

‘Ung Espace de Temps’ –
The Role of Time in *Le Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*

By

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Abstract

Between 1450 and 1529, five Middle French versions of a manuscript recounting the tale of Gillion de Trazegnies were produced in the ducal courts of Burgundy. The objective of this thesis is to explore representations of time in the *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies* in order to offer some potential conclusions about the ways in which time is addressed and rendered within this text – and, by extension, possible trends in literary representations of time during this period. Although it was not adapted from any work of verse itself, *Gillion* was likely influenced by its context – a period of abundant *mises-en-proses* – as reflected in the text’s penchant for conventional motifs and frequent repetitions. In addition to the potential role of its context in the work’s portrayal and use of time, this thesis will address time in *Gillion* at both the lexical and structural levels. By way of conclusion, remarks on the implications of these observations in the context of medieval French and Burgundian literature as well as the history of the novel will be followed by a brief exploration of the relationship between the text and Lieven van Lathem’s (ca. 1438-1493) program of illustration in one of the two illuminated manuscript versions of this text, Ms. 111, housed at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

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Dedication

To Marcus

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1 Introduction

While in the last few decades the *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies* has begun to receive more attention from scholars than in the last few centuries,¹ this has largely been restricted to analyses of its general themes – little close textual analysis of this late medieval romance has been done so far. The purpose of this thesis project is to consider just one component of this text – its temporal element – in order to offer potential conclusions about the role that time plays in *Gillion*, and how it is mapped in this text as well as in related medieval works produced in France and in the courts of the dukes of Burgundy during the late Middle Ages. It will begin with an overview of the context in which the work was produced, followed by an analysis of the text at the lexical level and an examination of the work's structure, and concluding with remarks on the beautiful illuminations of one of its manuscript exemplars, Ms. 111, housed at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. I will also consider *Gillion* in the light of pre-existing narratives, including *La Chanson de Roland*, *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and Marie de France's *Élïduc*, which, along with the range of structural and thematic elements common to romances and *chansons de geste*, represent the kinds of literary models that our author would have been able to choose to incorporate – or not – within his own text. The kinds of ideas and structures borrowed from these exemplars not only indicate the author's preferences in

¹ The first known scholarly work published on this text is Bruslé's *Histoire véritable de Gil-Lion de Trazegnies*, 1703; it was followed by T. F. Dibdin's *The Biographical Decameron ; or, Ten Days Pleasant Discourse upon Illuminated Manuscripts and Subjects Connected with Early Engraving, Typography, and Bibliography*, published in 1817; then Auguste Serrure C. P. Voisin's 1836 treatise *Le Livre de Baudouyn, conte de Flandre, suivi de fragments du Roman de Trasnignes*, René Basset's 1901 article "La légende du mari aux deux femmes", published in *Revue des traditions populaires*, and Alphonse Bayot's *Le Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*, 1903. In 1946, Gabriel Michel published *Le vœu du chevalier Gillion*; forty years later, Frances Horgan published her 1985 dissertation, *A Critical Edition of The Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies from Brussels Bibliothèque Royale ms.9629* and Marian A. de Jong her 1987 dissertation *Deux femmes autour d'un homme. Une relation triangulaire dans Gillion de Trazegnies, roman français du XV^e siècle*. These were followed by Horgan's contribution to the 1991 anthology *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, "Gillion de Trazegnies: a fifteenth-century Burgundian *Élïduc*?", as well as Monique Santucci's 1993, 1995, and 2002 articles, which treat various aspects of the narrative as well as the political motivations of the text's author; and, most recently, Elizabeth Morrison and Zrinka Stahuljak's *Adventures of Gillion de Trazegnies : Chivalry and Romance in the Medieval East*, 2015.

terms of configuring and disclosing the temporality of his story, but also give modern readers additional filters through which to evaluate the text through research that has been done on better-known works – as the existing literature on *Gillion* is comparatively sparse.

Besides three critical editions of the text, little research has been conducted on *Gillion* so far. The primary resource for this textual analysis is Stéphanie Vincent's 2010 critical edition, which is based primarily on the Dülmen manuscript.² In addition to Vincent's edition, two other critical editions of the romance exist – Frances Horgan's (1985),³ and a volume published by O.L.B. Wolff in 1839, which is based on the manuscript held in Jena, Ms. El. f. 92 (Vincent 29, Morrison and Stahuljak 6). While Wolff's is the first complete print edition of the text, according to Vincent, it is also unfortunately fraught with errors (Vincent 29-30). While a few articles have emerged since the late 1980s, few longer, more in-depth analyses of the text exist more recently than the mid-twentieth century. And, while one of Monique Santucci's articles ("L'espace et le temps dans le dessein politique de l'auteur du Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies", 1993) begins to initiate a discussion of time and space in the work, the scope of the article is limited to the role of these elements within the realm of the text's political positioning.

In order to delve into the nature and role of time within *Gillion*, we will first begin by situating the text within its own time, place, and literary context, followed by a brief outline of its plot. Of principal interest are the manuscript versions Ms. 111, which features high-quality illuminations by celebrated Early Netherlandish painter and illuminator Lieven van Lathem (1430-1493), and the

² *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*. Edited and annotated by Stéphanie Vincent, Brepols («Textes vernaculaires du Moyen Âge»), 2010.

³ Frances Horgan, *A Critical Edition of The Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies from Brussels Bibliothèque Royale ms.9629*, University of Cambridge, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1985.

Dülmen manuscript, produced in the same context and the most complete version of the text. When Alphonse Bayot published his 1903 study of the fifteenth-century romance, the edition that is now housed in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 111, had not yet been rediscovered by scholars. One of five manuscript versions of this text, the work was most likely produced between 1463-1464 for Burgundian nobleman Louis de Gruuthuse (1422/1427 to 1492), a member of the court of Philippe le Bon (1396-1467) and was acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum from the private collection of the Duke of Devonshire in 2012 (Morrison and Stahuljak 2-6). Apparently lost sometime during or after the reign of Francois I^{er}, the manuscript's last owner prior to its disappearance, the manuscript was still missing when Bayot published his study on the romance, and was not rediscovered until 1932 by Edward Billings Ham (Vincent 38-39). Ham discusses his astonishment upon finding the work in the Chatsworth library, where it had arrived under mysterious circumstances sometime between 1518 and 1817, in his 1932 article « Le manuscrit de Gillion de Trazegnies à Chatsworth ». Ms. 111 was transcribed by David Aubert (active 1453 - 1479), and some scholars, including Elizabeth Morrison and Zrinka Stahuljak as well as Stéphanie Vincent, have posited that Aubert may have authored the work as well (Morrison and Stahuljak 140; Vincent 39). Horgan postulates that Jean de Wavrin (c. 1400 – c. 1475) may be the author – following in the footsteps of Bayot's work, which also proposes that the romance was of Jean de Wavrin's creation. Horgan cites as evidence Jean de Wavrin's career as a professional soldier and the frequent occurrence of highly-detailed descriptions of battle scenes, and compares *Gillion* with another of Jean de Wavrin's works, the *Anciennes chroniques d'Angleterre*, finding many apparent stylistic similarities (Vincent 20-21). However, Vincent seems more convinced that the romance could be the work of Guillebert de Lannoy (1386-1462), who also held the title of *seigneur de Villerval*, to whom Jean-Chrysostome Bruslé de Montpleinchamp (1641-1724/25) attributes the romance in his 1703 discussion of it (22-27).

In total, eight manuscript versions of the romance are extant:⁴ one produced sometime around 1455, referred to by Vincent as *B*; one produced in 1463 and housed in a private collection in Dülmen, known as *D*; Ms. 111, alternatively known as *E*; one produced sometime during the latter half of the 15th century and housed today at the Thüringer Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek in Jena; one produced sometime prior to 1487 and written in Latin; two later versions, one in French produced in 1529, and one in Latin, produced in 1548 (both housed at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek België in Brussels); as well as a modern manuscript edition without known provenance or date and also translated into Latin, located in the Belgian state archives at Brussels (Vincent 31). Most scholars distinguish between the first five manuscripts – all of which were produced in the latter half of the 15th century – and the three newer versions; Morrison and Stahuljak refer to the first five as the “five original manuscripts” (Morrison and Stahuljak 6). Of the manuscript versions of the romance, Ms. 111, along with *D* – both of which were produced between 1463 and 1464 – are the longest (Ham 70), as well as the only two to have been illuminated (Morrison and Stahuljak 6). Morrison and Stahuljak refer to these manuscripts as the “long version of the romance”, and explain that the ending of the story – relatively succinct in the editions held in Brussels and Jena – is expanded from one folio to fifty and fifty-one in these longer versions (6). The manuscript that Vincent has chosen for her critical edition of the text is *D*, the closest manuscript version to Ms. 111 (Vincent 56-57). The reason for this choice is that although the text of the Dülmen manuscript is slightly shorter, the manuscript itself is more complete – Ms. 111 is missing thirty-three folios, including ten in the conclusion (57).

⁴ Vincent notes that Frances Horgan may have discovered mention of a ninth manuscript, now lost: “Parmi les manuscrits que trouve Arias Montano dans la bibliothèque de Breda, appartenant au prince d’Orange Guillaume le Taciturne, il y en a un intitulé ‘l’histoire de Gillon de Trasignies en françois’. Ce manuscrit figure dans l’inventaire de l’Escurial de 1576, mais un chercheur belge nommé Gachard n’en trouve aucune trace lorsqu’il se rend à l’Escurial au milieu du XIX^e siècle. Il conclut alors que le manuscrit a péri au milieu d’autres lors de l’incendie de 1671” (31).

Therefore, no critical edition of the text of Ms. 111 exists to date; Vincent's, however, includes extensive notation on variants and disparities between all five original manuscripts, as well as the three more recent versions, and is the most recent and comprehensive.

2 CONTEXT OF *GILLION*– THE ERA OF THE *MISE-EN-PROSE*

The five original manuscript versions of *Gillion*, all written in Burgundy between the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, together constitute an example of a text composed under the influence of the literary culture of the Burgundian ducal courts. The fifteenth century witnessed a burgeoning of prose manuscript production in France as well as at the courts of the dukes of Burgundy – many of whom were extraordinarily affluent and powerful patrons.⁵ Even before the introduction of the printing press, copious epics and romances were produced by scribes for the entertainment of French and Burgundian courtly elite, sometimes enhanced and enlivened with illuminations. This profusion of prose literature seems to have been both a moment of authorial experimentation with the possibilities of prose as well as a response to increasing demand for literary entertainment.⁶ Accordingly, while many of the resultant texts exhibit outward signs of inventiveness, perhaps an even greater number reveal extensive recycling of popular motifs, particularly towards the end of the century, by which point many themes had become so concretized as tropes that authors no longer bother rewording them at all, but simply repeat borrowed phrases and passages verbatim. In addition to this increase in prose production, a great number of verse originals were also 'translated' into prose

⁵ See June Hall McCash's chapter "Chrétien's Patrons" in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert. For information about specific Burgundian patrons, see Georges Doutrepoint's seminal work *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*.

⁶ See McCash; see also Doutrepoint, particularly p. 3, p. 16, and p. 48-49, as well as Philippe Ménard, « La réception des romans de chevalerie à la fin du Moyen Âge et au XVI^e siècle » in *The Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society*, 49, 1997, 234-273.

during this period, particularly in Burgundy (McCash 1-3). Although it was conceived in the period of the *mises-en-prose*, as far as we know *Gillion* was not adapted from any work of verse itself.⁷ It does, however, display many of the elements typical of adapted prose romances of this era, as we will see in our closer examinations of the work's language and story matter.⁸ Somewhat paradoxically, therefore, the *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies* may be seen as both a test case of the capacities of prose as a vehicle for narration and an exemplar of the emerging style of the *mises-en-prose* – a style favoring textual homogeneity, frequent repetition, and use of generic expressions.

