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JOINVILLE: A HAGIOGRAPHIC STORY ABOUT ONESELF AND ABOUT THE OTHER

The article deals with a Mediaeval hagiographic text dating from 1309, Joinville's work *Histoire de Saint Louis*. The text is a hagiography or sacred biography, a legal testimony that served in the canonisation process of Louis IX, but, at the same time, also the chronicle of a crusader expedition, that is, the story of a journey which was both an expedition and a pilgrimage. Finally, the text is also an autobiography, since Joinville also inserted elements from his own life in the discourse about the saint. The article elaborates the frameworks of hagiography in relation to historiography and the conception and formation of the Other (the non-Christian) in the context of the late Western Middle Ages.

Keywords: the Middle Ages, hagiography, autobiography, the Other

Hagiography as a literary genre

Hagiography is a literary genre that was also called hagiology and hagiologic during the 17th century. As Hippolyte Delehaye noted in his *Les légendes hagiographiques* as early as in 1905, hagiography favours the "performers" of the holy, that is, the saints, and aspires to exemplarity. According to Delehaye, a hagiography is every written memorial inspired by the cult of a saint and serves in the furtherance of such saint (cf. according to de Certeau 1975:274). The notion of "hagiography" did not exist in the sense of literature in the Middle Ages, which is somewhat unusual if we recall which of the *artes* were classified (*artes amandi, dictaminis, dictandi, epistolariae, liberales, mechanicae, memorativae...*). It was only at the end of the 17th century and/or beginning of the 18th that the notion of hagiography was given the meaning that it still has today: initially, the term was used to designate the one who wrote about the saints, that is, "the expert on saints", while it was used later to denote the literary genre that dealt with the saints and their lives. Diverse elements – literary, archaeological, onomastic and iconographic – are brought to-

gether in hagiography around one theme – the saint. It is the body of texts of the historiographic type whose heroes are the saints (Phillipart 1998:22-23). According to the etymology of the word, hagiography is a scholarly study about saints, their history and of their cult. The definition itself emphasises the historical aspect, but holiness can be analysed from many aspects: the psychological, theological, sociological, literary, and the like. It is impossible not to view hagiography in the role of "authenticity" or "historical importance", which means, in fact, to submit a literary genre to the laws of another genre – historiography. According to de Certeau, hagiography is a literary genre, or, as it is defined by M. Van Uytenghe, drawing on de Certeau – it is a "discourse" about the saints that we can identify by four features:

- 1) the hero placed at the focus point of the story;
- 2) "kiregmatic reduction" of "historical importance";
- 3) the twofold function of apologia and construction;
- 4) the use of commonplaces in description of the hero – the saint.

That definition enables us to encompass simultaneously "content, function and historical nature, leaving open the question of the literary form that sets it in motion" (Uytenghe 1993:149). The combination of place, works and theme indicates structure that does not necessarily relate to "that which occurred", but rather to "that which is exemplary" (de Certeau 1975:275). Each life of a saint can be observed as a system that organises a manifestation through a topological combination of "virtues" and "miracles". The *extraordinary* and the *possible* collaterally compose the fiction in the service of exemplarity. The author's major aspiration is to make the hero – the saint – as similar as possible to the "set" model, since individuality barely exists in hagiography: identical characteristics or identical episodes are transferred from name to name: combinations build up the personage and give him meaning. In order to stress the divine source of the hero's activities and virtues, the saint is very frequently of noble descent. The sanctification of princes and the "ennobling" of saints correspond with each other from text to text: these reciprocal operations create exemplarity in the faith and sacralisation of the established order within the social hierarchy. However, that also suits the eschatological scheme, which reverses the political order so as to give precedence over it to the celestial order, and to make kings out of paupers. According to de Certeau, hagiography is a "discourse of virtues", although the notion has moral meaning only secondarily. Virtues are basic units – their reduction or multiplication in a story creates the impression of repetition or progress; their combinations enable the classification of hagiography.

Histoire de Saint Louis – a different hagiographic model

The life of Saint Louis was closely linked with a new institution of the Church in the first part of the 13th century – the mendicant orders. From the mid-11th century, the Church had been trying to respond to the profound changes in western society. There was a considerable strengthening in economic activities during that period, along with development of the towns and the blossoming of the Romanesque and the Gothic styles. From Sainte-Chapelle to Nôtre-Dame in Paris and the Cathedral in Amiens, the churches testify to the piety of the saintly king. According to André Vauchez (1999), the changes in mentality and practice built up a new harmony, which reconciled the powerful attractiveness of "this down here" and the still very active fear of "that up there". Individuality also found a place in the remodelling of the common frameworks. The Church met all those challenges from the mid-11th century to the 12th by the Gregorian Reform, which more strictly separated laymen from the priesthood (Vauchez 1999:56-67). The life of St Louis and his canonisation were closely linked with the emergence of the new mendicant orders – the Franciscans and the Dominicans.¹ When it seemed that the production of memories of Saint Louis had been completed, when the hagiographers, who had known him or had been given testimony about him by people who had been close to him, had written about the life and the authentic miracles of the holy king, Jean de Joinville, who was then around eighty years old, started to write "un livre des saintes paroles et des

¹ Three mendicant monks deserve the credit for the "conservation" of memories of the holy king and his miracles: two wrote hagiographic works about Louis IX prior to his canonisation, while the third rewrote his *Life*, using the dossier on canonisation, which was later lost. Louis' first hagiographer was the Dominican, Geoffroy de Beaulieu, the king's confessor over a period of more than 20 years, who accompanied him to Tunis. It was from this monk that Pope Gregory X sought information after Louis's death about the king and his works that were connected with faith. At the beginning of 1273, Geoffroy sent the pope a report (*libellus*) containing 52 chapters entitled *Vita et sancta conversatio piae memoriae Ludovici quondam regis Francorum*, which was actually a hagiography whose main part consisted of examples of the king's virtues and piety. The second biographer and hagiographer was also a Dominican - Guillaume de Chartres, chaplain to Saint Louis during the first Crusade, who was later also to share the king's imprisonment. His text was composed in the way that hagiographies were written in the 13th century: it had two parts, the first was entitled *Vita*, although it was mainly preoccupied with enumerating the king's virtues and not with biographical information, while the second part was dedicated to listing the king's miracles. Since he lived longer than Geoffroy de Beaulieu, he also noted a greater number of miracles and that is where his originality lies. Those miracles, seventeen in all, had been verified and confirmed and they also represented the sole *corpus* upon which the sanctity of King Louis IX could be based. The third hagiographer was a Franciscan, Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, Queen Marguerite's confessor from 1277 to 1295, that is, until her death and, subsequently, confessor to her daughter Blanche. He can seem to be less reliable, *a priori*, since he writes after the canonisation, probably around 1303, or more than 30 years after the death of Saint Louis, whom he had not met. In writing the hagiography, he used the canonisation documents that disappeared not long after.

