land--

Full of roses and of flowers,

Of rosemary, and of lavender,

Of hawthorns of every color--

In order to forget the woes

Of my anxious heart,

Moved to tears and sobs

By the strength of my sadness--

I found a most delightful place]

Milet's narrator is in the midst of a stroll through a garden, in the grip of some kind of anxiety, until he finds a place that soothes it. The plants surrounding him denote memory, purity, and innocence, providing an almost wistful backdrop to his quest for forgetfulness and relief from woe (Lipp 60; Tresidder 100; B. Walker, 451, 465). Is this a nostalgic beginning, where memories of past innocence soothe present-day anxieties like a balm? On the one hand, the act of recruiting Trojan history as a source for French nobility is a nostalgic act--looking back to define the present and the future. On the other hand, the same intellectual work can support a triumphant view of the world, where the success of the present proves the existence of a noble past. Given the context for Milet's composition, both possibilities remain alive here, though the next phrases give focus to the main idea behind the Prologue. The "delightful place" turns out to be

A lombre dung arbre notable

Qui estoit bel et bien fleurant (Stengel 1, ll. 11-12)

[In the shadow of a remarkable tree,  
Which was beautiful and in full flower].

The tree's shadow appears pivotal in the narrator's quest to purge his heart of unhappy feelings. But the tree alone does not do it: instead, the music of a nearby stream ("Ung ru..Dung son gracieulx murmurant [A stream...With a gentle murmuring sound" ll. 13, 15) and the singing of a shepherdess ("une bergeronnete/Chanter melodieusement" ll. 17-18) combine to fill the narrator with joy (line 21) and make him completely forget his miseries ("joubliay totalement/La douleur de ma maladie" ll. 23-24). Without the *incipit*, there is no connection between the natural environment sketched by these few lines and any kind of allegorical framework for understanding it. There is, as well, the implication of a cosmic scale to the narrator's wanderings. The stream's shimmer is compared to the shine of the "sept planetes [seven planets]" in line 16. The sudden reference to a much wider world, coupled with the indeterminate locale ("une lande"), create the impression that a fable is unfolding here, and that consequently, important meanings may lie in easily overlooked details, and indeed a lesson may be on the way.

Moreover, this garden *mise-en-scène* is a common method of depicting an allegorical landscape (Badel 149). Authors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries wrote allegories in virtually all genres. For example, Charles d'Orléans wrote allegories in lyric poetry, while others, like Christine de Pizan, Jean Froissart, and René of Anjou used allegory in their narrative and didactic texts (*Littérature* 131). The garden motif often served as a symbolically rich locale where personified abstract concepts could meet and discourse on the subject at hand. In the *Roman de la Rose*, for instance, the action of the story takes place in a walled garden, ruled by Love and inhabited by characters named Reason, Danger, Jealousy, Fear, and Shame (Zink 242).

The *Roman de la Rose* was among the most popular works in French after the mid-thirteenth century, and motivated many writers to copy various aspects of its structure or story (Richards xxxv; Zink 247-250). René of Anjou's *Livre du Cœur D'Amours esprits* explicitly mentions its debt to the *Roman de la Rose* (Zink 249). Gardens structured the allegories in Pierre d'Ailly's *Jardin amoureux*, Pierre des Gros's *Jardin des nobles*, and *Le Songe du vergier*--the first a love debate, the second an instruction book for proper aristocratic values and behavior, and the third a political manual (Badel 149).

It is the shepherdess who makes the explicit connections between the pastoral setting and the political and ideological orientation of the Prologue. The harmony of the babbling brook and the shepherdess's song having released the narrator's negative feelings, he proceeds to almost fall asleep against the tree. The idea of a narrator, about to fall asleep and have a vision, is another extremely common trope in a tradition of allegorical poetry dating back at least to 1215, with more recent examples in Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre de la Cité des dames* and Alain Chartier's *Quadrilogue invectif* (Zink 240).<sup>78</sup> Though in this case, the narrator is already within his dream, rendering the framing device of a vision apparently unnecessary. In fact, the shepherdess prevents him from falling asleep by singing to him about the tree and what it represents. Doubtless Milet was aware of the device of the dream-vision. His choice to avoid using it yet draw attention to its existence suggests a deliberate strategy. The absence of a dream in this allegory suggests a tighter connection between the real world of the narrator and the world of symbols in the story.

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<sup>78</sup> The 1215 poem was the *Songe d'Enfer*. The *Roman de la Rose* also used a dream-vision in its induction; the examples are legion.

Having circumvented the narrator's dream, the shepherdess asks God to grant the tree joy ("Gentil arbre dieu te doint joie" line 36), proceeding to explain the tree's beauty and adornments in the most hyperbolic terms. Its fruit "vault de lor tant [is worth much gold]", and its reknown "la plus au monde [the greatest in the world]" (Stengel 2, ll. 44, 46). But what really draws the eye to the tree is the shining presence of three shields, hanging amongst its branches. The narrator has to take a step back and stand on a rock to get a good view of these blazons. The center shield is slightly raised above the others, and it features:

Blasonnes a troys fleurs delis  
Et tout le champ dazur estoit  
Couronne dor sur luy avoit  
De pierre dorient garnie  
Cest escusson environnoit  
Ung C qui charles signifie (Stengel 2, ll. 75-80)  
[Emblazoned with three fleurs-de-lys  
And on a field of azure blue,  
A crown of gold it had above,  
Set with stones from the East.  
This shield was surrounded by  
A C, which stands for Charles]

This unmistakable description of the coat of arms of the King of France, as well as its linkage with the current king, Charles VII, would have been lost on no one. The two other shields contain the coats of arms of two other Charleses who played pivotal roles in Charles VII's ultimate victory over the English: Charles, Duke of Orléans ("a trois lambeaulx dargent [a silver

three-point label])" and Charles d'Anjou, Count of Maine ("lionceau de sable/Hors du champ...Et bordure de rouge cler [a black lion cub/Outside the field...And a border of bright red]") (Stengel 2, ll. 84, 91).

These descriptions match nearly precisely the descriptions found in a fifteenth century *Traité du Blason* [*Treatise on Heraldry*], which, in addition to being a guide to heraldic symbology, also lists the peers of France and their heraldic devices. The only difference is that the *Traité* lists the device in the Count of Maine's shield as being "ung lion rampant d'argent [a rampant silver lion]" rather than a black one ("Traité," 334). The reasons for such a discrepancy are unclear. Each escutcheon is surrounded by a "C," which the text makes clear "Charles signifie [means Charles]" (Stengel 2, ll. 80, 88, 96). The identities of these three Charleses are further reinforced by Milet in his *Épître épilogative*. In his *Épître*, accompanying three of the play manuscripts, Milet dedicates his work to "la gloire...du Charles VII roy de France [the glory of Charles VII king of France]," "en lonneur...du Charles de Valois, duc d'Orléans [in honor of Charles of Valois, Duke of Orléans]," and "au plaisir...du messire Charles d'Angeou [to the pleasure of my lord Charles of Anjou]" (Jung 1978, 252). This last Charles, of Anjou, was the youngest brother of Duke René of Anjou and Marie, the wife and Queen of Charles VII. Both of these lords were absolutely essential to Charles VII's eventual victory, as they both sided with him against the English and the Burgundians. Charles d'Anjou was of considerably greater help, as he avoided capture (unlike Charles of Valois), assisted in the many successful campaigns from 1437 to 1453, and held a position of significant influence over the king (Vaughan 105). In addition to sharing the azure field with scattered golden fleurs-de-lys on their escutcheons, these three lords also shared a common heritage:

Ja soit ce que le tiers estoit



De branche non pas si prochaine  
Mais toutesfoiz elle partoit  
De la racine souveraine (Stengel 2, ll. 105-108)  
[And so it was that the third was  
On a branch not so near,  
But in any case that branch grew  
Out of the sovereign root]

Thus Milet accounts both for shared overall heritage and close familial relationships among the three lords. Charles d'Anjou, several generations removed from a second son of the king, is more distant from the royal line than Charles of Valois, the king's cousin. These differences appear to be both noteworthy (since they are mentioned) and unimportant, as the connection to the "sovereign root" overrides a question of proximity. Thus the tree of France and its three shields, symbols of the three Charleses, demonstrate a flowering of the noble stock and its bedrock connection to a unique heritage.

A thorough meditation on the shields and their heraldic devices follows, which ultimately leads the narrator to conclude "cestoit vrayement/Larbre de la lignee de france/Qui dure avoit longuement [this was truly the Tree of the Lineage of France/That has lasted so long]" (Stengel 3, ll. 174-176). This marks the first time that the Tree is labeled as such, in versions of the Prologue without the *incipit*. At this point, what has been hinted springs into sharp relief. The "lande" of the Prologue, with the Tree at its center, accords with Beaune's Tree and Garden that often represented the territory of France. Of course, the Tree clearly signifies more than contiguous geographic territory. Bearing the escutcheons of royalty and endowed with

metaphoric power to represent the nobility of an ancient genealogy, the Tree unites the symbols of Crown, chivalric identity, and representations of territory and nobility.

The identification of the Tree complete, the narrator turns to the shepherdess to divine the Tree's origins, labeling her, for the first time, "la pucelle senee [the wise young girl]" (Stengel 3, l. 181). The girl explains, "par parole et par signes [by words and signs]" that:

...jay cy ma demouree

Je te ditz que sur toute rien

Je suis celle qui lay gardee (Stengel 3, ll. 186-188)

[..here I have made my home

I tell you that through everything

I am she who has guarded it].

Moreover, she reveals that, if the narrator digs at the Tree's roots, he will find "bonnes enseignes [good teachings]" (Stengel 4, l. 204). This young girl's role as the protector of the Tree of France reflects very recent history--only twenty years previously, Joan "La Pucelle" provided new spiritual and moral impetus to Charles' efforts to expel the English and unite France under his crown. Of course, Charles' abandonment of Joan to the Burgundians, her conviction for heresy at the hands of the English, and her burning at the stake (1431) cast a cloud over her righteousness and her previous deeds to assist the French crown. Yet without her assistance, emotional and psychological in large part though it might have been, Charles may have languished as Dauphin with a lost and divided kingdom. England could today abut the borders of Burgundy along the River Loire.

Most relevant to our discussion, however, is the fact that by 1450, Joan's family had asked for her case to be re-opened. In 1456, Pope Calixtus III annulled her sentence for heresy,

and the recuperation of Joan of Arc as symbol and saint had received a significant boost. Today revered as "France's second patron," Joan of Arc, in the late fifteenth century, was only at the beginning of the journey towards spiritual and national sponsor (Farmer 273-4). Milet's play, completed in 1452, in the middle of the Church process that would ultimately redeem Joan, illustrates that not everyone was waiting for the Church to decide her fate. Milet does not explicitly name Joan as the young girl in his Prologue, but the title of "pucelle," the common reference to Joan at the time of her leadership of the French army. While some authors, like Christine de Pizan, named Joan in their writings about her (*Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*), others called her only the "Maid" (in Latin, *puella*, the equivalent of *pucelle*), such as Jean Gerson (*De quaddam puella*) and Alain Chartier (*Epistola de puella*) (Brown 1999, 385). In this case, the particular form of address, "pucelle," coming hard on the heels of the first use of the words "lignee de france," thus forges the common associative link between *this* girl in the garden, protector of a tree, and *that* girl, wearing armor, protecting her Dauphin.

With pick and shovel the narrator attacks the roots of the tree, uncovering "La forme dung bel escusson [the shape of a beautiful shield]," (line 256) and then, beneath them,

...les armes des troyans

Donc lost de france est descendu

Passe apres de cinq mille ans

Lors je me prins a pourpenser

De faire listoyre de troye (Stengel 4, ll. 270-274)

[...the arms of the Trojans,

From whom the host of France is descended,

After five thousand years have passed.

Then I began to think about how

To write the story of Troy]

Among the roots of the Tree of France--like seeds--lie the tools of the Trojans' chivalric deeds, brought to light by our narrator's efforts. This passage affirms the widespread belief in France's Trojan origins, while opening the possibility for the narrator's particular interpretation of that history. To build something new on something known, the author establishes his authority through the "pucelle" guardian and the discovery-cum-inspiration of the Trojan weapons. The narrator can proceed with his dramatization because it derives both from shared belief and an almost divine imprimatur.

