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Narrative Voice and Hybrid Style in Burgundian Chivalric Biography

Abstract : Critics are now generally agreed that the Burgundian chivalric biography known as the Livre des faits de messire Jacques de Lalaing (c. 1470) is a compilation of sources that draws on the conventions of both fictional and historiographical works of the period. Yet little attention has been paid hitherto to the precise narrative means by which the biographer, who was most likely a herald, sought to persuade his readers of the veracity of his account of the hero's life. Close stylistic analysis of how the narrator uses locutions involving first and second person voice, so as to construct his own voice as author and to create a certain « horizon of expectation » in the reader's mind, reveals that the Lalaing biographer adopts a hybrid style that owes a far greater debt to the narrative conventions of the chronicle than to those of the romance, but is in fact reducible to neither.

Résumé : Pour la critique moderne, la biographie chevaleresque bourguignonne intitulée Le Livre des faits de messire Jacques de Lalaing (c. 1470) est une compilation de sources diverses qui s'inspire des conventions typiques des ouvrages fictifs et historiographiques de l'époque. Pourtant, on ne s'est guère interrogé sur les traits narratifs précis dont se serait servi le biographe, qui était probablement héraut de métier, afin de persuader ses lecteurs de la véracité de sa version de la vie de son héros. Or, l'analyse stylistique de la façon dont le narrateur emploie les locutions à base de je, nous et vous, dans le but de construire sa propre voix d'auteur et de créer chez le lecteur un certain « horizon d'attente », nous révèle que le style du biographe est hybride, puisant pour la plus grande partie aux conventions de la chronique plutôt qu'à celles du roman, sans toutefois se réduire ni à l'une ni à l'autre.

The *Livre des faits de messire Jacques de Lalaing* (c. 1470) recounts the life and deeds of probably the most famous figure in late medieval French chivalry¹. Born in 1421 into a noble family of Hainault, Jacques de Lalaing performed many notable feats of arms during his extensive travels around Europe before being killed by a ricochet from a cannon at the siege of Poeke in 1453 during the Ghent War². The biography devoted to Lalaing forms part of the great outpouring of historiographical writings, which also included chronicles, heraldic accounts of tournaments, and pseudo-historical prose romances, that were produced at the court of Burgundy in the mid to late fifteenth century³. What all these various forms of

¹ All quotations from this text, hereafter referred to as the *Livre des faits*, are taken from the following edition: E. Springer, « *Les Fais de messire Jacques de Lalaing* », Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Paris III, 1982. All emphases in quotations are mine.

² R. Born, *Les Lalaing : une grande « mesnie » hennuyère, de l'aventure d'outrée au siècle des gueux (1096-1600)*, Brussels, Les Editeurs d'Art Associés, 1986, p. 111-41.

³ See C. Thiry, « Historiographie et actualité (XIV^e et XV^e siècles) », *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, vol. 11/1, *La Littérature historiographique des origines à 1500*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1986, p. 1025-63.

writing had in common was the aim of fostering the imitation of valorous models of military conduct. As Jacques Lemaire puts it: « L'exemple de Jacques de Lalaing rend ainsi compte du jeu d'influences réciproques qui s'établit en Bourgogne entre la culture littéraire et les mœurs, les préjugés sociaux et les idéaux de la classe dominante suscitant des productions de l'esprit qui, à leur tour, influent sur le mode de vie des gens de cour »⁴.

Although the *Livre des faits* presents itself as a continuous narrative, it is in fact comprised of three parts: the first covers the hero's *enfances* and early chivalric beginnings; the second recounts his chivalric and diplomatic *errances*; and the third narrates his participation in the war that led to his untimely death. Each section of the biography draws on different sources: the first is largely a fictional account that borrows motifs and even whole sections from contemporary prose romances such as Antoine de La Sale's *Jean de Saintré*; the second is based on detailed heraldic accounts of the numerous combats that the hero undertook between 1445-50, the most important of which was sent in the form of an epistle by Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Remy, the Burgundian king of arms known as « Toison d'Or », to Jacques' father shortly after his son's death⁵; and the third is a fragment of a chronicle of the Ghent War which, until recently, was thought to be by Georges Chastellain but is now unattributed⁶.

Because of its multiple sources, authorship of the *Livre des faits* has been ascribed at various times to figures such as Chastellain and La Sale⁷, but the modern consensus view is that the biographer was most likely one of the Burgundian heralds whose reports were used in the composition of the text, not least because the frontispieces of the earliest illuminated manuscripts of the *Livre des faits* depict the author as such⁸. However, disagreement remains as to whether this author portrait is meant to depict Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or, Lalaing's close friend and chief source of the second section of the text, Charolais Herald, who was also involved in a number of the hero's chivalric exploits, or even some other Burgundian herald whose name has not come down to us⁹. The heterogeneous nature of the Lalaing biography has

⁴ J. Lemaire, *Les visions de la vie de cour dans la littérature française de la fin du moyen âge*, Brussels/Paris, Palais des Académies/Klincksieck, 1990, p. 211.

⁵ See F. Morand, « Épitre de Jean Le Fèvre, Seigneur de Saint-Remy », *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 21, 1884, p. 177-239, hereafter referred to as *Épitre*.

⁶ See G. Small, *George Chastellain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy: Political and Historical Culture at Court in the Fifteenth Century*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press/The Royal Historical Society, 1997, p. 154.

⁷ See, for example, *Chronique de J. de Lalaing par G. Chastellain*, ed. J.-A.-C. Buchon, Collection des Chroniques Nationales Françaises, vol. 41, Paris, Verdrière, 1825, for an early attribution to the Burgundian *indiciaire*; and G. Raynaud, « Un nouveau manuscrit du *Petit Jean de Saintré* », *Romania*, 31, 1902, p. 527-56, who posits La Sale as the author.