bons faiz nostre roy saint Loos" ("a book about the holy words and good deeds of our king, Saint Louis"). According to Joinville's admission, Queen Jeanne de Navarre, King Louis IX's granddaughter, asked him to write the hagiography somewhat prior to her death in 1305, and Joinville completed writing it in 1309 (Le Goff 1996:473-477).

Jean de Joinville's *Histoire de Saint Louis*² is a text that is well known to Mediaevalists. It is a hagiography or a sacred biography, legal testimony that served in the process of Louis IX's canonisation, but it is also, at the same time, the chronicle of a crusader expedition, that is, the story of a journey that was both an expedition and a pilgrimage. Finally, the text is also an autobiography since Joinville was very close to the king and followed him on his journey to the Holy Land. According to Paul Zumthor (1993:87-101), it is here that we find ourselves on the "extreme" border of the literary act: the fate of that "I" who appears throughout the narration mixes with the common destiny of man and the world, while in character, the text is in fact a legal testimony.

We certainly should also enquire about the creditability of Joinville's written memories, primarily those that refer to the crusader expedition, due to the fact that they were written down after more than half a century had passed. Le Goff assumes that de Joinville started writing earlier, immediately

² Jean de Joinville (c. 1224 - December 24, 1317) belonged to a great noble family from Champagne. He received an education befitting a young noble at the court of Theobald IV, Count of Champagne. On the death of his father, he became the seneschal of Champagne. In 1241, he accompanied Theobald to the court of the king of France, Louis IX (1214-1270). Saint Louis was king of France from 1226 to his death. He was a member of the House of Capet and the son of King Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile. He is the only canonized King of France. In 1244, when Louis organized the Seventh Crusade, Joinville decided to abandon his family to join the Christian knights. At the time of the crusade, Joinville placed himself in the service of the king and became his counselor and confidant. In 1250, when the king and his troops were captured by the Mameluks in al-Mansourah, Joinville, also one of the captives, participated in the negotiations and the collection of the ransom. Joinville probably brought himself even closer to the king in the difficult times and misfortunes that followed the failure of the crusade (including the death of his brother Robert, Count of Artois). It was Joinville who advised the king to stay in the Holy Land instead of returning immediately to France as the other lords had wanted; the king followed Joinville's advice. During the following four years spent in the Holy Land, Joinville was the constant advisor to the king, who knew that he could count on Joinville's frankness and absolute devotion.

In 1270, Louis IX undertook a new crusade with his three sons. Any enthusiasm Joinville had had for the previous crusade had long since been quelled and he refused to follow Louis, recognizing the uselessness of the enterprise and convinced that the duty of the king was not to leave the kingdom that needed him. In fact, the expedition was a disaster and the king died outside Tunis on August 25, 1270.

From 1271, the papacy carried out a long inquest on the subject of Louis IX, which ended with his canonization, announced in 1297 by Pope Boniface VIII. As Joinville had been a close friend of the king, his counselor and his confidant, his testimony was invaluable to the inquest, where he appeared as a witness in 1282.

after the king's death, and not only when requested to do so by the queen, so that all his thoughts would have been orientated to the life that he has spent with Louis IX and, thus, his memories would have been much fresher (Le Goff 1996:476).

Perhaps it is not even necessary to mention that Mediaeval society, in which what was written was less important, was in fact a society of memories that were stronger, longer and more precise than in societies in which the need for written memories was stressed more. Naturally enough, we must not ignore the existence of certain fundamental differences between hagiography and historiography (cf. de Certeau 1975) in analysing Joinville's text. In historiographic texts, what is most important is reporting in chronological order and the co-ordination of the events of which the text speaks with a particular period, while hagiography is indifferent to such requirements: it barely ever occurs that the year or month and/or death of the saint is mentioned in his *Life* or legend, although the day or week or Church festival that co-incides with his hallowed death is often mentioned. Another characteristic of the hagiographic genre, which differentiated it from historiography, was the dissimilar evaluation of causality. The Mediaeval historiographer could not refer only to divine providence; he also had to provide rational causes for the events he was describing and, thus, he had to respect chronology and factography. Every part of the story and the works of a saint and the miracles he performed were accorded particular meaning, which did not demand causal motivation: a miracle is acasual in its very essence and represents a disruption of earthly causality (Gurevič 1987:38-40). A saint is an embodiment of the extratemporal and is not bound by human and/or earthly conditions. According to Gurevič, ideal behaviour, such as a saint's, contrasts with the actual behaviour of human beings, who experience actual history and participate in it: therein lies the importance of the legends and the *Lives* for the Church.