In addition, the progress of the narrator through the Prologue encapsulates the major historical events and popular moods of the fifteenth century. At the beginning, the narrator's deep anxiety and unease mirrors the early years of the fifteenth century, with the disaster at Agincourt (1415) and the resulting catastrophic loss of much of the French noble warrior class. Respite comes only through a renewal of hope symbolized by the Tree, in whose shadow the narrator rests. Similarly, national solidarity and a theme of royal restoration became the few avenues remaining to the Dauphin to rally his vassals following the Treaty of Troyes (1420), which removed him from the line of succession. The arrival of the girl, La Pucelle, just as the narrator is about to drift into sleep, reflects the enduring stalemate reached by the end of the 1420s, and the entrance on the scene of Joan of Arc, who provided the impetus to break the conflict favorably for the Dauphin Charles. In other words, Joan roused the nation from its torpor and urged it to victory. And integral to this success were the lieutenants--represented on the tree by the escutcheons of Charles of Valois and Charles d'Anjou--which stand in for the cadre of loyal chevaliers and military commanders whose loyalty and worthy service actually

enabled the victories Charles VII needed to reclaim his legitimacy. The narrator then leaves La Pucelle behind--much like the victorious Charles abandoned Joan--to approach the Tree and take the girl's advice to dig at its roots. What the narrator finds turns out to prove the girl was correct, in the same way that Joan's efforts, in retrospect, fulfilled her own prophecies of success. The narrator's manual labor, essential to uncover the truth, symbolizes the work done by French people of every class to renew the land and re-knit the economic and social fabric as the momentum shifted against the English, shunting them to the country's margins and corroding their dynastic claims.

Finally, the narrator's inspiration to write the story of Troy correlates with a renewed interest in the arts not only because of economic improvement, but also because culture became an important way of forging real and imagined connections between the various regions and perspectives. Fertile cultural *milieux*, as we have seen in Chapter Two, abounded during this period, and undoubtedly played a role in stabilizing the country politically and in bolstering a new image of France as "crowned and clothed in royal white, with a fine blue mantle peppered with fleur-de-lis, a virginal mother surrounded by her children--the king and the people...restored to full splendour [*sic*] and integrity, with [her] rightful king as gardener" (Curry 116). Milet's play dramatizes and epitomizes this new imagery by explicitly linking the successful leaders of his age with the flawed yet uniquely noble ancestors of Troy. As a part of this formation, therefore, the Prologue deploys signs, symbols and the *mise-en-abyme* to trace the contours of a tumultuous present, as well as suggest a glorious future through ideological projections of the state. The large number of manuscript (13) and print (13) editions of *Destruction de Troie*--all 26 of which originally included the Prologue--testifies to the effectiveness of Milet's literary

rendering of recent French history as well as the cultural appetite for ideations of renewed national vigor.

## 5.2 THE "MIRROR OF PRINCES": READING THE *ÉPÎTRE ÉPILOGATIVE*

The Prologue is a small fraction of the total number of lines in Milet's work. Thus any interpretation solely dependent upon the short introduction while ignoring the play's vast scope risks irrelevance. But there can be little doubt that Milet intended the entire play, at least on one level, to operate as a kind of instruction manual for politics and statecraft, in direct inheritance of the tradition of political advice couched in literary forms dating back to the 1376 *Songe du verger* [*Dream of the Orchard*] and including many of Christine de Pizan's works<sup>79</sup>, Alain Chartier's 1420 *Quadrilogue invectif*, and others (Zink 313-316). Crisis often motivated authors connected to the courts to produce new works, as Christine and Chartier both often did (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 2002, 210-215; *Selected writings*, xi-xvi). The play is a kind of "miroir de prince [mirror of princes]", where history teaches leaders how to behave (Jung 1978, 244). History has always been a source of inspiration for drama; for example, the Greek plays *Capture of Miletus* and *The Persians* dramatized contemporary military events of the classical era

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<sup>79</sup> These include: *Le Livre de la cité des dames* (deeds of famous and powerful women from history), 1404-5; *Livre des trois vertus* (instructions for women's behavior in society and in leadership roles), 1405-6; *Livre du corps de policie* (principles for a good government), 1404-7; and *Lamentations sur les maux de France* (call for unity against factionalism), 1410.

(Favorini 49-56). Just over a hundred years after Milet penned *Destruction de Troie*, and only a generation after the play went out of print in 1544, William Shakespeare would mine *The Mirror for Magistrates* for material for his history plays (Bullough III, viii). The function of the play as a "mirror of princes" complements and extends the ideological and mythopoetic dynamics elaborated in the Prologue, while also articulating a form that is able to contain a wide range of literary modes circulating in the mid-fifteenth century.

Alone among examples of fifteenth century drama, *Destruction de Troie* is followed in three manuscripts by the author's *Épître épilogative*, which, in addition to providing the dedication and the names of his collaborators that we have previously discussed, also outlines several crucial turning points in the piece and the accompanying political lessons to be drawn from those incidents. Divided into four parts (like the *Quadriologue invectif*) the *Épître* begins with a preamble, naming the author, giving the reasons for translating the *Istoire*, and laying out the plan for the *Épître* itself. The dedication follows, including a request for payment for the author's efforts. Milet lays out in careful detail exactly how to view *Destruction de Troie* as a "mirror of princes." The analysis of the four parts ("*journees* [days]") of the play unfolds in carefully structured sections:

Mais pour abreger et venir au second point, en ce transcript ay distingué quatre parties selon quatre poins principaulx prouvans à ma matiere, combien que en general les quatre peuvent estre reduictes à trois en continuant les deux parties moyennes, c'estassavoir la seconde et la tierce ensemble. Premièrement...(Jung 1978, 254)

[But to abridge and come to the second section, in this writing I have divided into four

parts the four principal points that prove my argument, of which in general these four may be reduced to three, one containing the two middle parts, that is to say the second and third together. Firstly....]

One can hear the echo of Milet's recently completed legal training in the pedantic and legalistic prose. But the careful structure also signals the importance the author assigns to these ideas. He wants to be crystal clear.

In the first day, Milet cites the abduction of Helen as the central cause of the Trojan War. The impetuosity of youth, coupled with the imprudence of fathers, and the "l'inconstance, la legence et la decepvance et generalmente les mauux qui peuent advenir par une femme [the inconstance, flippancy, deception and, generally, the evils that can come from a woman]" all lead to war, the "plus dangereuse [most dangerous]" result possible (Jung 1978, 254-5). This summary hardly encompasses all the events of day one; instead, it emphasizes certain incidents, apparently the ones Milet believed most relevant to the lessons he wished to impart. For example, his imputation of considerable fault to Helen rests solely on her enthusiastic return of Paris' aggressive affections, rather than any considerable role she played in precipitating violence (Stengel 40-42, ll. 2152-2277). In fact, she pleads with Paris to "menez moy doucement [take me gently]" and meekly agrees, "Je feray a vostre plaisance/Car je ny puis remedier [I will do your will/Because I cannot prevent it]" (Stengel 46, ll. 25, 33-4). Undoubtedly, her lack of faithfulness to Menelaus, demonstrated by her immediate passion for Paris, is what Milet faults Helen for in the *Épître*. In the play, however, Helen appears much less at fault than the bombastic Paris, whose persuasive powers are only exceeded by how wrong he is at every turn.

The discrepancy in the treatment of Helen is a sign that the play and the *Épître* have different audiences. Helen's acquiescence to Paris's will in the play mirrors the social



expectations laid on women of high birth in the fifteenth century. For the public audience of a large-scale performance, such behavior fits easily into expected norms. Helen's inability to remain faithful to Menelaus becomes an unremarked feature of the scene because, as the debates over the *Roman de la Rose* showed, misogyny in various forms remained very strong (Zink 247-50, 320-322; Richards xxxv-xxxvii). Helen's behavior could be easily understood as a natural failing on the part of women. But in the context of the *Épître*, Milet's emphasis on Helen's inconstancy draws readers' attention to the effects that the wives of rulers can have on the state. High-born women during this time were not free to marry according to their own preferences; instead, their male relatives traded them as commodities in a marriage market. In this market, where legitimate filial and dynastic lines of descent played crucial roles in cementing alliances and solidifying territorial sovereignty, women gained power most often by default.

For example, during the periods of Charles VI's madness--which constituted the bulk of his reign--his wife Isabella of Bavaria took the spotlight not with her conscientious stewardship, but with her profligate lifestyle. Isabella was rumored at the time to have carried on an affair with Louis, the Duke of Orléans, who was the king's brother. Not only did this liaison complicate and inflame the conflicts of the early fifteenth century, leading to the Duke's assassination in 1407, it ultimately cast doubt on Charles VII's parentage. Charles only became the Dauphin because of the premature deaths of his two elder brothers, thrusting him into a position for which he was not really prepared. The shadow of doubts about Charles's legitimacy definitely fueled his enemies' attempts to gather support against him (Vale 21; Jones 75-6). While these events were a generation or two in the past by the time Milet composed his *Épître*, the national memory on such things was long. Louis XI, Charles VII's son and successor, once remarked that his father "did not know whose child he was" (Vale 21). Milet's assignment of

blame to Helen has Isabella of Bavaria's inconstancy--and its consequences for peace--as a backdrop. There are undoubtedly more examples. For the ruling classes, wifely faithfulness and the production of legitimate offspring is a concern to exceed all others; thus Milet demonstrates an awareness of his aristocratic audiences' priorities.

As far as the imprudence of fathers and the impetuosity of sons goes, Priam and Paris showcase these qualities during the first day of *Destruction de Troie*. Priam begins the play with a speech about "sort injurieux [insulting destiny]," a meditation on how badly used his family has been at the hands of the Greeks (Stengel 6, l. 12). The focal point for his grief is the abduction, ten years previously, of his sister, Hesione, by the Greek king Thelamon (Stengel 12, l. 377). His brooding on the insult--the dishonor--motivates him, in the first speech of the play, to "releveray ma baniere [raise again my banner]" and go in battle against Thelamon in his kingdom (Stengel 7, l. 72). Once Priam's vassals are assembled, the king builds a case for vengeance, conceding at the end to an embassy to request the return of Hesione, and thus avoid a war. When, predictably, the embassy turns up only Greek contempt for Priam's plea, the vassals are unanimous in their desire for immediate revenge. But when Priam calls his sons to him, and expresses, in very strong terms, his need for vengeance, Hector's reaction is not what Priam expects. First, Priam assigns Hector responsibility for the war, making it Hector's duty to fulfill Priam's wishes: "Je ten charge et men descharge tout maintenant [I charge you with it, and yield it up at this moment]" (Stengel 26, l. 1315-6). To a contemporary eye, the rhetorical thrust of Priam's speech is that of the parental guilt trip! He calls Hector "treschier filz [best-loved son]," "mon esperance [my hope]," and "de tous tes freres as lonneur et lexcellance [of all your brothers you have honor and excellence]," (Stengel 26, ll. 1289-90, 1297-8). The final turn of Priam's speech invokes his own death:

Mon chier filz entens et retien  
Trestous mes motz  
Tu dois le royaulme tenir  
Et gouverner apres ma mort  
Si te doibt tousjours souvenir  
De moy et de mon desconfort  
Et pour moy donner reconfort  
Dois mettre toute ta puissance  
Cher filz nes tu pas bien daccord  
Dentreprendre cest vaillance (Stengel 26, ll. 1327-36)  
[My dear son, listen and keep  
Close all my words.  
You must hold the kingdom  
And govern after my death.  
O, you must always remember  
Me and my discomfort.  
And to give me consolation,  
You must spend all your power.  
Dear son, are you not well agreed  
To undertake this worthy task?]

It is hardly surprising to a modern reader that Hector bursts into tears at the end of this speech (line 1336sd). Priam has accomplished a maneuver that casts any answer other than "Yes I am well agreed" as going against the king's *dying wish* and the fondest hopes for the future.