⁸ See, for example, Paris, BnF, fr. 16830, fol. 1^r, which can be accessed via the « Banque d'images » on the BnF website.

⁹ E. Gaucher, « Le *Livre des Fais de Jacques de Lalaing*. Texte et image », *Le Moyen Age*, 95, 1989, p. 503-18, deems the biography to be the work of Le Fèvre; whilst P. Rudnitzki, *Der Turnierroman « Livre des faits du bon chevalier messire Jacques de Lalaing » in der Anholter*

likewise been a source of contention among modern scholars, who have argued as to whether it should be deemed a chronicle, a romance, or a hybrid of the two, this latter view of the text now being the most generally accepted¹⁰.

Yet, while earlier scholarship on the *Livre des faits* has provided a broad understanding of the way in which such biographies contributed to the chivalric culture of the age, it has also left key questions unanswered about this particular work. For example, how did the biographer's presumed status as a herald give him the necessary authority to present the *Livre des faits* as a reliable account of a life? What exactly does the supposed hybridity of the text consist of in terms of its borrowings from romance and chronicle as regards its narrative style, rather than just its use of particular motifs and episodes? How did this hybrid style allow the biographer to modify his disparate source materials so as to create a unified narrative?

Adopting the narratological approach to the study of medieval texts pioneered by Sophie Marnette¹¹, and drawing on my own analyses of Burgundian prose romance and chronicle¹², this study argues that the narrative style employed in the *Livre des faits* is intimately linked to the writer's role as a herald, one whose function was to serve as an intermediary between the knight and the aristocratic audience who were to derive both pleasure and instruction from hearing the hero's deeds recounted. Through close stylistic analysis of the three different sections of the Lalaing biography, it shows how the biographer sought to persuade his readers of the veracity of his account by using narrative traits typically found in the romances and chronicles of the period in the aim of transforming the raw material of his sources into a coherent account. Part I of this study therefore examines how the prologue of the *Livre des faits* employs a variety of literary topoi in order to set out the author's view of his own role and to establish the reader/listener's «horizon of expectation» as regards the work's didactic purpose, the nature of its claim to be

Handschrift, nebst einem Exkurs über den Verfasser, Münster, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1915, ascribes it to Charolais Herald.

¹⁰ For its nineteenth-century editors such as Buchon, the *Livre des faits* was undoubtedly a chronicle, whilst G. Doutrepoint, «Le *Livre des faits du bon chevalier messire Jacques de Lalaing*: une biographie romancée du XV^e siècle», *Journal des Savants*, septembre-décembre 1939, p. 221-32, deems it more of a romance. However, see R. Morse, «Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy», *Modern Language Review*, 75, 1980, p. 48-64; M. Szkilnik, *Jean de Saintré, une carrière chevaleresque au XI^e siècle*, Geneva, Droz, 2003; and E. Gaucher, «Le vrai et le faux dans l'écriture de quelques biographies du XV^e siècle: 'Écrire la vie, une autre histoire'», *Écritures de l'histoire (XIV^e – XV^e siècle): Actes du colloque du Centre Montaigne, Bordeaux, 19-21 septembre 2002*, ed. Danièle Bohler and Catherine Magnien-Simonin, Geneva, Droz, 2005, p. 205-17, who all regard the Lalaing biography as more of a hybrid in its form.

¹¹ S. Marnette, *Narrateur et points de vue dans la littérature française médiévale: Une approche linguistique*, Bern, Peter Lang, 1998.

¹² R. Brown-Grant, «Narrative style in Burgundian prose romances of the later middle ages», *Romania*, forthcoming, and *id.*, «Narrative style in Burgundian chronicles of the later middle ages», *Viator*, 42,2, 2011, p. 233-282.

telling the truth and the type of aesthetic experience which it offers¹³, whilst Part II reveals how the Lalaing narrator uses references to the first person and the second person so as to ensure cohesion in the organisation of the narrative and to grant different types of role to the reader/listener (for details of the quantitative data relating to these issues, see the tables provided below).

I. The author in the prologue

At first sight, the prologue of the *Livre des faits* seems almost indistinguishable from those of the prose romances of the period since it appears to be a simple « cut and paste » of phrases incorporating standard topoi which can all be found in the prefatory sections of such works. For example, its opening pious invocation to Christ and his mother could have been lifted straight out of *Olivier de Castille* (p. 13)¹⁴; its reference to the need for heroic deeds to be commemorated in writing, the exemplarity topos whereby present readers are urged to imitate the heroes of the past, the humility topos, and the stated desire to please the reader are identical to those in *Gilles de Chin* (p. 13-14)¹⁵; and the allusion to the particular need to preserve the memory of one's ancestors and the expressed wish to flee idleness are the same as those given in the *Seigneurs de Gavre* (p. 13-14)¹⁶. The prologue of the *Livre des faits* then goes on to borrow the whole of the opening paragraph of the first chapter of *Gilles de Chin* in order to link Lalaing, as a native of Hainault, to other legendary knights from the same region, including Gilles himself and Gillion de Trazegnies, as well as the more readily identifiable historical figure of Jean de Werchin (p. 14-15)¹⁷. Yet, in an important departure from the convention of romance prologues where the narrator generally claims to have found his source material in another book and thus declares that his actual role is merely that of a transcriber or a translator of a written source (whether this is actually true or not)¹⁸, the narrator of the Lalaing biography signals that he is partly writing from life, having been a direct eye-witness of some of the hero's deeds which it gives him great pleasure to recount: « ay voulu mettre et escrire les haulz faiz et emprins tresvaillans que en son temps fist et acheva messire Jacques de Lalaing [...]. Et pour ce que moy, acteur de ce present traictié, ay veu de sez haulz faiz aucune partie [...] ay prins plaisir de lez ramentevoir » (p. 13-14).