Joinville as an exceptional witness and hagiographer

Two circumstances made Joinville an exceptional witness: firstly he knew the king well – he accompanied him on the crusade to Egypt and lived in close proximity to him at various times in the royal palace in Paris; as for those other parts of Louis's life when he was not present, he sought out information from reliable witnesses (so, for example, the witness who informed him about Louis' second crusader expedition – to Tunis – was the king's son Pierre, Count of Alençon, who was at his father's side prior to his death). Joinville was also one of the witnesses questioned in the 1282 canonisation process. The second characteristic that made Joinville an exceptional hagiographer was the fact that he was a layman, which meant that he was free of the limitations of the mendicant order hagiographers, who had exclusively to describe

the king through the aspect of his piety. Joinville shows Louis IX as a saint, but also as a warrior and knightly king: it is to those very aspects that he dedicates the second part of his book – "The second part of the book speaks of his great chivalry and great military exploits".³ According to Le Goff (1996), Joinville was the first layman to write about the life of a saint, although, taking into account the 13th century context, that is not inexplicable: some of the members of the nobility attained a level of education that enabled them to venture into the writing of literature. Although Joinville was exceptionally well-educated and was probably quite familiar with the Mediaeval mode of writing, he did not follow the hagiographic convention. Thus, his *Vita* is not followed by a list of miracles, which was unusual for the hagiographic genre. Joinville did not witness the miracles and mentioned them only in one sentence: "(...) his bones were kept in a chest and taken and laid in Saint-Denis in France, where his tomb was, where he was buried, and whence God performed many miracles in his name (...)"⁴ (Joinville 1995:370).

It is also notable to mention that, unlike the hagiographers who were men of the cloth, Joinville wrote in French and "his" king used the language in which he had actually spoken – Old French – making Joinville's hagiography "more truthful" and "more credible" than those written in Latin, which was the inveterate language of sacred biography.

The oral and the written word in Saint Louis' century

It seems that the oral and the written have always intertwined but, in fact, they blend: these are not two completed, finalised verbal media. This is not merely a matter of one media prevailing over the other but rather of a historical dynamic of relations, which also influences the written and the oral genres. The 13th century was a period during which institutions, communities, and even individuals, accorded growing importance to the written word and/or a period in which memories based on oral transmission withdrew in the face of written texts. The written text increasingly became the instrument of rule. Paul Zumthor regards the 13th century as the period of the "triumph of the word" and provides a concept of oral culture that differs from the concept of popular culture, as defined, for example, by Bahtin and Gourevitch. Zumthor places the proximity of the oral and the popular in the background, replacing the notion of *oralité* by the notion of *vocalité* (Zumthor 1987). Zumthor puts the voice (*voix*) at the centre of his theoretical framework for the study of Mediaeval literature, since he believes that *vocality* was the material mode of

³ "La seconde partie dou livre si parle de ses granz chevaleries et de ses granz faiz d'armes."

⁴ "(...) et furent sui os gardé en un escrien et aporté et enfoui à Saint-Denis en France, là où il avoit eslue sa sepulture, auquel lieu il fu enterrez, là où Dieus a puis fait maint beau miracle pour li (...)."

existence of texts in the Middle Ages. The *voice* that was the bearer of the narration is incorporated in the text. Joinville's hagiographic royal word appears in that "general movement of words". According to Zumthor's research, Saint Louis was the first king to speak. He spoke in the works of his biographers and hagiographers, particularly so in Joinville's text, which often used direct speech so that the king's words would sound more authentic, so that here, the word "was made flesh". The words attributed to him correspond with the traditional code of the words of a particular saint, although Joinville does warn us that he "devoured" the words of the saintly king – and by that alone, confirms that all is truthful and credible.

Wavering between the genres in the *Histoire de Saint Louis*

Although Joinville was writing testimony about another, about Saint Louis, he was also writing his own testimony, that is, testimony about himself. Reading his text we are compelled to ask ourselves whether this is biography or autobiography. According to Le Goff's assumption (Le Goff 1996:477), Joinville started making notes about his memories of Louis immediately after his death and later, at the request of Queen Jeanne de Navarre, he re-edited the work, which did not fully lose the autobiographic character of the first version. Joinville intervened to such an extent in his own narration that it is no longer clear whether he personally participated in certain episodes, and what the "we" invoked so often in the text actually refers to. Michel Zink analyses the "auto/exo-biographie" (Zink 1985:219) in Joinville and believes that that particular element stems from the fact that Joinville was the first writer who, writing in French, spoke of himself in the first person. For its part, this is a direct reflection of the time in which the text was written because, according to Zumthor, the 13th century was a period of "the transition from lyric poetry to personal poetry" (Zumthor 1972: 405-428). In Mediaeval texts, "I" does not usually have autoreferential value; it is mainly replaced by a certain impersonal personage whom that "I" implicitly denotes. Mediaeval poetry was unfamiliar with narration in the first person, except in certain exceptions that Zumthor divides into three groups. Prose texts with historical elements that can be classified as memoirs are in the first group. Joinville's text in French, along with texts in Latin – Abélard's work *Historia calamitatum* and Guilbert de Nogent's *Vita* – are in this group. The "I" in those texts releases a certain type of universal quality from time to time in constant transitions from moral reflections to events. In contrast to that, the authors of "real" memoirs – Villehardouin, Robert de Clari and others – use the third person and speak of themselves using their own names, thus placing themselves in the same position that their "personages" occupy at the discourse level (Zumthor 1972:171-173).

In his game with mirrors, Joinville creates a certain type of illusion of reality in which he wants to convince his readers and, it seems, also himself. He mixes autobiographic testimony, his own memories of the sacred king and memories of himself. He constantly insists on the joint use of "I" and "we", which is a characteristic novelty in the mode of writing at the discursive level:

In the name of Almighty God, I, Jean de Joinville, Seneschal of Champagne, have written of the life of our sacred King Louis, of that which I have seen and heard during the six years that I spent in his company and during the pilgrimage across the sea, and later, after our return. Before I tell you of his great works and his chivalry, I shall tell you of his holy words and the good deeds that I myself saw and heard (...) ⁵ (Joinville 1995:210).