As a text with origins in the developing *mise-en-prose* tradition in the Burgundian courts, *Gillion* is an important example not only of the ways in which authors were repurposing known literary techniques, but also of the direction in which their writing was evolving. As Joan Tasker Grimbert and Carol J. Chase note in *Chrétien de Troyes in Prose*, “At the court of the dukes of Burgundy, in particular, a number of epics and romances were ‘translated’ from verse to prose, including Chrétien’s first two works, *Erec et Enide* and *Cligés*” (2). This rise in adapted and new prose works was fueled by an increasing demand for a more accessible form of entertainment, and indeed “the public for whom late French Arthurian romances were destined avidly consumed these works” (2). Similarly, *Gillion* is a testament to the increasing demand for, and consumption of, tales of heroism and chivalry – caused by a number of factors, including “the ubiquitous state of warfare that characterized France in the late Middle Ages” (2), as well as increasing literacy and the flourishing of smaller, more regional courts and

⁷ Though generally believed to be an original text by most scholars (including Vincent and Morrison and Stahuljak), Frances Horgan believes that *Gillion* may have been adapted from a verse work, now lost, due to its content, which is remarkably like Marie de France’s lai *Éliduc*, and “traces of octosyllables” that she identifies in the text – see Horgan’s contribution to *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 210.

⁸ For helpful contextual information about the *mises-en-prose* and the relationship between resultant texts and non-transcribed works like *Gillion*, see Doutrepoint, *Les mises-en-prose*, especially pages 2-4 and 43-49.

thriving urban centers – all of which not only made possible a greater production of literary creations, but also led to an increase in readers (2-3). Like his predecessors, Philippe le Bon amassed a large collection of such works, and seems to have been interested in new prose commissions in addition to prose translations of older verse works (Doutrepoint 16-17). According to one of Philippe’s favorite writers, David Aubert, the Duke was a particularly avid reader, who “a dès longtemps accoustoumé de journellement faire devant lui lire les anciennes histoires ; et pour estre garni d’une librairie non pareille à toutes autres il a dès son jeune eaige eu à ses geiges plusieurs translateurs, grans clers, experts orateurs, historiens et escripvains...” (Doutrepoint 17). This library was well-equipped with works of the cycle of the Round Table, including one copy each of Chrétien de Troyes’ *Chevalier au lion*, *Grand Saint Graal* or *Joseph d’Arimathie*, *Guiiron le Courtois*, *Ysaie le Triste*, and Raoul de Houden’s *Mérançois de Portlesguesz*, as well as two copies each of *Lancelot du Lac*, *Quête du Saint Graal*, and *Mort du Roi Artus*, and three versions each of *Tristan* in prose. Upon his death, Philippe’s library contained a number of *hystoires* or *livres de gestes*, according to the 1467 catalogue. He possessed, for example, the translated *Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin*, a copy of *Orson de Beauvais*, two copies of *Chevalier au cygne*, various narrative pieces on *Girard de Roussillon*, *Auberi le Bourgoing*, the *Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, the *Lorrains*, *Mélusine*, *Bueves d’Hanstone*, the *Voëu du Héron*, as well as several works composed by Adenet le Roi and various poems pertaining to the *Guillaume d’Orange* and the *Garin de Montglane* cycles (17-21). In addition to these preexisting works, Philippe also commissioned many new ones, or was in possession of texts that had been produced in one of the Burgundian courts, of which one of the most important examples is Jean Wauquelin’s 1447 work *Girard de Roussillon* (22), based on the fourteenth-century version (c. 1330-39) written in Alexandrines by monks at the Abbaye de Pothières, rather than the original twelfth-century *chanson de geste*. Philippe was also in possession of two of Wauquelin’s *mises-en-prose* (29), and may have also collected a copy of David Aubert’s *Charles Martel* – the work is dedicated to Philippe, though it remains uncertain whether or not the Duke actually kept it in his

library (34-35). Philippe and his contemporaries were fascinated by all aspects of chivalry and chivalric societies, and codified this fascination into a variety of different kinds of texts, including chivalric treatises, chivalric biographies, and descriptions of tournaments and jousts (Ménard, 247-48).⁹ Philippe possessed a transcription of Honoré Bonet's *Arbre des Batailles*, as well as a text entitled the *Conquêtes de Charlemagne* (Doutrepoint 42). Additionally, one of the manuscript editions of *Gillion* produced by David Aubert for Philippe's son, Antoine de Bourgogne (1421-1504) – the exemplar D, now housed at Dülmen – as well as another version produced by Jean de Wavrin (now manuscript B, housed in Brussels) and I, now in Jena, would also ultimately join the artifacts belonging to Philippe's library, though none of the inventories conducted during or after his lifetime mention any of these copies (43-45). The late romances and *mises-en-prose* resulting from this period of literary effervescence have frequently been looked down upon by modern scholars for their lack of inspiration,¹⁰ and while it is certainly impossible to measure a late romance like *Gillion* using the narrative standards of Chrétien de Troyes, these works nevertheless represent noteworthy trends in the development of French literature, and an important step in the evolution of the novel.

The process of recodification inherent in the transfer from verse to prose produces a number of results. For the purposes of this analysis, the most interesting are those thematic elements that tend to be emphasized, such as warfare and tournaments, as well as those that were frequently suppressed or omitted, such as lengthy dialogic interchanges and descriptive portraits (Grimbert and Chase, 8-9). The ways in which the authors of these works departed from previous narrative models provide a useful context for comparison that is helpful in a textual analysis. In the introduction to their

⁹ Ménard cites Richard Cowper's "Outline Bibliography of Works on Chivalry published in France before 1600", found in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, edited by S. Angelo.

¹⁰ As Philippe Ménard laments at the onset of his article; Grimbert and Chase also discuss this on pages 9-14.

translation of *Erec et Enide* and *Cligés*, Grimbart and Chase note a number of changes made to Chrétien's originals, intended to make the works more appealing to a contemporary audience. In some cases, dialogue-heavy scenes were shortened "so that the action moves along more quickly"; in other instances, "the prose text actually provides description absent in the verse" (8). In addition to adjusting the velocity of the adventures, prose authors "'corrected' what they saw as faults of logic and motivation in the source...many changes were plainly designed to clarify aspects of the early romances that Chrétien had left ambiguous" (11).¹¹ Clearly, the ways in which Chrétien and other early medieval authors dealt with time in their works posed some problems for later redactors of *mises-en-prose* catering to late medieval audiences, and authors of *histoires* and romances faced many of the same obstacles. A closer inspection of *Gillion* reveals some of the ways in which late medieval writers treated and conveyed abstract ideas, such as distance, space, and time. Similarly, many elements of the plot reflect a preference for the reuse of conventional ideas, including abundant lengthy descriptions of chivalric acts and tournaments, the plurality of heroes (a trope that is further enhanced in *Gillion* when the hero engenders twins), the Saracen ruler (and his beautiful daughter), fantastic conversions, and the requisite assortment of battle scenes. Yet, in spite of its conformity to the trends of its time, the *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignies* is a compelling, multi-faceted work – one that combines elements of romance, adventure, chivalry, travel, and a medieval European fascination with cultural alterity, all within a framework of Christian ideology. Before embarking on our exploration of this text, it will be useful to summarize the work's plot. While the following synopsis does not contain all of the details of the narrative, it does recapitulate the salient points, and those important for the purpose of this analysis.

¹¹ Grimbart and Chase cite Martha Wallen's 1972 dissertation "Art of Adaption in the Fifteenth-century *Erec et Enide* and *Cligés*".

2.1 Plot

In the prologue of the romance, we learn that the romance's titular character, Gillion de Trazegnies, is a noble knight from the county of Hainaut. He is happily married to the beautiful Marie d'Ostrevant, except in one respect: they are childless. Gillion prays for offspring and vows to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem if God will grant them a child. Shortly thereafter, Marie informs him that she is pregnant. Gillion prepares to leave at once, making a stop in Rome before continuing on to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, on his way home, Gillion's ship is caught in a storm and he is captured by a sultan's army and brought to Cairo. There he narrowly escapes death through the intervention of the sultan's daughter, Gracienne, who converts to Christianity. Later, as the sultan's prisoner, Gillion survives an attack on the kingdom by King Ysoré of Damascus, after leading the sultan's army to victory and even saving the sultan's life. Gillion is pardoned and given a commanding position in the Muslim ruler's forces – under the condition that he will not return to Hainaut without the sultan's permission. Meanwhile, Marie has given birth to twin sons, Jean and Gérard. Her husband has been long absent, and she is pressed by a suitor named Amaury, who leaves in search of Gillion to give him the false report that his wife and offspring have perished. Gillion, grief-stricken, vows not to return to Hainaut and to continue valiantly serving the sultan. Amaury dies in battle a short time later, and when he does not return to Hainaut, Gillion's young sons set off in search of their father themselves. Meanwhile, Gillion has married Gracienne and become the heir to the sultan's throne. After spending some time in Cyprus, being captured by two different Muslim rulers, and performing various chivalric deeds, Jean and Gérard make their way to Cairo. Finally, they meet their father on the battlefield when Gillion recognizes the Trazegnies coat of arms on their armor. Jean and Gérard inform their father that Marie is also still alive, and Gillion begs the sultan to permit him to return to Hainaut, which he does, under the condition that Gillion return immediately should the sultan ever need him. With his wife Gracienne and his two sons, Gillion makes his way back to Hainaut, where his two wives together

become nuns at the Abbey of the Olive, and Gillion enters Cambron Abbey. That same year, both Marie and Gracienne die – within two days of each other – and shortly thereafter Gillion is recalled to Egypt, where he dies in battle. His heart is returned to Hainaut, and laid to rest between the bodies of his two spouses (Morrison 12-14; Vincent 15). Clearly, the author of this text must negotiate vast swathes of geographical space, and the same is true with time: one of the foundational features of this narrative is a complex timescape.

3 LEXICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TIME IN *GILLION*:

THE WORK'S SELF-DESCRIBED TEMPORALITY

How do we represent time in literature? Some modern scholars have turned to medieval sources to answer this question, including Erich Auerbach, whose 1946 work *Mimesis* features chapters on *Roland* and *Yvain*. Other scholars have taken a broader theoretical approach, as Roland Barthes does in *Le degré zéro de l'écriture* and *S/Z*, Gérard Genette does in his *Figures*, and Mikhail Bakhtin does in *The Dialogic Imagination*. For Auerbach, a text's ability to convey a sense of time is not limited to its choice of words, but is also observable in the most basic elements of the text, including construction and arrangement of clauses, as well as the concatenation of sentences and events. While Auerbach is particularly interested in dissecting the syntax of *Roland*, his ideas on temporality conveyed through sentence structure are also useful as a tool of comparison in an examination of *Gillion*. Similarly, while many of the models that Barthes, Genette, and Bakhtin draw upon in their analyses are more recent works (or, in the case of Bakhtin, both older and newer, including an assortment of ancient Greek and Roman texts as well as 18th- and 19th-century novels), many of their observations about time in literature are nevertheless easily transferrable to a late medieval romance produced in the courts of the dukes of Burgundy.

For an examination of the temporality of a text – that is, of the ways in which the text constructs, disseminates, and manipulates time – it is useful to begin at the lexical level. Language,

which is the primary vehicle for transporting ideas and information between author and reader, is also responsible for the activation and mobilization of certain codes built into human societies (Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, 11-26). The reception and interpretation of these connoted ideas may be unique to the society in which the written work is produced (or even to the individual reader), and represent an important layer of our understanding of the text (Barthes, *S/Z*, 9-18). Taken as a whole, the written language of the text is the vessel that carries the *parole* of the author to the reader (Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, 11); taken individually, each word, verbal tense, and diacritical mark reflects a decision on the part of the author, and carries its own meaning (26). These precisions are the building blocks of the text, and together make up its most basic elements – its temporal and spatial setting, the structure of its narration, its themes, motifs, and symbols, as well as our sense of its verisimilitude. The purpose of this section is to explore and analyze temporality at the lexical level of *Gillion*. It will begin with an overview of time within the work – the ways in which the work positions itself within a particular temporal setting, the presence (and absence) of various types of temporal markers, and the text's preferred methods for disclosing (or not disclosing) the temporality of the events of its narration, including the relative lexical frequencies of key temporal indicators and syntactical structures.