¹³ See M. Abramowicz, *Dire vrai dans les narrations françaises du Moyen Age XII^e-XIII^e siècles*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2007, p. 21, who observes: « Cette partie initiale [...] met en place les éléments fondamentaux pour la compréhension de l'ensemble, l'interprétation de son sens et la réalisation de sa finalité de nature idéologique et pragmatique. »

¹⁴ *Histoire d'Olivier de Castille et Artus d'Algarbe*, Paris, BnF, fr. 24385, fols. 1^r-1^v.

¹⁵ *Messire Gilles de Chin, natif de Tournesis*, ed. A.-M. Liétard-Rouzé, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2010, p. 75.

¹⁶ *Histoire des Seigneurs de Gavre*, ed. R. Stuip, Paris, Champion, 1993, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Gilles de Chin*, ed. cit., p. 76.

¹⁸ See S. Marnette, « Sources du récit et discours rapportés : l'art de la représentation dans les chroniques et les romans français des 14^e et 15^e siècles », *Le Moyen Français*, 51-53, 2002-2003, p. 435-59.

In stressing his credentials as an eye-witness of real historical events rather than simply as a link in a chain of textual transmission, like a writer of romance does, the author of the *Livre des faits* therefore appears to resemble the chronicle narrators of the period, particularly Jean Le Fèvre who, in his own chronicle, insists that he is writing from first-hand observation and experience¹⁹. However, though the Lalaing biographer may emphasise his authorial/witnessing role in this first person voice so as to signal his responsibility as the originator and guarantor of his own text, he also marks his distance from the chronicler just as he did from the romance narrator. This he does by retaining his anonymity since, unlike a Le Fèvre or a Chastellain, the biographer does not insert into his prologue the chronicler's usual quasi-judicial formula of « *je + name + function (of office)* » whereby he sets out his credentials as author and commits himself to telling the truth in his recounting of the past²⁰. Rather, the biographer's refusal to disclose his own identity in the prologue of the *Livre des faits* throws into greater relief the fame of his eponymous hero, as is also the case in the early fifteenth-century biography of the renowned French knight Boucicaut, where the author similarly omits to identify himself²¹.

In distinguishing himself both from the romance narrator, by claiming direct responsibility for his work, and from the chronicle narrator, by preserving his anonymity, the Lalaing biographer thereby establishes a different relationship between himself, his text, and his hero from that found in these other genres. This relationship would seem to arise directly out of his role as a herald whose sworn duty was to record what he had witnessed and what he had heard about from others. Whilst this role is only made explicit in the authorial frontispieces of some of the manuscript versions of the text, in which he is depicted in his official herald's tabard, in the text of the prologue itself the narrator nonetheless makes the connection implicitly by drawing a parallel between himself and Lalaing so as to suggest that the work of the writer is a continuation of the deeds of the hero himself since both are embarked on the same quest: that of increasing chivalric renown. Thus, just as Lalaing « *mist grant paine et labour durant son temps de *augmenter et acroistre* en tout honneur et bonne renommee la maison dont il estoit yssus* » (p. 13), so, through his writing, the narrator will ensure that the knight's reputation will be

¹⁹ See *Chronique de Jean Le Fèvre, seigneur de Saint-Rémy*, ed. F. Morand, Société de l'Histoire de France, Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1876-81, 2 vols, vol. 1, p. 1-8.

²⁰ See, for example: « *je, Jehan, seigneur de Saint Remy, de la Vacquerie, d'Avesnes et de Morienne, dict Thoison d'or, consiellier et roy d'armes de très hault, très excellent et très puissant prince et mon très redoubté seigneur, Phelippe, par la grace de Dieu, duc de Bourgogne [...], me suis disposé à rédiger et mettre par escript aucunes petites récordacions et mémores, esquelles sont contenues, en chéefz, pluisieurs choses advenues, desquelles j'ay poeu avoir congnoissance* » (*ibid.*, p. 1-2). On chronicle prologues, see C. Marchello-Nizia, « *L'historien et son prologue: forme littéraire et stratégies discursives* », *La Chronique et l'histoire au Moyen Age. Colloque des 24 et 25 mai 1982*, ed. D. Poirion, Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 1986, p. 13-25.

²¹ See *Le Livre des fais du bon messire Jehan le Maingre, dit Bouciquaut, mareschal de France et gouverneur de Jennes*, ed. D. Lalande, Geneva, Droz, 1985, p. 6-11. For further comparison of these two texts, see E. Gaucher, *La Biographie chevaleresque: Typologie d'un genre (XIII^e-XV^e siècle)*, Paris, Champion, 1994.

« *augmentee et ramenteue pour donner exemple aux noblez et vertueux hommes du temps present* » (p. 13).

That this is the chief function of such biographical writings is emphasised by the narrator when he draws a further parallel between his account of this hero's life and those which he has discovered in other books about knights from the same region. Doing what these dead heroes can no longer do for themselves, these works commemorate these knights' deeds so that they may continue to redound to their glory: « *leur renommee s'espandoit et flourissoit par tous regnes – et encoires fait aujourd'hui, comme cy apréz pourrés oÿr ainsy comme je l'ay trouvé ez livres et hystoires de ce faisant mencion* » (p. 14). If, unlike the chroniclers of the period, the Lalaing biographer thus lacks a name and a clear identity, he nonetheless gives an authority to his account and guarantees the truth of his writing through his implicit reference to his heraldic office as a recorder of the past²². After all, it is this very office which bespeaks his status as a reliable witness, one to which the chroniclers themselves were heavily indebted and whose worth they readily acknowledged, as when Enguerrand de Monstrelet describes heralds as « *justes et diligens enquéreurs, bien instruis et vrais relateurs* »²³. Indeed, for the herald, his office *was* his identity, since the procedure of induction into their ranks entailed the individual's renouncing his given name and being formally « *rebaptisé* » into his new role as « *Toison d'Or* » or as « *Charolais Herald* »²⁴.