Joinville's use of the very convincing "I" might be connected with the emergence or birth of individuality during the 13th century. The notion of individuality differs depending of the period, context and society in which it appears; a different model is in question each time. In any case, however, we cannot speak of the continuous history of the individual and individuality; there was a series of historical productions that were orientated precisely at cementing memory of the individual that were denoted by a different interest: these were the autobiographies. Many historians have located the emergence of the individual in that very century of Saint Louis. The Mediaeval notion of the individual as a subject began to advance towards the individual-citizen in the "mid" Middle Ages. In Christian Mediaeval society, the individual could not emerge because of the conflict between two fundamental ideas: the one on the supremacy of the Law and the one on society as a human, organic body (cf. Gourevitch 1983; Vauchez 1999). The first idea assumes the image of a hierarchical and unequal society in which the individual is subordinate and must give precedence to his superior, who has the Law on his side. That is the society in which the "better" minority rules over the "inferior" majority. The individual is a mere subject (*subjectus*, a subordinate) in that society.

The following dominant idea derives from St Paul, and was revived in the 12th century by John of Salisbury. That concept observes society as a human body, where the limbs must obey the head (or the heart): the individual here is "submerged" into the community to which he/she belongs. It was the supremacy of the Law that contributed to the transformation of the individual-subject into the individual-citizen – and that in the century of Saint Louis. It was an era of change in the mentality and sensitivity, from which the

⁵ "En nom de Dieu le tout puissant, je Jehans sires de Joinville, seneschaus de Champaigne, faiz escrire la vie de notre saint roy Looyz, ce que je vi et oy par l'espace de sis anz que je fu en sa compaignie ou pelerinaige d'outre-mer, et puis que nous revenimes. Et avant que je vous conte de ses grans faiz et de sa chevalerie, vous conterai-je ce que je vi et oy de ses saintes paroles et de ses bons enseignemens (...)."

individual was born: in the early Middle Ages, *memento mori* gave the tone to life, thus also in literature, while the main life *credo* from the end of the 12th century was *memento vivere*. Resignation and flight from the world were replaced by "the joy of living", which made it possible for a human being to spend his/her earthly life in enjoyment. Gourevitch also places the emergence of individuality in the 13th century, emphasising the extent to which the individual was absorbed by the community of which he was a part during the Middle Ages (*individuum est ineffabile*, individuality cannot be expressed). He considered that personality – *personnalité* – would be a more appropriate term than individuality. The notion of the *persona*, which originally meant a theatre mask in Roman society (a masked person was known as a *phersu* as early as in Etruscan society), transformed into the concept of personality in the field of law. The feudal system long prevented the development or emergence of the individual and the individual's independence; the individual was subordinate to the universal, the type, the community to which he/she belonged and to the established order. However, "symptoms that testified to the increasing wishes of the person to be recognised" appeared during the 13th century (Gourevitch 1983:96-101) – the *homo interior* was discovered. Although the individual does not exist outside of the community of which he is a part and/or in which he lives in a permanent dialectical relationship between his *moi* and the group, this does not prevent the *moi* from speaking out more loudly; the 13th century *moi* is actually a conjunction of that *moi*, *homo interior* and the individual as we conceive him today.

The type and the individual appear in the *Life of Saint Louis* (Birge Vitz 1975:442-443). Although much more "lively" and real in Joinville than in the other hagiographers, Louis is a type, nonetheless, a model of a sacred king for the Church at the end of the 13th century. For his part, Joinville does partly appear as an individual through the autobiographic outlines, through the interiorisation of moral life and, finally, through his love for Saint Louis. However, he is fully aware throughout the entire text of his position within the feudal order and the customs of the genre that do not allow him to appear fully. The event that Louis introduces directly into Joinville's life is the departure for the crusade: that is also a moment of major internal conflict for Joinville. He wavers between his king and God on the one hand, and his family, castle and estates on the other. Therein lies the entire dramatic contradiction of feudal mentality (cf. Bloch 2001):

And while I travelled towards Blécourt and Saint-Urbain I no longer wished to look towards Joinville, from fear that my heart keep me there

because of the lovely castle that I was leaving and my two children⁶
(Joinville 1995:233).

If the category of subjectivity – objectivity is taken as the differential criterion between autobiography and biography, implying subjectivity as a display of one's own subjectivity, and objectivity as that shown in the presentation of the other subject (Zlatař 2000:153-154), we cannot be sure who is actually the "subject" and who the "object" in Joinville's text. For its part, if we accept Lejeune's autobiographic contract that implies that the author and the narrator are identical, we can frequently identify that here, with certain exceptions (for example, the king's envoys who speak about what they have seen in Mongol territory, then the king's son, who is Joinville's interlocutor concerning Louis IX's second crusade, in which Joinville did not participate...). Following Lejeune's categories we also arrive at the position of the narrator – sometimes the narrator is also the main personage and his narration is retrospective, speaking of his own life (admittedly while speaking of the life of another). Perhaps we are nearest in this text to what Gérard Genette called "homodiegetic" narration, which emphasises that the narrator, although the narration unfolds in the first person, is not identical to the main personage (according to Lejeune 1975: 13-46).

The characteristics of autobiography are visible in many parts of the *Life of Saint Louis* in a way that is not known in other texts from the Middle Ages, although the work itself is not autobiographical. To put it more precisely, the text constantly wavers between the life of Saint Louis and the life of Jean de Joinville. Joinville's model is hagiography, which he uses to produce the story of his own life starting out from the life of Louis IX. This is partly due to the fact that Joinville loved the saintly king and spent a part of his life in immediate proximity to him. Louis IX denoted Joinville's life to such an extent that, in writing his hagiography, he relived his life all over again, and could not avoid portraying it in his portrayal of Louis. Autobiography and biography are inseparably and inextricably intertwined here. Joinville's modernity lies in the fact that he is not writing for others – not for the queen or her son – but for himself.

The image of the Self, the image of the Other

Apart from the wavering in genre, this text shows an interesting approach to diverse cultural groups and to how the non-Christian, that is, the Other, is presented, and the extent to which that description depends on the cultural context, but also on the 13th century hagiographic genre itself.

⁶ "Et endementieres que je aloie à Blehecourt et à Saint-Urbain, je ne voz onques retourner mes yeus vers Joinville, pour ce que li cuers ne me attendrist du biau chastel que je lessioie et de mes deux enfans."