Hector, however, resists. In one of the longest speeches in the play, Hector counsels a wiser approach (Stengel 26-28, ll. 1337-1448). Since Hesione has been gone for so long, and her suffering is almost completely in the past, why create further enmity by re-opening wounds better forgotten? Hector's relentless focus on the probable consequences of a precipitous war with a far more numerous and far richer foe (which includes, prophetically, the destruction of Troy) leads to his conclusion "Si est meilleur de loblier que de mourir en combatent [It is better to forget her, than to die fighting for her]" (Stengel 28, ll. 1439-40). Paris's reply to Hector's speech is replete with confidence in success guaranteed by the gods. He recounts his vision, wherein he selects Venus as the most beautiful of the goddesses, framing it as a sign that he will lay waste to Greece. The juxtaposition of these two very different speeches leaves no doubt who Milet feels is better qualified to recommend foreign policy. Priam's imprudence, then, derives from two causes: his inability to forgive past wrongs, and his reliance on the advice of the wrong son: "...Priam, lequel voulut tousjours soustenir et obtempere a la volente de son filz Paris, plus que au bon et prudent conseil de Hector son filz [...Priam, who wishes always to sustain and comply with the will of his son Paris, more than with the good and prudent counsel of his son Hector]" (Jung 1978, 254).

The play's second day comprises half of the battles of the war, and includes the deaths of Patroclus and Hector. The enmity and climactic confrontation between Hector and Achilles is the center of Milet's next moral lesson in statecraft. In the *Épître*, Milet cautions against "trop grand appetit de vengeance [too great an appetite for vengeance]," "inobedience [disobedience]," and "trop grant pitié [too much pity]" (Jung 1978, 255). At the end of the day, failings in these three areas lead directly to Hector's death at Achilles' hands. The second day opens with the Greek host assembled, ready to board their ships and travel to Thenedon, the port of Troy.

Palamides, the only son of Naulus, shows his excitement and eagerness to gain renown on the battlefield. Naulus is practically bursting with pride, though he cautions his son against the mutability of Fortune. The brief exchange (lines 8002-73) stands in contrast to Priam's own conversations with his sons. Priam, with five legitimate sons and several illegitimate sons as well, has an excess of good fortune. Yet he is eager to renege his responsibilities, risk the security of his whole kingdom, dwell on decade-past injuries, manipulate his heir (who has better judgment!) into doing his will, and support the rash schemes of another son. Naulus, on the other hand, seems much more cognizant of what is at stake in the upcoming conflict. The conversation at the beginning of day two marks Palamides' departure with the Greek army; therefore Naulus is releasing his only son into the danger of war, where the possibility of his death looms large. He asks for divine protection:

Tous les dieux en qui nous croyons

Treschier filz te gardent doffence (Stengel 132, ll. 8072-3)

[All the gods in whom we believe--

Most dear son--keep you from harm]

Priam, on the other hand, does seem obsessed with the idea of retribution for his past suffering. It motivates his first speech, his actions in summoning his vassals and his sons, his support for Paris's expedition, and his orders for the invasion of Greece. But it is not until Ulysses arrives with the offer to avoid hostilities if Helen is returned to Menelaus that Priam's appetite for vengeance becomes clear. Of course, Ulysses is hardly a soft-spoken ambassador. He makes the Greek position quite clear:

Mais quelle soit restituee

Tout nostre ost sen rentournera

Mais selle nous est reffusee  
Agamenon vous assauldra  
Si verrez vous ceste cite  
Estre en ruine convertie  
Qui est en grant prosperite  
Vous mesmes y perdres la vie  
Et troye qui est bien garnie  
Sera mise a pouvrete  
Vos enffens et vostre lignie  
Tous tuez par grant cruaulte (Stengel 136, ll. 8370-81)

[But if she were restored,  
All our host will return home.  
But if she is refused us,  
Agamemnon will attack you  
So that you will see this city,  
Which is in great prosperity,  
Converted into ruins.  
You yourself will lose your life there,  
And Troy, so richly furnished,  
Will be thrust into poverty.  
Your children, and their families--  
All killed in greatest cruelty.]

This is exactly what Hector warned Priam would happen. But Priam's response seems unaware of the similarity between Hector's warning and Ulysses's threat. Instead, his anger and his pride burst forth, and his speech is laden with righteous indignity: "de la requeste irraisonnable que vous me faictes follement [of this unreasonable request you have foolishly made of me]," "Moy qui ay en obeysance la plus grant part de toute asie [Me, who has under his control the greater part of all Asia]" (Stengel 137, ll. 8383, 8392-3). Swiftly Priam moves to an enumeration of Greece's past wrongs, including his father's dishonorable murder (line 8398-9); the impoverishing of his kingdom (line 8400); the abduction and debasement of his sister (lines 8401-3); and the rough treatment of his diplomatic efforts to ransom her (lines 8406-8). Before dismissing Ulysses and Diomedes on pain of death ever to return, Priam makes perfectly clear the roots of his desire for the conflict:

*Vous le povez assez savoir*

*Jay bien cause de men douloir*

*Et appeter davoit vengeance* (Stengel 137, ll. 8409-11).

[You can understand it well enough--

I have good reason to grieve over these things

And to long to take my revenge]

Unfortunately for Priam, Hector's warnings and Ulysses's threats both come true. Priam's participation in a cycle of violence escalates until his country, his life, and many of his children are taken from him. The validity of Priam's grief, of course, complicates the situation. He does have legitimate grievances against the Greeks, but his efforts to resolve them seem to rely almost entirely on violent revenge. He does make a diplomatic effort, it is true. But his "eye-for-an-eye" retaliation--kidnapping a Greek queen in recompense for his own abducted sister--invokes a

code of honor that leaves neither side able to walk away. As the two Greek ambassadors leave, Diomedes points out the irony of Priam's position:

Bien deuras estre douloureux  
Quant tu verras plus de cent mille  
Des grecs puissans et vigoureux  
Qui vendront assaillir ta ville (Stengel 137, ll. 8442-45).  
[Good reason you should have to be griefstricken  
When you will see over one hundred thousand  
Powerful and vigorous Greeks  
Who come to attack your city]

How will the ensuing conflict lift the heaviness from Priam's heart? As Diomedes states, Priam's grief will only intensify because of the events set in motion. This seems to make no impression on Priam. The goal, it seems, has shifted away from the recoup of Hesione, transforming into a lingering thirst which only vengeance can slake.

While Priam so far appears most prone to the kinds of errors Milet is interested in warning against, the second day highlights the terrible dilemmas that often confront chivalric leaders and how reasonable actions can have tragic consequences. The focus is once again on Priam and Hector. Given the leadership of the Trojan army in the field, Hector is in the middle of arming himself for the day's battle when Andromache visits him to prevent him from going forth. Her visit is precipitated by a dream in which a lion is killed by a leopard and a wolf. Helenus, Hector's brother and a priest, interprets the dream to mean that Achilles (the leopard) and Prothenor (the wolf) will kill Hector (the lion) if he leaves the castle today. Priam decides to



err on the side of caution: he orders Hector to stay with him in the citadel, and delegate the command of the army to Paris. Hector, the dutiful son, agrees.

But the circumstances surrounding Hector's obedience to his father's command are very different from those at the beginning of the play, when Hector went against his own conscience in order to do his father's will and prepare for war. Now war is upon the Trojans. Hostile soldiers are at the gates, and only strength of arms stands between the enemy and the Trojan hearth. Hector's duty now consists of defending the city, and if need be, laying down his life for it. Milet emphasizes this point, as Hector leaves Andromache's supplications and immediately addresses the assembled barons, rousing them for the day's battle. Thus Hector's role in the upcoming hostilities is foregrounded. Hector even enjoins Andromache to think of her children, who will be in danger if he stays behind (Stengel 205, l. 12839). Priam is then forced to interrupt Hector's address to the troops ("interrompre les parolles de hector [interrupts Hector's speech]" l. 12930sd) in order to forbid him from going to battle. Hector is living the worst kind of chivalric dilemma. Like a good son, he provided excellent counsel to his father and sovereign, advising against open hostilities with the Greeks. But Priam did not listen. Now, with the country's survival at stake, Priam wants to withdraw his best commander from the field. And to ensure that Hector obeys, Priam ups the ante, and casts the choice in terms of filial obedience:

Je ten supplye

Je suis ton pere et ton roy

Et si ten prie

Hector

Cher pere puis que ainsi vous plaist

Je demourray

Mais de demourrer me desplaist  
Croyes de vray (Stengel 207, ll. 12952-8)  
[I beg of you,  
I am your father and your king,  
And I plead with you to stay.

Hector

Dear father, since it is your pleasure,  
I will stay.  
But staying is not what I want--  
Believe this truth.]

Thus Hector, in the midst of performing his highest duty--protecting his home and country--must accede to his king's command that he stay behind. His father's command is at odds with his highest duty, and whichever course he chooses, he violates some portion of the chivalric code. Either he fails to defend his homeland, or he fails to obey his father and king. Accordingly, Hector registers his displeasure at being forced to obey. After all, he had no problem resisting Andromache's wishes--but Priam's request puts him in an untenable position for a knight and prince. Priam, the inconstant leader, precipitates the ensuing tragedy by allowing his fear of losing his son to trump the knight's well-known obligation to defend his homeland.

But Hector's story is not yet over. The arrival of his brother Margariton's body from the battlefield drives Hector to take up his helmet and battleaxe and head out on the battlefield, alone, looking for Achilles (lines 13229-13238sd). Hector's inability to stick to his decision echoes Helen's and Priam's inconstancy; however, in this case, Hector is also doing what he's

supposed to be doing--fighting for Troy. Almost immediately, Hector comes upon Achilles in the middle of killing the Trojan vassal Bouettes. Hector then utters a speech full of the same type of righteous anger that animated his father's speech against Ulysses:

Achilles tu mas trop course

Quant as ainsi mon frere occis

Et bouettes aussi tue

...

Mais a ce coup cy je te ditz

Quil te fault mourir sans remede (Stengel 213, ll. 13274-8).

[Achilles, you have made me too angry

When you thus killed my brother

And also killed Bouettes

...

But with this blow, I tell you

That you must die--there is no other way.]

Though the tone of these two speeches are similar, their contexts are radically different. In the context of war, Hector is *entitled* to take Achilles' life. Hector has encountered Achilles in the act of slaying one of his vassals--an open-and-shut case. Hector's understanding of *this* chivalric situation is far clearer than Priam's distorted remembrance of Hesione's departure. Priam transmuted a peace offering (Hesione to Thelamon) into a kidnapping, and then waited literally years before attempting to address the perceived wrong. Priam, though perhaps justified in terms of honor, ultimately provoked the Greeks into threatening Troy directly as a result of this perceived injury to his honor. With war underway, Hector is by contrast eliminating a clear

and present danger to the city--the Greek warrior Achilles. And it is Priam's fault that he must do it as a result of disobedience.

Priam's inconstancy and Hector's disobedience (however justified) are not the only qualities which help Hector into his tomb. Paradoxically, it is also his *mercy* which gives Achilles an opening for the mortal blow. Millet outlines the problem:

...entre ceulx lesquelz sont ordonnez pour evader la vie et destruire l'un l'autre, c'est assavoir en bataille, ne prendre nulluy à mercy jusques ad ce que l'une des parties ayt surmonté (Jung 1978, 255)

[...among those which are prepared to leave this life and destroy one another, that is to say on the battlefield, show no one mercy until the point where one of the sides has overcome]

When we left Hector, however, he was intent on destroying Achilles for the murder of his brother. Where does mercy fit in? It so happens that, among the Greeks on the battlefield that day is one Ajax Thelamonius, son of the King Thelamon and the *captured princess Hesione*, Priam's sister. Ajax Thelamonius confronts Hector during the Greek retreat at the end of the second battle, revealing his identity as Hector's "nepveu [nephew]" in order to avoid the fatal blow (Stengel 167, ll. 10312-34). Hector then swears to the gods that "Ja ne vous feray villenie [I will do you no harm]" (ibid., l. 10339). The next time Hector meets Ajax Thelamonius, unfortunately, is during his pursuit of Achilles. Achilles pretends to kneel down, tying a bandage on his leg ("yra hors et fera semblant a lier sa jambe dune bande [will go out {of the fight} and pretend to tie his leg up with a bandage]"), while Hector agrees to take Ajax Thelamonius prisoner (Stengel 213, l. 13295sd). As a prisoner, Hector's nephew would be safe from harm inside Troy's citadel. Thus, Hector, distracted by Achilles's ruse and his own promise to Ajax

Thelamonius, leaves himself vulnerable to a sneak attack, which is exactly what Achilles launches:

Alors achilles vient par derriere hector et le tresperce dune lance et lors hector chiet mort et lors crieront les troyens et jousteront encore jusques ad ce que les grecz les metteront en fuite...(Stengel 214, l. 13319sd).