Having established his own role as authoritative witness and faithful amanuensis to the dead hero, what kind of expectation does the Lalaing biographer create in his readers' mind about the type of text with which they are dealing? Given that the romances from which he borrows so overtly in the opening remarks of his prologue were all in circulation by the time the biography itself was produced, with the names of Gilles de Chin and Gillion de Trazegnies being ones with which the audience would be conversant, the narrator cues the reader to expect his work to provide the same mix of entertainment and instruction as these earlier stories. Indeed, the whole notion of pleasure is central to the narrator's purpose as he hopes that the reader will experience the same delight in consuming the text (« *que la*

²² See B. Guenée, « *Ego, je. L'affirmation de soi par les historiens français (XIV^e-XV^e s.)* », *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 2005*, fascicule 2, 2005, p. 597-611, 608, who writes: « *des notaires et des hérauts, habitués à écrire des rapports et à enregistrer des dépositions, ont bien conçu leur oeuvre historique comme un témoignage sur le temps qu'ils avaient vécu* ». See also M. Stanesco, « *Le héraut d'armes et la tradition littéraire chevaleresque* », *Romania*, 106, 1985, p. 233-53, and G. Melville, « *Hérauts et héros* », *European Monarchy: Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. H. Duchhardt et al., Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992, p. 81-97.

²³ See *La Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet en deux livres avec pièces justificatives, 1440-1444*, ed. L. Douët-d'Arcq, Société de l'Histoire de France, Paris, Jules Renouard, 1857-62, vol. 1, p. 4.

²⁴ See C. Boudreau, « *Messagers, rapporteurs, juges et 'voir-disant'. Les hérauts d'armes vus par eux-mêmes et par d'autres dans les sources didactiques (XIV^e-XVI^e siècles)* », *Information et société en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque international tenu à l'Université du Québec à Montréal et à l'Université d'Ottawa (9-11 mai 2002)*, ed. C. Boudreau et al., Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004, p. 233-45.

matiere soit *plaisante* aux lisans et escoutans », p. 14) as he did in summoning up his reminiscences of the hero (« ay prins *plaisir* de lez ramentevoir », p. 14). Moreover, the narrator leads his audience by his own example, suggesting that, just as he has delved as a reader into the stories of previous heroes of Hainault, so they too must now delve into his own tale about the latest illustrious scion of this region. Creating a sense of solidarity with his readers by addressing them in the second person plural, he shows them how to link what they might already know about chivalric prowess from their familiarity with earlier accounts of famous knights to what they are about to read in his retelling of the life of Lalaing : « *comme cy dessus vous ay dit*, ou paÿs et territoire de Haynnau a eu par cy devant de grans hostelz dont sont yssuz et partis de noblez et vaillans chevaliers *comme cy apréz pourrèz oÿr* » (p. 15).

The biographer's allusions to the stories of Gillion de Trazegnies and Gilles de Chin thus seem to create a « horizon of expectation » in the reader's mind regarding not just the subject matter of his own work – the life of a chivalric hero – but also about the style that he will employ in his retelling of this life, for instance in terms of the likely degree of involvement which they can expect with the characters or the amount of access given to their thoughts and speeches. However, whilst the author of the *Livre des faits* might set us up to expect something akin to a romance, he nonetheless has to establish the veracity of his account by giving it a similar authority to that of an official work of historiography. To what extent, then, do the actual stylistic devices as regards the construction of the narrator's own voice in the text and the role that he grants to the audience through direct address to the reader in fact come closer to those of the chronicle than to those of the romance ?

II. Narrative voice and readerly roles

The relative frequencies of the first person singular and plural voice and of second person plural voice, which indicate the importance accorded in a given text to the role of narrator as opposed to that of the reader, serve as one of the key stylistic features that most clearly distinguishes prose romance from chronicle. Whilst romance narratives tend to contain more occurrences of *vous* than of *je* or *nous*, the opposite is true of chronicles, thus suggesting that romances are more orientated towards the reader's reception of the text whereas the chronicle is more concerned with foregrounding the personal investment of the narrator in his account of events²⁵.

The actual roles granted to these different voices are also closely aligned with genre. In romance, the narrator, in his first person singular voice, performs a purely organisational function in terms of commenting on the structure of his text, whether introducing a new chapter or shifting from one character to another (e.g. *vous lairay a parler de...*), or abridging his source (e.g. *ne vous vueil faire long compte*)²⁶. The first person plural voice, *nous*, though generally referring solely to the narrator and thus being a simple alternative to organisational *je*, can nonetheless be more inclusive of the reader in a variety of ways. It can link narrator and reader as adherents of the same faith through expressions such as *Nostre Seigneur* and it can also bind them both to the characters themselves when the latter are referred to as

²⁵ Marnette, art. cit., p. 447.

²⁶ Marnette, *op. cit.*, p. 43-51.

nos gens fighting against a Saracen enemy²⁷. Inclusive *nous* in romance can even be used to give the appearance of collapsing the distance separating the timeframes of the act of narration from that of the one in which the characters perform their actions, thus making the narrator and reader appear to be physically present as close observers in the characters' own world, as in the following example from *Gérard de Nevers*: « Ung pou vous *lairo*ns ester d'Euryant, et *retournerons* a Gerart, quy est a son hostel »²⁸.

The reader of romance plays a range of roles, not simply being the recipient of the text as indicated by the narrator's direct address to the audience using verbs of perception (e.g. *comme vous avez oïr*...) or comprehension (e.g. *sachiez que*...), but also being frequently positioned as a potential witness to the actions recounted through being the subject of *irréelles* (i.e. hypothetical constructions) such as *veïssiez* or *vous sembleroit que* etc. Moreover, romances often feature a particular variant on constructions with *oïr* in the present tense which produces what can be termed an « eavesdropping effect » when it follows a character's speech act reported in *discours direct* and gives the reader the impression of having « overheard » the characters' words as if they had been in the same room as them²⁹, a device which fosters a definite sense of spatial and temporal proximity, as in the following instance from *Gilles de Chin*: « Ainsi come *vous oez*, de telz ou samblables parolles *se devoïent* les chevaliers ensamble avec messire Gilles »³⁰.