Narration is a means *par excellence* through which reality offers itself to perception, although presentation cannot be reduced merely to reflections of social relations – it is itself a social relation, but connected with the perceptions, hierarchies, resistance and conflicts that exist in other spheres of the culture in which they circulate (Ricoeur 1985). Narration participates in the process of creating signs, processing reality in diverse ways (La Capra 1983): for the Mediaeval community, the text is a joint testimony on the sanctification, which thus becomes part of the tradition that it serves. In a particular way, the entire community is the author of sacred biography, while the narration is common experience.

The *Life of Saint Louis* shared a structure dominated by anecdote with stories about journeys in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The anecdote is a privileged register of encounters with the Other, with the unforeseen or the unforeseeable, and becomes a product of the "representative technology of a particular culture" (Greenblatt 1991:11). The anecdote denotes the particular integration of a certain event and its context – this is a literary form that relates to the "real", the "historem", the tiniest unit in a historiographic event. It is in that very form that the anecdotes concerning the Others enter into Joinville's narration. Those Others were those whom he probably met – French Jews; those he himself saw on the crusader expedition – the Bedouins; and, finally, those whom he never met – the Mongols. I shall try to show the ways in which the Others become "places of memory"⁷ of moral qualities and, indirectly, places in which "the world can be read off well".⁸

Christianitas versus gentilitas

The concept of Christianity does not cover the entire content of the Western Middle Ages, although the 13th century man is defined primarily as a Christian. The notion of *christianitas* relates in a somewhat unclear way to the religious community, to the comprehensive nature of the faithful and the unity of the space that belongs to them. Christianity was geographically identified with Europe and part of the Middle East around the mid-12th century. Western man very rarely had any conception of that which did not belong to his world. The Middle Ages, unlike Antiquity, had no concepts for classifying regions and peoples and interpreting their differences and/or diversity. The Latinised Greek word *ethnicus* assumed the meaning of "pagan, godless" in Mediaeval Latin. There was no word that corresponded with the word *ethnos* from Antiquity, and Mediaeval Latin did not even have an equivalent for it (cf. Zumthor

⁷ The term is borrowed from the French historian, Pierre Nore, who uses it in a different context.

⁸ The syntagma is borrowed from Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Ogledi o filozofiji umjetnosti*, translated by Darija Domić, AGM, Zagreb, 2003.

1993). In the 6th and 7th centuries, the Germans, Slavs, Saracens and other peoples occupied undefined regions that were no longer exclusively "external". The expression "Christian people" (*christian poblo*) came about as a counter-weight to the Barbarians, who were making incursions into Christian territory, so as to denote the remainder of the populous the Empire – the main factor in their unification being Christianity.

Frequent use of the word *christianitas* by chroniclers of the first Crusade – while chroniclers of the other expeditions barely mentioned it – tells us a great deal about the connection between the Crusades and Christianity. Christianity and the Crusades expressed two basic realities of the religious community: on the one hand, the need for unity and community, and, on the other, the wish for battle and expansion. However, that dialectic was a constitutive element of Christianity, which seems at that time to have been an enclosed society that opened up only when it became necessary to oppose and come into conflict with those who were not a part of it. Christianity was defined in contrast to the pagan world, that is, the Muslims and the *gentilitas*.

The antagonism between the *christianitas* and the *gentilitas* in the *Life of Saint Louis* is given a narrative form that derives in part from Mediaeval mentality: it transforms into a duel between virtue and vice – the first, destined for victory, leads to salvation, while the second inevitably leads to ruin (cf. Dupront 1987). Joinville uses the term *paiennine* – pagan – to label the opponent. In that way, the act of nomination in the *Life of Saint Louis* also became an act of designation.

Depiction of the Other – the Jews

In a digression in Chapter X of the *Life of Saint Louis*, the king narrates an anecdote to Joinville. The episode that is introduced by the event, which eludes the order of historical events, serves here for the creation of the illusion of reality. This anecdote is actually a discussion, a so-called *disputatio*, between the clergy from Cluny and the Jews. Briefly, a knight who found himself in the monastery asks the friar for permission to ask the question of whether Mary was both a virgin and the Mother of God, to which the Jew replies that she was not. The knight beats him and the Jews run away. The priest accuses the knight of having reacted badly, while King Louis IX draws the lesson from the anecdote as being that: "(...) no-one, unless he is a competent priest, should have discussions with them [the Jews](...)"⁹ (Joinville 1995:218).

In the period between the 12th and 15th century, the discussion (*disputatio*) practice was more than a mere joint literary act; rather, it was an

⁹ "(...) nulz, se il n'est très-bons clers, ne doit desputer à eus (...)."

everyday preoccupation, spontaneous and based on the less elaborated theological arguments, a practice in which everybody participated apart from the nobility who, it seems, were indifferent to that type of communication (Duhan 1991:341 according to Benveniste 1996:32). From the mid-13th century, the Church became concerned about the danger represented by those public discussions and, by his Bull in 1233, Pope Gregory IX banned the Jews from debating with the Christians about their rituals and about the faith in general. Events that took place in Paris around 1240 marked the beginning of the discontinuation of the tradition of public discussions between Jews and Christians: namely, the Talmud was declared immoral and offensive for Christians in 1242, and was publicly burnt. Those historical circumstances are significant for interpreting the anecdote from Cluny in Joinville's text.

The Cluny episode is found in the first part of the chronicle, in which Joinville describes the behaviour and attitudes of the saintly king, "des saintes paroles et des bons faiz" ("sacred words and good deeds"), which were in harmony with the will of God and the welfare of his kingdom. The digression – and/or departure from the chronological order of events to which Joinville more or less adheres – is given through the king's words in the first person. That narrative strategy aspires to give more weight to the words and to confirm the authenticity of the episode for those to whom the story is directed, while the authenticity is also emphasised by the language in which the king speaks – Old French. During that century, sermons were wrapped in the *exemplum*, and the words of the saintly king were like a sermon. The Cluny episode can be regarded as an *exemplum*, that is, an element of oral discourse that is introduced into the written story and addresses memory.