One of the first components of a text's temporal realm that an author must establish is its verisimilitude. Paul Ricoeur's discussion of narrative reproduction of temporal experience in the physical world in his *Time and Narrative (Temps et Récit)* takes Augustine's *Confessions* for its subject (Ricoeur 5), but the results of the study also speak to the author's treatment of time in *Gillion*. For Ricoeur, an author's ability to reproduce within the reader the feelings brought on by time – a sense of urgency or anticipation, for example – is directly linked to the work's credibility for the reader. This carefully-crafted sense of time, as well as the author's ability to convince the reader of its verisimilitude, is not a new art, and it is equally present in *Gillion*. For example, in his prologue, the author of *Gillion* establishes for his audience the authenticity of his *récit* in the following manner: “Comme il soit ainsi

que environ a deux ans, je passais par la conté de Haynnau...” (Vincent 126). The narrator goes on to explain that, while on this chance visit to Hainaut, he happened upon an old monastery, called the Abbey of the Olive – an obvious gambit, evidently used to entice the reader with a precise time, place, impeccable authority, and interesting context for the ‘discovery’ of the manuscript. In keeping with the popular theme of historic ‘vertu’ and chivalric feats worthy of contemporary emulation, he continues, “Et pour ce que dés ma premiere jennesse ay esté et ancoires suys moult desirant de sçavoir les haulz fais advenus par les nobles et vertueulz hommes du temps passé,” he writes, “demanday les noms d’iceulx trespassez quy dessoubz les trois tumbes gesoient” (126) – a request reminiscent of the “biographies de chevaliers” and the “ouvrages d’héraldique”, both popular literary categories in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in France and Burgundy (Ménard 247-48). In response to this inquiry, the narrator claims, an inhabitant brought him a small book, “ung petit livre en parchemin, escript d’une très ancienne lettre et moult caducque et obscure en langue ytalyenne” (Vincent 127). This exotic genealogy may be intended to increase the reader’s sense of its truthfulness, as it seems too fabulous and too detailed to be untrue. Finding the contents of this source “bien belle et pyteable a oÿr”, the narrator explains that the present work is a translation, and not an original story.

Although this text is original as far as we know, it poses as a translation. The author’s spurious denial of the originality of his work might seem peculiar and even counterintuitive to a twenty-first century reader. However, considered in the light of its historical context – a fervor for prose adaptations, especially with foreign origin – it may illuminate those aspects of the *mises-en-prose* that were particularly appreciated and cultivated. The trope of “discovering” a lost work and “translating” it for the contemporary reader was not an uncommon strategy among medieval authors, and these topoi became recognizable traits in the *mises-en-prose*. Of the veracity of the author’s account, George Doutrepoint declares, “cette découverte d’un manuscrit dans une abbaye, comme on le pense bien, n’est qu’une réédition du vieux *truc* littéraire usité au moyen âge pour allécher le lecteur”; of the work’s

alleged Italian provenance, “gardons-nous pareillement de nous laisser prendre à cette invention d’un récit qui serait venu d’au-delà des Alpes échouer à l’abbaye de l’Olive. Rien, dans l’histoire, ne rappelle ou ne décèle une telle provenance” (Doutrepont 45). Additionally, Vincent points out that the trope was cliché well before *Gillion* was written; in fact, Gilbert de Lannoy – a candidate for the authorship of *Gillion* – made use of it in the prologue of one of his known works, *Instruction d’un jeune prince* (Vincent 25).

This embedded provenance serves several purposes. First, it lends a sense of importance and veracity to the work, which is derived from its mysteriousness as well as its fabricated historical value. Its perceived antiquity also lends the story greater authenticity, permitting the author greater creative freedom with his tale (the past is a foreign country, as the saying goes). Additionally, as other scholars have pointed out, another important purpose of this motif as it is used in *Gillion* is the establishment of a general, hazy past, which serves as the backdrop for the author’s contemporary political agenda.¹² *Gillion* thus presents itself as the historical biography of a distant ancestor of the Trazegnies family – a family that had previously been prominent in the Burgundian court, but – curiously – was less so at the time of the work’s execution (Vincent 77). It seems as if the romance seeks to flatter the supposed descendants of its hero (Brown-Grant 131) – indeed, Vincent posits that “*Gillion de Trazegnies*...a dû servir à redonner un peu de lustre aux Trazegnies” (Vincent 75-76). Writing to flatter powerful noblemen as well as patrons was also not a new phenomenon at the time of *Gillion*’s conception. For example, although he omits this convention in *Yvain*, Chrétien de Troyes’ dedicatory prologues – for Philippe d’Alsace (*Le Conte du Graal*) and Marie de Champagne (*Le Chevalier de la Charrette*) – are well-

¹² Stahuljak, 68; see also Vincent 25-27 and Santucci, “L’espace et le temps dans le dessein politique de l’auteur du *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*”.

known, and serve a clear political function.¹³ *Gillion's* major themes – Christian piety and conversion, traveling between East and West, glorious battles between Muslims and Christians – were in vogue socially and politically in the court of Philippe le Bon at the time of the work's creation. As a successful courtier in Philippe's court aspiring to lead the next Burgundian Crusade, Louis de Gruuthuse would have particularly appreciated *Gillion's* message of chivalric Christian escapades in Muslim lands, as well as the beautifully-rendered battle scene illuminations of Ms. 111 (Morrison and Stahuljak 3). Much like *Roland* and other *chansons de geste*, *Gillion* glorifies the adventure and the righteousness of the hero's pilgrimage and subsequent years spent battling Saracens, as well as his sons' ready willingness to continue this divine work. Although written well after the apogee of the *chanson de geste*, many thematic elements in *Gillion* are reminiscent of this genre, and the work seems to cast itself in the epic world.¹⁴ These borrowed narrative themes reflect one of the major literary trends influencing *Gillion's* composition – the gradual erasure of the boundaries between the genres of epic and romance, resulting in a sort of generic flattening. These generic categories, which had remained distinct in the early Middle Ages, often produced hybrid forms (epics with romance subplots; romances with epic themes) and began to converge further in the later Middle Ages, and ultimately to form one broader literary category that often labels itself 'histoire'. While the *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignes* is a self-titled romance and is primarily reminiscent of earlier romances in its makeup, the work also incorporates narrative material borrowed from earlier *chanson de geste* cycles – for example, crusades, orientalist themes, and the motif of the *belle sarrasine*.¹⁵ The result that emerges is a primarily romance plotline set against a

¹³ For more information on these prologues, see McCash.

¹⁴ Here, we are using the term 'genre' to mean, loosely, a literary category retroactively imposed on these texts and used to define them by their characterizing traits, whose boundaries were not necessarily recognized by contemporaries.

¹⁵ See Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

backdrop of the political and military world of the *chanson de geste*, and a blending of epic and romance narrative themes.

In the same way that *Gillion* displays some of the thematic elements found in *Roland*, the work's purpose was, like *Roland*, likely plural. The *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignies* would not only have entertained, but would have also been a perfect tool of propaganda as Louis sought to recruit Burgundian noblemen for his planned crusade (Morrison and Stahuljak 3-5; see also 63-67). Although this glorious crusade did not ultimately take place, it exerted its influence on *Gillion* in many ways, and, together with the literary atmosphere in which the work was conceived, primarily informed the work's temporal self-positioning. The breakdown of distinctions between literary genres that transpired over the course of the Middle Ages was not a new phenomenon, as Mikhail Bakhtin, in his *Dialogic Imagination*, notes in his discussion of the Greek romance: "The significance of such genres as the love elegy, the geographic novel, rhetoric, drama, the historiographic genre in the genesis of the Greek romance may be variously assessed, but one cannot deny a very real syncretism of these generic features. The Greek romance utilized and fused together in its structure almost all genres of ancient literature" (Bakhtin 89). The Greek romance, therefore, set a certain precedent for generic blending: "all these elements, derived from various different genres, all fused and consolidated into a new – specifically novelistic – unity" (89), and this process is visible in *Gillion*. In this vein, Bakhtin offers a useful definition of a kind of temporality that he refers to as "adventure-time" (87), which may be useful in characterizing some aspects of the overall temporality of *Gillion*. This adventure-time may be distilled in a few words: it is the time that surrounds two young lovers who are destined for each other, but must undergo separation and other trials until they may at last be reunited – *Aucassin et Nicolette* is a classic example of French medieval literature, but, as Bakhtin points out, this model is as universal and well-familiar to modern audiences as it was to contemporary readers of the ancient Greek romance. What is particularly interesting about adventure-time is the way in which it presumes and

precludes the ending of the story, so that the events between the lovers' encounter and their ultimate union, though recounted in the story, are effectively nothing more than the substance passed over in an extended prolepsis. As Bakhtin puts it, "it is as if absolutely nothing has happened between these two moments...two adjacent moments, one of biographical life, one of biographical time, are directly conjoined. The gap, the pause, the hiatus that appears between these two strictly adjacent biographical moments...is, precisely, an extratemporal hiatus between two moments of biographical time" (90). The nature of adventure-time is such that it allows the audience to predict, with relative certainty, not only the ultimate ending of the story, but many of the events that will transpire between beginning and conclusion, as these had concretized into stable tropes that could be reliably anticipated in a romance even by the time of the Greek romances analyzed by Bakhtin. This ability of the reader to foresee the conclusion of the romance is mirrored in the generic opening of the romance, which, with its type-cast characters ("the hero and heroine of this adventure-time realm are remarkable for their *exceptional beauty*. They are also *exceptionally chaste*") and recurring motifs, works to establish the foundation for adventure-time: "From the very beginning, the love between the hero and heroine is not subject to doubt; this love remains *absolutely unchanged* throughout the entire novel. Their chastity is also preserved, and their marriage at the end of the novel is *directly conjoined* with their love" (89). Although *Gillion's* love dynamic is triangular, featuring two heroines to one hero, the language used to describe the relationship between Gillion and Marie as well as the union of Gillion and Gracienne are consistent with the concept of adventure-time: "Le jenne chevalier dont icy voeul faire mention estoit appellé Gilyon et fut sires de Trassignyes. De la beauté et bonté que en luy et en dame Marie sa femme estoient, ne vous sçauroye descripre a la verité, car Dieu et Nature y eurent tellement ouvré que homme mortel ne le sçauroit declairer" (Vincent 127). The exaggerated portrait employed here is uncannily reminiscent of those found in *Aucassin et Nicolette*: "Ele avoit blonde la crigne/et bien faite la sorcille,/la face clere et traitice :/ainc plus bele ne veïstes" (Walter 44); or, even more astonishingly,

“les flors des margerites qu’ele ronpoit as ortex de ses piés, qui li gissoient sor le menuisse du pié par deseure, estoient droites noires avers ses piés et ses ganbes, tant par estoit blanche la mescinete” (74). Like Aucassin, Gillion too is remarkable in his physical beauty and internal purity, and the match between the lord and lady of Trazegnies is considered by all to be highly fitting, as they complement each other perfectly in goodness and beauty: “D’eulz tous furent bien amez et chiers tenuz pour la grant vertu et humilité qu’ilz veoient en leur seigneur et en leur nouvelle dame” (Vincent 128).

Similarly, although she falls instantly and passionately in love with Gillion upon first sight of him, the reader is assured that Gracienne’s contact with the Christian prisoner is mediated by fellow recent convert Hertan, who is delighted to arrange meetings between Gillion and Gracienne so that the latter may benefit from Gillion’s religious instruction: “Tant l’admonnesta la pucelle tourna son amour a Nostre Seigneur, de quoy Hertan fut moult joyeux, car très voutentiers les ascoutoit”, and that Gracienne’s piety is such that “tellement et si longuement se deviserent eulx trois ensamble que l’aube du jour fut apparent” (151). The reader is consistently reassured that the “amitié” between Gillion and Gracienne is rooted solely in a passion for Christ, so that, when Gillion learns of Marie’s death, there is nothing to tarnish his union with Gracienne. Gracienne’s character type is also consistent with the notion of adventure-time, for although she converts to Christianity, her character does not change over the course of the story. Because she is introduced to the reader at the moment of her conversion, Gracienne – like Gillion, Marie, Hertan, and every other character in *Gillion* – remains consistent for the entirety of the tale. Static characters are a defining characteristic of adventure-time as it is outlined by Bakhtin. Her character recalls many *belles sarrasines* in *chanson de geste* cycles like that of Guillaume d’Orange, where free-spirited noblewomen fall in love with invading knights, and are ready to change their name, religion, and culture for their sake, and in so doing are more active, dynamic, and adventurous than their Christian counterparts.