In the chronicle, by contrast, the narrator's first person voice, usually expressed in the singular rather than in the plural, performs a much wider range of roles than simply narratorial organisation. Rather, *je* in the chronicle also serves to refer to the first person voice in multiple complementary functions: as author (already identified via the « *je* + name + function » formula in the prologue) i.e. as the actual historical figure responsible for the composition of the text who comments on his use of sources or points out the limits of his own knowledge; as a witness or even a protagonist whose own experiences are presented as a trustworthy source for the text; and as a moralist drawing out the moral and political implications of the events recounted for the reader's edification³¹. Unlike in romance, the chronicler's first person plural voice is almost always exclusive to the narrator as organiser of the narrative, except when it includes the audience as fellow Christians or as compatriots, as when discussing how *nos gens* are fighting against a common enemy. Rarely in the chronicle is there an attempt to give the impression of breaking down the spatial and temporal barriers separating the narrator and readers from the characters as is found in romances through either inclusive *nous* or the « eavesdropping effect » of *oïr*. The corollary of this emphasis in the chronicle on the narrator's subjective presence is that the reader is, therefore, much more of a

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53-8.

²⁸ *Gérard de Nevers, prose version of the Roman de la Violette*, ed. L. F. H. Lowe, Princeton/Paris, Princeton University Press/Presses Universitaires de France, 1928, p. 126.

²⁹ See Brown-Grant, art. cit. (prose romances).

³⁰ *Gilles de Chin*, ed. cit., p. 113.

³¹ S. Marnette, « The experiencing self and the narrating self in medieval French chronicles », *The Medieval Author in Medieval French Literature*, ed. V. Greene, New York/Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 117-36.

passive figure, being most frequently addressed as the recipient of the narrative through verbs of perception or comprehension, and only seldom constructed as a potential witness to the events recounted through expressions such as *veïssiez*³².

References to the first person singular

Although the prologue of the *Livre des faits* thus creates the expectation in the audience's mind that what they are about to read (or listen to) is akin to the romances featuring heroes such as Gilles de Chin and Gillion de Trazegnies, in terms of the broad distribution of narrative voices all three sections of the biography in fact more closely resemble the chronicle than they do the romance. In each case, the frequency of first person voice, whether singular or plural, is always greater than that of second person voice (see Tables 4 and 5). Indeed, there is a marked increase in the preponderance of *je/nous* over *vous* in the third part of the biography, not surprisingly perhaps, since it is a direct *calque* of its chronicle source. Furthermore, the roles played by the first person voice in the *Livre des faits* are much more varied than just the organisational *je* of the romance (see Table 2).

In the first part of the biography, which is the most thematically similar to a romance, being an almost wholly fictionalised account of the hero's early years, it is predominantly the organisational first person singular voice which is heard. However, even here the narrator interjects in his more authorial capacity for nearly a third of the occurrences, particularly when he refers to himself as *je* in order to substantiate aspects of his narrative which are otherwise somewhat conjectural. Thus, for instance, he adduces an external source of information on the hero's piety so as to back up his assertion about Jacques' having thoroughly taken on board his father's moral teachings on how to conduct himself at court: « Si est a croire pour certain que la belle doctrine que par messire Guillaume de Lalin, son pere, lui avoit esté faite a son departement, quant premierement il alla a la court du bon duc Phelippe de Bourgoingne, il avoit bien retenue ; *car depuis son trespas, j'ay oï dire a noble homme* et de bonne credence que jamais ne se feust alléz couchier sans soy avoir confessé, pour tant qu'il s'eust sentu estre en pechié mortel » (p. 107). Likewise, the Lalaing narrator offers his own opinions on events so as to increase their credibility, particularly when coupled with a truth assertion *topos*, as in the following example at the end of Jacques' first successful exploits which he performed at the joust in Nancy in 1445: « Et *vous dy* pour certain que celui jour il eut affaire a huit jousteurs sans ce que oncques nulz de eulx le sceussent avoir fait ployer » (p. 114). Even in this most fictionalised part of the biography, the narrator is at pains to signal via his first person singular voice that the text is underpinned by information from external sources, including those which he himself gleaned in his authorial capacity or which he himself can supply as witness.

In the second and third sections, the biographer actually appropriates for himself many instances of the first person singular voice that were already present in his sources – Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or and the chronicler of the Ghent War, respectively – which he incorporates seamlessly into his own narrative. In both sections, these instances of *je* are almost an even split between, on the one hand, authorial comments on sources, information and opinions of the kind typically found

³² Brown-Grant, art. cit. (chronicles).

in the chronicle where they serve to boost the trustworthiness of the narrator/author, and, on the other, straightforwardly organisational narratorial comments (see Table 2). However, if we compare these two sections of the *Livre des faits* with their sources, it is possible to see where the biographer has modified both Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or and the Ghent War chronicler so as to insert these works more smoothly into his narrative or to supplement the information which they provide. Hence, in the third section, two references to abridgement are in fact the biographer's own where he has shortened the chronicler's account by omitting the texts of the various treaties and letters pertaining to the duke's negotiations with the Ghentish rebels which were not strictly pertinent to his focus on the hero and his fellow knights: « Et enfin fut traicté l'appaisement et accord, lequel *je me depporte de le raconter*, car apréz ledit traictiet et accort fait des deux parties, les deputéz d'iceulx Gantois [...] s'en retournerent » (p. 540).