The crusader expeditions were precisely what drew attention to the Jews: according to some chroniclers, the breaking off of relations between the Christians and the Jews dates from that period. This Cluny episode should be seen less as a *topos* of the Christian stance towards the Jews, and more as an element in the sacred biography, since Louis IX firmly defended the Christian faith – and there was no place in the hagiographies for episodes that did not have an ethical dimension.

During that period, the oral tradition was introduced into the written word in equal measure as was the oral impregnated by the written (cf. Ong 1982). During the 11th and 12th century, certain aspects of oral culture, the Mass, for example, gave up their place to theological culture. The King-Priest, connected with oral culture, that is, the culture of the gesture, gave up his place to the King-of-Law, who ruled with the aid of rational, constitutive elements. In Paul Zumthor's opinion, the lyricism of conviction was opposed by the lyricism of celebration in the 13th century (Zumthor 1972:405-428), which then led to the emergence of new types of communication. The dominance of the written word created new codes that restructured the existing models of behaviour, while the oral lost a part of its former

legitimacy. The written word, which became dominant, changed the ways in which personal or collective identity was created and the role of personal experience was even more limited. The banning of public discussions reduced the value of personal experience in favour of the collective identity, the "Otherness" created by literacy. That cultural context, that is, the beginnings of the transition from oral culture to written culture, partly illuminates the place of the anecdote in Joinville's text, although the role of the ban on communication between Christians and Jews must be borne in mind. Such exclusion from oral communication is similar to spatial exclusion. The prohibition on speech communication and Joinville's written testimony are, in fact, acknowledgement or recognition of the proximity of that Other, whom it is intended to expel: the wish to exclude is emphasised by the narrative practice that reminds one of the proximity of the Other. Here, Mediaeval society is merely rejecting the modes of communication of oral culture so as to protect itself by sheltering behind the text. The Cluny episode aims to erase having knowledge and experience of the Other, in this case, the Jews; it shows the fear of the Mediaeval world enclosed of the "Otherness".

Depiction of the Other – the Bedouins

The encounter with the Bedouins served Joinville for a quality "game" of sorts: all the negative characteristics of the Bedouins comprised a counterpoint to Christian virtues. The Bedouins appear in a description of the robbing of a camp of defeated Saracens (Joinville also called them "Turks"): lack of courage and betrayal are shown as part of their culture and customs: "I would never have said that they were Bedouins, who are subordinate to the Saracens (...), since their custom and habit is such that they always attack those who are weaker (...)"¹⁰ (Joinville 1995:261). By that sentence Joinville creates a strong contrast between the (poorer) character of the Bedouins and the virtues of the Crusaders. Quoting H. Benveniste, the myth about diversity is composed of fragments of the real world perceived through the prejudices of the observer (Benveniste 1996:41). Joinville also considers the question of the Bedouin's religion to be important: "The Bedouins do not believe in Mohammed (...) they also believe in the Old Man from the Mountain, the one supported by the Assassins"¹¹ (Joinville 1995:261).

Murders were attributed to the Assassins even outside the Orient, in the actual Christian region, so that a real psychosis about them was created in the West. It was even believed that the Assassins had come to the West to kill

¹⁰ "(...) je n'oy onques dire que li Beduyn, qui estoient sousjet aus Sarrazins (...), pour ce que leur coustume est tele et leur usaiges, que il courent tousjours sus plus febles."

¹¹ "Li Beduyn ne croient point en Mahommet (...) et aussi y croient li Vieil de la Montaigne, cil qui nourissent les Assacis."

Richard the Lionheart. Their king, "Li Vieil de la Montaigne", had been seduced by Satan. The etymology of the word *assassin* is significant: it derives from the Arab word *hashîshiya*, which mean "hashish smoker", by which it is implied that the Bedouins did not know what they were doing because they were permanently under the influence of narcotics. That name is inseparable from the very essence of the Other, the "name" is a component part of "things", and not its representation (cf. Foucault 2002). Religion served Joinville as the first system of reference in order to establish the difference between the Christians and the Bedouins.

Bedouins believe that the day of their death is ordained ahead of time: "They believe that they can die only on their previously ordained day and that is why they do not want to arm themselves (...)"¹² (Joinville 1995:264). For Joinville, the passivity with which they awaited death excluded any possibility that theirs could be a beautiful, heroic death, similar to that of Rolland, for example, or some Crusader: the allusion to *miles Christi* was intended to be clear to those for whom the text was written – the well-educated Mediaeval reader. Just as he did not regard their death as heroic, so Joinville rejected any thought that their behaviour could have been such: he explained this by their belief in an inferior, powerless God, who was not the Christian God.

As one of the differences, Joinville also mentions their way of life: the Bedouins are nomads and that very fact places them in opposition to the western nobility of the Middle Ages, who lived in castles and towns: "Bedouins live neither in towns nor in settlements nor in castles, but dwell in fields (...)"¹³ (Joinville 1995:271)

In physical description, Joinville also emphasises the difference between the Bedouins and the Christians: "[They are] ugly people and it is disgusting to look at them because their hair and beards are completely black"¹⁴ – the hair and beards of the men had a particular symbolical value: they were the reflection of the human soul or personal strength.¹⁵ In the Middle Ages, colour and light were considered to be beautiful; being fair in appearance was considered to be the sign of nobility. So the saints were "creatures of light". Therefore, the black colour of the Bedouin beards bears bore the particular affective and aesthetic value given to it by Mediaeval

¹² "Leur créance est tele, que nus ne puet mourir que à son jour, et our ce ne se veulent-il armer (...)."

¹³ "Li Beduyn ne demeurent en ville, ne en cités, n'en chastiaus, mais gisent adès aus champs (...)."

¹⁴ "Laides gens et hydeuses sont à regarder, car li chevel des testes et des barbes sont tout noir."