And yet, while the cast of *Gillion* does not undergo any psychological or personal change, they do experience natural or biological changes over the course of the story's narrative time. While this idea will be discussed further in Section VI, in which I address structural representations of time within the text, it is worth noting in this context that the natural process of aging as it is reflected in *Gillion*, and particularly in the case of Gillion's twin sons, adds a dimension to the timescape of this work that is not present in Bakhtin's notion of adventure-time. This reminder to the reader of the time that is lapsing as the events of the story unfold contrasts with certain aspects of the story's adventure-time, and particularly with the preclusive nature of its ending. Although the conclusion of *Gillion* is generally in keeping with the ending prescribed by the adventure-time romance (albeit doubled, as a result of its love triangle), the references to Gillion's age and to the age of his sons are reminders of the time that exists between the two fixed points of the story's adventure time.

Like the tropes of "discovering" a lost work and "translating" it, familiar story arrangements were also a helpful tool for late medieval authors, who used and reused patterns such as those particular to the realm of adventure-time and added their own embellishments in order to craft an attractive story. In the case of *Gillion*, just as the romance takes place in a vast expanse of exotic and often unfamiliar territory – another element of the typical adventure-time romance (Bakhtin 88) – the story's temporal setting seems to have been painted in equally broad strokes. This temporal component of the work's chronotope – to borrow another concept from Bakhtin (84) – is largely (though not entirely) fictive, and historically inaccurate: it is supposed to have taken place during the reign of Merovingian king Childebert (ruled 511 to 558), as well as the lifetime of Baldwin I, Count of Hainaut, who was also Baldwin VI of Flanders and ruled Hainaut from 1051 to 1070 (Stahuljak 68). Baldwin was known for the reconstruction of the monastery of Hasnon as well as his support of the

emperor Alexius of Constantinople.¹⁶ It seems that the point of this temporal positioning is not necessarily to situate the story in a specific historical moment; rather, it evokes memories of a specifically vague past – that is, an intentionally general, misty past that is occasionally punctuated with precise details, as well as a certain ideological nod to powerful rulers known for piety and involvement in the East. Events are therefore not constricted to a specific chronology, but may create their own timeline, something that is particularly essential in a story whose plot relies heavily on fictitious battles between warring sultans.

However, while the battles themselves are the creative expression of *Gillion's* author, some elements of them are based in history – an aspect of the romance which has not only helped to approximate the date of its composition, but also plays an important role in the development of its carefully curated setting. Jacques Paviot, in his 2003 monograph *Les Ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'Orient*, finds similarities between the sultan's calling upon his allies – France and Burgundy – for aid following a narrowly-avoided invasion by the King of Cyprus (Chapter XXV, 180-182) and Philippe le Bon's own request for volunteers to join him in his envisioned crusade in 1454. Additionally, Paviot notes that the invasion of Cyprus by the King of Slavonia (XXXVIII, 231-237) echoes the historical invasion of Mehmet II, who took back Constantinople in 1453 (Vincent 17-18). This hybrid of the imaginary and the historical corresponds to another important element of the Greek romance as noted by Bakhtin – the mélange of real (and often precisely-detailed or even “encyclopedic”) descriptions and elements with fictional details. While Bakhtin did not treat medieval literature in any depth, his observations on the Greek romance, including its tendency towards meticulously-detailed portrayals of real places, peoples, customs, structures, and animals (Bakhtin 88), offers some helpful context for

¹⁶ Gilbert of Mons, *Chronicle of Hainaut* (trans. Laura Napran), 4-25.

similar descriptions in *Gillion*, which seem to serve the same purpose: to anchor the narrative and to give it a lively sense of verisimilitude. The apparent anachronism of King Childebert and Count Baldwin I belonging to the same temporal realm is therefore also explained: they are part of an intentionally imprecise historical time, which is connected to, but not subject to, real history, and which may be adapted to the situational needs of the story. The point is not necessarily to situate the story within history (although to a certain extent the romance is also interested in presenting itself as history, bringing this *histoire* seemingly closer to history itself – see Vincent, 75-76), but more importantly to cultivate an ideological effect within the reader. A comparable example of this technique is *Roland*: set in 778 at the historical battle of Roncevaux, the work features authentic historical figures – including Charlemagne and Roland himself – as well as historical events; however, as other scholars have already pointed out, the work manipulates these events to a deliberate ideological end – the cultivation of the crusading spirit.¹⁷ The layering of this call to crusade, contemporary at the time of Roland’s creation, but not at the time of the Battle of Roncevaux, over unconnected historical events taking place some three hundred years in the past seems oddly anachronistic, but may be better read as a deliberate literary temporal elision, which ignores the span of time between the period of the work’s conception and the purported period of its narration in order to project the ideology of the former onto the historical events of the latter.

In addition to fulfilling political and ideological objectives, this kind of temporal setting – with one foot in history and one in fiction – is also important to the reader’s acceptance of the fictitious elements of its narration, as Ricoeur points out in the first volume of his *Time and Narrative*. Plot, he

¹⁷ See, for example, “Politicizing national literature: the scholarly debate around *La chanson de Roland* in the nineteenth century”, Isabel N. DiVanna; Joseph Duggan’s 2005 edition of *Roland*, and Richard Lock’s *Aspects of Time in Medieval Literature*.

finds, is much like metaphor: it imitates, evokes, and signifies the real human experience, and this mimetic component of plot is “creative imitation, by means of the plot of lived temporal existence” (Ricoeur 31). Time is not only an important component of a work’s agenda; it is a deciding factor in the reader’s willingness to suspend disbelief and to accept the events of the plot. This willingness may be elicited through the cultivation of a temporal context that is convincing in its imitation of lived temporal experience, the foundation for which is a set of authentic lexical temporal markers that help to guide the reader through the constructed narrative temporal context. In the following section, closer attention shall be paid to the text’s temporal vernacular.

4 LEXICAL TEMPORAL MARKERS:

A PREFERENCE FOR THE GENERAL OVER THE SPECIFIC

As with *Gillion’s* temporal self-presentation at the onset of the romance, time within the narrative is a mixture of oddly-specific and ambiguous temporal markers. Examining the language of the romance, we may begin to identify the ways in which time is processed linguistically within the text. The most obvious lexical marker of time within a text is a word or phrase that denotes a particular point in time or an amount of time spent or passed. To the modern reader, familiar with more recent texts emerging from a cultural tradition of denoting and keeping track of time, these markers seem comparatively scant within *Gillion*. For example, the phrase ‘ung espace de temps’ occurs dozens of times throughout the text (see, for example, IV, 131: “Ainsi fut messire Gilyon a sejour *ung espace de temps* en son chastel de Trassignies avec Marie sa femme...”; XIV, 152: “Ainsi comme vous pouez oyr fut messire Gillyon *ung espace de temps*...”; XXVII, 186, “...ilz y sejournerent *ung espace de temps*...”), whereas specific points in time such as calendar dates are much more infrequent (occurring four times in the entire romance – interestingly all in LXIII; the first two appear on page 336: “le .xv^e. jour de novembre” and “le premier jour de may prochainement venant”, and the third and fourth on page 337: “le .xv^e. jour d’octobre” and “au premier jour de may”). Equally uncommon are textual

observations of religious holidays (one reference to “le jour de la Saint Jehan” is made (217), and two to “la Saint Jehan prochainement venant” (205 and 226); there are also two references to important dates in the Muslim calendar: “...advint ung jour ainsi que ilz faisoient la grant feste et solempnité de Mahom” (259) and “...jusques a la feste de la nativité Mahom” (262). Specific times of day are also scarce: “my nuit” appears periodically, and in the entire romance, two allusions to canonical hours are made – one to the “premiere eure” (229) and one to the “heure de pryme” (247). Far more common in courtly romance, and far more common in *Gillion*, are references to parts of the day, such as “jour”, “journee”, “nuyt” or “nuit”, “au jour dhuy” or “au jour duy”, and “matin”. These frequencies indicate that, as far as temporal indicators are concerned, the text is not necessarily concerned with *measuring* time or conforming to any particular schedule, but rather with moving the narrative forward naturally. It is also important to keep in mind in this context that the ways in which the narrative of *Gillion* imitates real human experience would have been perceived differently by its contemporary readers than it may be by a modern audience. Richard Lock, in his 1985 *Aspects of Time in Medieval Literature*, notes that “As members of a technological society with a long history of literary culture, we have become accustomed to equate the effectiveness with which reality is conveyed to us as a measure, if not the measure, of literary excellence. Fundamental to our ideas of reality are plausibility of number, time, and space” (Lock 36). Lock also explains that, while specific times and dates might signify realism (and therefore quality of writing) to a modern audience, this was not necessarily the case for medieval writers, who lived primarily according to the rhythms of the natural world – the sun rising and setting, the moon waxing and waning, and the seasons changing. Although calendars and clocks certainly existed by the time *Gillion* was written, the text clearly prefers the old generic ways of telling time: “l’aube du jour fut apparent” (Vincent 151), “avant que le soleil soit esconsé” (154); “vers le matin” (270), etc. Measuring and keeping track of time would have been of less significance, with the exception of holidays; it is unsurprising, therefore, that the only fixed date given in *Yvain* – “A tot le

mains jusqu'a un an / Huit jorz après la Saint Jehan" (lines 2673-2574) – is absolutely crucial to the work's plot; it is included not for the sake of realism or even for the sake of establishing the temporal setting of the poem, but rather to anchor specific events of the story to a distinct juncture, and to move the story forward.

This use of time as plot device is not uncommon in medieval literature; in fact, it is a typical component of the quest narrative (like *Yvain* and *Perceval*), in which the main objective is continually displaced, so that the main protagonist – and therefore the story, as expressed in the arrangement of time and space – must keep moving in search of it. Time plays a key role in the effectiveness of the quest narrative, in that it creates a sensation of mounting suspense as the protagonist seems to be approaching the goal. In his 1978 monograph *Poétique de la prose: choix suivi de nouvelles recherches sur le récit*, Tzvetan Todorov analyses the prose work *La Queste del Saint Graal*, finding that "La quête du Graal est la quête d'un code. Trouver le Graal, c'est apprendre à déchiffrer le langage divin" (Todorov 68). The usefulness of temporal markers within the text has less to do with their capacity to denote time in the modern sense than with their ability to increase the dynamism of the narrative through suspense. In *Gillion*, this suspense lies at the intersections between the story's language of worldly love and the divine, as well as its adventure-time and its references to other kinds of time, both natural (the human life cycle) and eternal.

Examining the author's management of time in the creation of the story's plot, it is clear that time is an instrument, which may be used as needed to create (and solve) problems, and to increase suspense by delaying or deferring (i.e., withholding) the solution to those problems. For this reason, it is logical that temporal indicators such as 'ung espace de temps', 'ung petit', and 'pou d'espace' are far more common than precise indicators: 'ung espace de temps' is an amount of time with flexibility; it can be as long or as short as it needs to be in order to fit the narrative's (and the author's) purposes,

as well as the reader's imagination. This also invites the reader to participate actively in the story by filling in the gaps and anticipating what comes next.