In a far greater departure from his source than that which occurs in the third section of the *Livre des faits*, the narrator's first person voice in the second section of the biography on the hero's *errances* adds to those instances of *je* which are adopted with minimal modification from Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or's heraldic account by interjecting at length in his own capacity as a witness (see Table 2). The originality of these instances of first person voice, which account for nearly a quarter of these occurrences in this section, is highlighted by the narrator's use of various forms of the tag-phrase *moy, acteur de ce present livre*, before going on to deliver his actual eye-witness opinions and experiences. Thus, for example, he reinforces his descriptions of the hero's physical beauty with his own views on this matter: « Et pour verité dire, *moy, acteur de ce present traittié, en mon temps n'avoye veu plus beau josne chevalier, ne que mieulx semblast homme de hault affaire* » (p. 195). Similarly, in order to give extra authenticity to his account of Jacques' election to the Order of the Golden Fleece at Mons in 1451, he points out that he was there himself in person to witness it: « ou *moy, acteur de ce livre, estoye et tout au long vey les serimonies et sollemnitéz qui s'y firent* » (p. 408). In addition, then, to adopting the authorial voice of his source as if it were his own, the biographer in this second section of the text, which may well correspond to the part of Lalaing's life with which he was genuinely most closely involved in his duties as a herald, attempts to increase the reliability and truth-value of his narrative by bringing in his own first-hand observations and opinions, thus once again anchoring his account as firmly as he can in historical reality.

References to the first person plural

As regards the use of *nous*, which is frequently inclusive of the reader in the romance but almost never so in the chronicle, the *Livre des faits* similarly varies from section to section (see Table 3). However, the bulk of occurrences in all three parts of the biography are exclusive to the narrator and most inclusive forms tend to indicate solidarity between narrator and reader as fellow Christians or Burgundians. This is certainly true of the third section of the biography where, in accordance with chronicle convention, there are no instances of inclusive *nous* that foster the reader's proximity to the characters. Rather, following the Ghent War chronicler as faithfully as he can, the narrator of the *Livre des faits* limits himself to creating solidarity with his reader by means of « nos gens » to refer to the Burgundian knights in their battles

with the Ghentish troops at Ovremare and Mourbecque (p. 467, 513, respectively). This inclusive emphasis on the body of knights rather than simply on Lalaing himself is entirely apposite in this section of the text in which, through his exploits as a leader of other men in mass warfare rather than as an individual who excelled in single combat on the jousting field, the hero attains his apotheosis as a representative of the chivalric caste. In both the first and second sections, there *are* a few instances of more characteristic romance usage of inclusive *nous* which have the effect of collapsing the spatial or temporal boundaries separating the narrator's timeframe of the act of narration from that of the narrated events themselves, so as to increase the audience's involvement in the text. However, as we shall see below, these examples do not necessarily have the same significance when used in the context of the chivalric biography as they do when employed in the prose romances of the period.

In the first section, which concerns Lalaing's *enfances*, the most notable occurrence of inclusive *nous* is found in the episode where the hero attracts the amorous attentions of two noble ladies at the tournament in Nancy where he first fought in an important public arena. This episode, of all those in the biography, is given by far the most heavily fictionalised treatment by the narrator who employs many of the narrative devices typical of prose romances in this period, particularly dramatic irony, since the motif of the *querelle* between two ladies for the hero's favours is a well-known theme in these stories, as can be seen in the contemporary tale of *Gérard de Nevers*³³. Thus, having depicted the two ladies verbally sparring with each other over their respective attachments to Jacques, due to their mutual suspicions of each other on seeing the hero go into combat with two different love-tokens on his armour, the narrator uses inclusive *nous* with his tongue firmly in his cheek to suggest that he and the reader should leave the ladies to it and instead turn their attentions elsewhere: « Et la, toutes ensemble encommencerent a elles deviser des joustes et esbatemens advenir, desquelz nous a present encommencerons a parler, *et lairons les dames faire leurs gracieuses devises* » (p. 97). Yet, for all its romance-like connotations, this episode and the narrator's treatment of it actually distinguish Lalaing from typical romance heroes who are motivated primarily by love. The usual significance of this type of episode in the romance is to underscore the knight's devotion to a completely different lady from the ones who are fighting for his attention, as happens in *Gérard de Nevers* where the eponymous hero turns his thoughts back to his real lady-love, Euriant, whom he has unjustly abandoned³⁴. However, in Lalaing's case, after this episode, no further mention is made of any actual amorous involvements with other women and, indeed, the lady who is described as being the greatest source of inspiration to him and for whom he adopts the *devise* of « la Non Pareille », is the Virgin Mary (p. 550). Thus, the narrator's highly ironic treatment of the Nancy joust, which exploits a key motif of romance fiction only to debunk it by using the first person plural voice to distance himself

³³ See *Gérard de Nevers*, ed. cit., p. 70-3, for the squabbling between Aigentine, daughter of the duke of Cologne, and her companion, Florentine.

³⁴ See R. Brown-Grant, « *Gérard de Nevers* : a Roman de la Violette moralisé ? Mise en prose and the revalorisation of the courtly lady in the 'cycle de la gageure' », *Essays in later medieval French literature. The legacy of Jane H. M. Taylor*, ed. R. Dixon, Durham Modern Languages Series, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010, p. 21-34.

and the reader from the over-eager ladies, highlights Lalaing's difference from the heroes of these tales by pointing up instead his piety and chastity.