¹⁵ "Black is the colour of the Prince of Darkness in Christian symbolics, while it was linked in the Middle Ages with the casting of spells, 'black magic', and witches. Generally speaking, the colour black is reminiscent of mourning, illness, failure and death" (According to Badurina 1990:186).

culture, transforming it to a code of diversity. Joinville's narrative materialised the Bedouin culture, opposing it to his own, through the imperfect manner that we call traduction. Stereotypes, as commonplaces, carry within them a host of connotations that make up the sub-text. Presentation with the aid of commonplaces and stereotypes is the objective of narrative practice that wants to underscore diversity, and to confirm one's own identity so as, perhaps, to ensure assimilation. The Bedouins are depicted as being different, but also as being inferior: their faith has no knowledge of the almighty Christian God, their character features are in opposition to the virtues of the Crusaders, and they look like animals as is "testified to" by their physical characteristics and their social customs. The Bedouins are observed through the prism of Western culture, the Other is mimetically doubled in this instance, to use Steven Greenblatt's concept (Greenblatt 1991:44), which does not result here in identification with that Other, although an effort is made, nevertheless, to assimilate him.

Depiction of the Other – the myth about the Mongols

Joinville devoted three chapters (XCIII, XCIV and XCV) to the Mongols, where he framed the events connected with the deputation sent out in 1249, linked by myth to a) the Garden of Eden b) a Christian prince who ruled somewhere in Asia in a place near to that Eden; and, c) the feeling of expectation mixed with trepidation at the life-saving intervention of the Mongols.

Namely, the Mongol myth is one of the strangest in Mediaeval Christianity: it was believed not only that the Mongols were prepared to convert to Christianity, but also that they had already done so and were waiting for an opportunity to announce it. The myth of Presbyter John, a mysterious Christian ruler, who was believed in the 13th century to be in Asia – while he appeared in Ethiopia in the 15th century – was transferred to the Mongols, whom, it was said, he had already converted to Christianity. In that way, the illusion developed that an alliance was possible between the Christians and the Mongols, who were prepared to "annihilate" Islam, so that Christianity could rule over the entire world. Therefore, deputations were sent to the Mongols at the mid-century, these regularly ending in failure and disappointment.

The Mongol myth prompted several expeditions around 1300, the most important of which were those led by John of Monte Corvino and the Franciscan monk, Odorik of Pordenone, and they even managed to create small, temporary Asian oases of Christianity. However, Christianity continued to be largely a European religion (Le Goff 1998:210-211).

"Actual events" are mixed with myths in Joinville's narration. In other words, historical truth in the Middle Ages did not also imply the authenticity of events. Historical truth was comprised of everything that was a part of

accepted tradition – unlike today, myth and reality were not necessarily two opposing categories (cf. Veyne 1983). Chroniclers presented history as a "repetition" or "a renewed notation", and it was, to an extent, inseparable from myth.

Joinville based his narration on a combination of actual events and myths; the presence or absence of the author as narrator, the invention of an indirect narrator and references to known and recognised tradition were combined in the narrative practice of presentation of the Other, who was encountered and situated in the already existing mythology. In Joinville, the story or myth about the Mongols links the present with the future or the past, contrasting the Christians to those "Others". Retrograde procedures of entering into the mythic past contributed to the complexity of the narration, simple organisation of the text – Christians against non-Christians – thus being avoided. Depiction of the Mongols was connected with the sojourn of the Crusaders to the island of Cyprus in 1248. The "Great Tatar King" sent his delegation to Louis IX and expressed concern about the arrival of the Franks and his wish to prevent their possible attack. The Khan wrote in his letter that the Mongols were prepared to join the Christians in the conquest of the Holy Land and in liberating Jerusalem from the Saracens. The envoys departed, accompanied by the king's emissaries: the Dominican monk André de Longjumeau, his brother Guy and Jean de Carcassonne. Joinville described to the smallest detail the gifts that the envoys took with them: an altar, books, a chalice – or, in other words, everything necessary for a mass – in addition to two priests who were meant to conduct the celebration of the mass (Joinville 1995:311).

According to the myth mentioned above, the Mongols wanted to convert to Christianity, or had already done so, and were waiting for an opportunity to announce the fact. In that light, the gifts have clear symbolic meaning: what is in question is a "religious" object by which the gift-giver wishes to ensure his influence on the recipient. The exchange also testifies to faith in the possibility of communication between the two systems of representation, utilising the universal language of signs. Louis' gift implies spiritual control: if the recipient accepts it, he also accepts something of the religion of the gift-giver. However, reversal of the purpose of the gift would lessen the possibility of communication, and create difference. The Mongol king called all the other kings, who were not subordinate to him, and exhibited the gift as a sign of allegiance on the part of the Frenchman ("The French king came to beg for mercy and to surrender himself and this is the gift that he sends us").¹⁶ The Mongols sent Louis expensive cloth and a letter in which they said that peace would be possible, only if his army yielded to

¹⁶ "(...) li roys de France est venus en nostre merci et subjection, et vez-ci le teru que il nous en-voie."

the Mongol Empire, emphasising how many kings had been defeated because they did not wish to do so. Nonetheless, the pre-eminence of the French that had been marred on a symbolic level because of the "misunderstanding" of Louis' gift, was established once again and the Mongol prince acknowledged the power of the Christians. Still, Joinville says at the end that the king regretted having sent the delegation.

The actual events – sending the emissaries (1249) and their return (1250) – is framed by and created in the narrative area dedicated to the story of the Other and the myth about him. The text combines the presentation of the Other and inventing of the story as testimony about the Other: there is a circular effect in the creation of the text and the creation of the Other. The journey becomes a means of drawing nearer to the Other, and transforming and leading that Other into the story. The Other is such because of the different space in which he dwells. As Paul Zumthor says, the Mediaeval traveller did not differentiate clearly *Other* and *Elsewhere* (Zumthor 1993:259). The rhetoric of distance was created therefore according to cultural space; in order to reach the Khan's court, the emissaries had to travel for a year. The length of the journey gave weight to the testimony that followed, and entitled the text to speak about the Other.