While indications of these general, elastic increments of time occur much more frequently, explicit temporal indicators are also present within the text – for example, the description of the amount of time spent feasting (“huit jours entiers” – considered one full week in contemporary society) after the marriage of Gillion and Marie in I (128), or the “quarante jours” that Gracienne is given to find a champion to defend her honor after she is accused of indecent behavior and practicing Christianity in secret – a typical time delay found in romances where judicial matters are represented (Vincent 269). These definitive amounts of time are most likely included to A) signify the importance of the event to the reader (as in the case of the week-long celebration), B) increase suspense (as in the case of Gracienne's forty-day limit), and C) themselves become part of a work's strategically-interlaced adventures, as other events then ensue between the onset of the delay and the conclusion of its term. This can also heighten the suspense, because the interlaced adventure(s) can and usually do put the timely arrival of the protagonist in doubt. Additionally, in these and other instances, references to specific amounts of time may be used to increase verisimilitude: when Marie is pregnant for “son terme de noeuf mois” (141), for example, or when specific dates are used in LXIII (November 15, October 15, and May 1) – all of which are used to describe the gradual amassment of various Muslim armies preparing to make war on the sultan in Gillion's absence. Specific calendar dates exist nowhere else in the text – the sudden presence of four within the span of one chapter is striking to the modern reader, and would have been even more so to a contemporary audience. Their usage may be intended to induce anticipation, as well as increase verisimilitude.

Although in *Gillion* we find copious references to time of day or night, and even a few to the calendar, there is one temporal frame of reference which seems to be largely wanting: divine time and the religious calendar. In early medieval works, the distinction between human time and religious time

may be reinforced in several ways. In *Roland*, for example, human time is interrupted when God stops time. This is cosmological time: God-centered and God-controlled, and on a circuit independent from human time. Cosmological time as it exists in medieval literature – and perhaps as it existed in everyday medieval life, through events such as pilgrimages and holy days – may be seen as a rupture in the temporal fabric of human time. Ricoeur sees a distinction – as well as a resemblance – between “eternity” and “time”: “At the very heart of temporal experience, it produces a hierarchy of levels of temporalization, according to how close or how far a given experiences approaches or moves away from the pole of eternity” (Ricoeur 28).¹⁸ Although eternity may resemble time in its construction and in the ways in which it may be conceptualized, the inherent disparity between them is revealed at each attempt at comparison: “Peregrination and narration are grounded in time’s approximation of eternity, which, far from abolishing their difference, never stops contributing to it” (29). Although Gillion’s adventures are initially inspired by what is perceived as God’s divine intervention, cosmological or indeed religious time does not play a role in this story as it does in other medieval works, or even as it may be perceived in *Roland* or *La Queste. Gillion* does, however, display an interest in time beyond the scope of human life, and in time without particular limits, and this limitless time may be found in the frequent use of hyperbolic temporal adverbial expressions, such as ‘jamais’ and ‘tousjours’ (see Fig. 1). An example is the case of Lucien’s speech to King Morgant, in which he denies his treacherous behavior against the king’s sister, Nathalie – “Sire, ja sçavez vous que oncques en nul jour ne trovastes en moy aucun mauvais conseil. Tousjours vous ay esté loyal...” (Vincent, 267). Thus, while references

¹⁸ It is interesting to note in this context the unique nature of dreams within this array. Frequently a feature in ancient texts, dreams may serve as warnings or foreshadowings, and are in general a unique time cog. Gillion’s dream on the way to Jerusalem, therefore, would be an interesting area for further inquiry: “Quant messire Gillyon de Trasignies fut couchié et endormy, une vision merveilleuse luy sourvint. Car il luy estoit advis qu’il voyoit ung moult grant griffon et horrible, et qu’il luy venoit courir sus pour luy esrachier et le foye du ventre...” (137).

to eternity or to worldly temporal markers grounded in eternal time – such as the Christian religious calendar or canonical hours – are scarce, the notion of a time without limits is nevertheless periodically present within the text, primarily to underscore human consistency and fidelity.

5 LEXICAL TEMPORAL MARKERS: TIME IN MOTION

Aside from this departure from the conventional method of tracking time according to religious observances, *Gillion* generally adheres to the common lexical features of medieval works associated with time-keeping. Much more common within the text than references to specific time increments are certain loaded key words that convey a *sense* of an amount of time, or of a general timeline of events. By far the most common word used in this context is the conjunction *quant*, which appears hundreds of times at the beginnings of sentences in order to describe a linked chain of actions occurring in a succession (e.g., “Quant messier Amaury se fut esloigié du paijs de Haynnau, il prist son chemin vers Venise ou il monta en mer”, p. 185). Although there is no specific amount of time connected to these actions, the reader is usually able to infer how long the first activity takes, which offers an approximate starting time for the second activity related in the sentence. This is a key feature of the text of *Gillion*, and one that may be found in other medieval texts as well, including *Aucassin et Nicolette* and *Éliduc*. “Qant or voit li quens Garins / de son enfant Aucassin / qu’il ne pora departir / de Nicolette au cler vis, / en une prison l’a mis” (68). So begins the eleventh section of *Aucassin et Nicolette*. The use of *quant* at the beginning of sentences is less common in *Aucassin et Nicolette* than it is in *Gillion*, and it also seems to be used in a different way. While in many (though not all) cases these *quant* constructions seem to convey sequential actions in *Gillion*, they are more often used in *Aucassin et Nicolette* to disclose *causality*, as is the case in the lines above; another example is found a few lines later: “Quant or i vint Aucassins, / dolans fu, ainc ne fu si...”, or in section 29: “Dist li rois : Je gis d’un fil. / Quant mes mois sera complis / et je sarai bien garis, / dont irai le messe oïr...” (130), as well as Nicolette’s emphatic declaration of her love in the lyric section between sections 33 and 34:

“quant mes dox amis m’acole / et il me sent grasse et mole, / dont sui jou a tele escole, / baus ne tresce ne carole, / harpe, gigue ne viole...” (138). In these cases, the capacity of the word *quant* to create linked chains of events is used to emphasize sequences which are not only *chronologically* dependent, but *situationally* conditional. While this usage of *quant* seems proportionally less frequent in *Gillion* than it is in *Aucassin et Nicolette*, it is also found in some passages in *Gillion*, particularly those conveying emotion: “Quant la noble pucelle entedy Hertan, de la grant joie qu’elle eut le couru embrachier...” (207).

What this lexical frequency of *quant* – as well as the ways in which the word is used – tells us is that, rather than utilizing precise amounts of time, the author of *Gillion* seems to prefer to relay time through sequences of actions. This may be done with the help of a variety of conjunctions (*quant, puis, ainsi que, ainsi comme, si tost que, tantost que, au plus tost, jusques icy*), prepositions (*avant, apres, maintenant, jusques a, vers*), determiners (*ledit jour, auquel jour, propre jour, ce jour, celluy jour, celle nuyt, a ceste heure, telle heure, pou d’espace*), adverbs (*pou d’espace, avant, apres, souvent, tost, maintenant, jamais, tousjours, prochain(e), assez tost trespasé, longuement*), and adjectives (*longue duree, long temps, petit temps*). Of these groups, conjunctions and determiners are by far the most dominant categories, with *quant, puis,* and *apres* appearing hundreds of times each (“Quant le jour fut venu...” (187), “Quant icelles joustes furent accomplies...” (188), “Quant a l’ostellerie furent descendus...” (228), “Puis le lendemain matin...” (189), “Puis luy disoient...” (242), “Aprés les paroles dittes...” (179), “Aprés il regarde a main destre...” (243), etc.).

This pattern of linking words gives the text a sense of constant sequential movement and excitement, as it seems to the reader that each new event in the action seems to trigger the next. But it is also repetitive, frequently echoing previous passages, and reminding the reader of similar scenes in earlier chapters. This is another way that time may be conveyed linguistically – through repetition of key words or phrases, imagery, and scenes that recall the reader back to a previous point (or points)

in the story. The feeling of having read or heard a passage before not only reminds the reader of previously-recounted events of the narration – and therefore of the textual and narrative space between the referent passage and the referenced – but also of the cyclical nature of real time. Lexical repetitions of this sort may also be considered a kind of self-referentiality – allusions to earlier moments within the text itself that add an additional dimension to the narrated time. Repetition as a structural motif of this text will be discussed further in Section VI.

As one of the most frequently and formulaically repeated features of this text, the high volume of connectors, as well as specific conjunctions, mimics the aural quality of a story recounted orally. In addition to existing written works, the oral tradition of storytelling would have been an important model for the author of *Gillion*, and would also have informed audience expectations for the work. As Maria Columbo-Timelli observes in her contribution to *Temps et Histoire dans le roman arthurien*, “un public réfractaire aux longues pauses, qui apprécie un déroulement le plus possible suivi et linéaire, a sans doute besoin de remarques qui lui signalent expressément toute rupture de cet ordre” (78). Prevalent conjunctions and prepositions – words that form and connect clauses – are key components of successful storytelling; they help to ensure that the audience is following the order of events, and verbally illustrate the relationship between events for listeners – who, unlike readers, cannot simply return to a previous line or page for clarification. *Gillion*'s predilection for conjunctions and prepositions reflects another common aspect of oral storytelling: the relativity of time within the tale. Time in the recounted tale is often established through comparison between events of the narration, in addition to or instead of comparison with a timeline, historical or fictional. In *Gillion*, we see that the actual (or fictional) historical moment at which various episodes take place is largely irrelevant; what is of interest to the author is rather the temporal relationships – that is, the relative temporal proximity – between the events themselves, and the timeline that is created as a result of these relationships.

In his seminal work *Les mises en prose des Épopées et des Romans chevaleresques*, Georges Doutrepoint notes that:

nous avons alors des formes littéraires qui, souvent, ne sont connues au public que par la récitation: chansons de geste, vies de saints, poèmes religieux, récits évangéliques, fabliaux chevaleresques. On sait que de là proviennent des manières d'écrire, ou de rédiger, qui sont appels à l'attention...des formules de transition, des épithètes conventionnelles ou clichés qui ne constituent que du remplissage. (684)

This atmosphere of recitation, he adds, results in “l'allure mimique que prennent, par moments, des productions romanesques: elles deviennent presque scéniques...les passages avec chansons étaient l'objet de réceptions, ou de déclamations. Toute cette armature, plus ou moins artificielle, émanait presque nécessairement de la force des choses” (685). However, already by the thirteenth century, the more evident components of these trappings had begun to disappear with the advent of prose, leaving behind only remnants of their oral heritage. As a product of a society with a long tradition of reciting stories out loud, it is unsurprising that *Gillion* retains some of the lexical features of a tale meant to be told or read aloud, whether or not this was the author's intention for the work. The preference for prepositions and conjunctions establishes a temporality that is relative, and which primarily expresses itself through linked chains of actions, an idea that Auerbach explores in the context of *Roland*. Auerbach's chapters on *Roland* and *Yvain* in his 1946 work *Mimesis* offer insights into the disclosure of time in *Gillion* thanks to his analysis of temporality at the minutest level of a text – clause and sentence construction. According to Auerbach, the configuration of *Roland* as a series of disjointed clauses is an important part of the poem's artistry, and the arrangement conveys as much meaning as the words themselves. Although *Gillion* is a prose piece and features more clause-connectors than *Roland*, it occasionally employs the same ‘paratactic bluntness’ that Auerbach describes – and for many of the same reasons. This is evident in Gracienne's immediate (and almost unspectacular) conversion to

Christianity, as well as Gillion's decision to remain in Egypt upon receiving the news of Marie's death (almost as if he has no other option). The author of *Gillion* writes that:

Atant la belle Gracienne, voyant le Chrestien nud et que l'on le lyoit a l'estache, et d'autre part elle veoit les archiers prestz pour tyrer, moult piteusement prist a regarder messire Gillyon, car advis lui estoit que oncques plus beau corps d'homme ne mieulx fourmé, elle ne avoit veu. Et comme il pleut a Dieu quy ainsi l'inspira, elle vey sa belle face coulouree, les beaulx yeux qu'il avoit ou chief pour regarder, la bouche vermeille pour baiser ; et son coeur le prist a amer et eut très grant desir de croire en Jhesu Christ, a celle fin que de luy peust estre amee du bon du cœur. (147-48)

While more descriptors are offered in this scene than one would expect to find if it were a scene taken from *Roland*, in terms of syntactic structure, the works bear some similarities. Auerbach explains that an important element of *Roland* – and one of the principal underlying reasons for the poem's paratactic bluntness – is the idea that “everything must happen as it does happen, it could not be otherwise, and there is no need for explanatory connectives” (Auerbach 101). This is not entirely the case with *Gillion*, as the reader understands that Gracienne is miraculously converted through a combination of Gillion's physical allure and God's will; however this explanation is nevertheless relatively meager, and expected to suffice. Although less extreme than the statement found in line 1015 of *Roland* – “païen unt tort et chrestiens unt dreit” – used by Auerbach to underline this idea, the description of Gracienne's conversion bears the same self-understood nature, both at the lexical and structural level. Gillion's response upon hearing the news of Marie's death is similar – “A ceste fois, je puis bien perchevoir que jamais n'y retournay, car ma joye est perdue puis que celle est morte que tant souloye amer” (Vincent 193). In his grief, Gillion declares his intention never to return to Hainaut – a statement containing as much finality and rigidity as Roland's resolution not to recall Charlemagne.