[Then Achilles comes from behind Hector and stabs him with a lance and then Hector falls down dead, and then the Trojans will scream and shout, fighting until the point where the Greeks put them to flight...]

Though Milet faults Priam and Hector for chivalric failures, the person who is behaving very discourteously here is Achilles--attacking while a foe's back is turned. But Greek treachery seems to be expected, in this world. It is, after all, the Greek deception of the Trojan horse that eventually destroys the city.

Moreover, the fault is not so much Hector's mercy, in and of itself. In fact, Milet says in the *Épître* that "roys, princes et gouverneurs...doyvent estre liberaulx, en droit et en raison [kings, princes, and governors...must be generous, in law and in reason]" (Jung 1978, 256). The problem with Hector is that his mercy is *misplaced*. By not waiting until the armed conflict was resolved, Hector's desire to protect his nephew endangers his ability to lead, and then win, the battle. Achilles articulates how important Hector is to the Trojan's cause, declaring "Car je scay que tant quil vivroit/Nous ne pourrions avoir victoire [Because I know that as long as he lives/We cannot have victory]" (Stengel 213, ll. 13301-2). So even Hector, revered exemplar and one of the "Neuf Preux [Nine Worthies]", has fatal flaws (Jung 1986, 146). But keep in mind that the image of Hector's tomb occupied the central pages in the P4 manuscript. He might have flaws, but might not Hector be a powerful model for fifteenth-century autocrats precisely

because of the terrible choices he was forced to make? He gives good counsel that is ignored. He commands a victorious army yet is ordered to stay behind. Anger at his side's losses drives him back out to the battlefield where a misplaced act of mercy costs him his life. This series of events encapsulates many of the dangers of chivalric leadership, and the often contradictory requirements of the code of conduct. And Milet's warning about showing mercy before victory is assured, which might be expressed simply as "give no quarter," is particularly appropriate given recent political and military events. In the context of the fifteenth century, where treachery (such as the 1407 assassination of the Duke of Orléans), broken promises, factionalism (Armagnacs vs. Burgundians), and an extended military conflict in which long periods of stalemate were punctuated by swift shifts of momentum, Milet's prescription is pragmatic rather than bellicose: be generous *after* the battle is won, once it is clear where the new power lies. To do anything else is to risk a repetition of the previous century's sporadic, inconclusive, and frequently treacherous violence.

In day three, military matters give way to the influence of love and marriage on the affairs of state. Here Milet's commentary in the *Épître* becomes much less specific, offering general cautions rather than pinpointing the precise moments where characters' decisions lead to death and destruction:

La tierce est fondee principalement sur le traictie du mariage du Polixenne, sur la mort d'Achilles et de Paris. Et ceste cy je repute concordant aux deux premieres et a la quarte, car elle fait mencion d'amours, de guerre, et de trayson...(Jung 1978, 256)

[The third {day} is principally concerned with the treatment of the marriage of Polyxena and the deaths of Achilles and Paris. And this here I submit is similar to the first two days and to the fourth, in that it mentions love, war, and betrayal...]

Like the opening of the first and second days, the third day begins with a prayer: Achilles, in the Temple of Venus, prays for forgiveness for murdering Hector, and also for strength to conquer the rest of his enemies. He resolves to visit the tomb of Hector and pay his respects. The next scene reveals that the women of Troy are also preparing to visit Hector's tomb, setting up a fateful meeting between Achilles and Polyxena, which drives almost all of the action in the third day. The interaction between the two mirrors, at least in general outline, the encounter between Paris and Helen in day one. Achilles and Polyxena see each other, and confess their feelings to others. Unlike Helen, who suffers no attack of conscience when inflamed by a man not her husband, Polyxena seems conscious of the incongruity of finding her brother's murderer attractive:

Et par mon serment cest dommage  
Quant ung si beau homs est  
meurtrier (Stengel 234, ll. 14516-8).  
[And by my oath, it is too bad  
When such a handsome man is  
A murderer.]

Like Helen, Polyxena confides in the women who accompany her; unlike Paris, Achilles "se tire appart et dit [pulls himself away and says]" to the *audience* what he's feeling (Stengel 234, l. 14529sd). Achilles is accompanied only by his valet, Basaac, who apparently doesn't need to hear Achilles' internal musings on his new-found love. Achilles, inflamed with passion "pour ung seul regard gracieulx [with a single gracious look]", resolves, against his better judgment, to ask for her hand in marriage (Stengel 234, l. 14540).

The marriage negotiations ensue. Achilles promises to persuade the Greeks to drop all hostilities, renounce any claims on Helen, and depart Troy, if permission is granted for him to marry Polyxena. Milet chronicles the debate among Hecuba, Priam, and Paris on whether to take Achilles up on his offer, in some detail. Priam resists the idea of the marriage, which appears to him as something "vrayement contre nature [truly against nature]", but he ultimately--reluctantly--agrees, reasoning that "Je voy bien quil est necessaire/Se ma terre vueil despechier [I see clearly that it is necessary/So that my land may be relieved]" (Stengel 239, ll. 14908-9). Polyxena shares Priam's reluctance, though in a somewhat more visceral register; her relationship with Achilles would be much more intimate than any of her family, and she resists the idea that she must marry him. Priam's appeal to her duty, both owed to him and to her country, wins her obedience. The bargain is struck--Hecuba sends Achilles word that he will marry Polixena (Stengel 241-244, ll. 15052-305).

The action shifts to the Greek camp, where the generals, under the leadership of Palamides, are discussing how to break the seven-year stalemate. Achilles' absence--noted in both the stage directions (l.15402sd) and in dialogue (l. 15474)--is crucial, as the Greeks elect to continue their attacks on Troy. The battle is joined, and in the ensuing fracas, Priam's son Deiphebus is killed, and the Greeks begin to fold under the Trojan assault. The Myrmidons, Achilles' special fighters, beg Achilles to intervene. He resists, though he does not give the real reason why he does not fight. Finally, however, his valet Basaac lays out the choice before Achilles:

Achilles sire vrayement

Vous nous laissez bien tous mourir

...



Vous verrez ycy arriver  
Tantost plus de dix mille troyans  
Qui vous vendront ycy tuer  
Car noz gens ne sont plus puissans  
Pour estre contre eulx combatans  
Se vous ne leur donnez secours (Stengel 273-4, ll. 17173, 17181-6)  
[Lord Achilles, truly  
You will not let us all die?  
...  
You will see arriving here  
Many more than ten thousand Trojans  
Who are coming here to kill you!  
Because our people are no longer strong enough  
To go against their fighters,  
If you do not help them!]

In response, Achilles jumps into the battle. He rebuts Paris's accusation of treachery, proceeding to kill his brother Troilus, tie the body to his horse's tail, and drag it across the battlefield. Apparently Achilles' promises mean nothing. However, Paris's shock at this betrayal would seem more reasonable if he had been unaware of how Hector was killed. This is the second time that Achilles proves both untrustworthy and fatal to the Trojan royal family. Though Milet does not comment in the *Épître* against the inconstancy of dangerously amoral knights, such a warning would fit more cleanly with the action of the play than his somewhat

vague warnings "d'amours, de guerre, et de trayson[of love, war, and betrayal]" that occur in the third day (Jung 1978, 256).

Perhaps Milet spends the least amount of time detailing the errors of the third day, perhaps because the acts of betrayal appear so obvious. Treaties are made and broken, and secret murder plots are hatched--much less subtle kinds of political errors than taking the wrong person's advice. When Hecuba sees the body of yet another son dead at the hands of Achilles, she takes matters into her own hands (Stengel 286-8, ll. 17978-18169). She conspires with Paris and others to lure Achilles into the Temple with the promise of immediate nuptials, where he and his companion Archilocus are set upon and murdered (Stengel 291-5, ll. 18336-525). The broken contract precipitates another round in the cycle of violence that culminates, by the end of day three, in the death of yet *another* Trojan scion, Paris, killed in revenge for the ambush of Achilles in the Temple. Promises, so often--and easily--made in order to forestall violence, can result in it when the parties renege. Though at this point in the story, it's hard to determine who has broken more promises or acted more discourteously--the Greeks or the Trojans. Perhaps it is this ambivalence, among a variety of other possible motivations, that drove Milet to make the lessons in the play explicit in the *Épître*. For to those unfamiliar with the details of the stories, how would people know who to root for? Based on behavior alone, certain acts are hard to distinguish from each other. To save their city, a ruling family agrees to marry their daughter to their bitterest enemy. To save his friends, that enemy rescinds his promise. Who is worse? The fact is that betrayal--the common element in all these reverses--fuels a cycle of violation and violence. Thus, as Milet points out, betrayal leads to destruction.

In day four, Milet keeps his lessons even more concise, explaining that the "matiere de trayson et destruction, la quelle chose est traictee assez au long en la quarte partie [subject of

betrayal and destruction, which treated at some length in the fourth part]" (Jung 1978, 257). In addition, Milet warns against the dangers "qui peult advenir et survenir par eslever et soustenir gens de bas lieu, sans science et sans experience, en trop hault estat [which can result and come from raising up and supporting people of the lower rank, without wisdom and without experience, into too high an estate]" (Jung 1978, 256). Milet is speaking specifically of Anthenor and Aeneas, and "ceulx de leur lignee [those of their family]", and their collective betrayal of their sovereign, Priam (ibid.). Betrayal again plays a central role in a cycle of violence that culminates, at the end of the play, in the utter destruction of Troy, the murder of the king, and beheading of his daughter, and the flight of refugees. The betrayal once again has its roots within the inner circle around the king, as the newly anointed advisors take matters into their own hands against their sovereign's will.

Day four marks the final struggle of the Trojans for advantage in the conflict. Steadily losing members of the royal family to treachery and death, day four opens with the hopeful arrival of Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons and an old friend of Priam's. The newly-arrived Pirrus, Achilles' son, makes short work of the Amazonian Queen and leaves her dead on the battlefield to be eaten by birds (Stengel 350, ll. 22219-26). With virtually no one of noble blood available to lead, a group of four counselors, Anthenor, Anthenor's son Pollidamas, Anchises, and Anchises's son Aeneas, agree on a plan to persuade Priam to offer the Greeks Helen in return for peace. Priam's reaction is unequivocal. He flies into a rage ("entrer en une fureur") at the change of heart these counselors have undergone after ten years of war. He reminds Anthenor how he spoke against Hector's moderate counsel against war, but now Hector is dead; he reminds Aeneas that he was with Paris in Cytharea, helping him with Helen's abduction, rather than counseling peace. The indictment of not only these counselors' advice, but also their

attitudes ("sans faire nulle reverence [without paying any respects]", line 23072) is vituperative.

At the end of his rant, he throws them out of the palace:

En mon palais plus ne venez

Car je voy tout evidentment

Que decepvoir vous me voulez (Stengel 362, ll. 23120-2).

[In my palace no longer come

Because I see so clearly

That you want to deceive me!]

But when the advisors leave the palace, Priam realizes he cannot let them go: they made clear their intentions, and now they are a danger to Troy. Priam relies on one of his remaining (illegitimate) sons, Amphimachus, to round them up and lead them back to the palace to be killed for treason. But they anticipate this move and gather several hundred men-at-arms to impose their will upon the king. Forced to agree to an embassy to the Greeks, Priam concedes that "Je nay plus povoir ne puissance [I no longer have power or might]" (Stengel 372, l. 23698). Thus the monarch, whose policies had led to so much pain and destruction, tumbles due to shifting sands of support among those he elevated.

But the course charted by Anthenor and friends turns out no more successfully. The Greeks betray the betrayers, building a wooden horse and stowing their army within it, springing their own ambush on the entire city, as Achilles sprang on Hector, and Paris waylaid Achilles and Archilocus in the Temple (Stengel 414-5, ll. 26663-771). Pirrus, Achilles's son, enraged by his father's death, plays the role of the avenging angel in the final destruction of Troy. The first to jump out of the horse, Pirrus cuts off Priam's head with barely a preamble, crying his justification: "Achilles suis je propre filz [I am Achilles's own son!]" (Stengel 417, l. 26802).