Joinville reported that, on reaching the land ruled by the Mongols, the emissaries saw devastated towns and many dead. They noticed that they were in a sandy valley in which nothing grew. The valley was bordered by stone cliffs that had never been crossed; there, at the end of the world, God had enclosed the "Godless" nations of Gog and Magog who, according to the Apocalypse, would be destroyed on the day of the world's end. Their guardian was Presbyter John, whom we have already mentioned within the framework of the Mongol myth. Mythological geography combines with eschatological tradition in order to introduce the story of the Mongols into Joinville's narrative. According to Joinville, the distance that the emissaries travelled was preparation for the "unusual". That very journey through time and space gave Joinville the right to speak about the past of the Mongols, and that with considerable credibility.

The Mongol past is placed within the framework of a legend that illuminates their relations with Presbyter John. Joinville submits his information as facts that are well-known to everyone. He speaks of how the "Tatars" – Joinville also refers to them as 'Mongols' – rebelled against Presbyter John, to whom they were subordinate. Joinville then speaks in detail of their legendary conversion to Christianity. A low-ranking Mongol prince disappeared for three months and, on his return, spoke of a fortunate encounter: "The news that he brought was such that he climbed onto a tall stony hill whence he could see many people, the most beautiful people that he had ever seen (...) while at the foot of the hill he saw the most beautiful of all

kings, the most beautifully dressed and the most ornamented, sitting on a golden throne"¹⁷ (Joinville 1995:314).

It could be said that the episode has the place of a "miracle" in the story, a commonplace in the lives of the saints (Benveniste 1996:51). The narration assimilates a joint commonplace in the Mediaeval imaginary, since the "miraculous" was introduced into high culture in the 12th and 13th centuries (Le Goff 1985:17-56). Of all the notions that denoted something unusual in the Middle Ages, it was precisely the miracle that had the broadest semantic meaning. In order for the miracle of conversion to take place, it was necessary for the Mongol prince to leave his country. In Joinville, the prince becomes a mediator who accepts the Christian message from the beautiful king. The unusual king introduces himself as the "Seigneur du ciel et de la terre" ("Ruler of the Heavens and the Earth") and issues a message to the King of the Tatars by way of the Mongol prince, that he will give him the power to conquer the entire land but that, prior to that, he must free the priests captured in the battle against Presbyter John, in order for them to be able to convert the entire nation to Christianity. It is perhaps possible to see the reflection of Saint Louis in that wondrous and powerful king.

In the final chapter that is dedicated to the Mongols, the source of information changes: it no longer stems from mythological tradition but from the king's emissaries. However, the very history of the Mongols places them in the present of Joinville's text: their conversion brings them closer to the Christians, while their customs estrange them from them. The emissaries speak of two themes that are very important, because they are what create the difference: the food and the women. Mongolian women are not very different from their men, since they, too, go into battle, they create the threat of chaos for the Mediaeval system of values. As far as food is concerned, Joinville emphasises that the Mongols do not eat bread but only raw meat and milk. According to Lévi-Strauss, it is that contrast between raw and cooked that creates the fundamental difference between nature and culture, so that the manner of nutrition is a culturological identification and, in that context, the Others are characterised as uncivilised (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1980). Bread was much more than a mere foodstuff in Mediaeval Christianity; it was the main element in the ritual of the Eucharist.

In Joinville's work, the diverse sources of information – the mythological dimension of the Mongols, the testimony and observations of the emissary, his own comments – do not belong to diverse orders of

¹⁷ "(...) les nouvelles que il en rapporta furent teles, que il avoit monté à un trop haut tertre, et là-sus avoit trouvé grant nombre de gens les plus bels gens que il eust onques veues (...) et au bout du tertre vit seoir un roy plus bel des autres, mieus vestu et mieus paré, en un throne d'or."

importance or reliability: they make up the common story of the Other, which is interpreted according to the Western and, thus, Christian system of values.

They participate in the creation of the story and the creation of meaning in *The Life of Saint Louis*. The "Otherness" comes about in the stance towards the holy king, the ideal Christian, and those Others are not shown because of themselves; they are primarily a narrative *topos*, a place of remembrance that serves for full composition of the image of the main hero – Saint Louis.

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JOINVILLE: HAGIOGRAFSKA PRIČA O SEBI I PRIČA O DRUGOM

SAŽETAK

Hagiografija reflektira temeljnu ambivalentnost svetosti: ona nam govori o nekoj svetoj osobi, no ona ne rekonstruira kontinuitet njezine ljudske sudbine, opisani su tek trenuci njezina života. Tako povijesna stvarnost njezina postojanja nije uništena, nego razdijeljena na fragmente, od kojih svaki dobiva novu vrijednost – onu modela – koji će biti složeni poput mozaika prema zakonima hagiografskog žanra. Kao što je to ustvrdila E. B. Vitz, svaki životopis sveca je istodobno, no u razmjerima koji se razlikuju od slučaja do slučaja, diskurs pohvale, uvjeravanja i dokaza. U posljednjim stoljećima srednjeg vijeka "pohvalni" aspekt često prelazi u drugi plan jer autori manje inzistiraju na priči o čudima njihova junaka, no zato se u tekstu naglašava uvjeravanje: potrebno je uvjeriti slušatelja, ili sve češće – čitatelja, da djeluje, da se ponaša prema modelu sveca i da prema njemu modificira svoje ponašanje. Dokazi također dobivaju na važnosti jer su u procesu kanonizacije "zagovaratelji" nekog kandidata morali uvjeriti eklezijastičke autoritete da njihov junak posjeduje sve atribute i zasluge koje zahtijeva Crkva da bi potvrdila svetost. U 12. i 13. stoljeću pojavljuje se novi tip hagiografskih tekstova: naglasak je stavljen na egzemplarnost sveca, dakle na sve ono što bi moglo potaknuti čitatelja ili slušatelja da ga pokuša oponašati. U sklopu promjena koje je donijelo 13. stoljeće pojavljuju se i individualni glasovi, kakav je bio Joinvilleov, koji nam pripovijeda o svom prijatelju i svecu Louisu IX., ne zaboravljajući pritom ni priču o vlastitom životu, ali se koristeći i Drugim kako bi jasnije ocrtao identitet srednjovjekovnoga kršćanskog kralja-sveca.

Ključne riječi: srednji vijek, hagiografija, autobiografija, Drugi