In the second section of the biography which features the hero's *errances* all over Europe in search of opponents prepared to take up the challenge of his chivalric *emprise*, the inclusive *nous* so redolent of romance is used only sparingly by the narrator to give the reader the impression of being physically present next to Jacques on his travels from one country to another, as when he states : « Or lairons ester pour le present a parler du royaume de Navare et *viendrons* en Castille, comme cy apréz porréz oÿr » (p. 183). Similarly, the narrator in this part of the text maximises the reader's involvement in his retelling of the hero's combats when, at the joust against Scottish knights in Stirling in 1449 at which Jacques fought alongside his uncle, Simon de Lalaing, and a Breton squire named Hervé de Meriadec, he adopts the first person plural voice in order to create the illusion in the reader's mind of being present at this combat among the ranks of actual spectators as they switch their attention from watching one pair of combatants to another : « Or doncques *lairons ester* la bataille des deux champions et *retournerons aux autres*, sy dirons comment messire Symon de Lalain se gouverna a l'encontre du seigneur de Haguet » (p. 292). In these two instances, particularly the latter which embellishes the rather bald phrasing of Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or in his heraldic account where he simply states « Or, fault parler de messire Symon de Lalain » (*Épître*, p. 201), the biographer employs this inclusive usage so as to render the scene more vivid and dramatic for the reader, as befits his own role as a witness. Thus, in the *errances* section which, as we have seen above, is heavily marked with the narrator's own interjections and opinions from his first person singular perspective, his desire to share his impressions about Lalaing's exploits, at which he may or may not actually have been present, are treated in such a way as to invest both himself and the reader as witnesses in the narrative. The biographer's use of inclusive *nous* in this section is therefore reminiscent of but not totally identical to that found in romance in which the narrator would never lay the same kind of claim to having actually been present at the hero's exploits.

References to the second person plural

Given that it is only the *enfances* and *errances* sections of the Lalaing biography that tend to employ narrative devices commonly found in romance in order to enhance the reader's engagement with the narrative through the use of first person plural, what role is given to the audience by means of second person plural voice in the different parts of the text? If a preponderance of *vous* forms over *je/nous* is typical of romance, and the converse true of chronicle, to which of these two patterns does the *Livre des faits* more readily conform?

As comparison of the second section of the Lalaing biography with Le Fèvre/Toison d'Or's heraldic account reveals, the fact that the narrator replaces his source's impersonal constructions such as *or est ainsi que* or *comme devant est dit* with more personal locutions such as *comme vous avéz oÿ* and *sy poéz croire et sçavoir*, shows the extent to which expressions using second person plural voice were regarded as indispensable in these narratives which were designed both to educate and to please the reader by attracting and maintaining their interest. Yet, compared to the romances of the period which make extensive use of constructions

with *vous* not just to address the reader as the recipient of the text but also to posit them as a potential witness to the events recounted in the narrative, the Lalaing biography is far more parsimonious in its use of constructions of this type (see Tables 4 and 5). Indeed, not only does the amount of space devoted to second person voice noticeably decrease from the first to the third section of the text, but the range of functions allocated to *vous* is also considerably narrowed as the narrative proceeds (see Table 6).

By far the most frequent construction in all three sections of the biography is that featuring *vous* as the subject of a verb of perception such as *oÿr*. With a largely organisational function, being designed to signal the beginnings and ends of sections, these expressions also allow the narrator to refer anaphorically to what has gone before in the narrative (e.g. *comme vous avéz oÿ*) or to allude cataphorically to what is about to come (e.g. *comme vous orréz cy apréz raconter*), thus showing the narrator's total control of the text and positioning the reader as its passive recipient. Equally indicative of the audience's passivity is the construction of *vous* as the indirect object of the narrator's *verbum dicendi*, which tends to occur in formulae of abridgement as in « Des mets et entremetz de quoy le roy fut servis, ne *vous feray long compte* » (p. 212). Slightly more demanding of the reader, in the sense of seeking a cognitive response from them, are expressions with a verb of comprehension such as *penser* or *sçavoir*. Clustered in the *enfances* and *errances* sections, these locutions occur most frequently in those passages of the text where the narrator is being speculative in imputing amorous desires to the various crowds of ladies who see the hero making his way along the streets to the jousting field. These expressions thus perform a function which is similar to that of a truth assertion (to which they are often attached), as in the following example from the Boniface joust of 1445 : « mais *sachiéz pour verité* que les fenestres et les huis des maisons qui estoient sur les rues par ou il passoit estoient bien garnies de dames, de damoiselles, bourgoises et pucelles que toutes alloient priant a Dieu que a son grant honneur il peust faire retour. *Sy poéz croire et sçavoir* que de maintes il fut golousé, car *pour certain* plus bel escuier, mieulx fait ne formé de tous membres, on n'eust sceut trouver ne querre » (p. 139-40).

Though all three sections of the biography tend to address the reader by means of phatic constructions that limit their involvement in the narrative in a manner which is more typical of chronicle than romance, there are nonetheless isolated instances of other constructions that *do* posit the audience as potential witnesses. For example, in the fictionalised *enfances* and in the embellished transcription of the heraldic source which constitutes the *errances* section, there are also several occurrences of the « eavesdropping effect » with *oÿr* which, as we have seen, is more characteristic of romance than of chronicle. The single example of this in the first section is used to highly ironic effect when, in his account of the run-up to the hero's first joust at Nancy in 1445, the narrator directly reports a conversation between certain French knights boasting about their superior prowess in the tilting yard compared to that of such a young, untried combatant as Lalaing, a conversation to which the reader is made privy before it even comes to the ears of the hero himself : « Ainsy, *comme vous povéz oÿr, se devoient* lez gens du roy, eulx estans entre les dames et autre part ou ilz se trouvoient ensemble, et tant que de leurs devises les nouvelles en vindrent a Jacquet de Lalaing qui ne s'en faisoit que rire »

(p. 84). The reader thereby shares not only in the narrator's setting up these knights for a fall, when Lalaing subsequently proves them wrong, but also in the pleasure of the hero's calm and amused dismissal of their vainglorious boasting. Similarly, in the second section of the biography, the « eavesdropping effect » is deployed by the narrator to allow the reader to imagine themselves as a close observer of the elegant, chivalric conversation that takes place between Toison d'Or, acting as Lalaing's emissary, and the Sicilian knight Jean Boniface, whose challenge the hero wishes to accept: « Ainsi *comme vous oëz, furent leurs devises* et le prist le chevalier bien en gré » (p. 128). Once again the narrator gives the reader a privileged access to this conversation which is only later relayed « mot apréz autre » to Lalaing himself (p. 129), whilst also permitting the reader a direct insight into the protocols and diplomatic niceties involved in all aspects of organising these chivalric events.