From this reaction, it is evident that, as it is in *Roland* and especially in *Yvain*, time is a crucial factor in determining the outcomes of cause-and-effect scenarios. While Gillion, unlike Yvain, is not

given a deadline to return from his adventures, the amount of time that passes is nevertheless felt and becomes a source of grief for his partner. The conversation between Marie and Amaury prior to the departure of the latter testifies to the role of time in Marie's sorrow, as well as its potential implications for her future: "Amaury...prist a regarder la dame du chastel...laquelle luy sembla tant belle que advis luy estoit que plus belle dame jamais n'avoit veue...Il disoit a luy meismes que bien seroit eureux se avoir pouoit une telle dame epousee" (Vincent 183). Her husband's long absence makes possible inquiries that would otherwise be indecent and uncourtly. In response to Amaury's question – "Alors le conte se prist a deviser avec la dame en luy demandant se nulles nouvelles avoit oyès de messire Gillion son seigneur depuis que d'elle s'estoit party", Marie replies that "oncques puis qu'il party du paijs de Haynnau, de luy je n'euz quelques nouvelles. Dieu par sa grace le voeulle garder et preserver de tous perilz et le ramener par decha a grant joye". The amount of time that has passed – ostensibly more than seven years, as evidenced by Amaury's response – "Ma cousine, sachiez que se il estoit en vie, ja piecha en eussies ouy aucunes nouvelles. Mais tant y a que l'eglise permet que, quant ung homme s'est departy de sa femme et que au bout de sept ans n'est retourné, licitement sans quelque reproche, elle se poeult remarier a ung autre mary" – creates space for the possibility of a second suitor. Similarly, after Amaury's long absence as well as their own demonstrations of prowess in regional tournaments, Gillion's sons determine that it is time for them to set off in search of their father themselves: "Jehan dist a Gerard : "Mon frere, se telz estions que devrions estre, tous deux ensemble, sans plus arrester, devrions aler querir et serchier monseigneur nostre pere..." It seems that the twins' coming of age results in a sense of filial obligation: "Nous sommes desja grans assez pour porter armes et querir les adventures, ainsi que ja piecha fist monseigneur nostre pere, car a icy tousjours demourer, très peu d'honneur y pouons conquerer" (215). In this manner, the span of narrative time that passes after Gillion's initial departure is a catalyst for both Amaury's departure and his sons' resolution to embark on a quest to find their father themselves.

6 STRUCTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TIME IN *GILLION*

It follows that manifestations of temporality at the lexical level would exert an influence on the overall rendering of time at the structural level of the work as well. Many of the patterns observable in the language and syntax of *Gillion* are reproduced on a larger scale within the narrative structure, including parallel scenes, repetition, and the sequence-of-events-style (or episodic) narration. Considering the most basic elements of a narrative plot – the arrangement and ordering of episodes, and the artful and well-timed disclosure of new information – the crucial role of temporality in the establishment, development, and resolution of the plot is evident (Herman, *Cambridge Companion*, 43-44). The decision to reveal a particular piece of information at a specific textual moment (or to instead withhold it) appends an additional layer of temporality to that which is enumerated by the actual words of the text itself. These timing decisions on the part of the author result in the audience's reception of the work (suspenseful, exciting, or boring) and may be used stylistically to create the desired effect. For instance, one of the many similarities between the stories of Marie de France's hero Éliduc and *Gillion* is the author's early insistence on the hero's purity, loyalty, and overall goodness (an insistence which is essential to the story, as these traits will later be called into question when both protagonists commit adultery). The timing of the author's release of this information is crucial, in that it not only encourages the audience to empathize with the characters, thereby adding psychological depth to the story, but also plants the seeds for later suspense when the act of adultery is committed. An author's assurances of a hero's fidelity would seem ironic given after the relation of his adulterous conduct; yet, when expressed at the onset of the story and reinforced with scenes demonstrating his mettle, the act becomes a test or a trial, rather than an offense.

In addition to this technique of timed information release, an author may manipulate the textual duration of episodes within the plot in the process of cultivating this narrative temporality, or narrative time. There are five kinds of identifiable duration manipulation (Herman 58): the **descriptive**

pause (involving a great deal of textual space but covering no story time), the **slow-down or stretch** (in which the textual space is greater than the time covered in the story), the **scene** (in which textual space is equal to story time), **summary** (textual space is less than story time), and **ellipsis** (requires no textual space and may cover variable amounts of story time). The way that an author chooses to construct a scene with respect to its devoted story time versus textual space may be revealing of its relative importance within the story, or it may be another method of cultivating suspense or anticipation. While *Gillion* features far fewer stretches or descriptive pauses than one might anticipate from reading, say, a nineteenth-century work, these are still present – primarily in the narration of the field of battle. While other scenes that might have spanned several pages for Balzac or Zola occupy a few lines in *Gillion* (the hero’s capture and imprisonment at the hands of the sultan, for instance, or his reunion with his sons), the scenes that seem to lend themselves best to descriptive pauses (or at least feature them most frequently) in *Gillion* are those involving combat. Tournaments and battles are described in far greater detail than any other activity, and include details such as names of participants, precise ligaments crushed, and the sentiments of the participants (see, for example, page 154, “Le roy Ysore, quy guaires n’estoit loings d’illec, vey cheoir par terre le roy d’Antioche son frere, dont il eut au coeur une douleur tant grande que tout tressuoit d’angoisse”). In fact, while his pain is primarily conveyed in physical, observable signs, traces of Gillion’s internal processes are also evident:

Quant messire Gillion de Trasignies eut entendu Amaury quy faulx luy donnoit a entendre, du grant courrouz qu’il eut auc coeur de aussi hault qu’il estoit, chey pasmé. Et quant il fut revenu a luy, moult piteusement se prist a complaindre en disant : ‘Ha très noble dame, par moy et par ma deffaulte est advenue ceste perte. Je prie très humblement a Nostre Seigneur que de vostre ame voeulle avoir misericorde. Je sens en moy que après vostre mort, au coeur n’auray joye... (192-93).

Like Roland on the field of battle, Gillion faints as he is overcome with his emotion upon receiving word of his wife’s death. Like Yvain, he is temporarily suspended somewhere between the present

and the eternal and must ‘come back to himself’. Yet, in addition to these physical manifestations of his grief, the author of *Gillion* has transcribed the hero’s emotional outpouring into direct discourse, allowing the audience to permeate, to a certain extent, the hero’s exterior in order to observe the goings-on within. While in most cases the duration of reading does not correspond precisely to the actual duration of events in the story, Genette suggests that dialogue comes closest to doing so (Herman 58). In preserving Gillion’s reaction in discourse, the author has effectively slowed narrative time the better to dramatize it.

While lengthier description seems preferred for combat scenes, the greater part of the work moves along at a quicker pace, as if time slows down when the hero engages in battle. However, between these clashes, the majority of the scenes in *Gillion* are summaries or ellipses. The author is quite explicit about these omissions; early on in the work he explains that “De leurs journees ne vous veuil faire long compte, mais tant exploitterent a vent et a voille qu’ilz trespasèrent le far de Messines, les isles de Candie et de Rodes jusques a Baffe en Cyppre ou ilz se rafreschirent” (Vincent 136). The food, wine, and weather conditions are of no interest; the story is stripped down to its barest essentials – the evocation of the exotic place names of Gillion’s stops. Because the author does not stop to linger over any details, time (both reading time and narrative time) seems to pass quickly. This renders the scene of Gillion’s nightmare a few lines later all the more intriguing, because of the disproportional textual space allotted to it. The journey of several days or possibly weeks is covered in a sentence, while a single night in Calvary occupies an entire paragraph.

In addition to these temporal manipulations, an author may also utilize the ordering of scenes (including a scene’s chronological position within the story’s timeline and its position in relation to other scenes) within a text in the crafting of the story. This may include deviations from the straightforward, linear trajectory of time, such as ellipsis, which Genette further delineates as either **analepsis** (flashbacks) or **prolepsis** (flash-forwards), or parallel scenes (that is, two scenes occurring

simultaneously in different physical locations or from different perspectives that are of necessity recounted sequentially).¹⁹ In the case of *Gillion*, as is the case for many other medieval works from Chrétien onwards, the parallel scene is a very common structural manipulation of time. In part due to the vast geographical space covered by the work (as well as the author's desire to render textually and vividly physical separation induced by capture or imprisonment), in part to the number of characters, the parallel scene seems to be a favorite strategy of the author, who frequently leaves off on one subplot of the story and picks up in another place. A typical example concludes the eighth chapter and transitions to the next: "Atant se taist l'istoire du preu baceler prisonier jusques temps soit d'y retourner pour parler de dame Marie sa femme quy demouree estoit en son chastel de Trasignies" (141); the same technique is employed between XXXIII and XXXIV: "Or pour le present vous lairay a parler de Hertan jusques heure soit d'y retourner, pour racompter du paijs de Haynnau et de dame Marie de Trasignies avec Jehan et Gerard de Trasignies, ses deux filz" (207), among other examples. These kinds of direct statements serve a double function: not only do they introduce and close different or parallel scenes, but they also act as conscious reminders to the reader that the tale is an 'istoire'. In discussions of post-modern fiction, such reminders would be considered instances of metafiction; in the case of *Gillion*, it may be better to describe them as self-conscious indicators of the fictional nature of the story. These indicators grant the reader a certain glimpse into the author's tale-crafting process, temporarily eliminating the boundary between reality and the fictional world of the story.

¹⁹ See *Figures III*, "Ordre". For information on analepsis (*analepse*), see pages 90-105; for information on prolepsis (*prolepse*), see 105-115; Genette classifies parallel scenes under the umbrella of *anachronie*, "réservant le terme général d'anachronie pour designer toutes les formes de discordance entre les deux ordres temporelles, dont nous verrons qu'elles ne se réduisent pas entièrement à l'analepse et à la prolepse" (82).

Similarly, the very presence of parallel scenes serves as a reminder of the fictive nature of the tale. There are a variety of reasons that may call for the parallel scene; for one, it allows the author to suspend narration in one place or from one character's perspective (increasing the audience's anticipation for the story that is interrupted) in order to discuss events taking place elsewhere, or to recapitulate a scene from a different point of view. These events may be related – and therefore allow the author to disclose information integral to one of the scenes in the parallel – or unrelated, as is frequently the case in *Gillion*. Parallel scenes also permit the reader to make comparisons between the approximate amount of time that has passed in one location with the amount of time that passes in another (in *Gillion*, such comparisons often match more *approximately* than precisely; again, it is not necessarily important to have a precise chronology). In the same vein, parallel scenes render multiple stories that would otherwise be comparatively unexciting more dynamic through combination, and may be used to artificially introduce circularity into an otherwise linear narrative, as a parallel scene must necessarily re-commence from an earlier point in narrative time in order to recapitulate a different series of events taking place within the same time frame as its counterpart. The alternation between parallel scenes also functions as a kind of *entrelacement*, a technique frequently employed by Chrétien de Troyes and which may be used to a variety of ends. In some cases, interlaced scenes may invite the reader to draw comparisons between two heroes, as one is occasionally inclined to do in *Perceval*; in other cases, they may be employed as part of the author's overall project of timed information release designed to boost suspense by interrupting one adventure with a digression to another, before returning to the first scene in order to resolve the first, thereby constituting a sort of narrative splicing.