The cycle iterates. Each repetition is a distorted reflection of the incident before it, containing some elements in common while integrating new aspects. As a "mirror of princes," *Destruction de Troie* is a funhouse of chivalric horrors, a catalogue of the worst kinds of deeds perpetrated by people for reasons that, by themselves, would be noble. Priam wants his sister back. Menelaus wants his wife back. Hector wants peace, and to do his duty. But these desires become irrevocably complicated in the story by the fusing of betrayal and violence. As broken promises mount, so too does the body count.

The genre of medieval "mirrors," called *specula*, appeared first in the thirteenth century. They were efforts to catalogue the knowledge on a particular subject in order to more easily disseminate it and thus distribute the lessons of that subject. One of the most famous examples is the *Speculum naturale, doctrinale, historiale* [*The Natural, Doctrinal, and Historical Mirror*] of Vincent de Beauvais, which attempted to conserve all the knowledge of this time (Zink 173-4). "Mirrors" often were targeted to specialty audiences, or covered narrower topics. For example, some were aimed at women, such as in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*, which offered advice for all classes of women in how to behave in society.<sup>80</sup> Probably the most popular and influential "mirror for princes" was the *De regimine principum* by Giles of Rome, written between 1277 and 1280 and dedicated to the future king, Philip the Fair of France (*SEP*). Extant

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<sup>80</sup> See, especially, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee's edition of critical articles and English-language translations of *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*; and Charity Cannon Willard's English translation of and critical introduction to Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus* in *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies*.

in at least 350 manuscripts in Latin and various vernaculars (the most commonly appearing translation being into French) the work circulated extensively in clerical circles as well as among aristocratic readership (Briggs 13-19). Though dedicated to the future king, *De regimine principum* explicitly aimed its teachings to all those who want to be "worthy" of kingship, and the ambitious nobles who undertook a study of the book "understood it as a 'mirror of virtues' and a book of chivalry" (Miethke 482; Briggs 1-2). The clarity with which Giles of Rome announces his intentions in the book contrasts to Jacques Milet's more indirect mode of providing commentary on a literary work as a way to offer advice to a subset of the ruling class. Indeed, given that the *Épître* only accompanies three manuscripts of the play, further evidence must be considered in establishing *Destruction de Troie* as a "mirror of princes".

The idea of a "mirror" did not just apply to works as overtly didactic as those by Giles of Rome and Christine de Pizan. For example, Arnoul Gréban's nearly contemporary *Mystère de la Passion* (c. after 1450) also included authorial commentary that envisaged the story of Christ's Passion as a mirror for the public (Maddox 1989, 107). So Milet's efforts to cast his play as a "mirror of princes" fit smoothly in with his contemporaries' concern for the public commonwealth and the profound effects that good or bad leadership could inflict. However, the presence of Milet's letter, explaining what lessons he wants readers and his patrons to draw from the play may indicate he had some doubts his aristocratic readers would take his point. Indeed, since the *Épître* only appears in three manuscripts out of 13, and in no print editions, it is likely that the play and the *Épître* had different audiences. Milet emphasizes what group he intends to read his letter and what he wants them to do with it:

...ay proposé et advisé de faire une requeste à tous ceulx en la main desquelz ou desquelles porra parvenir ceste presente histoire, comme dessus est dit, et principalement

au trespuissant et très chrestien roy de France, avecques les deux nobles princes, ausquelz est adreesee ceste presente epistre, non mye seulement à eulx, mais à tous aultres, c'estassavoir qu'il leur plaise interpreter, reduyre, ethimologuer les choses inscriptes et dictez en la presente...(Jung 1978, 257)

[...I have proposed and determined to make a request to all those in whose hands this story, written above, may come, and principally to the most powerful and most Christian King of France, with the two noble princes, to whom this present letter is addressed, but not only to them, but to all others, namely that it would please them to interpret, cut, etymologize the things written and described herein...]

Thus the letter, specifically addressed to the three Charleses and "all others"--presumably the other members of the aristocracy close to the king--becomes a guide for interpreting and reshaping the meaning of the play itself. Later, Milet addresses a more inclusive audience, but with a message of a different sort, directed at religious orthodoxy:

Et c'est ce que j'avoie proposé pour le tiers point de ceste presente epistre, la quelle est adreesee premierement a la noblesse de France, secondement aux clers et orateurs, et tiercement a toutes gens vulgaires, populaires, et de commun estat, ausquelz je notiffie en la fin, pour reprimer et excuser tout erreur, ceste presente histoire este faicte et reglee quant au langage, à la forme et maniere de parler de ceulx...pour ce temps là n'avoient point de cognoissance d'un dieu immortel, mais creoyent en plusieurs dieux...(Jung 1978, 257)

[And that is what I have proposed for the third point of this letter, which is addressed firstly to the nobility of France, secondly to clerks and orators, et thirdly to all regular people of the common state( whom I address at the end) to suppress and excuse all error,

this present story being created in the language of the form and manner of speaking of those...who in that time did not have any knowledge of an immortal God, but believed in many gods...]

The issue Milet is most concerned that all three levels of society understand is that the play, in its effort to represent the time of the Trojan War, represents a polytheistic world, one to be "excused" as an "error." Milet also creates a hierarchy of importance, with the letter aimed *first* at the nobility, and *thirdly* at the general public. Since this is the only mention of the "gens vulgaires [common people]" (or clerks and orators, for that matter) in the letter, it would seem that those levels of society are not a large portion of the audience for the *Épître*; yet Milet's caution against taking too much of the matter of the *play* for truth extends to *all levels* of society. With a focus on the ruling class, Milet's *Épître* acknowledges the existence of different audiences for his letter and the play, while at the same time attempting to modulate possible objections to the dramatization of pagan, polytheistic beliefs. In the end, Milet's attempt to cast his play as a "mirror of princes" may have had limited success. The play and the *Épître* may have sprung from a motivation to instruct similar to *De regimine principum*, but the form and reception were undoubtedly different.

Though Milet may have had limited success in casting the play in purely didactic terms, he deployed patterns in the storytelling familiar enough to "clue in" all levels of society. For example, Milet's casting of the Trojan ancestors as primarily chivalric *failures* was surely familiar to audiences, accustomed to drawing lessons in behavior from characters, who from bad faith or bad luck, ended up in crisis. Many of the most well-known examples of French literature depend upon central characters who fail to achieve their goals, or violate the code of chivalry in some significant way. The most famous is the *Chanson de Roland*, where the utter destruction of



the hero Roland was used as recently as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to shore up French nationalism in the face of dire threat (Taylor 35-6; Kinoshita 80-1). *Roland* also featured treachery in the heart of Charlemagne's court, which allowed the Saracen king Marsile to ambush Roland's soldiers and defeat them (*Roland* 53, ll. 377-511). The shine of greatness emanates in *Chanson de Roland* not from flawless behavior, but from nobility, selflessness, and enormous strength against unbelievable odds and almost supernaturally powerful foes.

Another example wherein lessons emerge out of dire circumstances and defeat is in the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* (c. 1300). The inciting incident of the play is a crusade in which the Saracens kill all the Christian knights. The event is important enough that it requires the only stage direction to be preserved in the single manuscript of the play: "Or tuent li sarrasin tous les crestiens [Then the Sarrasins kill all the Christians]" (Bodel 84, l. 453sd). The one escaping Christian then gets the opportunity to make such an impression on the heathen Sarrasins that they eventually convert to Christianity. Here the failure of the Christian knights occasions a miracle through the intercession of Saint Nicolas and the proving of the Prud'homme's faith to the Saracen Emir. Jacques Milet's flawed Trojan ancestors echo this tradition, where even failures lead to valuable lessons. Whether perceived as a "mirror of princes" or not, *Destruction de Troie* and its accompanying *Épître* attempted to direct the attention of the highest-ranked members of society towards the lessons that could be learned from the story of Troy. Moreover, the way Milet articulates and emphasizes these lessons reveals his engagement with contemporary events and recent history. In the play itself, a familiar pattern of chivalric imperfection, echoing literature from the preceding centuries, unfolds as a resonant context for all to understand the scope and consequences of decisions rulers make.

### 5.3 LITERARY TRADITIONS AND INNOVATIONS

*Destruction de Troie* contains traces of many conventions and tropes other than the "mirror of princes" and chivalric imperfection. Milet's concern about his audience's perception of "error" in his representations of antiquity's polytheistic world signals a preoccupation with registering differences not only between the peoples of antiquity and the inhabitants of fifteenth century France, but also between the Trojans and the Greeks. One of the most important domains for establishing the scope and significance of these differences is that of religion. Religion figured prominently in the context of the fictionalized world of antiquity because a world *without* religion was likely unimaginable, and the legends and myths from that time often included the gods as characters. These two factors created a problem: how do you extol the virtues of a pagan people, and not undermine the Christian foundation of medieval society? Milet's answer, following the lead of various other works in French, was to create a parallel universe, in which the Greeks and Trojans of antiquity take on characteristics of Saracens and Christians, respectively. This transmutation, ahistorical though it may be, had the effect of dressing the opposing forces in garb familiar to the various audiences of the play. At the same time, however, the representations of Christians and Saracens in medieval French literature tended to elide the true cultural differences (which were not well understood in any case), and narrowed the areas of difference to obvious markers: foreign-sounding names, skin color, outlandish or exotic dress, appeals to multiple gods, use of idols, and parodic or heretical versions of Christian rites.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> For a fuller discussion of these and related issues, see Blanks and Frassetto, *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*; Daniel, *Western Views of Islam in*

Drama, in particular, essentialized Saracen representation to a few key markers that allowed actors to quickly signal their characters' difference. For example, in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, the Saracen king and his servants shout the names of "Mahomet," "Apolin," and "Tervagan" within the first few lines of dialogue (Bodel 55, ll. 115, 122, 134). The idol of Tervagan, onstage from the beginning, plays an important plot role by giving the Saracen king confidence that he can win the upcoming crusade. However, the ineffective protection Tervagan the Saracen idol provides is contrasted sharply with--yet parallels--the statue of St. Nicolas, which comes to life, protects the Saracen king's treasure, and converts nearly the entire Saracen court. This paradox, in which Saracen difference coincides with eerie similarity to Christianity, has also been identified by Sharon Kinoshita in the *Chanson de Roland*:

"Paiens unt tort e crestiens unt dreit" [Pagans are wrong and Christians are right] conceals the instability unsettling each side of the confessional divide. The dualism it implies is belied first by the parallelism that constructs the pagans as mirror images of the Christians, and second by the possibility of their conversion, which gestures toward the collapse of all difference. (Kinoshita 79-80)

Similarly, Milet casts the Greeks and Trojan on separate sides of the "confessional divide," marking the Greeks/Saracens in obvious ways as exotic heathens. However, he also constructs

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*Medieval and Early Modern Europe and Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de geste*; Hüe, "La chrétienté au miroir sarrasin"; Kinoshita, "Pagans are wrong and Christians are right"; Ramey, ed., *Christian, Saracen, and Genre in Medieval French Literature*; Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*; and Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*.

the two pagan societies as mirror images of each other, demonstrating with prayers how similarly the two groups conceive of and appeal to their gods.

The foregoing discussion is not meant to obscure the fact that this is not a mystery of the Passion of Christ, after all; it is a dramatization of the fall of Troy. And the legend of Troy, nearly alone among all subjects disseminated throughout Europe after the twelfth century, remained primarily "une histoire purement profane ou laïque [a purely secular or lay history]" (Jung 1996, 10). That is, the various versions of the Troy story had no intrinsic connections to a Christian worldview, being originally products of a pagan culture. Thus, as Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski has pointed out, the interpreters of this resolutely "profane" material first had "to cleanse mythology of supposed indecencies, while later Christian commentators saw it as their task to justify their use of such pagan material in a Christian culture" (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 1). By 1450, when Milet composed his dramatization, the cleansing and justification of previous iterations allowed Milet's version to fit seamlessly into a Christian world.