The most common way of positioning the audience as potential witness in the prose narratives of the period, particularly for scenes of chivalric combat, is to borrow from epic the hypothetical constructions *veïssiez* or *vous eussiez veu/oï* which allow the reader to imagine themselves as being present alongside the actual spectators of these events. Readily employed in the romances of the time but only sparingly used in the chronicles, the Lalaing biography comes far closer to the latter than to the former in only containing three occurrences of this type of locution. Thus, of the Nancy joust, the narrator exclaims that: « car se adonc *vous eussiez esté* a Nansy, *vous y eussiez veu et oï* sy grant bruit et tel noise [...] qu'il sembloit estre ung ost » (p. 90); whilst of the fight against the Ghentish troops for control of the strategically important « pont d'Espierre », he declares: « Et la *veïssiéz* nobles hommes saillir en l'eaue [...] pour garnir et saisir ledit passage » (p. 429). The biographer's restricted use of this stylistic device in his text therefore seems to suggest that he felt his principal aim to be to cater for the reader's desire for an account of the facts of the hero's life rather than to make consistent direct and dramatic appeal to their imagination, as the writer of romance was wont to do.

Conclusion

The prologue of the *Livre des faits*, which draws a parallel between this text and those romances commemorating the deeds of other heroes of Hainault whilst at the same suggesting a divergence from this model in favour of an account which is more rooted in eye-witness authenticity, allows the Lalaing biographer to create an authorial voice which borrows elements from but is nonetheless distinct from that of the romance writer and the chronicler alike. This hybridity of style, which can here be attributed to the biographer's particular status as a herald - a trustworthy informant but one whose identity remains subordinate to that of the knight whose great deeds it is his task to commit to writing - is equally maintained in the rest of this text which appears, ultimately, to subscribe more closely to the patterns of the chronicle than to the romance. Indeed, the multiplicity of roles played by the narratorial first person voice in the *Livre des faits* as, by turns, organiser of the narrative, author and witness, is far more complex than that found in the romance. Such a range of roles, which is much more typical of the chronicle, reveals the biographer's concern with anchoring his tale in an historical reality that is guaranteed by the narrator's reference to his authorial function in drawing on authoritative source materials and in providing his own first-hand assessments of the

hero's worth. Moreover, whilst the narrator's addresses to the reader of the *Livre des faits* in the second person voice certainly follow romance usage in occasionally encouraging the audience to imagine themselves as being physically present as spectators at key events in the hero's life, such addresses are in fact few and far between compared to romance fictions. Close analysis of the narrative style of the Lalaing biography thus reveals it to be no mere compilation of sources but rather a carefully crafted hybrid, one that owes a greater debt to the narrative conventions of the chronicle than to those of the romance but is in fact reducible to neither.

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Tables

First section of the *Livre des faits* = chapters 1-23, p. 15-118 ; Second section = chapters 24-88, p. 119-410 ; Third section = chapters 89-109, p. 411-559.

Table 1 : Number of lines per text

	First section	Second section	Third section
Total lines per text	2060	5820	2960
* Lines of narration	1370	4497	2504

* Figure obtained by subtracting from the lines of text the total number of lines devoted to reported discourse. NB It is this figure which is used as the basis for calculating all the percentages of occurrences of narratorial constructions given in the tables below.

Table 2 : Occurrences of types of construction using first person singular (*je*), expressed as percentages of the total number of such occurrences

	First section	Second section	Third section
Author : reference to Sources	18.8	8.3	20
Author : limits of knowledge	-	5.6	6.7
Author : opinion/interpretation	12.5	5.6	20
Author : reference to self	-	11.1	-
Witness/protagonist	-	22.2	-
Narrator : organisational	12.5	11.1	13.3
Narrator : abridgement	56.2	36.1	40

Table 3 : Types of narratorial constructions using first person plural (*nous*), expressed as percentages of the total number of such occurrences

	First section	Second section	Third section
Exclusive of reader (organisational)	88.9	50	75
Inclusive : spatial/temporal proximity to characters	11.1	25	-
Inclusive of reader (<i>nostre/nos gens</i>)	-	25	25

Table 4 : Ratios of constructions using first person singular and plural combined (J/N) to those using second person plural (V)

	First section	Second section	Third section
Ratios	1.21 J/N to 1 V	1.12 J/N to 1 V	2.28 J/N to 1 V

Table 5 : Occurrences of narratorial constructions in different voices referring to the act of narration, expressed as a percentage of the total narrative part of the text, i.e. minus the sections of reported discourse (1% = 1 occurrence per 100 lines of narrative)

	First section	Second section	Third section
First person singular	1.17	0.78	0.60
First person plural	1.31	0.27	0.40
Second person plural	2.04	0.93	0.52

Table 6 : Types of narratorial constructions using second person plural (*vous*), expressed as percentages of the total number of such occurrences

	First section	Second section	Third section
Recipient: reader as subject of verb <i>oÿr</i>	53.6	54.8	92.3
Recipient: reader as subject of verb <i>savoir/penser</i> etc.	17.9	23.8	-
Recipient: reader as indirect object of narrator's <i>verbum dicendi</i>	17.9	9.5	-
Potential witness: reader as subject of « eavesdrop effect »	3.5	11.9	-
Potential witness: reader as subject of <i>irr�elles</i> (e.g. <i>ve�ssiez/eussiez vu</i>)	7.1	-	7.7