This text features in particular recurring parallel scenes that continually revisit the same stories – such as that of Marie's life in Hainaut, which interrupt and digress from Gillion's adventures. Just as Chrétien de Troyes does in *Perceval*, the author of *Gillion* has interlaced multiple narrative threads

to create his tale. In the case of *Gillion*, this multiplicity of threads is first established with Gillion's departure – the separation of Gillion and Marie in two distinct places duly prevents them from taking part in the same narrated scenes. This variety of venues adds spatial as well as temporal complexity to what would otherwise be a narratively simple epic tale, and the lovers' separation and resultant splitting of the narrative is an essential component of the driving force of the action. This is true even when Gillion is unaware that his wife is still alive, thanks to the existence of his sons, who divide the story into even more individual threads by coming of age (as they are now able to participate actively in the story themselves) and departing from Hainaut and from their mother. Two interlaced tales of lovers' trials becomes three interlaced tales of father, mother, and children, and this pattern of fragmentation is repeated once more when Jean and Gérard are separated from one another. When at last the brothers are reunited, the distance between the story's various scattered threads gradually begins to shrink, and when the twins at last discover their father and ultimately reunite their parents – the story's original separation – there is a sense of closure in the reunification of both characters and storylines. In this way, the author's careful maintenance of the separation of the various players in *Gillion*, and therefore of the story's multiple filaments, creates the tension that underpins the excitement of the action of the story.

However, while there is significant divergence between Marie's story and Gillion's, many of the events that transpire in the twins' tales are reiterations of scenes from their father's experiences. Just as this text frequently repeats conjunctions such as *quant*, *aprez*, and *puis*, the story itself also regularly reuses and reiterates motifs and scenes. One of the best examples is the language used to describe battle scenes, for example: “Il luy esracha en le levant contrement, si l'en assena sur la teste **ung si grant coup** que la chervelle luy en fist saillir dehors...” (146), or, equally graphic: “Mais le preu Jehan de Trasignies quy l'apperceu, vint vers luy l'espee ou poing et luy bailla **ung coup si grant** sur la teste que tout le pourfendy jusques a la poitrine...” (238), and then, a few battles later: “...dont

il l'assena entre le col et l'escu *ung coup tant demesuré* que le bras a tout l'escu luy fis voler par terre...si luy bailla *ung coup* d'espee *tant grant* sur le heaulme qu'il pourfendy jusques en la cervelle..." (250); another arm is cut off a few chapters later: "Adont le preu Gerard, a quy moult tardoit que du Payen feust delivré, luy donna *ung coup* sur l'espaule *tant grant* que le bras a tout l'escu luy abaty par terre." (276); there is also the scene of Herthan's death: "...mais illec vint ung Sarrazin quy par derriere fery Hertan *ung coup* du trenchant de son espee *tant merueilleux* que de dessus son cheval le porta par terre. Adont Jehan de Trasignies regarda le Sarrazin et...il luy donna *ung coup* d'espee *si grant* qu'il le porta jus de son destrier..." (312). Interestingly, it seems that the exaggeration of the injuries caused by these blows increases with each iteration – as if each new description must top the previous one in order to maintain the story's excitement, or perhaps to rework prior scenes in order to improve and increase their exhilarating effects. Similarly, the theme of death by trampling is also frequently revisited: "...il chey de son destrier sur le champ *ou il fina sa vie miserablement entre les piés des chevaulz*" (250); "...il coula la lance tout au travers du corps, tant que le destrier chey mort par terre" (284); "...le malleureuz roy tumba mort par terre devant le cheval du souldan..." (311); "Et de la grant douleur qu'il senty, chey jus de son destrier par terre et *fina miserablement sa vie entre les piés des chevaulz*" (313). But perhaps the best illustrative example is found in the heat of one of the work's climactic battle scenes, in LXIX: "En son venir rencontra le roy de Bel Marin, auquel il donna *ung coup* d'espee sur l'heaulme *si très pesant* qu'il le fist verser de son destrier par terre, et illec *fina miserablement sa vie entre les piés des chevaulz*" (359).

These repetitions may perhaps be owing to a shortage of useful expressions for conveying the desired amount of gore – suggesting perhaps an authorial difficulty in describing them. Although this text is particularly occupied with recounting battles, scenes of this nature are so extreme that they are not easily rendered textually. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of repetitions – as well as the fact

that many are quite verbatim – is striking. Despite the fact that these battle scenes take place in different physical locations and between different groups, many terms and ideas are frequently recycled, with little or no modification. Perhaps this is because battle scenes are exciting, and the audience may have enjoyed reliving the thrill – achieved through specific language – again and again. Additionally, the use of repetition may also be a remnant of the oral tradition, as discussed in Section V; in the event that listeners could not be present for the entirety of a recitation of a work, repetition of particularly good passages would have ensured that everyone would have a chance to hear them. On a structural level, repetition also lends a sense of circuitousness in a linear narrative and, as a result, a more authentic portrayal of time as it is experienced in reality. The repetition that we find in *Gillion* not only seems to echo the way that we sometimes experience time in real life – as older generations age and newer generations reach maturity – lending the representation of time within the work a greater authenticity; but it also serves as a reminder of the cyclical nature of human time. Bakhtin notes that the concept of adventure-time as it may be found in the Greek romance as well as the later European novel “lacks any natural, everyday cyclicity – such as might have introduced into it a temporal order and indices on a human scale, tying it to the repetitive aspects of natural and human life” (Bakhtin 91).

While this is certainly at least partially the case in *Gillion* – and particularly so in the epic descriptions of the hero’s adventures, and the curious homogeneity of the skirmishes – the work’s parallel scenes, the intricate entrelacement of divergent tales, and repetitions at various levels all work to reintroduce this natural cyclicity into the romance’s otherwise flat, linear storyline. While in many respects the *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignies* adheres to the protocols of adventure-time, it is, first and foremost, the story of its eponymous hero, which means that its story covers a lifetime, and that its chronology is, at least in part, informed by the cyclical nature of life. This type of chronology particularly manifests itself in the recurring patterns identifiable in the experiences made first by

Gillion and later by his sons, which are in some cases uncannily similar to their father's adventures – if not identical, as in the case of Jean's imprisonment “en la prison ou messire Gillion son pere avoit par avant esté prisonnier” in “Trypoly en Barbarie” (Vincent 264). These events are *reiterated* as opposed to repeated: for while repetition involves the reappearance of the same motif or episode tailored to fit the scene in which it is (re)used, reiteration is the deliberate retelling and reworking of an event or scene within the story.

Reiteration as a means of revision (as well as literary experimentation) was not an uncommon practice in medieval literature. To cite just one example: Yvain's return to the mystical, bubbling spring, a scene that is reiterated a number of times throughout the work, each time altered slightly, as if each new visit to the spring were a revised version of the scene. As scholars like Gaston Paris, Alphonse Bayot, and Frances Horgan have pointed out, many of the features of Gillion's story are curiously similar to Marie de France's *Éliduc* – in fact, several medieval stories feature the general motif, known as ‘the man with two wives’: *Le Fresne*, *Ille et Galeron*, *Galeran de Bretagne*, *Beuves de Hamtone*, *King Horn*, and the final part of *Tristan* (Horgan 207). According to Horgan, who cites W. Ann Trindade, “the ‘beginning of the legend’ is the result of a common narrative technique, the process of repetition, one of the simplest ways of extending a narrative sequence” (208). Whether or not the author of *Gillion* was directly influenced by *Éliduc*, the similarities in the stories' plots are remarkable, as is the comparable usage of repetition. Unlike *Éliduc*, however, *Gillion* adds additional layers of repetition with the inclusion of his sons, who not only double their father's adventures, but are also, as twins, a literal doubling themselves (another motif that appears in Marie de France's lai *Le Fresne*). Like repetition, reiteration may be used to emulate natural human experience; perhaps the best example in *Gillion* is found at the end of the work, when Gérard (like his father some twenty years before him) has left his country as well as his pregnant wife in order to travel abroad. *Unlike* his father, however, Gérard returns to his wife and newborn son at the conclusion of the story:

Et après ces choses ainsi dittes et faittes, les deux freres Jehan et Gerard prindrent congé du noble conte et des barons, et quant montez furent a cheval, ilz ne arresterent si vindrent a Trasignies ou de leurs femmes furent moult honnourablement et joyeusement receuz; et par especial messire Gerard comme raison estoit, car a son retour sa femme luy apporta ung moult beau filz qu'il avoit engendré en elle a son partement de Haynnau. (373)

This rather succinct summation represents a brief reiteration of one of the most crucial turning points in Gillion's story – his decision to remain in Egypt, and not to return to Hainaut. Gérard's return to wife and son is a re-writing of his father's choice, a reminder of how simply the story might have ended, or perhaps a demonstration that Gillion's offspring have learned from their father's mistakes. The presence of this reiteration also supports the work's attempt to render the cyclicity of time within the context of its linear narrative.

Finally, an important factor of the structure of this text, and one that further distinguishes it from many previous works (and simultaneously reinforces its genesis in the era of the *mises-en-prose*) is its division into chapters. This partitioning of the text and the inclusion of chapter headings and table of contents poses a variety of implications for text as well as reader, and further speaks to the work's reflection of, and adherence to, the emerging 'house style' of the French and Burgundian courts. As Ménard notes, "l'apparition de chapitres avec des rubriques, l'emploi de miniatures permettent de diviser les aventures et de découper commodément le texte" (Ménard 238). He goes on to explore possible explanations for this rise in explicit divisions within texts, refuting a possible theory proposed by Pickford, who in his analysis of the phenomenon suggests that "Le lecteur de la fin du Moyen Age... 'aimait ne suivre qu'un épisode à la fois, un épisode plus ou moins complet, raconté d'un seul tenant, sans interruption'" (Ménard 238, citing Pickford 293). Ménard suggests rather a nuanced version of this idea, explaining that "l'existence de rubriques résumant l'action... donne une grande lisibilité à l'œuvre. Cette présentation très aérée qui deviendra à la mode

plus tard, dans certains mss. et dans les imprimés, apparait...à date ancienne” (238). *Gillion's* contemporary audience, therefore, was not necessarily less sophisticated than previous generations of readers; rather, the demarcation of textual divisions is a visual guide that may have served a variety of purposes, including the possibility to more easily return to previous scenes, to skip ahead to a desired chapter, or to get a preview of a chapter's contents. To give just one example: the chapter title ‘Comment messire Gillion de Trasignies, luy estant en l'abbaye de Cambron, racompta au conte de Haynnau les adventures qu'il avoit eues, luy estant en la terre des Sarrazins, et comment, après plusieurs devises, ilz partirent l'un de l'autre par grant amour’ is a fairly straightforward, though not necessarily succinct, summary of its subject matter. The presence of rubrics therefore adjoins another dimension to the text's timescape, in opening up the possibility of reader involvement in its temporal mechanics.

7 Conclusions

It has been the aim of this project to explore the representations of time in the *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignies*, in the hope of offering some potential conclusions about the ways in which time is addressed and rendered within this text – and, by extension, possible trends in literary representations of time during this period. *Gillion*, written in Burgundy between the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, is a product of the literary culture of the Burgundian ducal courts, where French prose literature – as well as verse originals converted to prose – experienced a golden age. Although as far as we know it was not adapted from any work of verse itself, *Gillion* is clearly influenced by the period of *mises-en-proses*, as reflected in the text's predilection for the reuse of conventional motifs and literary techniques. Additionally, many lexical and thematic elements in *Gillion* are reminiscent of the *chansons de geste*, and the work seems to cast itself in this epic light, in spite of its romantic plotline. This blending of genres is indicative of the gradual erasure of the boundaries between the genres of epic and romance that was ongoing at the time that *Gillion* was written. In terms of the construction of

the temporal aspect of its setting, Bakhtin's notion of adventure-time, typical of the Greek romance, is particularly useful for describing the way that time is dealt with in our romance. The self-conscious linearity of its plot is perforated with episodes of situational elasticity, as adventure-time compresses time in between adventures, but expands and unpacks the adventures themselves. The story is made up of bricks of adventure cemented together with precisely enough temporal and spatial information to keep them in place (though many of them are not time-sensitive, and could be manipulated and rearranged in a variety of configurations). As we have seen, this linear concatenation of adventures is also readily reiterated, and Gillion's sons' repetition of his adventures is reminiscent of Yvain's following in Calogrenant's footsteps to seek out the supernatural stone in the forest Broceliande. Unlike *Yvain*, however, the sequence of adventures in *Gillion* does not lead to character development – for although they age physically, the characters in *Gillion* remain static over the course of the story.