Therefore, the major role of religion in the play appears to be to provide context, a necessary metaphysical backdrop ensuring that the world of the play does not seem too distant from that of the audience. For example, within the first 200 lines, the character, Machabrun, Priam's messenger, is sent to assemble his vassals for the embassy to Greece. The stage direction "Pause [pause]" is inserted in the middle of his speech. The "Pause" direction signals something new, and what that something new turns out to be is a prayer:

Pause

Celuy qui regne hault et bas

Garde pollidamas de mesaise

Et anthenor qui est en chaize (Stengel 8, ll. 119sd-122)

[       Pause  
He who reigns high and low  
Protect Polidamas and Anthenor--  
a landed man--from affliction]

The next line begins Machabrun's conversation with Polidamas. This prayer, three lines long, merited an entire stage direction--characteristically formatted on its own line or alone in the margin--assigning it an importance seemingly out of proportion to the number of lines. But we soon see that prayer forms an integral part of the process of collecting Priam's vassals and his sons for the council meeting. At nearly every stopping point, and there are over a dozen, either Machabrun or one of the lords includes a prayer in his speech. Nearly all of the time, these prayers are announced by the stage direction "Pause". Often, these prayers address a deity without a name, in the manner of Machabrun's prayer above. Occasionally, perhaps for authenticity's sake, characters use the names of the pagan gods. In the first scenes where Machabrun summons the lords to the council, "Jupiter le grant roy des cieulx [Jupiter the great king of the skies]" appears several times, though the content of the prayer's requests remain essentially the same (Stengel 8, l. 152). The supplicant asks for protection for his companions or his sovereign, or both. The names of the pagan gods have been reduced to signposts of antiquity, in exchange for the capricious individual personalities inhabiting the mythologies of antiquity. Of course, there are exceptions. Paris's dream, where he meets Venus, Juno, and Athena, is one. The dream would hardly make sense, otherwise. But for the most part, the pagan pantheon is a backdrop, iconographic set dressing in front of which an actor in a chasuble and an alb can put on a laurel wreath and play the role of a "high priest" of antiquity, as the images in the P4 manuscript show (P4, f. 231v).

If Milet is trying to establish the almost-Christian credentials of the Trojans by the repetitive prayers and nominal use of the pagan names, he is working hard to mark the Greeks as definitely Other, and specifically, Saracen. When Anthenor goes on his embassy to ask for Hesione's return, his prayers during the journey--repeated at nearly every port--contrast sharply with the Greeks' often rude and violent reception of his request:

Thelamon

...Plusieurs de noz gens furent mors

Si eu de mon sang respandu

Et receu mains coupz despee

Et on ma pour guerdon rendu

Exionne qui tant magree

...

Mais ta vie fera finee

Se ne te hastez den aler

...

Ta vie est de peu de pris

Quant tu te metz en tel dengier

Se tu ne te pars de mon pays

Je feray ton corps dommaiger

Partoy dicy legierement

Et ne me fay cy plus darrest (Stengel 17, ll. 726-730, 733-735, 739-744).

[Many of our people died,

My own blood was spilled,

And I received many blows from the sword.

And they gave me in recompense

Hesione, who pleased me well.

...

But your life will be ended,

If you do not hurry away from here.

...

You care so little for your life

To put yourself in such danger.

If you do not leave my country,

I will do your person harm!

Leave here nimbly

And do not keep me any longer.]

The anger and brutality of the Greeks contrasts with the piety and seeming innocence of the ambassador's mission. And it recalls the brutal and crude Saracen King in *Saint Nicolas*, who shouts at his underlings and calls his god Tervagan a "fils de putain [son of a whore]" (Bodel 55, l. 134).

Helen is the first Greek we witness in an attitude of worship, though her prayers at the Temple of Venus serve merely as an opportunity to encounter Paris, as we hear almost none of what she says in context of the religious service. Her brief prayer centers on her duty to Menelaus. In 12 lines, she mentions some form of the word "loyalty" ("loyaulte", "loyalment") three times, and the word "truly" ("vrayment") twice (Stengel 40, ll. 2152-2163). But in less than 100 lines, Helen is completely enamored with Paris. Therefore, the prayers of Greeks seem

to be meaningless, as Helen proves herself unfaithful not only to Menelaus, but also to the goddess, within her own Temple.

One of the clearest illustrations of the differences between Greek and Trojan religion comes near the end of the first day, as the Greeks prepare to travel to Troy. Achilles and Patroclus go the Temple of Apollo to divine the god's will in the coming conflict. The entire scene is dramatized, and includes turbans and wicker hats; nonsense words representing sacred chants; a blood sacrifice of a lamb; and an idol of Apollo who speaks directly to Achilles (Stengel 114-117, ll. 7013-7188). This representation of the Greeks has much in common with other dramatic representations of Saracens. In the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, for example, the idol Tervagan speaks at the end of the play in nonsense words, meant to express the pagan god's despair at losing the loyalty of the newly converted Saracen king (Bodel 185, ll. 1512-15). Likewise, the non-Christians in *Saint Nicolas* refer to three Saracen gods, Apollo, Mahomet, and Tervagan (Bodel 55, ll. 115, 122, 134). The scenographic correspondence is quite close: in *Destruction de Troie*, Achilles and Patroclus, wearing their special garb, enter a Temple of Apollo to make a sacrifice to an idol of Apollo which speaks to them. In *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, the Saracen king and his courtiers shout at their three gods, present gold to an idol of Tervagan which then speaks to them. Though *Saint Nicolas* is hundreds of years earlier, these representations show a remarkable stability, conserving those elements most important to communicate difference, and clearly still able to convey meaning to Milet's audience.

Though several scenes obviously mark the Greeks as something definitely other than Christian, in other contexts the Greeks--contradictorily--appear very similar to the Trojans in their religious orientation. For example, when Cithus, a Greek messenger, travels to assemble the Greek council, he prays in a way virtually indistinguishable from Anthenor and Machabrun:



Les puissans dieux de terre et de la mer  
Qui ont le monde du tout a gouverner  
Sauluent nestor a la barbe fleurie  
Et son beau filz qui tant est a louer (Stengel 66, ll. 3867-70)

[The powerful gods of land and sea,  
Who have all the world to govern,  
Keep safe Nestor with the white beard,  
And his handsome son who is so praiseworthy]

The Greek Cithus prays to Juno (l. 4094), "dieu" (l. 4137), and "Jupiter venus et mercure" (l. 4314), asking for the same things Anthenor and Machabrun asked for: protection for the lords, and redress of their grievances. Even in the scene with the lamb sacrifice, Achilles' prayer to Apollo would not seem out of place in a church, as he addresses the idol only as "dieu" (ll. 7046, 7091) and rhetorically treats him as a single god, "qui est du monde la clarte [who is the light of the world]" (l. 7047). As the play progresses, then, both sides of the conflict pepper their dialogue and speeches with references to god and gods, named and unnamed, giving life to Kinoshita's paradox. At once separated by scenes in the play that cast them in different roles on opposite sides of the "confessional divide," the majority of the time, the Greeks and Trojans partake of a shared religious context that enables their world to interface without dissonance the world of their audience. Like other writers before him, Milet bridges a historical gap by grafting a contemporary split--Christian vs. Saracen--onto the conflict of antiquity, taking pains to show the resulting differences between Greeks and Trojans while simultaneously reinforcing the many similarities between them. The audience, presumably, had no difficulty tolerating this cognitive dissonance.

### 5.3.1 Verse Forms and their Functions

Milet used a wide variety of literary forms and techniques to fit the myriad purposes of the dramatic storytelling. In *Destruction de Troie* and its Prologue, Milet used more than any other verse the common octosyllabic line, often in rhyming couplets, quatrains, and eight-line stanzas. The octosyllabic verse line was a kind of default meter for much of the poetry of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, in the same way that pentameter became so widely used in England in the sixteenth century (*Littérature* 495). Driving this adoption was the expansion and circulation of examples of genres in the vernacular intended for reading, especially the *roman* and the *fabliau* (Zink 131; Axton & Stevens viii). The octosyllabic lines in the *roman*, usually paired in rhyming couplets, became "une sorte de degré zéro de l'écriture littéraire [a kind of basic form of literary writing]", the meter most fungible and "un style et une rhétorique qui privilègient la narration [a style and a rhetorical form that privileged narration]" (Zink 132). Zink's use of the word "narration" here does not mean narrative as opposed to dramatic, because plays of all kinds used octosyllabic couplets as the primary meter, including *Le Jeu d'Adam*, *Courtois d'Arras*, *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, *Le Miracle de Théophile*, *Le Jeu de la Feuillée*, and *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* (Axton & Stevens 4, 74, 139, 167, 209, 259). Zink really means "storytelling," which can take place in a variety of genres. But what is important about the octosyllabic line is that it

...laisse l'attention se concentrer sur un récit dont il ne prend pas l'initiative de rompre la continuité, laissant au lecteur celle de le maîtriser, de le structurer, d'y réfléchir, de le comprendre. (Zink 132)

[...allows the attention to concentrate on a story whose flow it does not attempt to interrupt, permitting the reader to master it, structure it, reflect upon it, to understand it.]

Unlike in the *romans*, an uninterrupted flow was occasionally not what was desired. This was particularly true for dramatic pieces, that tended to mix a variety of metric lines depending on the tone required for a particular scene. Ten syllable lines, twelve syllable lines, patterns of rhyming in quatrains, *sizaines* (six-line stanzas), and even *douzaines* (twelve-line stanzas) were common in a variety of dramatic works from the twelfth through the fifteenth century (Axton & Stevens viii-ix; Zink 211; Porter 529-30).

Milet followed this pattern of mixing meters. In addition to the common, unmarked octosyllabic meter, Milet used the *alexandrin*, a French twelve-syllable verse which was later popularized by the Pléiade and ultimately became strongly associated with serious subjects by the middle of the sixteenth century (*Littérature* 494). Though the twelve-syllable French verse line first appeared in the early twelfth century, it was not named the *alexandrin* until the mid-fifteenth century, when the rhetorical treatises of the *Grands Rhétoriciens* assigned it that name based on its repeated use in different versions--abridged and otherwise--of the legend of Alexander the Great (Porter 529-533). Its use, of course, was not limited to the Alexander story, but the *Rhétoriciens* in their guidebooks reflected the strong association between the two. Indeed, virtually the only mentions of the term *alexandrin* come from the many rhetorical guides of the middle fifteenth century. Moreover, the *alexandrin* became associated through the course of the thirteenth century with stories of epic scope and reach. Gradually, the twelve-syllable line supplanted the older ten-syllable line (the meter of the *Chanson de Roland*), though it was also not limited to a particular topic or genre, appearing in plays (*Miracle de Théophile*, *Jeu de la Feuillée*) and *romans* (*Roman de Jules César*) (Porter 529-30; Short 16). Thus the twelve-syllable *alexandrin* was both associated with epics, but available and commonly recruited for

other uses. But by the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *alexandrin* became less and less frequent, as prose took its place (Porter 530).

Milet adopted not only the common octosyllable and the *alexandrin*, but also the older epic decasyllable and a shorter four- to six-syllable line to completely versify *Destruction de Troie*. Milet's use of *two* seldom-used, older verse forms usually appearing in epic legends, seems to indicate a desire for authenticity: a closer affinity between the topic at hand and the manner of its expression. The octosyllable is clearly the dominant form, measuring out the vast majority of verses in rhyming couplets, quatrains, or occasionally groups of three and six lines of interrelated rhymes. The most common rhyme schemes include ABAB, ABABBCBCCDCD (where the second rhyme in one quatrain becomes the first rhyme of the next quatrain, a very common pattern), and the occasional long series of monorhymed lines. The interlocked rhyme scheme mentioned above creates long chains of related octosyllabic quatrains with an almost musical cadence, supplying a forward sense of motion in the manner suggested by Michel Zink that encourages the narrative flow.

When Milet breaks the flow of rhyming octosyllabic verse, it is usually for moments in the play that echo the events and tone of the epic stories lending their verse styles. The decasyllable occurs second most often to the octosyllable, usually in the manner of an address to princes or to the gods--never as part of a dialogic conversation. For example, the first occurrence of the decasyllable fuses both purposes. Anthenor, disembarking from his journey from King Thelamon (the abductor of Hesione), and entering the country of Castor and Pollux, starts his speech with a prayer:

Pause

Le dieu des cieulx qui hault et tres loing voit

Gard roy priam quelque part que il soit  
Et ses parens et son noble lignaige  
Et saulcuent en qui mal luyouldroit (Stengel 18, ll. 775sd-778)

[ Pause

God of the skies, most high, who sees very far,  
Protect King Priam, wherever he may be,  
And his relatives and noble family,  
And save them from those who would wish them ill]

From this prayer, Anthenor moves into direct address to the two kings:

Castor et vous polus je suis messaige  
Du roy priam qui est prudent et saige (Stengel 18, ll. 782-3).

[Castor, and you Pollux, I am the messenger  
Of King Priam, who is prudent and wise]

Both the remainder of Anthenor's speech, asking Castor and Pollux to assist in the return of Hesione to Troy, as well as their responses, all occur in decasyllabic rhyme. These passages are similar, in structure and tone, to the discussions amongst the Charlemagne and Marsile courts in *Chanson de Roland*. In *laissez* 15 through 26, the argument amongst Charlemagne's knights that culminates in Ganelon's embassy to the Saracens occurs entirely in epic decasyllables (*Chanson* 43-51). The *laissez* 34 through 46 show the discussions in Marsile's camp regarding Ganelon's offer of help, in the same meter. Milet's use of the meter, however, imparts far greater structure, as he builds each speech in *Destruction* as a rhymed poetic entity on its own, whereas in the *Chanson*, the courtly conversations and arguments ebb and flow within each *laisse*, with statements and responses--and even interruptions--occurring within a single *laisse*. Milet's other

uses of the decasyllable reflect similar categories of utterance, such as (among others) the farewell to Paris on the occasion of his expedition to Cytharea (ll. 1902-87); Agamemnon's speech to the assembled Greek lords on the eve of their departure for Troy (ll. 5431-5527); Paris's speech to rally the Trojans before the seventh (and Paris's last) battle (ll. 19559-609); and Menelaus's presentation of Achilles's son Pirrus to Agamemnon, which sets in motion the Greeks' final push to victory (ll. 21312-91).

The shorter verse line--usually four or six syllables--occurs at moments of intense emotion, as a way of accelerating the emotional and actual tempo of a scene. For example, Agamemnon's reaction to the news that Helen has been abducted is measured partly in three-, four-, and six-syllable lines:

Il vous fault demander vengeance  
Par puissance  
Darmes et non aultrement  
A lespee et a la lance  
Sans doubtance  
Fault demander vengeance  
Non pas en gemissement  
Nen tourment... (Stengel 59, ll. 3365-72)  
[You must demand vengeance  
By strength  
Of arms--no other way--  
With the sword and the lance,  
Without hesitation

Demand vengeance--  
No groaning about it,  
No torment because of it...]

The urgency this verse form creates is more evident in the original, of course, but the repetition and the pattern of restarting the utterance creates a sense of command. Agamemnon is telling Menelaus what to do and how to do it, and the almost staccato nature of the delivery hints at consequences if Menelaus does not do what Agamemnon says. This isn't to say that Agamemnon is threatening Menelaus, but that the anger Agamemnon feels emerges in the versification as passion for what he is advising. The full effect of these lines' rhythm and meter would, of course, be most effective in a performance, where the actor could physicalize the intention as well as vocalize it.

Other examples of the shorter verse line also show passion, but of different varieties. For example, after the fall of Troy, Pirrus systematically kills members of the royal family, starting with Priam. Since his father was Achilles, he reserves special venom and brutality for Polyxena, Achilles's would-be bride. After he tells her "ne faictes pas long sermon [do not make a long sermon]" so that he can get to beheading her more quickly, her response includes a sequence of short verses:

Cest mon reconfort  
Que je meus pucelle  
Oncques neus nouvelle  
De couple charnelle  
Si me vueil offrir  
Comme teurterelle

Vierge nette and belle

Pour la mort souffrir

O dieux recevez

Et en gre prenez

Ma virginite

Vous qui tout savez

Mon ame sauvez

Par vostre bonte

Jay en chastete

Vescu et este

Depuis que fus nee

Mieulx me vient a gre

Mourir en purite

Questre diffamee (Stengel 425, ll. 27402-12).

[It is my comfort

That I die a young girl

Still innocent as snow

Of carnal coupling.

I offer myself--

Like a turtledove--

A virgin, clean and beautiful,

To suffer death.

Oh gods, receive



And with grace take  
My virginity.  
You who know all,  
Save my soul  
By your bounty.  
I have lived  
In chastity and have been  
Since I was born.  
I am better satisfied  
To die in purity  
That to be dishonored.]

The shorter verse line imparts a sense that Polyxena is literally running out of time. The short phrases give her final words an urgent and plaintive quality, as she prepares herself for death with the only comfort available to her, that she remains as virginal as she was at birth. Using the same meter as Agamemnon above, Milet creates a very different mood--a desperate prayer for salvation instead of a speech of masculine intimidation. This is another example where the different functions of the meter would be best demonstrated in the context of performance, where the actor playing Polyxena would add to the verse's sensitive portrayal of her predicament with her body, vocal modulations, and physical movement.

Moreover, the echoes of Pirrus' vengeance on Polyxena reverberate in the register of contemporary life: Charles VII's abandonment of Joan of Arc directly resulted in her horrible death. Polyxena uses the word "pucelle", mimicking the common address of Joan, as she prepares to meet a similar fate, though a less torturous one. It is easy to imagine, with lines such

as these, an emotional performance that takes advantage of the concision of this speech to show a young girl's bravery and nobility in the face of brutal treatment and undeserved death.

The *alexandrin*, least used of all the forms in the play, appears in places of particular weight, such as occasions where living characters mourn the death of another character, or characters make a last request. Such a use prefigures statements like Ronsard's from his *Art poétique*:

Les vers alexandrins tiennent la place en nostre langue telle que les vers héroïques entre les Grecs et Latins. (Porter 532)

[Alexandrine verse holds the place in our language like that of the heroic verses {hexameter} among the Greeks and Romans.]

Other critics in the mid-sixteenth century called it "une antique maniere de rithmer [an old manner of rhyming]," associating not just with the hellenic and hellenistic past ("antique"), but also with the dawn of French letters as well (Porter 531). Thus Milet's use of the *alexandrin* invokes a double history--an invocation that mirrors the play's subject and Milet's orienting of the play according to the Prologue. The *alexandrin* provides a literary reflection and structural reminder of that history. With such good reasons to use the *alexandrin*, why did Milet selectively apply the meter? First, the *alexandrin* definitely slows the pace of the storytelling--rhymes occur with less frequency and the speeches are correspondingly longer. Second, it is harder to speak, as the lines are longer and more words fit in between each rhyme. Thus actors would need to memorize more words without the direct aid of a rhyme scheme. Third, it has a far greater impact used sparingly rather than in all 30,000 lines of the play, drawing attention to itself by its relative rarity. Finally, by assigning the *alexandrin* to only the most thematically similar occasions, Milet creates a link between the versification and that specific topic. Thus all

six occasions of *alexandrin* verse in the play forge an additional connection to yet another literary influence on Milet's writing: the funerary *complainte*.

The *complainte funèbre* (funerary lament), as a poetic genre, is not categorized on the basis of its metrical or rhythmic structure, as the variety of forms used by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poets is nearly as diverse as the number of *complaintes* themselves (Deschaux 79). Even the contemporary *Rhétoriciens* could not agree on a formal structure, with many different treatises elaborating different definitions for the *complainte* (ibid. 80). What was common to all definitions, however, was the nature of the subject: death and how to conceive of loss. Whatever its precise nature, however, by the fourteenth century, the *complainte*--closely allied with its lyrical poetic cousin the *lai*--had established itself as a separate genre, often appearing within longer works. *Complaintes* featured a wide range of subjects: the Great Schism, lost love, dead patrons, occupied cities, as well as fellow artists, musicians, and writers who had passed on (ibid. 77-9). The genre survived into the early sixteenth century before it was supplanted by other forms; Jean Lemaire de Belges, one of the *Rhétoriciens*, was one of the sixteenth century's well-known writers of *complaintes* (ibid. 79). During the second half of the fifteenth century, however, the *complainte* most often "célébrent la gloire, non plus le *triumphus Mortis*, mais le *triumphus Famae* [celebrated glory, no longer the 'triumph of Death' but the 'triumph of Fame']" (Jung 1986, 142).

But the story of Troy had not historically been a source of material for *complaintes*, especially in the earliest versions by Dares and Dictys (Jung 1986, 143). They first appeared in the prose version *Roman de Troie*, Guido de Colonne reduced them in his *Historia*, and then, Milet significantly expanded and elaborated them in *Destruction de Troie*. He used *alexandrin* in four out of the eight *complaintes funèbres* in the play: Achilles mourning Patroclus; Priam

and Paris mourning Troilus; Archilocus mourning Achilles and saying farewell to his father Nestor; and Priam and Helen mourning Paris. The *alexandrin* is not exclusive to the *complainte funèbre*, appearing in at least two other places, the death and dying wishes of Deiphebus, and the end of Priam's vision before the final destruction of the city. Milet's elaborations consisted not only of creating dialogue, but also sequencing the laments through a hierarchy of mourners designed to heighten the tension. This is particularly the case in the laments for Hector, Troilus, and Paris, which begin with their siblings, and escalate towards the mother, wife, or lover. The *complainte* for Paris culminates in a 43-line *alexandrin* lament from Helen. This bit of poetry borrows one of its refrains from a ballad of Christine de Pizan: "et sy ne puis ne guerir ne morir [and so I can neither be cured nor die]" (Jung 1986, 155-6; Stengel 321-2, ll. 20326, 20342, 20358, 20362). In addition, the form of Helen's lament is very close to a specific form labeled "ballade fatrisée" by Jean Molinet in his *Art de rhétorique* (Jung 1986, 157).

### 5.3.2 Shared Aspects of the *Grands Rhétoriciens*

Sprinkled throughout the foregoing are references to a group of poets called the *Grands Rhétoriciens*, who are best known for their innovations in poetic forms and techniques. Michel Zink has strongly objected to the term *Grands Rhétoriciens* because it is based on a misunderstanding of a contemporary description. Yet the phrase has become common currency to describe a type of poetry and its proponents that flourished from the middle to the end of the fifteenth century--exactly contemporaneous with Jacques Milet's writing career (Zink 298). Jacques Milet has never been included among the names typically grouped as *Grands Rhétoriciens*, though at least one, as we have seen, did know of and admired his work (see Chapter Two). All of the *Grands Rhétoriciens* were courtly poets, employed by a prince

usually in a profession not associated with their avocation. Unsurprisingly, the court of Burgundy supported the greatest number of *Rhétoriciens* (6), including Michaut Taillevent, Georges Chastelain, Olivier de la Marche, Pierre Machaut, Jean Molinet, Jean Lemaire des Belges. Others included Jean Meschinot (at the court of Brittany), Jean Robertet (at the court of Bourbon), and, during the reign of Charles VIII, André de la Vigne, Guillaume Cretin, Jean Marot, and Octavien Saint-Gelais (at the court of France) (ibid.). We have seen some of these names before, as artists and historiographers who recorded many of the political and cultural events discussed in Chapter Two. It is already clear that they were contemporary countrymen of Jacques Milet's, but in this section, I want to show how Milet shared their values and parts of their artistic vision.

The source of the *Rhétoriciens*' financial support heavily influenced their attitudes towards princely leadership and its relationship to both public good and public opinion. They esteemed the idea of service to the Prince, often took a moralizing tone in their writings, and were always interested in shaping public opinion. The *Rhétoriciens* were not limited in the kinds of writing they did, composing poetry and prose in equal measure. Also common among the *Rhétoriciens* was a tendency to create or consult treatises on what they called "*seconde rhétorique*", or rhetorical rules and guidelines gathered from the growing number of works from antiquity circulating in courtly and clerical *milieux* (Zink 299; *Littérature* 209). The application of these rhetorical guidelines varied widely among the *Rhétoriciens*, as might be expected for a collection of individuals that did not have a group consciousness at the time. In general, however, the *Rhétoriciens* shared interests in three dimensions of their work: values, forms, and techniques. Reverence for the prince, concern about political stability and security, and virtually no interest in courtly love or religious topics represented some of the most important

shared values (Zink 299; *Littérature* 204). Milet, as his efforts to turn the play and its Prologue into a "mirror of princes" demonstrate, definitely shared the contemporary political consciousness of the *Rhétoriqueurs*, and his choice of the Troy story meant that he also engaged, as we have seen, religious topics and the pitfalls of courtly love.