While prose adaptations and late romances of the *mise-en-prose* period have often been looked down upon or ignored by modern scholars for their lack of ingenuity, the defining stylistic traits of these works reflect intentional choices on the part of *prosateurs* catering to readers' and patrons' desires and expectations. In this light, *Gillion* may be seen as a case study of a particular emerging prose style, and of the ways in which these authors addressed preliminary questions of space and time. Changes in their methods, in spite of a corpus of medieval literature that had already found various ways of treating these aspects successfully, reveal changes in cultural literary norms, and particularly a desire to increase the verisimilitude of literary works. This is apparent in the noticeable lack of canonical hours in *Gillion* – references which might have seemed old-fashioned to contemporary readers, as clocks had become typical in the upper layers of Western European society by the end of the fifteenth century, and were even seen regularly in public spaces by this time (Dohrn-van Rossum 125-28). The text's sense of time, established through allusions to time of day or night, would have likely seemed much more modern in its imitation of actual time-telling practices. Additionally, as Doutrepoint

remarks in *Les mises en prose*, “On sent que la littérature ‘nouvelle’ s’adresse de moins en moins à des groupes, de plus en plus à des individus...On ajouterait volontiers, à condition de s’entendre sur l’expression, qu’elle devient individualiste” (Doutrepoint 685). While the works of the *mise-en-prose* era have been largely excluded from discussions of development in French literature (and particularly of the French novel) – due, perhaps, as Caroline Jewers suggests is true of the medieval chivalric romance, to their lack of ‘great’ writers and exceptional texts (6-7) – the drive for a more recognizably realistic rendering of time and space, as well as the changing dynamics between text, author, and reader, represent noteworthy trends in the development of French literature, and an important step in the evolution of the novel.

Indeed, in his analysis of prose adaptations, Doutrepoint contends that “le roman moderne se trouve en formation, c’est-à-dire que le récit de fiction commence à répondre à sa définition moderne” (685). Likewise, if we consider one possible definition of the fifteenth-century ‘novel’ (or novel prototype) – for instance, “un ‘récit en prose contenant quelque histoire intéressante par les aventures de ses héros’”, as Doutrepoint suggests (685) – the resulting image is not far from our romance, but nor is it necessarily widely different from the sort of book a twenty-first-century reader might opt to read for entertainment. Yet, among those definable characteristics (including thematic elements selected for suppression, such as the religious and mystical *merveilleux* found in earlier texts, and magnification, such as the predilection for lengthy and detailed descriptions of tournaments and battles) which we might use to begin to distinguish various ‘stages’ in this process of development are a number of qualities and processes that resist definition – largely, as Doutrepoint points out, because there are many aspects of contemporary intellectual life that we simply do not have access to. “En tout cas,” he writes,

la France littéraire, dont le présent travail évoque le dessin, apparaît assez nettement à nos yeux comme ayant déployé une activité qui n’est pas niable. C’est, sans doute, une France littéraire qui n’avait pas grand éclat, mais...elle suscite dans notre imagination

un ensemble considérable d'écrivains qui...noircissent du papier pour des amateurs de lettres, qui fabriquent la copie pour des libraires. (686)

and, in so doing, offer a glimpse into the direction in which entertainment literature – and the novel – was heading.

8 EPILOGUE: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TIME in Ms. 111

As a text produced and read in manuscript form, an examination of *Gillion* would be incomplete without acknowledgement of the program of illustration accompanying the text in two of its editions, Ms. 111 and the Dülmen manuscript. Illuminations are a visual gloss of what is in the text. If medieval texts are narratively imagistic, then illustrations are visually narrative, and a counterpart to what we read. The way that time is perceived by a reader necessarily differs between images and text, and a work like Ms. 111, which is both textual and visual in nature, is able to convey time in different ways than a work that is purely textual. Today housed at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Ms. 111 features 269 folios and measures 387 x 267 mm (Vincent 39). The text is adorned with eight half-page miniatures bordered by marginal designs, forty-four historiated initials, and numerous decorated letters, all created uniquely for this text (40).

The program of illustration in Ms. 111 has an impact on the reader's experience of the temporality conveyed through the text in a variety of ways. In general, an image can deliver a burst of action that may be absorbed by the reader instantaneously, whereas the reader necessarily requires more time to take in the same information through the text. In our romance, images foreshorten the time that it takes to transmit essential information. They also highlight and visually underline events of the text, not only drawing greater attention to those scenes selected for visual representation, but also guiding the reader's mental image of the scene in a specific direction. Yet in spite of the difference in media, the possibilities that images offer in the transmission of time underline many of the ideas that we have discussed about the text of this work.

The suite of images of Ms. 111 not only compress time and events into single historiated initials or illuminations, but also visually reproduce – and thereby underline – the key points in the narrative. The manuscript's striking historiated initials are exquisite reproductions of the scenes taking place in the text in which they occur, which, like the chapter subheadings, also serve to give readers a sense of what they are about to read within the text, in the form of abbreviated versions of the scenes. In this way, the nature of images – in the sense that they may be more quickly absorbed than text – not only enhances the reader's enjoyment of the text, but also interacts with the text's transmission of time, and the reader's ability to participate in this transmission.

It is also important to keep in mind that in creating these initials, the artist has intentionally chosen specific scenes within the text to highlight, and therefore to grant priority through visual representation. Perhaps the best example of an intentional use of images as means of representation are those initials featuring minute depictions of Gracienne in the background or looking down from her tower as Gillion wards off dozens of enemies. Her appearance in these tiny images is minor, but repeated frequently within the illuminations and initials in order to give the reader a sense of her constant presence as the story unfolds (Morrison and Stahuljak 24). Additionally, the physical distance between the two characters that is represented in these images is – as it usually is in this motif – bridged through the gaze – something that can be depicted most directly in images, and adds substantial layers of meaning to the text, including visually directing and focusing the reader's attention on a particular character. This becomes particularly relevant when Gillion learns about the death of his wife, and discovers his love for Gracienne. In effect, the images are used to weave in Gracienne over the course of several illumination-worthy events, so that, when Gillion is suddenly widowed, the reader, like Gillion, has become so accustomed to Gracienne's presence that their union seems like the next logical step.

Additionally, as is the case in many other medieval manuscripts, the illuminations in *Gillion* occasionally contain multiple events occurring concurrently or steps in a process within a single image, as we see in the preliminary illustration of the author learning the story of Gillion, a scene that is rendered in several stages within the same image (see Fig. 2). In some cases, such images could be interpreted to depict simultaneity – i.e., the visual equivalent of parallel scenes within a text – while others seem intended to portray a succession of events (a phenomenon that we have also observed in the construction of concatenated sequences through conjunctions like *quant*). Both of these types of artistic decisions reflect and reinforce their textual counterparts.

Similarly, the author's interest in presenting a realistic story is also upheld in van Lathem's images, which portray characters in contemporary clothing, in settings made up of recognizable architectural forms and flora (both in images representing domestic locations as well as those depicting more exotic ones).²⁰ In the same way that the text seeks to evoke various elements of the distant past to create its ideal temporal setting, the program of images in Ms. 111 serve as a kind of visual gloss, intended to generate similar sentiments within the reader. What is interesting about the unification of this text with these images is that, unlike the text, which is replete with generic, clichéd motifs and repetitions, the illuminations in Ms. 111 are all unique, not only within the manuscript, but to other works as well (Morrison and Stahuljak 124-26). There are a number of possible reasons for this contrast. One explanation may be a difference in audience anticipations for the text versus the images, which might have been expected to tailor and personalize the text for the patron. Worth noting is that, as the

²⁰ For more information on these aspects of the images, see Morrison and Stahuljak, particularly pages 18 and 124.

author left deliberate space for these illustrations,²¹ the text, as it was transcribed in Ms. 111 and in the Dülmen manuscript, anticipated the addition of rich illustrations and illumination.

The Getty museum's beautiful copy of the *Roman de Gillion de Trazeignes* is an exquisite example of text and imagery working together to absorb the reader in a whirlwind of shifts in fortune, impossible love triangles, exotic adventures and reversals in the East, and dramatic battle scenes. Woven throughout the fabric of this work is time, confronted and dealt with by both author and artist to create a manuscript that is as much a reflection of its literary context as it is an example of the ways in which its makers sought to render the intricate qualities of time in both text and image.

²¹ But not for the historiated initials, which were interestingly enough “not part of the original plan” for Ms. 111, according to Morrison (107).

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10 Appendix

Figure 1: Lexical temporal markers by textual frequency

Grammatical Function	Term or Phrase	Frequency
Conjunction	quant	high
	puis	high
	ainsi que/comme	high
	si tost que/tantost que/au plus tost	high
	puis après	medium
	lors, lorsque	medium
	depuis que	low
	tandis	low
Preposition / Prepositional Phrase	aprez (also used as adverb)	high
	jusques a/jusques icy	high
	maintenant (also used as adverb)	low
	jour de sa vie	low
	vers	low
	avant (/que)	low
	dès maintenant	low
Determiner	celluy jour	medium
	ce jour	medium
	auquel jour	medium
	a ceste heure	medium
	ledit jour	low
	celle nuyt	low
	telle heure	low
	propre jour	low
Adjective	petit temps/petit espace/ pou/peu d'espace	medium
	grant espace	medium
	longue duree/long temps	medium
	prochaine	medium
	toute (la nuyt/la journee)	low
	[# jours] entiers	low
	propre jour	low
	[jusques au] cler jour	low
	brief(z) temps/jours	low
	environ (also used as adverb)	low
Adverb	aprez (also used as preposition)	high
	jamais	high

	au jour dhuy/le jour d'huy	high
	tousjours	high
	jusques a/jusques icy	high
	longtemps (also used as noun)	medium
	souvent	medium
	oncques	medium
	maintenant	low
	(assez) tost	low
	(moult) longuement	low
	autrefois(z)	low
	journallement	low
	prochainement	low
	finablement	low
	hastivement	low
	tard	low
	desja	low
	nuyt	low
Noun	espace (/de temps)	high
	au jour dhuy/le jour d'huy	high
	heure/eure/bonne heure	high
	journee	medium
	longtemps	medium
	lendemain	medium
	ung petit	low
	matin	low
	mynuyt/minuyt	low
	nuyt/nuit	low
	temps	low
	soir	low
	demain	low
	mois	low
	an(s)	low
	fin (de ses jours)	low
	aube	low
	present	low
point	low	
duree	low	
Verb	avenir/venir	medium
	finir [ses jours]	low
	durer	low
	approcher	low
	arriver	low
	passer	low
Numbers/dates	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 40	low

Figure 2

Lieven van Lathem (circa 1430 - 1493), *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*, 1464, Tempera colors, gold, and ink on parchment, bound in blind-tooled orange morocco featuring the arms of the sixth duke of Devonshire. Closed: 38.9 × 28 × 9.4 cm (15 5/16 × 11 × 3 11/16 in.), Ms. III (2013.46), the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Figure 3

Lieven van Lathem (circa 1430 - 1493), *Roman de Gillion de Trazegnies*, 1464,
Initial A: *Gillion Defeating the Army of the Emir of Orbrie*, Tempera colors, gold, and ink on parchment
Leaf: 37 × 25.5 cm (14 9/16 × 10 1/16 in.), Ms. 111 (2013.46), fol. 54v
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Gracienne depicted atop a tower in the background of the scene; circle added for emphasis.