The time of the *Rhétoriqueurs* was a period of a "fête de langage [festival of language]", when writers experimented, exclusively in the vernacular, with complex and occasionally extremely rigid rhyme schemes, mixing prose and verse, and innovating concrete forms, which are poems dependent on their spatial arrangements on the page to convey meaning (*Littérature* 204). Much more than writers in previous centuries, the *Rhétoriqueurs* used the *prosimètre* form, which interspersed poems with prose explanations or commentaries that expounded in a more linear fashion the ideas figured within the verse. Milet's combination of the prose *Épître* alongside the verse dramatization is a kind of prosimetric form, where the prose section explains the reasons for representing the incidents in the poem in a specific way. The *prosimètre* was only one example of the many types of poetic forms that the *Rhétoriqueurs* spent time inventing and cataloging in the rhetorical treatises that proliferated in the fifteenth century. As we have seen, Milet was extremely selective about the forms of verse he deployed in *Destruction de Troie*, matching the meter and verse type with the thematic or dramatic needs of a particular section, rather than opting to display a talent for ornate and decorative rhyme schemes, like many of the *Rhétoriqueurs*.

While he may not have participated in the boldest rhetorical experiments that marked the period of his writing career, Milet definitely shared the typical background, political consciousness and sense of craft of the *Grands Rhétoriqueurs*. Milet's biography and educational background strongly suggest a role in a princely court of some kind, though no direct

records exist that have come to light attesting to a long-term role in a specific court. But as his *Épître* demonstrates, Milet was focused on getting the attention of the prince and then imparting useful information about how to rule, make decisions, and weigh potentially conflicting priorities, such as the amount and timing of clemency, the consequences of betrayal, and the dangers of inconstancy. He wove concern for the body politic into his Prologue as well, metaphorically embodying the nascent state and the protection it needed, while setting the stage for his dramatization of antiquity. As we have seen, concerns about religion and courtly love register only to the degree that they affect the background of the fictional world, and the political course of events.

The web of influences and the traces of intertextuality sketched in the preceding sections testify to Milet's embeddedness in a *milieu* occupied not just by his living contemporaries and advocates of rhetorical values and forms, but also by his literary predecessors, such as Christine de Pizan and Alan Chartier, who supplied models, words, and above all, an attitude that artists are involved in, and attempt to influence, their societies through the words and manifestations of their art. Perhaps Milet and his dramatist colleagues--such as the Gréban brothers and Eustache Mercadé--had finally realized what the Dukes of Burgundy and Anjou had learned: performance can become reality. With that perspective, *Destruction de Troie* becomes an experiment in social influence where the methods of rhetoric are allied with the unique power of enactment to spark debate within the arena of performance. This is not to say that this is all *Destruction de Troie* is. But part of its reason for being is surely the literary context of the mid-fifteenth century, in which Milet's play is both an heir to tumultuous political history, innovative literary achievement, and embodies a kind of *speculum*--not of princes, but of the wide variety of literary responses to his society. Viewed from this many-faceted perspective, the diachronic and synchronic elements

integrated into *Destruction de Troie* argue that, both as a document intended for performance, and as literature, the play deserves consideration not as an exception to ahistorically conceived categories, but as emblematic of its time: a fertile, heterogeneous expression of vital creativity and ingenuity, imbued with concern for aesthetic pleasure and the public good. In this new formulation, *Destruction de Troie* migrates from the margins into the center of a culture--reflecting it, distorting it, contesting it, and proposing improvements for it.



## 6.0 CONCLUSION: INTO THE MAINSTREAM

The location of *Destruction de Troie* on the periphery of our understanding of medieval theatre and drama in the last decades of the fifteenth century and the first few of the sixteenth is a result of latter-day history rather than an appropriate contextualization of its actual significance as a cultural product. The examination of *Destruction de Troie* from the perspective of a series of domains--material, historical, performative, and literary--repositions the play at the intersection of a constellation of established, emergent, and experimental cultural practices. In at least one way, this study has confirmed what scholars already knew. *Destruction de Troie* belongs in the category of large-scale religious mystery plays because it shares much of their formal characteristics and many of the performance customs deployed within them. However, *Destruction de Troie's* subject, the "matter of Troy," rather than representing a kind of minority point of view, actually situates the play in the mainstream of the kinds of fictional universes recruited and appropriated by a range of social groups, including sovereigns and the members of their courts, civic guilds, and artists and writers of all varieties.

The long list of surviving copies, in manuscript and print, also demonstrates how effectively the play captured the spirit of its time, as demand for reprints extended the play's life in book form to nearly a century. Though print technology suppressed many of the traces of performance that abounded in the handwritten copies, print also ensured the survival and wide dissemination of the stage directions. However, changing attitudes towards plays in print

influenced the way later generations encountered the play, helping to fuel the contemporary scholarly conclusion that effectively cleaved the play from its performance dimension.

Yet performance, as we have seen, is crucial for understanding *Destruction de Troie*. Much of the text in the play, as well as all of the images, are incomprehensible unless the rubric of performance structures our understanding. Though much of the direct evidence for performance remains inconclusive, the strength of the correspondence between the performance forms, tastes, and customs at or near the places where *Destruction de Troie* originated and circulated, and the traces of those practices in the text and images of various extant copies, supports the idea that the play was much more emblematic of the broader performance and literary cultures dominant at the time. The play's particular attention to political matters as demonstrated in its *Letter of Epilogue*, as well as the ideological orientation of the Prologue reinforce the important relationship of performance to power.

*Destruction de Troie* first appeared on the scene at the opening of a newly stable period where society and the economy possessed new optimism and resources, and people of many classes and regions energetically invested in performance forms and activities. There soon became evident an interrelationship and interdependence between performance and power, signaling a culture-wide appreciation of the utility of performance, irrespective of genre, for a variety of purposes, and testifying to a renewed *exploitation* of performance by nearly all levels of society. Dukes, kings, and cardinals all took advantage of the triumphal Entry. Communities staged *histoires* and *misteres*--on their own and in conjunction with other events--to celebrate, commemorate, impress, and outdo. The large-scale religious cycle plays, rather than *principally* manifestations of devotional piety, may have owed at least as much to their communities' desire for prestige, and for temporal rather than metaphysical reward. In this conception, plays like *Le*

*Mystère de la Passion* and *Destruction de Troie* become points on a wide continuum of spectacular performance practices, including Entries, processions, banquets, and many other kinds, that infused the cities, courts, and countryside of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century with a prickling energy born of renewed pride in the past, confidence in the present, and optimism for the future.

Similarly, the literary dimension reveals *Destruction de Troie's* myriad connections to traditions, forms, and techniques that Milet both inherited from his predecessors and models, and appropriated from his peers. These synchronic and diachronic axes collapse into a unified whole that integrates literary expression with the unique qualities of enactment. Here the play becomes an exemplar of the time period in terms of its recruitment of both literary and performance practices to serve political, social and aesthetic purposes. Given *Destruction de Troie's* representative rather than exceptional relationship to its time period, it is time we re-wrote the historical narratives that guide both our teaching of, and further research into, varieties of performance in the late medieval period. Preoccupations with generic categories and reliance on master narratives prevent us from seeing the connections among domains of culture and experience, such as religious and secular, sacred and profane, serious and comic.

Theatre historiography is in the midst of a re-orientation around how technologies of communication influenced the forms and reception of performance. In that context, this study suggests that, for the late medieval period, it is the technologies of spectacle--civic, courtly, religious, and otherwise--that provide the unifying lens through which the performance history of the time becomes most comprehensible, and that history's connections to past and future periods become less inflected with progressivist or hierarchical assessments. Our new narrative might pass from performances of ritual, belief, and festivity (Attic and Roman drama, liturgical drama,

early vernacular plays) through technologies of spectacle (14th, 15th, and early 16th century European forms of performance, including plays, processions, banquets, tournaments, entries, and the like) en route to theatres of the word (professionally incarnated and preserved in print). *Destruction de Troie* would then stand as a particularly good example of technologies of spectacle: the kind of play that deployed a wide variety of performative, literary, and aesthetic tools, was closely related to both religious performance and secular literature, and was inflected with the political and social ideologies of its day.

## APPENDIX A

### MANUSCRIPT SOURCES IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, BY REPOSITORY

The following is a list of the manuscripts and other handwritten sources consulted in the course of this research. Not all of these documents are cited in the foregoing, but every cited manuscript document appears in this Appendix. The list is divided according to repository. Manuscripts of *Destruction de Troie* are noted, using the accepted labels.

#### A.1 FRANCE

##### A.1.1 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The following lists all manuscripts consulted at the BnF. Most of these manuscripts were consulted because they contained images that related to my analysis in Chapter Three. For more information on the *Destruction de Troie* manuscripts, please see Table 1.

fr. 50, *Miroir historial*, c. 1463 (Vincent de Beauvais)

fr. 127, *De cas des nobles hommes et femmes*, c. 1450-c. 1475 (Boccacio)

fr. 254, *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, c. 1467

fr. 301, *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, c. 1400

fr. 329, *La Bouquechardière*, 15th c.

fr. 783, *Roman de Troie*, c. 1275-c.1300

fr. 861, *Roman d'Enéide*, c. 1500

fr. 1415, *Destruction de Troie (P1)*

fr. 1610, *Roman de Troie*, 1264

fr. 1625, *Destruction de Troie (P2)*

fr. 1626, *Destruction de Troie (P3)*

fr. 1627, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*

fr. 2609, *Grandes Chroniques de France*, 1471

fr. 2685, *La Bouquechardière*, between 1457 and 1461

fr. 12536, *Mystere de la Passion jouee a Valenchiennes*

fr. 12601, *Destruction de Troie (P4)*

fr. 22552, *Recueil de Troie*, 1495

fr. 22553, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, n.d. (post-12th c.)

fr. 22554, *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, 16th c.

fr. 24333, *Destruction de Troie (P5)*

fr. 24920, *Histoire de la Destruction de Troie (Colonne)*, 15th c.

N.A.F. 11674, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*

N.A.F. 24920, *Histoire de la Destruction de Troie (Colonne)*, c. 1495-c. 1500.

Lat. 7939A, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, 1458

Rothschild 1079, *Destruction de Troie (R)*

### **A.1.2 Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris**

These manuscripts were consulted because of the illustrations they contained, as evidence for my argument in Chapter Three:

MS-3692, *Recueil de Troie*, 15th c.

RÉS-MS-3685, *Histoire universelle*, 15th c.

### **A.1.3 Archives départementales de Loiret, Orléans**

The primary resource at these Archives was the *Archives communales d'Orléans antérieures à 1790*, or "archives of the commune," which essentially means the records of city government from before 1790. The volume lists primary documents by series, which are organized topically and standardized in all archives throughout France. At Loiret, I consulted the "CC" series, or *Finances, impôts, et comptabilité* [*Finances, taxes, and accounting*]. I consulted the following segments of the CC series: 537, 558, 561, 654, 655, 660, 665, 666. These segments contained relevant information on performance-related expenses, and date from 1391 through 1460.

### **A.1.4 Archives municipales de Lyon**

I consulted documents here in the "CC" series and the "BB" series, or the *Registre des délibérations* [*Minutes of Council Deliberations*]. In BB, I consulted: 019, 025, 026, 037, and 038. These contained information on council decisions relating to performance events. These date from 1487 to 1518. In CC, I consulted: 0273 1, 0481, 0512, 0515, 0518, 0519, 0541, 0551,

0638 1, 0838 1, and 0934 1. These contained information on performance-related expenses, and date from 1475 to 1540.

## **A.2 ENGLAND, OXFORD UNIVERSITY, BODLEIAN LIBRARY**

In England, the only manuscript I consulted was a partially illustrated copy of *Destruction de Troie*.

Douce MS 356, *Destruction de Troie* (O)



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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